DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION

Special Educational Needs



Only Study guide for ETH306-W

Compiled by
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FOREWORD

Dear Student

Welcome to this module on Special Needs Education (ETH306–W), which is presented by the Department of Primary School Teacher Education. This module, and therefore also the study guide, has been compiled in such a way (in the context of *knowledge, skills* and *attitudes*) that you will be better equipped to understand learners experiencing barriers to learning, and support and accompany them so that they are able to realise as much of their inborn potential as possible.

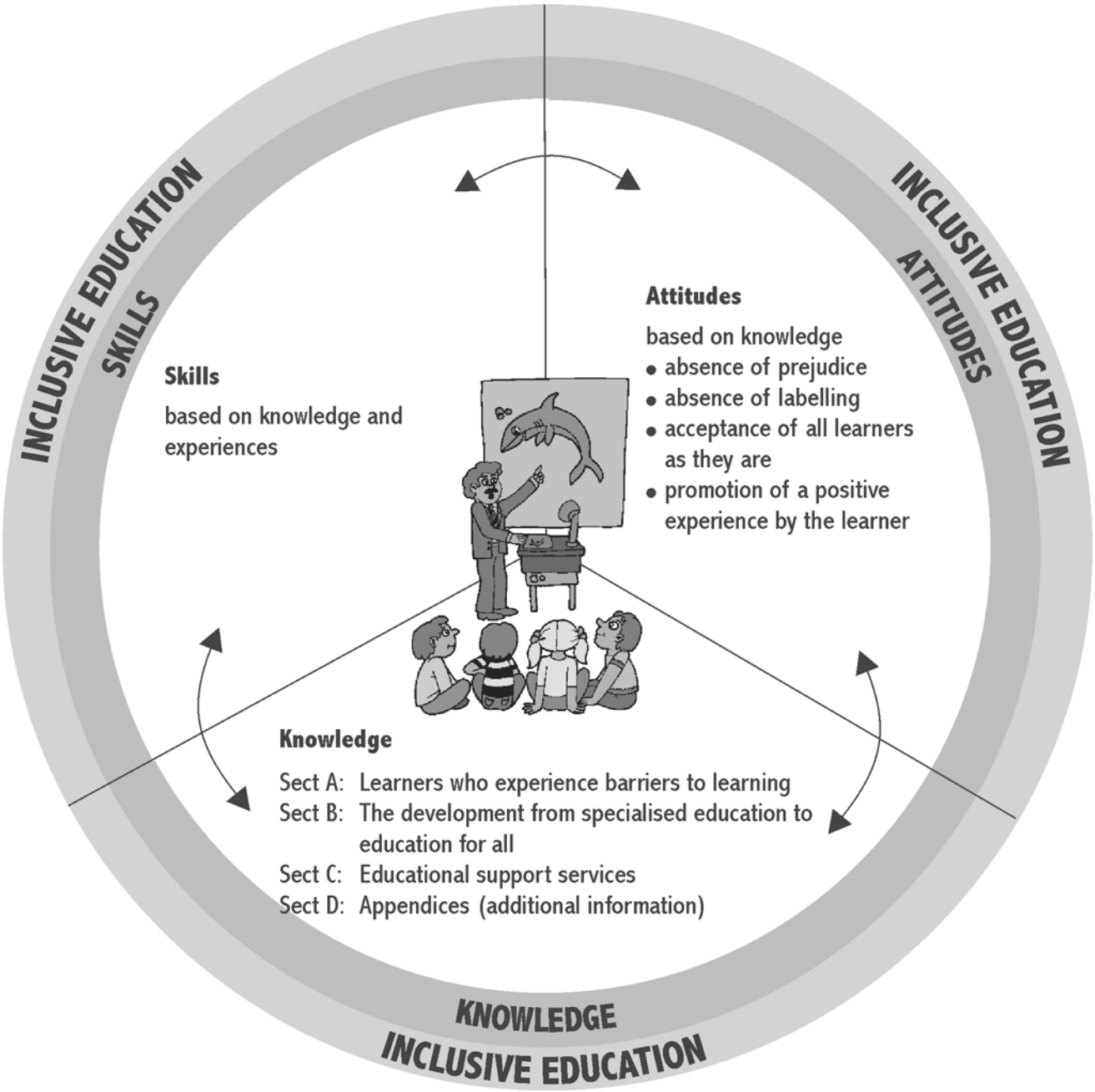
We should like you to use the study guide as a reference source, to which you should add any useful new information that you come across. We should like to impress upon you the need to keep up with self-study — the more research and independent study you do, the more enriching you will find this module. After all, you are busy empowering yourself with knowledge that will be of practical value to you! We intend to give you the tools you will need to complete this task successfully.

Knowledge, skills and attitudes are interrelated, as is evident from the fact that attitudes can be determined or changed by knowledge and that skill in a particular field requires knowledge of the subject in addition to practice. It is important that you do not see these three components of the instructional model in isolation, but always bear in mind that they have an impact on one another. The learning content of the study guide therefore resembles a photograph mounted inside a double frame — in the first frame we see knowledge, attitudes and skills and the second frame bears the words ''inclusive education''. Therefore, if you look at the ''photograph'', you need to do so through the two frames (see fig 1). The second frame which bears the words ''inclusive education'' symbolises the outstanding characteristic of the new South African Education Policy, namely inclusive education.

In sections A – C it is indicated which parts need to be studied or read only. Section D is linking up with sections A – C as well as to add on to next sections new information.

FIGURE 1

Components of the instructional model



It would be a useful exercise to begin by taking stock of your own knowledge, skills and attitudes so that later on you will be in a position to determine what growth has taken place in respect of each component. If you find that there has been no growth, you should work through the study guide again or repeat the module. **Please complete the first questionnaire when you begin the module and the second questionnaire upon completing it — see *Activity* at the end of this section.**

1 WHAT ARE THE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE MODULE AS A WHOLE?

In White Paper 6 (2001:5, 11) the Minister of Education says the following:

> *The education and training system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could* ***develop and extend their potential*** *and participate as equal members of society — a humane and caring society.*

In the light of the above instruction from the Minister of Education, the following general learning outcomes have been set for this module:

- To have sufficient KNOWLEDGE to gain a better understanding of Special Needs Education learners can be better equipped to accompany them so that they can realise their full potential (eg, you will need knowledge of education policy, and of the whole history of special needs education).
- To have SKILLS based on knowledge and additional practice, in order to be better equipped to understand and accompany learners so that learners can realise their full potential (eg, you should acquire interviewing techniques, listening techniques).
- To have a CHANGED ATTITUDE in order to be better equipped to understand and accompany learners so that learners can realise their full potential (eg, absence of prejudice and a willingness to accept learners as they are).

To help a learner to realise his or her full potential, the educator needs to help the learner to feel good about himself or herself. Educators are engaged daily in either building up (or breaking down) learners' self-concept. The following tale illustrates the impact a teacher can have on a learner, and specifically on the self-concept of the learner:

> *There is a story of an elementary teacher whose name was Mrs Thompson. And as she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the learners a lie. Like most teachers she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same. But that was impossible, because there in the front row slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.*
>
> *Mrs Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he didn't play well with the other learners, that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. And Teddy could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Mrs Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then putting a big ''F'' at the top of his papers.*
>
> *At the school where Mrs Thompson taught she was required to review each learners's past records and she put Teddy's off until last. However, when she received his file she was in for a surprise. Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, ''Teddy is a bright learners with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners ... he is a joy to be around.*
>
> *His second grade teacher wrote, ''Teddy is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle''.*
>
> *His third grade teacher wrote, ''His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken''.*

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote ''Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and sometimes sleeps in class''.

By now Mrs Thompson realised the problem and she was ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Teddy's. His present which was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he got from a grocery bag. Mrs Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of other presents. Some of the learners started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing and a bottle that was one quarter full of perfume. But she stifled the learners's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist.

Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, ''Mrs Thompson, today you smelled just like my Mom used to do''. After the learners left, she wept.

On that very day she quit teaching, reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach learners. Mrs Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest learners in the class and despite her lie that she would love all the learners the same, Teddy became her ''pet''.

A year later she found a note under her door from Teddy telling her that she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life. Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then wrote that he had finished high school third in his class and she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life. Four years after that she got another letter, stating that Teddy had stayed in school and that he would soon be graduating from college with the highest of honours. He assured Mrs Thompson that she was still the best and favourite teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favourite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer — the letter was signed Theodore F Stoddard MD.

The story doesn't end there. You see there was yet another letter that spring. Teddy said he'd met this girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs Thompson might agree to sit in the place at the wedding that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom.

Of course Mrs Thompson did. And guess what? She wore that bracelet — the one with several rhinestones missing. And she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembers his mother wearing on their last Christmas together.

They hugged each other and Dr Stoddard whispered in Mrs Thompson's ear, ''Thank you Mrs Thompson for believing in me. Thank you so much for ***making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference''.*** *Mrs Thompson with tears in her eyes, whispered back, ''Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference.* ***I didn't know how to teach until I met you''.***

In view of the enormous impact you can have as a role model on the learner's self-concept and sense of dignity, as reflected in the above illustration, it is essential that we prepare you to help bring about the ideal of ''humane and caring societies'' spelled out by the Minister of Education. This module represents part of that preparation.

