

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

'If families do not ... then schools must provide roots for children.... So that they can stand firm and grow, provide wings for children ... so they can fly.

Broken roots and crippled wings destroy hope. And hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible'

(McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter & McWhirter, 2004:57)

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Policy and legislation pertaining to special needs education in South Africa are founded on the Bill of rights (109/1996), the South African Schools Act (84/1996) and White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) on Inclusive Education. These legislation and policy documents stress the principles of Human Rights, social justice, quality education for all, the right to a basic education, equality of opportunity, and redress of past educational inequalities in South Africa. The most important development to come out of these policies and legislation has been the emerging paradigm shift from the notion of learners with special needs to the concept of barriers to learning and participation, and the recommendation for a community based Inclusive Education Policy.

The Inclusive Education Policy, as propounded in the White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), is founded on Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the League of Nations in 1945 and proclaims the right of every human to an appropriate education regardless of gender, disability, race, socio-economic background, colour and religion. This right has since been enshrined in the Constitutions of all independent nations. In South Africa, this fundamental right to basic education is contained in Section 9 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act Number 108 of 1996, which commits the state to the achievement of equality education, and Sections 9 (3), (4) and (5), which commits the state to non-discrimination. These clauses are particularly important for protecting all learners at school, whether disabled or not.

In building an Inclusive Education and Training system, South Africa is also guided by Section 29 (1) of the Constitution, which states that all human beings have the right to a basic education, including adult basic education. This legislation is an indication of the way in which South Africa constitutionally, promotes both Inclusive Education and life-long learning.

The Department of Education's obligation to provide basic education to all learners and its commitment to the central principles of the Constitution are guided by the recognition that a new and unified education and training system must be based on equality, to redressing past imbalances in education which were caused by the apartheid system of education before 1994, and on a progressive promotion of the quality of education and training. It is for these reasons that the South African Department of Education, in July 2001, through the development of White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, officially accepted the Inclusive Education as policy for all schools under its jurisdiction irrespective of talent, disability, socio-economic background, race, class, gender, health status, religion, sexual orientation, learning style, language or cultural origin of learners (Department of Education, 2001).

White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) provides an Inclusive Education policy framework, which outlines the Ministry of Education's commitment to the provision of educational opportunities, in particular, for those learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or who have dropped out of learning because of the inability of the education and training system to accommodate the diversity of learning needs, and those learners excluded from it.

White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) further outlines how the Education and Training system should transform itself to contribute to establishing a caring and humane society, and how it must change to accommodate the full range of learning needs and the mechanisms that should be put in place. Particular attention is paid to achieving these objectives through a realistic and effective implementation process that moves towards the development of a system that accommodates and respects diversity. This process requires a phasing in of strategies that are directed at departmental, institutional, instructional and curricula transformation. It further requires vigorous

participation of all social partners and communities so that social exclusion and negative stereotyping can be eliminated.

Therefore, the process of developing White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) arose from the need to change the provision of education and training to be responsive and sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs. White Paper 1 on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) highlighted the joint responsibility of all South Africans with a stake in the education and training system, to help build a just, equitable, and high quality educational system for all South African citizens. All stakeholders in education and training must share a common culture of disciplined commitment to teaching and learning. The best expertise and experience from the old ethnic departments are indispensable; however, the inefficient and reactionary administrative and professional practices from the old dispensations were to be jettisoned.

Education White Paper 1 on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) acknowledged the importance of providing an effective response to the unsatisfactory educational experiences of learners with special educational needs, including those in the mainstream educational environment whose educational needs are inadequately accommodated. White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education and Training (Department of Education, 2001) adds to this by stating that the inclusive approach acknowledges that the learners who are most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion in South Africa are those who are labelled 'learners with special education needs', such as learners with disabilities and impairments.

The creation of special education introduced several educational problems including the following:

- Learners who qualify for special education have some impairment, which makes it difficult for them to participate in the regular school curriculum. Thus, they follow a curriculum that is different from that of their peers (Fernstrom & Goognite, 2000: 244; Fisher, Sax, Rodifer & Pumpian, 1999: 256; UNESCO, 2009).
- Learners with disabilities and other conditions are labelled and excluded from the mainstream of society. Assessment procedures tend to categorize learners and

this has damaging effects on educator and parent expectations and on the learners' self-concept (Federico, Harold & Vann, 1999: 76; UNESCO, 2009).

- The presence of specialists in special education encourages ordinary classroom educators to pass on to others the responsibility for learners they regard as special (Farber & Klein, 1999: 83; UNICEF, 2007).
- Resources that could otherwise be used to provide more flexible and responsive forms of schooling are channelled into separate educational provision (Farrell, 2000: 35; UNESCO, 2001, 2002).
- The emphasis on Individualized Educational Plans and task analysis in special education tends to reduce educator expectations of learners. In addition, task analysis and the associated behavioural teaching strategies introduce disjointed knowledge and skills, thus making learning less meaningful to learners (Fagan, 1999: 193; UNESCO, 2009).

In the light of the above paragraphs, this research will examine, by means of a literature review, the paradigm shift in special needs education in the international world and in South Africa in particular. The empirical research will investigate the eco-systemic management strategic challenges that South African educators and Senior Management Teams at schools face in implementing the Inclusive Education policy. The learners' home environment will be explored from the parents' perspective. The research base on Inclusive Education in South Africa is relatively small and quite varied in its management, teaching and learning approach. In general, it tends to support the continued need for special education and its particular focus on individualized teaching while also showing the positive benefits of inclusion.

Several studies have found that learners with disabilities who have been included in general education classrooms gained more than those in 'pull-out' programmes or control schools (Dieker, 2001:14) and Alur (2003 and 2005). Achievement test data has demonstrated consistent academic gains made by learners with and without disabilities in general education classrooms (Klinger, Arguelles, Hugh and Vaughn 2001:221, Alur, 2005 and 2010). The studies show efforts of modification of general education classrooms in Minnesota schools in ways that enhanced Inclusive

Education opportunities for all learners. Studies regarding learner achievement that were conducted by Taylor (2003) and Bach (2009) revealed that both low-achieving learners and learners with disabilities performed better in integrated programmes. Special education learners demonstrated no differences in reading achievement in integrated or resource programmes. Although the special education learners performed relatively poorly in both integrated and resource programmes when compared with their low-achieving classmates, they demonstrated increased social success in general education settings (Spinelli, 2002: 21).

Staal (2001: 243) and Kilgore, Griffin, Sindelar and Webb (2002: 7) studied reading achievement in a school that introduced inclusion. In comparison to a control school, learners in the inclusive school demonstrated significantly superior gains on several psychometric scales, including reading vocabulary, total reading, and language, with a marginally significant effect on reading comprehension. These positive effects were spread across all learner types. Favazza, Phillipsen and Kumar (2000: 491) and Peters (2004) investigated achievement test scores of learners taught by special education educators and learners taught by general education educators and found that the learners taught by general education educators held steady in the first year of the school's inclusion efforts, while the learners who participated in the 'pull out' model lost ground. For learners with disabilities, studies have indicated that participation in general education environments results in a number of academic increases and behavioural and social progress. Schnorr (1997: 1), Tomlinson and Eidson (2003) and Tomlinson *et al.*, (2002) studied the intellectual and social functioning and learner-environment interaction of learners who experienced barriers to learning in forty-three different classrooms from fourteen schools. No significant differences were found between integrated and segregated learners in the traditional domains of self-help skills, gross and fine motor co-ordination, communication, and adaptive behaviour. In the functional domain of social competence, however, learners from integrated sites generally progressed (Daniels and Garner, 1999: 34; Reid *et al.* 2005; Dyck and Pemberton, 2002). Conversely, learners from segregated schools generally regressed in each of the traditional skill domains as well as in social competence.