In the study units contained in the study guide we help you to note the *causative*

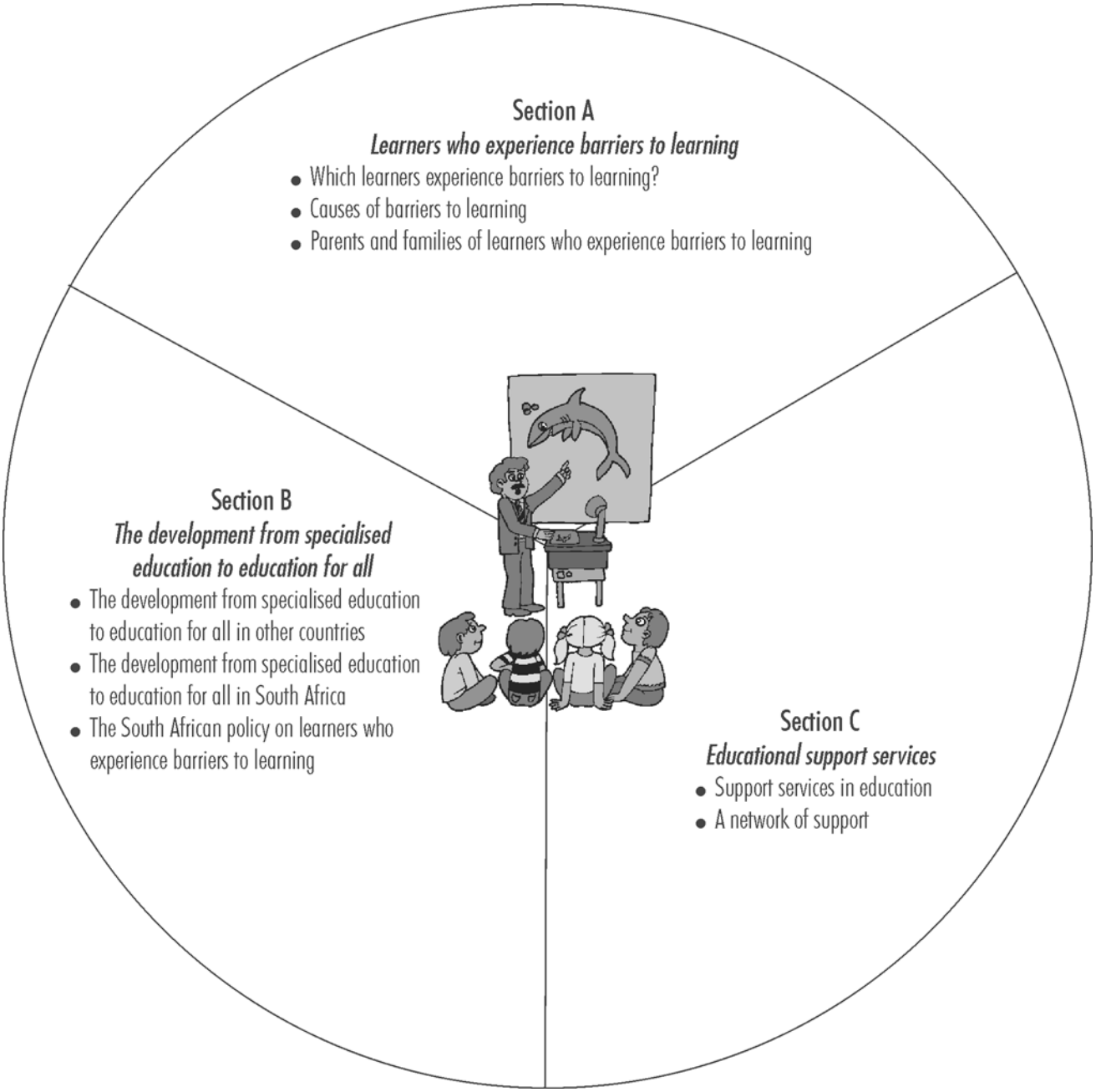
factors, *the manifestations of barriers to learning*, and especially the question of *assistance* to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Upon completion of this module, you should be able to put your theoretical knowledge, changed attitudes and skills into practice to really HELP learners and UNDERSTAND them better.

2 HOW IS THE STUDY GUIDE DESIGNED?

To empower you to understand learners better and be better able to help them, the following study units have been included in this study guide *(see fig 2 for the graphical representation of the layout of this study guide):*

FIGURE 2

Graphical representation of the layout of the study guide





Section A: Learners who experience barriers to learning

Section B: The development from specialised education to education for all

Section C: Educational support services

Section D: Additional information — appendices

3 WHAT SOURCES ARE RECOMMENDED AND PRESCRIBED?

For the recommended sources, we refer you to Tutorial Letter 101.

4 WHAT ICONS ARE USED?

Please pay attention to the following icons:

This icon indicate an activity whereby you must be writing.

This icon idincate a thinking activity as well as in some cases, a case study that you must read.

This icon wants to stop you for a while, so that you can take note of important facts.

This icon wants to indicate the envisaged outcomes of the study to you.

This icon want you to pause and think seriously about a fact.

5 WHICH MATERIAL SHOULD YOU SINGLE OUT FOR DETAILED STUDY?

It is important that you should focus at all times on the following main themes which occur right through the study guide: *the causative factors* (this knowledge will give you a better understanding of the learner and his or her experiential world), *the manifestation of various barriers to learning* (this knowledge will enable you to identify the learner who is experiencing specific barriers to learning) and especially the question of *assistance* to these learners. You should be able to use your new knowledge, skills and changed attitudes based on the new knowledge you have

acquired to handle these learners more effectively and make a difference in their lives.

6 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENTS?

The purpose of the assignments is to make sure you have a thorough knowledge of the learning content of the study guide, expand on it and help you put it into practice in your own classroom. Further, doing the assignments will compel you to do independent research, which you will come to ENJOY! A further purpose of assignments is to serve as possible examination questions or as examples of similar examination questions.

7 ''STOCKTAKING'' ACTIVITY — PRETEST

Since this module focuses on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that you will acquire by ''becoming'' like the learner, by living empathically with him or her, it is necessary to do a pretest at the beginning of your studies and a posttest after completing them so that you can determine whether you have grown in knowledge and skill and whether your attitudes have changed.

- **KNOWLEDGE**

Use the space below to write down briefly what you know about learners with special educational needs.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

In the table below, fill in (i) the knowledge you think you would require to better understand and accompany a learner who is experiencing barriers to learning and (ii) indicate which parts of this knowledge you still have to acquire, as well as (iii) the ways in which you will acquire this knowledge.

TABLE 1

What knowledge is required?	*What knowledge has still to be acquired?*	*How should this knowledge be acquired?*
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

- **ATTITUDES**

Write down (a) how you have always felt about these learners and how you have treated them and (b) what factors determined your attitude.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What do you think the attitude of the ''ideal teacher'' should be?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- **SKILLS**

Make a list of all the skills you think you already have and give a brief example opposite each one of how you used the particular skill in dealing with a learner, as well as indicating by means of a tick or a cross whether the outcome of the use of this skill was successful.

.....

.....

.....

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.....

What skills do you think an ''expert'' teacher should have?

.....

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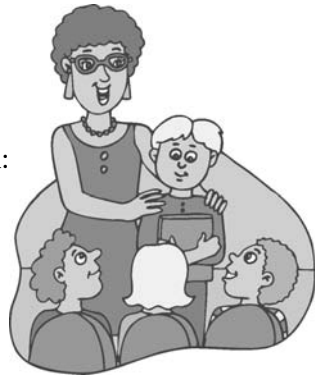
.....

We trust that this module on learners with special educational needs will have given you a better understanding of and more passion for learners in general so that you will be prepared to go the proverbial ''extra mile'' for the learners.

ENJOY your studies and do not hesitate to contact your lecturer if you have any problems or unanswered questions (telephone numbers are given in Tutorial Letter 101).

We trust that from now on you will be able to make a difference in learners' lives, or that if you are already doing so, you will be able to make even more of a difference!

Dr FH Weeks



The following experts on related fields were also consulted:

Prof L du Toit
Mev E Landsberg
Dr AJ Hugo
Dr D Kruger

SECTION A

LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING



STUDY UNIT 1

WHO ARE THESE LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING?

Read

Although we use the male form throughout this study guide, the term is inclusive in nature — that is, it includes the female form as well.

This module on Special Needs Education deals with learners in ordinary schools who may experience barriers to learning. Right from the outset of this module, it is therefore necessary that you should be clear about WHO these learners are who may experience barriers to learning.

In the course of your studies you will read and hear again and again that not only the system of education and the school, but also each teacher has a responsibility to accept these learners in their classes and to adapt their educational and learning-support strategies in such a way that these learners will make progress in their classes. (See section A: study unit 1 for further particulars on who these learners are.)