Voltz, Brazil and Ford (2001: 23) evaluated differences in progress between learners who experienced learning barriers in special classes and those in ordinary classes. The forty-one learners participating in the study are considered moderately intellectually handicapped and are between the ages of six and ten. Educators of ordinary classes reported greater behavioural progress among the learners with disabilities placed in their classrooms. Wolpert (2001: 28) conducted a comprehensive study to evaluate different programme placements for learners with severe disabilities. Sixteen elementary learners, eight receiving educational services in classrooms with normal learners and eight in special education classes, participated in the study. Programmes were chosen that met selected criteria for best practices and models for educator training. Findings consistently revealed the superiority of ordinary class placements over special education classes, including Individualized Educational Programmes (IEPs) with more academic objectives, greater social interaction, and less time spent alone.

Walton (2001: 76) found that achievement test data demonstrated consistent academic gains by general education learners in inclusive classrooms. None of the studies indicated any negative impact for learners who are not identified as having disabilities. Davis, Reichle and Southard (2001: 423) found that the quantity and level of time spent on instruction for learners without disabilities was not adversely affected by the presence in class of learners with severe disabilities. In a study of co-operative learning groups (Wallace, Anderson, Bathlomey and Hupp, 2002: 345), learners without disabilities who facilitated interactions of their peers with severe disabilities did not have their level of achievement affected. Standardized test and report card measures used to determine impact, revealed no significant negative academic or behavioural effects on classmates who were educated in classes with learners with disabilities in an elementary school of six hundred and forty learners in rural Minnesota (Dover, 1999: 21; Slee, 2001).

Numerous studies have also examined various aspects of attitudes and relationships resulting from inclusion. These studies document those efforts to include learners with disabilities in general education classrooms resulted in positive experiences and improved attitudes on the part of learners, both with and without disabilities, and educators alike. Davis and Watson (2001: 671) found that learners develop positive

attitudes toward learners with disabilities. Gibb, Allred, Ingram, Young and Egan (1999: 122; Rix and Simmons, 2003) also noted that learner friendships and relationships seem to be enhanced by inclusion, with greater understanding and empathy evidenced. Heller, Manning, Pavur and Wagner (1998: 50; Rix and Simmons, 2003) noted, too, that inclusion facilitated peer friendships. Hunt, Farron-Davis, Wren, Hirose-Hatae and Goetz (1997: 127; Engelbrecht, 2004) found that friendship networks and social relationships were enhanced for learners with severe disabilities placed in inclusive classrooms and schools. Maccini and Gagnon (2002: 325) and Kaufman, Fuchs, Warren, Tindal and Meyer (1997: 38; Rix and Simmons, 2003) studied young learners' social relationships and found reciprocal and positive social relationships between learners with disabilities and their classmates. Staub, Spaulding, Peck, Gallucci and Schwartz, (1996: 35) and Dyson and Millward, (2000) found that learners without disabilities experienced greater awareness and appreciation for people with disabilities and that they developed better self-esteem and an increase in responsible behaviour.

The literature review also reveals that educators in inclusive classrooms have positive attitudes towards learners with disabilities or develop such an attitude over time, especially when inclusion is accompanied by training, administrative and other support, assistance in the classroom and a smaller class size (Ryndak, Morrison and Sommerstein, 1999: 5; Sandkull, 2005; Swart, *et al.*, 2002). In schools where Ryndak Morrison and Sommerstein (1999:5); Sandkull (2005) and Swart, *et al.*, (2002) conducted their research, the reaction of the educators was overwhelmingly positive toward inclusion. Sandkull (2005) and Swart, *et al.*, (2002) studied educators who had learners identified as having a 'severe disabilities' in their classes and results of their research indicated that most educators reacted to the initial placement cautiously or negatively, but that most educators experienced increased ownership and involvement with these learners over the course of the school year.

An attitude survey was conducted with high school staff, learners and their parents in the Chicago School District (Waldron, 1998: 395; Sandkull, 2005; Swart, *et al.*, 2002; Salend, 2004a). Principals indeed agreed with the basic goals of inclusion, followed by special education educators and regular education educators, respectively. An important implication of this study is that more knowledge, exposure and experience

led to greater acceptance of inclusion (Sandkull, 2005; Swart, *et al.*, 2002; Salend, 2004b). Swart, *et al.*, (2002) surveyed six hundred and eighty certified special and general education educators and administrators in thirty-two schools that had experience of providing Inclusive Educational opportunities for learners. The professionals that participated in the study generally believed that educating learners with disabilities in Inclusive Education classrooms resulted in positive changes in educators' attitudes and job responsibilities. In another study, one hundred and fifty eight educators indicated their perceptions regarding the support available and the support that they need for inclusion (Opdal, Wormnaes and Habayeb, 2001: 143; Sandkull, 2005; Swart, *et al.*, 2002). Training was one of the identified needs. Special and general educators reported similar levels of needs for resources, but special educators reported a greater need for resources than general educators.