Who are the learners who experience barriers to learning? Before this question can be answered, the general reactions of people towards these learners should be noted. According to Gous & Mfazwe (1998:1), these are as follows:

- People in general find it difficult to establish relationships and to talk to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning.
- In some cultures perfection and beauty are seen as requirements for acceptability and in fact are so highly regarded that when someone is unable to meet these requirements the common reaction is to feel uncomfortable.
- People are afraid that they won't understand anyone who is different from themselves.
- Feelings of sympathy towards the learner who is experiencing barriers to learning make people feel helpless and incompetent.
- In some cultures people with handicaps are treated as if they are possessed by the devil or likely to pass on an infectious disease.

The fact that learners with barriers to learning are treated ''differently'' by other people is one of the main reasons why they come to see themselves as DIFFERENT. Gous and Mfazwe (1998:1) say that ''... learners with special needs would like to lessen the feelings of difference between themselves and their peers''. The following illustration is self-explanatory.

Ray Kitching is a young man with cerebral palsy. He wrote the following about himself (Gous & Mfazwe 1998:2):

> *My name is Ray Kitching. I was born with* cearbral palsy *(his spelling). When I was a baby I use to cry because nobody would understand me. I use to cry a lot about the fact that I was handy cap, I use to see my brother and cousins run around and I had to sit in a pram and watch them play their game I enjoyed watching them but it was not the same running with them on the grass. In 1974 I came to Vista Nova school. I drove my*

mother mad on the way there. She said you can cry till the crows [come home] but you still going to school. I got use the school after a couple of months.

In 1980 a very happy thing happened to me I got donated a motorised wheelchair by the Rotary Club. This wheelchair made a great help to my life it made me independent. I thank mrs S Lotz for this wonderful wheelchair.

In April 1985 Il got a Canon Communicator. It is like a portable typewritter which can help me communicate with people who don't know from a bar of soap. I can then type out and give it to them right away. I thank mrs BR Lewis for that Canon. It can fit on my wheelchair (his punctuation and spelling).



Outcomes

At the end of this study unit you should be able to demonstrate that you

- *understand the meaning of the concept of ''learners who experience barriers to learning''*
- *can indicate the ways in which these barriers manifest themselves*
- *can distinguish the groups into which these barriers can be divided*
- *can indicate the effects of barriers to learning for learners*

1.1 THE TERMS ''LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS'' AND ''LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING''



Write a brief exposition on what you think is meant by the term ''learners who experience barriers to learning''. How does this differ from the meaning of the previous term, namely ''learners with special educational needs''?

Study

The term ''learners with special educational needs'' (LSEN) is a fairly recent coinage. It was used for the first time in England where in 1978 it appeared in an important report on education, the Warnock Report on Special Educational Needs. Subsequently it was incorporated into educational legislation in England. Since then it has been used increasingly in other countries, including South Africa where, for example, it was used in the Report of the Working Committee: Children with Special Educational Needs (HSRC 1981), in the new White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa, 1995, and in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

At the end of 1996, however, the then Minister of Education appointed two commissions to inquire into the policy on and support to learners with special educational needs. These two commissions were the following: the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS). These two commissions amalgamated under the chairmanship of Professor Sandy Lazarus of the University of the Western Cape. Their report, entitled *Quality education for all: overcoming barriers to learning and development*, was published in November 1997. This report makes provision for far-reaching changes in the policy on and support

provided to these learners. The policy of ''inclusion'' or ''inclusive education'' was accepted; in terms of this policy all learners should be accepted into the main stream of education. We shall return to this name, but let us now first analyse the concept of ''learners with special educational needs'', in order to see what it means.

''Learners'' implies both ''learners'' and ''pupils''.

First, it refers to learners who have special educational needs — hence not just ''learners''. It acknowledges that learners do not necessarily still have to be learners and that young people and adults may also have ''special educational needs''. This development is very useful for the situation in our country where, for example, there are many learners who, for some reason or another, did not complete their schooling and now wish to resume their studies, or learners who are already in their twenties and who are still at school. When in this study unit we therefore refer to ''learners'', it also includes learners.

The phrase ''special educational needs'' implies that these learners have needs that are *different* from those of the average learner. That is why the needs are ''special''. These needs may take various forms. For example they may entail the need of

- a simplified (or more complex) curriculum because what the other learners are learning would be too difficult (or too easy)
- extra time to complete assignments
- a special seat in the class — perhaps nearer to the chalkboard to assist the learner to see more clearly what is written on the board
- additional help in a certain learning area (language, mathematics or another learning area) because the learner concerned is having difficulties there
- extra tuition because he has fallen behind with the work in all learning areas
- additional attention from the teacher because the learner concerned tends to disrupt the class routine with his unacceptable behaviour
- special encouragement because the learner concerned has no faith in his own ability to solve problems and quickly becomes discouraged, and so on

Thus, in summary, learners have special educational needs when teachers find it necessary to make special modifications to their teaching in order to assist that learner or a group of learners with similar difficulties.

As you have probably seen, the emphasis in this name was on the special educational needs of learners. In the report entitled ''Quality education for all: overcoming barriers to learning and development'' (from now on we shall refer to this report as the ''NCSNET/NCESS report'') the commissions give the following reasons why they prefer the name ''learners who experience barriers to learning'' to ''learners with special educational needs'':

- In teaching, the words ''special needs'' refer to the needs of an individual or the system that should be addressed. These special needs are however caused by barriers within the person himself, the curriculum, the learning centre (eg, the school) the system of education and the broader social context. In order to enable the learner to make optimal progress these barriers should be decreased, removed or prevented.
- The term ''learners with special educational needs (LSEN)'' has become a too broad, all-inclusive term that is used to categorise all those learners who for some reason or other do not ''fit'' into mainstream education, and also to describe the complex variety of needs that they may have.
- ''LSEN'' does not give an insight into what caused the learning process to fail or why such learners were excluded from the system.

- In order to promote equal opportunities for effective learning by all learners the focus should be on the diverse needs of the learner population. The system of education should be structured and function in such a way that it can accommodate a diversity of learner and system needs. If the system does not do so, the learner can be prevented from participating in the learning process or from maintaining an ideal learning process. Those factors that cause the system to be unable to accommodate diversity, which in turn causes the learning process to fail or to prevent learners from having access to education have been conceptualised by the NCSNET/NCESS as barriers to learning and development.
- First, the focus should be on the nature of these barriers, and on their causes and their manifestations, before we can begin tackling problems of interrupted education and exclusion from ordinary learning centres. It is then also possible to identify components of the system of education that should be present and be supported in order to ensure equal provision, promotion and support of quality education for learners with different needs in this country.

The emphasis is therefore now shifting from the ''needs'' of the learners to the ''barriers that learners may experience in learning'' and how to remove or decrease these barriers. This is a more positive approach, because in this case the focus is on what learners know and can do. These ''needs'' caused them to be treated ''differently'', such as by excluding them from the mainstream of education.



How could you apply your newly acquired knowledge?

Now think about the learners in your class (use an imaginary class if you are not a class teacher). Write down at least TWO cases of learners whom you regard as ''learners who experience barriers to learning''. Also give reasons why you think so. What, in your opinion, are the causes of these barriers?

1.2 MANIFESTATIONS OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Read

(Please refer to sect D for important additional information on the manifestation of barriers to learning.)

Learners' barriers to learning can manifest themselves in various ways: that is, there are external signs from which we can recognise these manifestations. These manifestations are important, since they enable teachers to identify these learners for whom the curriculum and teaching strategies should be adapted and these barriers should be removed or prevented, if possible. (In Module 2 we shall teach you how to identify learners who experience barriers to learning by means of these manifestations.)

Barriers can be present in the following:

- the learner himself (eg, when a physical and/or physiological impairment becomes a disability)
- the learning centre (eg, the school)
- the system of education
- the broader social, economic and political context (including the environment)

These barriers manifest themselves in various ways, for instance: inattention, frequent absences from school and underachievement, and often become clear only when

- the learning process fails
- learners drop out of the system
- learners are excluded from the ordinary system of education

Physical and physiological impairments in learners can be identified at an early stage and can be treated by implementing effective methods and processes. Barriers, on the other hand, can occur during the learning process if these learners do not get the necessary support. These barriers in learners can require various interventions or strategies in order to prevent interruptions in the learners' education or the learners being excluded from the system. This can be done by effective monitoring and treating the different needs found among the learner population and within the system as a whole.

The following are some examples and definitions of the above-mentioned manifestations:

1.2.1 DISABILITY AND IMPAIRMENT

Study

The meaning that is attached to the concept of ''disability'' is changing. The White Paper on An Integrated National Disability Strategy (as compiled by the Disability Desk in the office of the vice president, 1997) explains the concept of ''disability'' as follows: (Please refer to sect D for more particulars on the White Paper.)

— as a human rights and development issue
— as resulting from factors in the social environment
— in terms of a social model of disability and NOT a medical model

It is accepted that disability stems from barriers to learning that are caused by the community's attitude towards people with physical impairments (eg, sensory, intellectual, physical and neurological impairments) and/or physiological impairments (eg, chronic illnesses such as Aids, diabetes, cancer and tuberculosis).