Even though most of the research available today supports Inclusive Education, there are a number of studies that take an alternative position. For the most part, these studies report on situations in which learners with barriers to learning are placed in general education classrooms without proper support (Landrum and Tankersley, 1999: 319) or they are placed in classrooms with learners without disabilities but do not receive special education, as defined by law (Langone, 1998: 1; Sandkull, 2005; Swart, *et al.*, 2002). Such studies definitely raise concerns. This research is premised on the fact that it is most inappropriate to 'dump' learners in classrooms where educators are unprepared and lack resources to support such learners' needs in the ordinary class.

Thus far, it is clear that Inclusive Education provides learners who experience barriers to learning with a diverse stimulating social environment in which they can learn and develop; opportunities to experience diversity of society on a small scale in a classroom; and a miniature model of the democratic classroom process (LaParo, Sexton and Synder, 1998: 151; Corbett, 1999: 53; Lewis 1999: 269; Crockett and Kauffman, 1998: 74; Sayed, 2002; Waghid, 2002). Inclusion also enables learners and educators to develop a sense of belonging to the diverse human family; recognize that all learners have strengths irrespective of their cognitive, connotative and affective abilities; develop an awareness of the importance of direct individualized instruction; develop collaborative problem solving skills; develop

teamwork skills; enhance accountability skills; combat monotony in classrooms and schools; promote the civil rights of all individuals; support the social value of equality; teach socialization and collaborative skills in classrooms; develop a spirit of supportiveness and interdependence among learners; maximize social peace; appreciate that every person has unique characteristics and abilities; develop respect for others with diverse characteristics; develop sensitivity toward others' limitations; develop help and teach all classmates; and develop empathetic skills (Palmer, Fuller, Arora and Nelson, 2001: 467).

It can be deduced from the findings of the literature review that the question to be raised in inclusive schools is not, how do learners who experience barriers to learning have to change in order to be members of the school, but rather how does the school have to change in order to offer full membership to its learners with disabilities?

The answer to the question calls for educators in inclusive schools to be competent in inclusion and to have the ability to:

- problem solve, to be able to informally assess the skills a learner needs (rather than relying solely on the standardized curriculum);
- take advantage of learners' individual interests and use their internal motivation for developing necessary skills (Nakken and Pijl, 2002: 47);
- set high but alternative expectations that are suitable for the learners - this means developing alternative assessments;
- have appropriate expectations for each learner, regardless of the learner's capabilities (Waldron, McLaskey and Pacchiano, 1999: 141; Sandkull, 2005; Swart, *et al.*, 2002);
- determine in what way to modify assignments for learners and to design classroom activities in such a way that all learners can participate (Diamond, 2001: 104);
- learn how to value all kinds of skills that learners bring to a class, not just the academic skills (Dieker and Berg, 2002: 92);

- provide opportunities for daily success for all learners (Lavay and Semark, 2001: 40);
- realize that every learner in the class is their responsibility (Little and Little, 1999: 125; Howell and Lazarus, 2003);
- apply a variety of instructional strategies (Howell and Lazarus, 2003);
- be flexible and to display a high tolerance for ambiguity (Waldron and Van Zandt, 1999: 18; Loebenstein, 2005).

The findings of the literature review highlighted above have led to the following questions for this research:

- What challenges do South African educators, Senior Management Teams and parents face in managing the implementation of the White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education?
- What eco-systemic strategies can be employed to help educators, Senior Management Teams and parents to develop the necessary capacity to effectively implement and manage the Inclusive Education policy?

These questions were used to formulate the aims of this study.