A disabled person is therefore a person who has an impairment and who is hindered and prevented by society to fully participate at all levels of society. If we therefore speak about a disabled person we are referring to a person with a physical and/or physiological impairment who has not had enough education, or who has been hindered by society to develop to his full potential.

The official definition accepted by the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons in the Office of the Presidency is based on a sociopolitical perspective of disability and states that disability is localised in the environment (or is caused by the social environment):

— Disability is the social restrictions and constraints imposed on persons with impairments in their pursuit of full and equal participation.

A disability can be prevented or alleviated ''... by creating a barrier free environment through the reconstruction of society (social model) and NOT by trying to 'cure' or 'treat' (medical model) impairments''. A ''barrier free environment means one in which access to all facilities and services are equally available to all learners'' (South Africa 1997) — equal education for all.

The definition of ''disability discrimination'' that is used in the Draft Bill on the

Promotion of Equality has the same point of departure in mind and gives a good summary of the concept, namely:

Disability discrimination, means and includes —

(a) the systematic societal and individual discrimination against people with or perceived to have, disabilities that hinders or precludes their ability to conduct their activities, undermines their sense of human dignity and self-worth, and prevents their full integration into the greater society.
(b) the systematic and individual discrimination against people with, or perceived to have HIV/AIDS.
(c) the defining, perceiving of, or limiting of people with disabilities by their disability rather than examining societal and individual biases and stereotypes that continue to disadvantage and discriminate against people with disabilities.
(d) contravening the South African Bureau of Standard's Code of practice or Regulations that govern environmental accessibility.
(e) the imposition of a term that would result in a person with a visual, hearing or mobility impairment being separated from the person's guide dog.

This therefore means that a person with a physical and/or a physiological impairment is not necessarily disabled. An impaired person in a wheelchair is disabled only when he does not have access to a building.

We shall refer mostly to ''impairments'' when referring to persons with physical (pertaining to *body structure*) and/or physiological (pertaining to *body function*) impairments, that is, to persons who have permanent defects in their constitution. Keep the above-mentioned explanation in mind when reading the rest of the study guide.

A person is usually born with an impairment, or, because of some detrimental factor or other, such as an illness or an accident, there may be manifestations of physical and/or physiological impairments after birth. These impairments can have various causes and can take on various forms.

Sensory impairments. These occur when one of the senses is affected. A person has a visual or aural disability when his ability to see or hear is affected and the environment does not make provision for support.

Physical impairments. A person whose external physical appearance or functioning is affected has a physical impairment. For instance, an arm is missing or crippled, or a hand, leg or limbs cannot be used, with the result that movement requires the use of a wheel-chair or crutches. Further examples are a hunchback, club feet, and so on. However, the person is physically disabled only when he has no access to the environment.

Mental or intellectual impairments. This renders affected persons mentally less capable than the average so that they find it much more difficult to comprehend and to learn. They can, however, learn — therefore the emphasis in assessment is on what they know and can do.

Multiple impairments: Some persons have more than one impairment. They may, for example, have physical and intellectual impairments, or visual and hearing impairments.

There are numerous other forms of physical impairments such as epilepsy, autism and other forms of communication and behavioural disorders.

The phrase ''physiological impairments'' refers to an impairment in the functions of the body. These impairments comprise chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes milletus, Aids, tuberculosis, et cetera.

It is vital for learners with physical and/or physiological impairments to be identified as early as possible so that, from an early age, they may benefit from the best possible assistance, and so avoid developing a serious developmental backlog or delay — that is, do not become disabled on a social level.

Most learners who experience barriers to learning however have no physical and/or physiological impairments. They may experience any of the problems mentioned below.

1.2.2 DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS

Read

We speak of developmental problems when we refer to a learners whose development does not correspond more or less to that of other learners in a particular age group. Nowadays it is not difficult to establish whether a learners's development is falling behind. Developmental psychology provides clear guidelines in the form of developmental tables which enable us to know at which age a learners ought to have reached the ''developmental milestones''. The tables also give us the boundaries of the age groups within which the development may be seen as ''normal''. Of course, there are also different aspects of development such as motor, social, moral, emotional, cognitive (mental), language and so on.

Developmental problems could manifest as follows:

- a total delay (This means that the learners has been delayed in all or most of the developmental aspects mentioned above.)
- a delay in one or more aspects of development (For example, by the age of two, such a child cannot say even a few words.)

Developmental problems may mean that, by the age of six, a child is not yet ready to begin school. Learners may experience developmental backlogs because of intrinsic problems such as a physical and/or physiological impairment, but also can become disadvantaged because of problems in the social and environmental context (such as deprivation, mal- and undernourishment and too little stimulation).

1.2.3 LEARNING PROBLEMS

Study

Learners have learning problems when they find it difficult to master those learning tasks which most other learners in the class can manage.

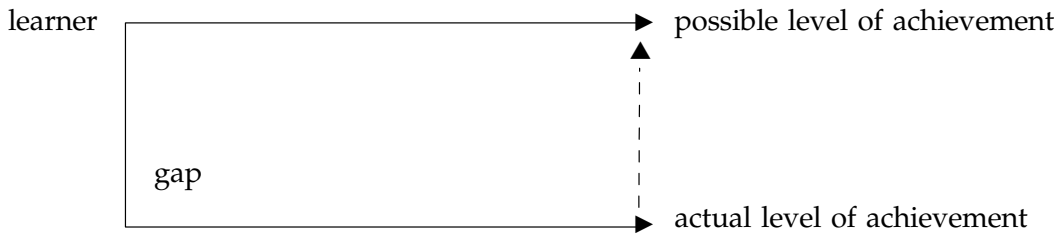
Learning problems are manifested in

- all learning areas
- only in certain learning areas, such as mathematical literacy
- only in a certain section of a learning programme, such as geometrical computations in mathematics

The following terms are used when referring to learners with learning problems:

Underachievement. Learning problems give rise to **underachievement**. This means that a learner does not do as well as one would expect of someone with his

intellectual ability. Thus there is a gap between the learner's achievement and what he or she is actually capable of. One could illustrate this as *follows*:



It goes without saying that, in cases like this, teachers should do everything in their power to assist underachievers to regain their real capability. Thus the teacher should attempt to bridge the gap that has arisen.

Any learner, even intellectually gifted learners may, for a variety of reasons, experience difficulties in one or more learning areas and may begin underachieving — and thus become socially disabled.



Consider the following cases. Do you see the learners as underachievers? Substantiate your answers.

A girl in grade 4 takes a long time to complete her tasks and particularly finds insight and reasoning tasks difficult. In most of her learning programmes she can achieve only certain outcomes, or the outcomes set to her are at a lower level than those of the rest of the class.

A boy in grade 10 is extremely sporty and is very popular among his friends.

He participates in various school activities and is a member of both cricket and rugby teams at the school. Although his marks for mathematics and science usually exceed 70 percent, for subjects requiring memorising, his marks are poor.

FEEDBACK

It is clear that the intelligent boy is underachieving, while the intellectually less able girl cannot be classified as an underachiever because she experiences learning problems in all the learning areas and the outcomes that are set to her are at a lower level than those of the rest of the class. She is therefore slow with regard to understanding of and insight into the educational material.

Poor achievers. Poor achievers are those who generally do not do well at school. Yet they are not necessarily underachievers. They are possibly trying their very best but, because they lack good mental abilities, they cannot be expected to show better results. In such cases the teacher should make sure that the curriculums, teaching strategies and aids are suitable for helping these learners to understand the work. Also, their instruction should be more contextual in nature (ie, learning to count money while the other learners are busy with additional written computations) and more vocationally directed so that at school they can already be prepared for vocations that they will be able to pursue one day.

Disadvantaged learners. This term is used to refer to those learners whose education has fallen behind as a result of social, economic or political circumstances. In many cases they begin school with a disadvantage and this disadvantage tends to increase with time because the school environment also is not always conducive to learning.

At-risk learners. It is used to refer to those learners who do not normally have a good chance of making a success of their school career. This group includes learners whose circumstances are not conducive to academic achievement, such as learners from poor environments; learners who speak languages that are different from the medium of tuition in the school; learners with some or other disability or having other complicating circumstances. Thus, disadvantaged learners can also be viewed as at-risk learners.

Pallas (1989:1) lists five factors which are considered to be indicators of risk in the USA: poverty; race and ethnicity (minority groups run an even greater risk); single-parent families; a low level of education on the part of the mother; and a poor language background.

These concepts should be used with great circumspection so that learners are not labelled unnecessarily. You should accept the diversity of the learners in your class and adapt your learning support to this diversity — equal education for all.

1.2.4 EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Read

If a teacher knows a learner well, he will be able to recognise the manifestations of a problematic emotional life. It is reflected in such things as nervousness, tension, anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies, et cetera.

Learners with emotional problems frequently develop learning problems as well as eventually behaviour problems. On the other hand, learning problems in their turn give rise to emotional problems.