1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study are to:

- Investigate the nature of challenges that South African educators, Senior Management Teams and parents face in managing the implementation of White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education
- Make suggestions regarding eco-systemic management strategies that could be employed to help educators, Senior Management Teams and parents to develop the necessary capacity to effectively implement and manage the Inclusive Education policy as propounded in White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education.

1.3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This research used both literature review and qualitative empirical research methods in answering the research questions raised in 1: 1.

1.3.1 Qualitative research

The research design that is used in this study is qualitative, which as Berg (2003: 5) states, helps the researcher to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible. Qualitative research can further be explained as a multi-perspective approach to social interaction that is aimed at describing, making sense of, interpreting, or reconstructing interactions in terms of the meaning that the participants attach to it (Bogdan and Bicklen, 1998: 22; Berg, 2003). Qualitative research states that it is important for qualitative researchers to interact and speak to participants about their perceptions in order for them to understand the nature of their constructed realities (Creswell, 2003: 29).

The qualitative research design of this research utilizes in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection and observation as a secondary method. In-depth interviews, which Denzin (2001: 10); Holliday (2007) describe as face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the participant is the main source of data collection in this research, with observation as an added mechanism. After conducting, recording and transcribing the interviews, the analysis and interpretation of the data follows. A literature review is conducted in order to explore the challenges that educators in South Africa face in implementing Inclusive Education. The usual ethical procedures (*cf.* 1.3.3) are followed.

One of the semantic constructions frequently identified with qualitative interview data is a 'story'. Telling stories is considered a primary way of making sense of an experience (Flick, 1998: 39; Shank, 2002). The underlying premise of qualitative research is a belief that individuals make sense of their world most effectively by telling stories (Patton, 2001: 19; Holliday, 2002). This research employs unstructured interviews in which the participants tell their stories of their day-to-day encounters of Inclusive Education challenges. The researcher constructed a list of items for the

interview schedule (see Appendix A) to explore with each participant their experiences of Inclusive Education.

1.3.1.1 Literature review

Shank (2002: 27) refers to literature review as the first and foremost tool in the contextualization of a study to argue a case. Existing national and international literature on Inclusive Education was reviewed. A thorough literature study was done to acquire understanding of inclusion and Inclusive Education. The curricula and features of inclusive schools were also investigated by means of a literature review to determine the way in which inclusive schools are characterized and to ascertain whether inclusive schools have the capacity to accommodate all learners irrespective of their differences and abilities. To achieve this, the available data bases (both national and international) were consulted during the study, for example, the NEXUS, SABINET - on-line, the EBSCOHost web and various other web-based sources as well as a DIALOG search were conducted to gather recent (from 2001-2009) information regarding the subject. The following key concepts/words were used in the search: inclusion, Inclusive Education, mainstreaming, learners with barriers to learning, learners with special educational needs, integration, White Paper 6, transformation of Education in South Africa, history of Inclusive Education, and inclusive classrooms and schools.

1.3.1.2 Observation

Merriam (1998: 97), Creswell (2003) perceive observations as making it possible to record behaviour as it is happening. The researcher learned about behaviours and the meanings attached to them through observations. There are several reasons why data in this study was collected through observations, as noted by Merriam (1998: 95; Denzil and Lincoln, 2005):

- An observer will notice things that may lead to the understanding of the context. Observation makes it better to observe behaviour as it is happening.
- Observation provides some knowledge of the context, specific incidents or behaviours that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews.

- Observation is the best technique to use when a situation can be observed firsthand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the topic under study.

1.3.1.3 Field notes

Field notes are written accounts of the observation (Seidman, 1998: 29; Maxwell, 2004). These written accounts are made immediately or as soon as possible after the observation. Maxwell (2004: 106) posits that field notes should include a description of the setting in which interviews take place, the purpose of the observation, the behavioural expressions of people and their activities during the interview sessions.

1.3.1.4 Interviews

Strauss and Corbin (1998: 7); Denzil and Lincoln (2005) define an interview as a conversation with a purpose, where a researcher wants to discover what happens in people's lives or worlds. They further argue that a face-to-face interview helps in understanding the closed world of individuals, families or organizations. In describing unstructured interviews, Denzil and Lincoln (2005: 8) use the term 'qualitative interviewing'. DeMarrais and Lapan (2003) also refer to unstructured interviews as 'conversations with a purpose'. The participants are made to understand why the interview is being conducted. They are also given the assurance that the information provided will be treated in strict confidence.

Flick (1998: 57) and Shanks (2002) assert that during interviews interviewees are seen as social actors who are interacting with an interviewer and who are at the same time involved in discursive practice. This means that the researcher who interviews participants is also a co-constructor of meaning (data). Should the participant not understand a question, the researcher needs to simplify it in order to facilitate effective and meaningful conversation. If the information given does not give sufficient details, the researcher needs to probe further and deeply in order to develop comprehensive and meaningful content on the subject under investigation. Kvale (1996: 29) and De Vos (2003) indicate that if participants get to ask some questions, the very nature of the question and recurring comments and analysis might reveal discursively rich data.

1.3.1.5 Tape recording and transcribing

The interviews for this research were audio taped and transcribed for accuracy during the data analysis stage. An observer was present during the interviews to make sure that all ethical procedures were followed.

Necessary transcripts were made from the data collected from the audiotapes. De Marais (1998: 53); Shank (2002) and Denzil and Lincoln (2005) note the advantages of working with transcripts as:

- providing the researcher with more details;
- allowing the reader and researcher to return to the exact extract to either analyze or refer back; and
- permitting the researcher to have direct access to the data.

The participants were given an opportunity to verify the correctness of the captured data.

1.3.2 Population and sample

The population of this research comprised Senior Management Teams (SMTs) of schools, educators and parents in the Vaal Triangle (District 8 of the Gauteng Department of Education), (N=1200). The sample was 10% (N=120). As no detailed information regarding the number of SMTs, educators and parents could be obtained from the Sedibeng West District (D8) of the Gauteng Department of Education, the researcher decided to determine the research sample. This research used purposive sampling. According to Maxwell (2004) a 10% sample of the population is sufficient. This type of sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher. A research sample is composed of elements which contain the most common characteristics of the population (Berg, 2003: 27). Merriam (1998: 61) and Maxwell (2004) refer to purposeful sampling as a method in which information-rich sources are selected in order to gain insight and understanding from which a great deal can be learned.

In purposeful sampling, it is important for the researcher to first determine the selection criteria to be used in choosing the participants. These criteria must reflect the purpose of the study and guide the process to be followed (Denzin, 2001: 61). A sample of 10 %, 120 participants (N=120) of the total population of 1200 (N=1200), 40 educators (N=40), 8 focus groups of Senior Management Teams, each had 5 members (N=40) and 40 parents (N=40) were selected from former model 'C' schools, private schools and township schools in the Vaal Triangle. These participants were selected from one Former model 'C' school, one government funded Catholic school, one Section 21 non-profit private school and one township school in the Vaal Triangle area. These schools have 100% black learners. The educators and the Senior Management Team comprised black, white, mixed and Indians. The parents are mainly black. The selection of the sample is based on the first names on the lists of educators on post level one that school principals gave to the researcher and the Senior Management Team of the schools. The first ten educators on the list were selected per school. Likewise, the first ten names of parents on the list of learners who were classified as learners who experienced barriers to learning were selected for the research. All the participating schools have approximately 600 hundred learners in each school. The participating educators' teaching experience ranges from 4 years to 25 years. The age range of participants is between 28 to 55 years. The parents' ages ranged from 28 to 60 years.

1.3.3 Ethical measures

The researcher had to consider the ethical responsibilities associated with qualitative research (Shank, 2002: 28). Participation was voluntary and participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from this study at any time, without explanation or prejudice. The use of humans as participants in social science, education and medical research is common. When the focus of investigation is on human participants, ethical implications must be looked at carefully in terms of what the researcher intends to do with the participants. The principles of ethical measures to be taken before the investigation dictate that the research participants should be given information about the whole process. They should be aware of what is going to happen and the effect the research process is going to have on them (Leecy and Ormrod, 2005: 101).