1.2.5 BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

Study

Behavioural problems are those involving unacceptable conduct. This may have various causes. For instance, a learners may behave in an unacceptable manner simply because he is imitating his father or a friend. In many cases, however, it is the result of emotional problems. Other examples of behavioural problems include the following:

- The learner becomes aggressive; fights; is quarrelsome, a tease, rebellious; refuses to comply with requests; vandalises things and so on.
- The learner shows regression, is more dependent, childish and immature than he or she ought to be. For example, some young learners start wetting their pants again after having been potty trained.
- The learner becomes shy, uncommunicative and withdrawn. This may also take the form of day-dreaming, absent-mindedness, untidiness, listlessness and drowsiness, inattentiveness, passiveness and a lack of initiative, poor motivation and a tendency to leave tasks unfinished. Such learners may also become depressed, lonely and pessimistic. They often have a poor self-image and are subject to feelings of guilt.

The barriers to learning of learners who engage in the types of behaviours described

above may be of a mere temporary nature. Parents and teachers should however see these manifestations in a serious light if

- they are serious and have occurred for a considerable period
- the symptoms seem to be worsening
- they are accompanied by signs of social aggression
- the learner's school work begins to deteriorate

Sometimes the work of learners with behavioural problems is perfectly acceptable — despite their poor behaviour in the classroom. However, in many cases this is not true: then learners with behavioural problems become learners with learning problems.

On the other hand it may happen — as stated in section 1.2.4 above — that learning problems lead to emotional and behavioural problems. When learners battle to learn and their teachers scold them, they lose face (look foolish) in the eyes of their classmates (peer group). This is when many of them overcompensate by drawing attention in other ways such as by behaving in an unacceptable way.



- *Is it a simple matter to separate the manifestations of barriers to learning from one another and decide where each learning problem originated? Substantiate your answer.*
- *Why, do you think, is it wrong to label learners who do not do well as ''lazy'' or ''stupid''?*

1.3 THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Read

In the course of the discussion above we repeatedly referred to the fact that one form of manifestation can give rise to another. In practice it often happens that learners do not have single or simple barriers to learning but that these are combined. Someone with a physical and/or physiological impairment runs a far greater risk of developing developmental, learning and emotional problems than an abled body. A learners with emotional problems has a greater tendency to have learning and behavioural problems than a learners without emotional problems, and so on. We should also remember that the system of education, the school and the environment in which the learners grows up can, to some learners, become barriers to learning. Therefore, a school in which there is little discipline and in which learners and teachers are allowed to come and go as they like can become a breeding-ground for learners with behavioural and learning problems. In study unit 2 we shall further discuss the possible causes of barriers to learning and development.

1.4 PHASES IN WHICH BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT COME TO THE FORE

Read

You should also note that the causes of barriers we discussed above do not emerge with equal prominence in the different stages of learners' lives. For this reason we

shall be concentrating on specific problems more than others in certain age groups or stages.

When we rate babies, we look to see whether they are normal in every way. Even at this early stage it is possible to note pronounced physical or sensory impairments. Developmental problems also emerge at this stage. Generally speaking parents can determine whether their learners sit, walk and so on at the usual age.

Parents should see to it that they do not cause their learners's developmental delays/backlogs by not, for example, stimulating their learners to crawl, walk or learn to talk, and thus become a barrier to their child's learning.

The problems preschool learners manifest are mainly developmental ones. One soon notices the fact that a three-year-old is not measuring up to the expected level of language and motor development for that age group. Emotional problems too, are discernible here, such as a stammer, bed-wetting or reluctance to be separated from the mother.

We can see whether a child who is beginning school is ready for school. We take note of whether individual learners are paying attention; whether they recognise various shapes and colours; whether their language ability is good; and whether they are prepared to be separated from their parents for a certain length of time each day.

The phases in which learning problems first begin to come to the fore are the fundamental and intermediary phases. In these phases we are on the lookout for the extent to which learners are succeeding in mastering basic academic skills such as reading and mathematics. Learners in these phases often experience emotional problems. Sometimes it is also here that behavioural problems already begin coming to the fore — particularly in the intermediary and senior phases.

The senior phase and the phases in the Further-Education Band already clearly indicate if a learner is motivated, if he uses sound study methods and if his learning is going well. It is much easier for behavioural problems to come to the fore in these stages than in younger learners.

Of course it is incorrect to say that problems occur ONLY in the stages mentioned above. Often the causes of learners' failure in learning is discovered only much later, particularly if the parents and teachers in the learners's past had no insight and if the environment is not conducive to learning in general — and thus creates barriers to the learner's learning. In such a case, a large group of learners experience delays/ backlogs in learning so that the teachers often do not have a norm against which to ''measure'' these learners.

1.5 CLASSIFICATION OF LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Study

The term ''learners who experience barriers to learning'' is an all-inclusive concept. As indicated above, this term refers to a group of learners who may be experiencing a diversity of problems to learning and who consequently cannot realise their optimal potential. Their experiences and their environment constitute the barriers to learning.



Suppose you have three learners in your class who cannot read. Do you think that the cause of the problem in all three of them is the same, or would the learners' poor reading ability be caused by different factors? If not, would you like to know more about how the possible causes may differ?

1.5.1 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CLASSIFICATION

Previously, learners with physical and/or physiological impairments were classified into different classes, such as the blind and partially sighted, the deaf and the hard of hearing, the spastic, et cetera.

In recent years there has been a growing resistance to any form of classifying people. The notion behind this is that when we classify a person as belonging to a particular group or class such as the mentally or physically disabled, underachievers, learners with behavioural problems, or whatever, it can make them feel labelled, stigmatised and humiliated. Besides this, the current thinking is that, in any case, classification creates the mistaken impression that persons belonging to one ''class'' form a homogeneous group. But it does not follow that all learners who are classified as ''partially sighted'' or as ''learners with reading problems'' would have more or less the same characteristics. Such an assumption is obviously quite unfounded because, although these learners belong to the same category, there are great differences between them. Even their problems could be entirely different.

An additional assertion is that classification implies a value judgement. In other words, when we classify one group of learners, we tend to view them as (or they feel) worth either more or less than another. People would allegedly prefer to be classified as ''gifted'' rather than ''mentally disabled''.

However, the classification of learners who experience barriers to learning has important advantages. Some of these advantages are the following:

- Education authorities are able to make sure that they actually do meet the needs of a specific group of learners if they know whom they are dealing with and how teaching strategies can be adapted and what aids should be provided to teach these learners effectively.
- It makes it easier for persons from different subject fields such as education, psychology or medicine to exchange information about specific groups of learners, if they know precisely with whom they are dealing.
- It enables researchers to conduct studies of specific groups of learners with similar problems and to produce more accurate research results.

In spite of the criticism of classification, in this course we are nevertheless going to distinguish certain classes of learners who experience barriers to learning, and particularly physical and/or physiological impairments. This will enable us to give you more precise guidelines at a later stage in this advanced certificate, on how to identify and assist these learners. However, this does not mean that these classes of learners are homogeneous groups or that one group might possibly be superior or inferior to another.

1.5.2 CRITERIA FOR DIVISION INTO GROUPS

Learners who experience barriers to learning can be divided into groups according to the following criteria:

In accordance with the manifestations or external symptoms of the impairments or problems. These manifestations can be seen from the outside. A teacher can therefore recognise learners who experience barriers to learning on the grounds of these manifestations. We made such a division in section 1.2, when we referred to physical and/or physiological impairments, developmental, learning, emotional and behavioural problems. One can also elaborate and refer to language problems, perceptual problems, motor problems, et cetera.

In accordance with the causes of the barriers to learning. The following three groups can be distinguished:

- *Learners who experience barriers to learning because of intrinsic factors* — that is, factors inherent in themselves. In most cases, these learners were born with the problems or acquired them later. The factors have nothing to do with their education or their environment. These are the learners with physical and/or physiological impairments. These impairments are generally rather obvious — for example blindness or a physical impairment. However, do remember that not all impairments are equally easy to see. Particularly the less severe forms of impairment, such as being hard of hearing or a slight measure of partial eyesight, are not quite so obvious and will not necessarily be noticed by the ordinary parent or teacher. However, these less severe impairments can have a detrimental effect on learners' progress at school and can thus cause a disability if they do not receive the correct support in time.

  There are different forms of impairments and in Module 3 of this advanced certificate you will study these impairments in detail so that you can know how to recognise these learners in the classroom and in the school environment, and how to assist them. (In Module 3 we still refer to ''disabilities''.)

  At this stage, you should also note that these physical and/or physiological impairments can occur in different measures. A hearing impairment, for instance, can vary from total deafness to a slight hearing loss. The same also goes for the other forms of impairment. As mentioned, these learners can become disabled when they do not get the necessary support from their parents, the school, the system of education and the community.

- *Learners who experience barriers to learning because of extrinsic factors* — the vast majority of learners at school who experience barriers to learning do not have any physical and/or bodily impairments, but experience barriers because of other factors that adversely affect their ability to learn, such as the environment in which they are growing up or the school that does not encourage a learning culture.
- *Learners who experience barriers to learning because of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.* In many cases, learners experience barriers to learning because there are intrinsic and extrinsic factors that work together. This means that a learner can have a physical and/or physiological impairment, such as an intellectual impairment, but that he may also because of environmental factors, such as malnutrition and poor stimulation, experience further learning delays/backlogs and thus become disabled.