The relevant people holding key positions such as principals in the selected private schools, township schools and the former model 'C' schools working in inclusive settings, gave permission for this research in the Vaal Triangle. The collected data and the participants' names will be treated as confidential. The research aims and objectives were explained to them before participation in the research (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2003). Ethical issues identified and considered by researcher are as follows:

- **HARM TO PARTICIPANTS**

There were no activities in which the participants were exposed to physical, emotional or psychological harm. The participants were not subjected to undue stress or embarrassment (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 101; Strydom, 2002). However, Bailey (1994: 472, quoted by De Vos, 2003) highlights that research projects may have positive effects on the participants although it may take years before any beneficial effects are seen (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2003).

- **INFORMED CONSENT**

Informed consent implies that all possible, important or necessary information regarding the goal of the investigation, the procedures which will be followed during the investigation, the possible advantages, disadvantages and the dangers to which the participants may be exposed, including the credibility of the researcher, are given to the participants or their legal representatives (De Vos, 2003). De Vos, (2003) adds that informed consent is a necessary condition rather than a luxury or an impediment. The emphasis is placed on accurate and complete information so that participants will fully comprehend the investigation and thus be able to make a voluntary, thorough reasoned decision about their possible participation. The participants must be legally and psychologically competent to give consent and they must be aware that they would be at liberty to withdraw from the investigation at any time they wish to.

In this study, all the stakeholders were given the necessary information about the aims, the process as well as the benefits of the study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 101; Strydom, 2002: 65-66).

- **CONFIDENTIALITY/ VIOLATION OF PRIVACY/ ANONYMITY**

The right to self-determination, violation of privacy and confidentiality can be seen as synonymous (De Vos, 2003). Privacy is defined as 'that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyze' (Sieber, 1982: 145, quoted by De Vos, 2003). De Vos, (2003) further explains that 'the right to privacy is the individual's right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed'. The violation of this principle can occur in many ways. It is therefore imperative that the researchers be reminded of the importance of safeguarding the privacy and identity where the privacy of participants is relevant (De Vos, 2003). Privacy means the element of personal privacy, whereas confidentiality means handling the information in a confidential manner. Confidentiality is viewed as a continuous process of privacy, referring to agreements between persons that limit the others to access the information (Sieber, 1982:145 as quoted by De Vos, 2003). The information given by participants must remain anonymous to ensure the privacy of the respondents. Researchers should ensure the participants' anonymity in their covering letters and/or verbal communications (De Vos, 2003; Berg, 2003).

- **DECEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The definition of deception of participants is a deliberate misinterpretation of facts in order to make another person believe what is not true, violating the respect a person is entitled to (De Vos, 2003). The participants were fully informed about the aims and objectives of this study.

- **COMPETENCE AND ACTIONS OF RESEARCH**

During the research value judgments were not made on cultural aspects of participants. The researcher was aware of the ethical responsibility at all times (Strydom, 2002: 69). The ethical obligations of researchers are to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to embark on the proposed research. This requirement is more important when the investigation requires looking into sensitive issues (De Vos, 2003, Maxwell, 2004). This research project was conducted in an ethical manner.

- **RELEASING OF THE FINDINGS**

The importance of the documentation in an accurate, objective, complete and certain manner must be understood by the researcher (Strydom, 2002). In this study, the researcher endeavoured to document all the results and findings objectively, completely, with accuracy and without prejudice.

1.4 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

This study that explored and investigated eco-systemic management strategies for inclusive schools in the Vaal Triangle is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Orientation

Chapter 2: The meaning of Inclusive Education

Chapter 3: Strategic leadership and Management of inclusive of education

Chapter 4: Research methodology and design

Chapter 5: Data analysis

Chapter 6: Phenomenological interpretation of the findings

Chapter 7: Eco-systemic management strategies for inclusive schools

Chapter 8: Recommendations and conclusions

1.5 CONCLUSION

Chapter one presents the statement of the problem of this research. It serves as a basis for the research questions as well as the aims of the study, which focus on eco-systemic management strategies of inclusive schools in the Vaal Triangle. The research questions and aims as well as the method used for this research are defined. The measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations are highlighted. Chapter Two deals with the literature review on the meaning of Inclusive Education.