This group is often called the ''grey'' group because it can be difficult to determine the extent to which intrinsic or extrinsic factors are responsible for the problems.

Read

1.6 DEGREES OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING

The barriers to learning that learners may experience may vary from extremely serious and long-term barriers to slight and less serious forms — that is, there are various degrees. We can also say that learners who experience barriers to learning are on a continuum with at the one extreme learners with serious and multiple physical and/or physiological impairments such as learners who are blind and deaf or who have serious physical and mental impairments, and at the other extreme those learners who have temporarily fallen behind because of barriers that can be removed quickly. Although it has become a worldwide practice to include learners with serious physical and/or physiological impairments in ordinary education it appears as though in South Africa learners with serious physical and/or physiological impairments will continue to receive their education in special schools. In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, however, parents themselves can decide to which school they wish to send their learners. We shall return to this matter in a later study unit. All schools should however make provision for accepting and accommodating a diversity of learners — this has been done through the principles set out in the new curriculum.

Read

1.7 EXTENT OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING

It is not easy to ascertain how many learners experience barriers to learning during their years at school. Various countries deploy various figures or statistics to determine this. Still, it is important for the planners of education to know how many learners experience barriers to learning so that they can make provision for these learners and so that mainstream education can be adapted for most of these learners.

In England, the concept of ''learners with special educational needs'' (as these learners are known in that country) has a broad meaning and all underachievers are also included in this concept. It is estimated that these learners make up 18 to 20 percent of the learner population (Department of Education 1998).

In South Africa, the number of learners who experience barriers to learning is estimated to be exceptionally high because of the social, economic and political history of this country. The NEPI report (NECC 1992) accepted that the number may be between 40 and 50 percent of the total school-going population. Also, the extent of learners who experience barriers to learning varies from region to region and from school to school. In environments with a low socioeconomic level there are always more learners who experience barriers to learning than in regions with a high standard of living. (We shall discuss the reasons for this in study unit 2.) The incidence in one region can therefore not be applied to another region in which learners are growing up in other circumstances.

In the *National integrated disability strategy* (South Africa 1999:5) it is estimated that about 70 percent of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments do not attend school. According to the 1995/1996 figures only 0,34 percent of these learners were in special schools. Only a small percentage of these learners are in ordinary schools (South Africa 1997:24). It can therefore be assumed that a large number of

learners with physical and/or physiological impairments do not have access to education. It is also financially impossible for the government to provide specialised education in separate schools for all learners who experience barriers to learning (Naicker 1997:66).

This high incidence of learners who experience barriers to learning has incisive implications for the education policy in South Africa. An incidence of 20 percent can already mean that one fifth of the learners in a class — that is, eight learners in a class of 40, should receive special aid. One could even assume that, in time, in some neglected regions all learners in the class fell behind, particularly because of poor education.

You should therefore understand that we have no other choice than to accept as great a diversity of learners as possible in mainstream education. We trust that this advanced certificate will empower you, with the aid of the education districts, to teach all learners.

Read

1.8 CONSEQUENCES OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING

If learners who experience barriers to learning are not helped timeously and in an appropriate way it can lead to serious consequences for the learners themselves and for the country.

Learners who continually feel that they are not getting anywhere at school, lose their motivation, begin to play truant for every possible reason and associate with peer groups who also do not have much interest in school work. This often leads them into involvement in dubious activities such as crime. The obvious result is a vicious cycle: the less interest they have in schoolwork, the lower their marks fall, and the more negative their teachers become towards them.

Most learners in this situation eventually fail one or more years and consequently do not complete their schooling. This has dramatic consequences for the learners and the country. Learners who do not complete their schooling are often illiterate and more frequently unemployed than those with a good school education. When they do find work, it is of the type that offers few prospects for the future (''dead-end jobs'') and a generally low salary.

Unfortunately, the situation in virtually every country indicates that these persons run the great risk of becoming part of a growing social group who cannot make a positive contribution to the social and economic prosperity of their country and their community, and eventually become dependent on the health and welfare services which the state is obliged to provide for the poor.

Read

1.9 SUMMARY

Now let us summarise the *KNOWLEDGE* you have acquired in this study unit:

- The term ''learners who experience barriers to learning'' refers to a group of learners whose barriers hinder or prevent them from utilising their education in an optimal way.
- We explained the new meaning that is now attached to the concept of ''disability''.
- ''Barriers to learning'' manifest themselves as physical and/or physiological

impairments, developmental problems, learning problems, emotional problems or behavioural problems. Often these problems occur at the same time.
- The causes of barriers to learning and development include intrinsic (such as physical and/or physiological impairments) as well as extrinsic causes (such as inadequate environmental influences, poor education and a system of education that does not provide for a diversity of learners).

How could this newly acquired *KNOWLEDGE* influence your *COMPETENCIES* and *ATTITUDES*?

As you will have realised from figure 1, the knowledge you have acquired has largely influenced the change that has taken place in your *attitude* towards learners who experience barriers to learning. You now have a better understanding of who the learners are who experience barriers to learning, of the meaning you should attach to ''disability'', and of how barriers to learning manifest. You also have a knowledge of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. You therefore understand these learners better and have a changed attitude towards learning. You will also be more *skilled* in handling these learners since the way you handle them will be based on skills which are tailor-made for specific learners.

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STUDY UNIT 2

CAUSES OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING

In study unit 1 we considered various manifestations of barriers to learning and incidentally noted the different causes. In this study unit we shall be considering the causes in greater detail.

NB: Important knowledge!

You should make certain that you have a knowledge of the causative factors of barriers to learning. It is essential to point out that, although we shall be distinguishing different groups of causes, this does not mean that, in practice, they can be separated in this way. In most cases a considerable number of factors jointly give rise to barriers in learners.

It is important that you study the relevant parts of section D in conjunction with this general discussion of causative factors.



Outcomes

At the end of this study unit you should be able to demonstrate your knowledge of and insight into the following:

- *how a knowledge of what causes barriers to learning is of benefit to the teacher*
- *what causes possibly arise because of impairments located within the learner himself*
- *what causes are related to the learner's environment*
- *what causes are related to the learner's upbringing*
- *what causes are related to the learner's education*

2.1 WHY A KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT CAUSES BARRIERS TO LEARNING IS IMPORTANT



Cast Study?

In your class you have a boy called Andrew. He does not pay attention, is clearly bored and distracts the other learners from their work. You have been giving him extra work so that he does not worry the other learners. When the parents

complained about the extra work, you explained to them that you suspect that he may be gifted because he enjoys the more challenging work and always finishes the work before the other learners. You make sure that his parents understand that the extra work assigned to him will not be ''punishment''.

Study

Having read the case study above, answer the following questions:

- Suppose you had previously been aware of the fact that Andrew was gifted. Would your course of action have been different?
- Would the problems have arisen had your course of action been different?

It is vital to know the causes of a learner's problems — for the following two reasons:

- When we know what causes barriers to learning, we are in a position to take preventative action. It makes so much more sense to have prior knowledge of the situations that cause problems, because this enables us to prevent these problems instead of waiting until they arise before attempting to solve them. This applies not only to education departments in general but also to teachers and parents.
- The cause of a learner's problem gives an indication of how to help the learner. For example, a learner with an attention deficit caused by brain damage at or before birth needs to be treated quite differently from a learner who is not paying attention because she is highly intelligent and therefore bored with the work in class.

The causes of the occurrence of barriers to learning of learners may be divided into two broad groups, namely:

- those located within the learner (impairments or intrinsic factors) (these impairments do not necessarily need to become disabilities and barriers — see study unit 1)
- those emanating from outside the learner (extrinsic factors) (see study unit 1)

The NCSNET/NCESS report (South Africa 1997) identified the following factors as causing barriers to learning:

(1) *Socioeconomic barriers.* This includes the lack of access to basic services (medical services, housing), poverty, underdevelopment and other factors exposing learners to dangers such as child abuse, war and political violence.

(2) *Discriminating attitudes.* Labelling has a very negative effect on the self-image of learners. Labelling occurs when these learners are placed in special schools or when they are excluded from mainstream education — that is, it occurs when learners are categorised**.** Very often people who label learners cannot determine what is needed for the system to satisfy the needs of the learners: for instance, a learner is classified as intellectually disabled and therefore also as uneducable after one formal assessment session, without considering his real abilities. Inadequate knowledge of diseases such as Aids can lead to negative assumptions regarding this disease, so that a HIV-positive learner may be denied access to learning centres.

(3) *Inflexible curriculum.* An inflexible curriculum that does not provide in the diverse needs of all the learners in the class can cause learning to fail; inadequately trained teachers can use teaching styles that handicap the initiative and involvement of the learners; and what is taught by the curriculum is not applicable to the situation in which the learners find themselves, et cetera.

(4) *Language and communication.* For many learners, teaching and learning take place in their second or third language. This inhibits communication in class.
(5) *Inaccessible and unsafe environment*. Inaccessible and unsafe buildings in many instances prevent learners with physical disabilities from having access to the learning centres, for instance if there are no ramps for wheelchairs, or if furniture is put in aisles it hampers the movement of blind learners.
(6) *Inapplicable and inadequate provision of support services*. The labelling and categorisation of learners have caused educational services to be focused on the incompetences of learners rather than on the barriers within the system, such as poor and stereotyped teaching methods. The nature of the intervention caused the learners to be placed in a special school rather than to confront the problems of that specific learning environment. In the rural areas there are almost no support services.
(7) *A lack of empowering and protective policy*. This can promote the existence of barriers to learning and development directly or indirectly. Legislation on age restriction (which prevents learners from enrolling at schools or from staying in the education system as long as possible) can for instance be barriers to learning.
(8) *A lack of parental recognition and involvement.* A lack of recognition of parents as primary educators and continued negative attitudes as far as parental involvement is concerned can also contribute to barriers to learning and development.
(9) *Disability*. Disability and chronic illnesses can cause barriers to learning and development if the environment and the community do not adapt in order to provide for the needs of these learners. If, however, learners with impairments make use of supportive or assistive devices the barriers hampering their learning and development can largely be removed. If, for instance, the learning centre is accessible to wheelchairs, learners in wheelchairs are not hampered in their access to the school building. If blind learners have access to reading and writing media (Braille and adapted computers) and mobility training they are also not hampered in their learning. Intellectual impairments, severe autism or multiple impairments, however, can prevent learners from ongoing involvement in programmes in the ordinary learning centre that are aimed at facilitating learning and development.
(10) *A lack of human-resources development*. A lack of strategies for developing human resources and a lack of ongoing in-service training of teachers can lead to a low self-image, insecurity and a lack of innovative practices in the classroom. This, in turn, can lead to barriers to learning and development.

As you have seen, nine of the above-mentioned 10 factors refer to extrinsic barriers to learning. Only one factor refers to disability as a barrier to learners with physical and/or physiological impairments. In the next section, however, we shall refer in more detail to impairments since it would appear as though most learners with physical and/or physiological impairments in South Africa do not receive school education (see study unit 1). These learners then become disabled, because they are excluded from the school system.

Read

2.2 DISABILITY

As mentioned in study unit 1, we refer to ''disability'' when the physical and/or physiological impairments intrinsic to learners is becoming a disability to them since

the social environment excludes them and/or do not give them the necessary support.

Intrinsic factors are factors located within individual learners themselves. These learners are usually born with specific characteristics such as blindness or a missing arm. The learners' condition can be aggravated by a poor environment, ineffective education and inapplicable education so that they may become disabled.

The most prominent intrinsic factors are physical and/or physiological impairments and personality characteristics.

2.2.1 IMPAIRMENTS

An impairment is a permanent physical or mental deficit that the person concerned has to accept. The deficit could seriously complicate the person's development and learning and thus become a disability. In English we distinguish between the terms ''disability'' and ''impairment''. ''Impairment'' refers to the person's specific deficit. If, however, this impairment and the society in which he lives really hampers the person in such a way that he cannot achieve in life what he wishes to achieve, it becomes a disability to him. People with serious impairments usually find that in many respects they are also disabled. However, there are also other people with impairments who have learnt to live with their impairment to such an extent that despite their impairment they lead meaningful and happy lives and cannot be regarded as disabled persons. Society has adapted to persons with that particular impairment to such an extent that they experience no difficulties in leading a ''normal'' life. Examples here are persons in wheelchairs who have access to all places they wish to go to, or deaf learners who can communicate by means of sign language and an interpreter.



Read the following case study and answer the questions that follow: *A girl with an intellectual impairment is not making progress at school. She is finding it infinitely difficult to learn to read and write. Her years of schooling completed, she finds a job as an assistant at a nursery school. She is very happy there. She adores the little learners and is very committed to her work. There is no need for her to read or write.*

- *Do you agree that her impairment was a disability to her at school but that this is no longer the case?*
- *Explain why you think that an impairment can, in certain instances, be a disability.*
- *What would this girl's experience of school life have been if her particular barriers had been taken into account?*

The word ''syndrome'' refers to a group of symptoms associated with a specific condition.

There are a great many factors that can cause physical and/or physiological impairments in people. In the literature on this topic literally thousands of syndromes are discussed. Many of these syndromes will be discussed in more detail in Module 3. In this study unit we shall merely outline a few general causes of physical and/or physiological impairments.

GENETIC FACTORS

genetic = hereditary

Genetic factors are hereditary factors. We inherit our genetic composition in the form of chromosomes and genes in the cells of our bodies. At conception we receive an equal number of chromosomes and genes from each parent. Just as the colour of one's eyes, and one's physical build are determined by hereditary factors, so one can inherit one's physical and/or physiological impairments from one's parents or grandparents. Examples of this are poor eyesight, a low level of intelligence or club feet.

Sometimes it is not that we inherit an abnormal genetic composition from our parents but that, at a very early stage of development in the uterus, something goes wrong with the chromosomal or genetic composition of the unborn baby. In such cases we speak of ''chromosomal'' or ''genetic'' deviations. Syndromes such as Down's syndrome or Turner's syndrome could result.

(Learners with these syndromes usually have an intellectual impairment.)

PRENATAL, PERINATAL AND POSTNATAL BRAIN DAMAGE

prenatal = before birth, perinatal = during birth, postnatal = after birth

Many physical and/or physiological impairments arise in learners as a result of brain damage incurred before, during or after birth — prenatal, perinatal and postnatal damage respectively.

A child may suffer brain damage before birth, caused by such factors as excessive radiation, a harmful infection of the mother (German measles, syphilis), a defective placenta, an incompatibility of blood groups (the Rh factor) and so on. During birth babies can suffer brain damage if there are complications with the birth. After birth there could be brain damage caused by accidents, diseases accompanied by high temperatures (encephalitis, meningitis) or diseases such as polio which result in permanent paralysis of one or more of the muscles.

The following forms of physical impairment are directly related to brain damage:

- epilepsy
- cerebral palsy
- learning impairments such as dyslexia (difficulty with reading) or dyscalculia (difficulty with arithmetic)
- certain forms of intellectual impairment
- certain forms of hearing impairment
- certain forms of visual impairment

Learners with physical and/or physiological impairments have special educational needs because they often need other and more specialised educational methods and teaching aids. (For example, blind learners require Braille machines.) In the past, learners with physical impairments were usually taught in special schools. The new education legislation, however, makes provision for them being included in the mainstream of education.



PLEASE NOTE

In Module 3 there is a detailed discussion of the causes of physical and/or physiological impairments as well as the identification and education of these learners.

2.2.2 PERSONALITY PROBLEMS

Some learners have specific personality characteristics that have a negative impact on their achievement at school and give rise to barriers to their learning. These personality traits may be inherited partly from parents but could also be shaped by education and environment. The following are examples:

(1) Some learners are exceptionally shy and cannot assert themselves. They lack the confidence to ask questions about things in their school work that they do not understand, or to query statements made by a teacher.
(2) Rebellious and/or attention-seeking learners do not accept the authority of teachers. The fact that they do not learn self-discipline evokes the displeasure of both teachers and parents. They may even find that the teacher ignores them or regularly punishes them and that their achievements and motivation for school work are adversely affected.
(3) Learners with a poor self-image frequently do not have the inner strength and perseverance to do well. The slightest negative experience puts an even greater damper on their motivation to achieve.



It is important that you should take careful note of Pringle's model on unsatisfied emotional needs — see section D: ''Additional information supplement''.



One of the learners in your class is rebellious and noisy. Give a brief account of how his personality can give rise to the incomplete realisation of his potential.

2.3 EXTRINSIC CAUSES OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Read

In the case of extrinsic factors the barriers are not within the learners themselves. They are perfectly normal at birth but circumstances beyond or outside the learners — that is, their environment, home, upbringing or teaching — are so inadequate that they adversely affect their development and learning and ultimately cause barriers to their learning.

In order to systematise them, we distinguish between different extrinsic factors. Once again we point out that these factors seldom occur singly or in isolation. These causes of barriers to learning correspond to nine of the ten causes mentioned in the

NCSNET/NCESS report (read again sect 2.1). Keep them in mind when reading what follows.

2.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Unfavourable socioeconomic circumstances

There is a strong link between learners' achievements at school and the socioeconomic status of the community from which they come (UNICEF 1993a:56). The more disadvantaged the socioeconomic status of the community concerned, the greater are the chances that, owing to the negative environmental influences, the learners of that community will develop barriers to learning. (See the section on the incidence of barriers to learning in study unit 1.)

The socioeconomic status of most inhabitants of South Africans is low. A large proportion of people are without houses, living in informal settlements such as squatter camps or temporary shelters that are unhygienic, dangerous and far from their places of work. Generally speaking, the basic needs of families such as clean water, healthy nutrition, medical care, clothing and furniture are not met. The people living in these communities are vulnerable and become an easy target for criminals and exploiters (CREID [sa]:25). Unemployment, poverty and crime reign supreme.

There are additional factors associated with this way of life that are not conducive to good academic achievement on the part of the learners. The following are examples of conditions that are rife:

- poor medical services (Consequently colds, ear and eye infections, sores, tooth infections and other health problems are not treated adequately.)
- cramped, overcrowded, noisy homes (There is not enough quiet space in which learners can study.)
- poor lighting (This is especially true in the winter months and it complicates studying even more.)
- limited time for study (The reason for this is that learners are often expected to work in the afternoons and at weekends in order to supplement the family income.)
- a lack of cognitive stimulation (Usually there is little or no reading matter such as books, newspapers and magazines in the home, no electricity for TV and generally not even a radio.)
- language use (This is poor — limited in vocabulary — and essentially concrete. In urban areas where people from different language groups are interspersed, languages are often mixed. This use of language fails to equip learners adequately for the academic skills they need to master at school.)
- a shortage of role models (There are virtually no individuals who have already attained academic success.)
- a general attitude of resignation about life (which is not conducive to progress — especially at school) rather than an active resolution to improve the situation
- irregular and poor school attendance which is reinforced by the fact that most parents themselves had no schooling, do not really grasp the value of education and therefore do not encourage their learners to attend school regularly (Since the parents are very seldom at home, they do not see to it that their learners attend school and do their homework. This indifference to education frequently gives rise to lack of motivation on the part of the learners.)
- a general relaxation of morals (The consequences of this are forms of social

malpractice such as theft, violence, indolence, sexual molestation, drug abuse, teenage pregnancies and fatherless learners.)

These destructive social circumstances frequently initiate a chain reaction. There are few schools in these areas and, when there is education, it is not of a very high standard. (It is a concomitant but unfortunate fact that good teachers are usually found in favourable environments.) According to Waxman (1992:2), learners in these environments easily become ''socially isolated'' because they are deprived of contact with other learners from stable communities.

optimal = highest

It is clear from the preceding that these environments do not encourage learners to achieve their optimal potential. The number of unmotivated and underachieving learners from the lower socioeconomic sections of populations is rapidly increasing worldwide. According to Reglin (1993:5) these learners would do better at school if their parents and family members could be encouraged to care for their learners, take an interest in their achievements at school and attend the school's academic and social activities. Teachers should also be encouraged to take account of the circumstances of these learners in their teaching.

(Please note that some of these are also factors that are common to education, hence confirming what we have said above, namely that the factors are not really separate from one another and may be viewed as overlapping in many areas.)



Think about the following questions before proceeding, and then answer them briefly:

- *Which other factors, not mentioned here, also contribute to the emergence of barriers to learning among learners from these communities?*
- *Which learners in your class come from home (domestic) circumstances that are similar to the ones described above?*

Urban areas

In cities learners often grow up in apartment buildings. Usually both parents — or the single parent — work. Young learners walk around with keys around their necks because they themselves are responsible for locking and unlocking their flats. These learners are often called ''key learners''. In the afternoons, these learners are usually confined to the flats or apartments and do not have the opportunity to play outside freely and in safety. The older learners usually roam about the shopping centres where they come into contact with characters such as idlers, thieves and drug peddlers. There is very little supervision and control over their schooling and homework.

Although the economic conditions of these learners are better than those of the former group, stimulation to scholastic achievement from these environments may be as slim as in cases where the economic conditions are bad.



Read the following questions and answer them briefly.

- *What advice would you give to parents whose learners are unsupervised during the afternoon?*
- *What advice could you give the learners themselves so that they can plan their leisure time more usefully?*

Rural environments

Learners in rural areas have a different set of problems. According to UNESCO (Hundeide 1991:24–25) illiteracy is generally much higher in rural areas than in cities. This would appear to apply equally to South Africa (UNICEF 1993b:26). Parents who themselves are illiterate, do not always see the value of education for their learners. In fact, they expect them to leave school at an early stage so that they can augment the family's income. As a consequence of the duties their parents impose on them, such as herding cattle, tilling the fields and carrying water, these learners attend school very irregularly. In earlier times particularly, young learners were obliged to work as farm labourers (UNICEF 1993b:26). The outcome of this was that, during planting or harvesting, they were unable to attend school for weeks at a time. Girls were frequently kept from school in order to care for younger learners in the family, while the mother sought work outside the home. The lack of books, magazines, television and radio adds to the limitation of their life-world(s). Moreover, learners of farm labourers often grow up believing that they too will become farm labourers. The result is that most of them are never motivated to attend school or pursue academic achievement.



Consider and answer the following questions on paper.

- *How can a farm labourer motivate his learners to pursue scholastic achievement?*
- *Do you know of learners of farm labourers who have excelled despite their environment and who could become role models for other learners from similar circumstances?*

Prosperous areas

Environments need not be disadvantaged to have a negative effect on learners' progress at school. In prosperous areas, too, there are factors which can give rise to barriers to learning in learners. The very fact that learners grow up without hardship, that their needs are provided for and that they have plenty of pocket money, causes them to become bored and then seek excitement and adventure in the form of unlawful practices such as the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Of necessity these young people will show a deterioration in school achievement.

At prestige schools the learners themselves, their parents and the different schools in that category, often engage in an unhealthy form of competition. Teachers and parents place unnecessary pressure on the learners to achieve. As a consequence, they become negative and rebellious. There has also been an increase in the incidence of tension-related conditions such as depression, dietary disorders and teenage suicide in these communities.

2.3.2 FACTORS IN UPBRINGING

We know that a good upbringing implies — amongst other things — a good relationship between parents and learners, characterised by mutual love and trust, and featuring the creation of a space in which the learners feel happy and safe. Besides the fact that parents and learners should understand one another, there should be a balanced relationship of authority in which parents exercise authority over their learners in a sympathetic way and in which learners are taught to submit

to authority and discipline and themselves appropriate the acceptable norms and values.

Mistakes in upbringing

Because we are all human, we make mistakes with the upbringing of our learners. Fortunately, not every mistake in our upbringing has serious consequences. In some cases, however, there are so many problems with the upbringing that they can cause learners to have serious emotional, behavioural and learning problems.

The following are examples:

- There are parents who pressurise their learners to achieve, or who have unrealistically high expectations of their learners. This can make the learners feel despondent and they may refuse to yield to parental pressure, unconsciously becoming hostile towards their parents and negative towards school (Tlale 1991:16).
- Overprotective parents begrudge their learners the freedom they need in order to become independent (Schiefelbush 1982:7). They tend to make decisions for the learners, or do not allow them to make their own decisions. This means that overprotected learners do not learn to take responsibility for their lives and their schoolwork.
- Then again, some parents show very little interest in the activities of their learners. They are not really concerned about the learners's education and do not encourage them to do well either academically or at sport. Nor do the parents attend school functions. This lack of interest filters through to the learners, affecting their attitude to school.
- Homes where there is poor discipline, often have very little routine: the learners are allowed to do what they like (Tlale 1991:17). This leads to a disordered household which is reflected in disorganisation in the learners's school work. The parents fail to set the learners an example which maintains structure and routine and, as result, the learners do not learn to be independent and disciplined about their studying. Rimm (1988:38) maintains that disorganised homes constitute one of the main causes of learning problems in learners.
- On the other hand, there are cases where the discipline is too strict. One or both of the parents may have a dominant personality, showing too little love and affection towards the learners and the discipline they mete out is too restrictive and strict (Tlale 1991:17). According to DeBaryshe et al (1993:795) these parents tend ''(a) to direct more frequent negative behaviors toward their learners, (b) to be less likely to ignore minor aversive events, (c) to respond to negative learners behavior in kind, and (d) to engage in longer conflictual exchanges that end with expressions of anger and use of physical punishment''.

  An upbringing that is too strict or rigid can produce learners who are inhibited, sly (furtive), rebellious or aggressive. DeBaryshe et al (1993:795,801) maintain that, in some cases, the antisocial behaviour of learners can be directly ascribed to authoritarian and prescriptive parents. He believes that ''coercive parent-learners relations'' produce these problems ''early in life'' and that they, in turn, influence the scholastic achievements of learners.
- When parents are inconsistent in their style of upbringing, their learners may begin to feel uncertain and confused which could, in turn, be manifested as barriers to learning. For example, parents who punish an offence excessively one day and totally ignore it the next, are acting inconsistently.
- Parents do not always teach their learners to espouse (choose) good values and norms. Some parents even set a bad example of unacceptable behaviour by being

dishonest, irresponsible and too easy-going. They also tend to make unrealistic or unjustified demands and set examples of criminal and violent behaviour towards others, such as evidenced in the senseless murders that plague our country. This type of behaviour is counterproductive and will not help learners to do well. Learners copy their parents' behaviour to the extent that they come to school with weapons and murder their teachers and fellow learners.

- Unfortunately, other more serious, escalating factors in the upbringing of learners are the physical and/or sexual abuse of learners which is manifested in various acts of violence towards learners. It often takes more than the available educational assistance to guide these learners towards becoming independent and responsible members of society.

Unstable domestic (home) circumstances and broken homes

Apart from educational mistakes, unstable domestic circumstances can also detract from the upbringing of learners. Examples of these are divorce, the death of a parent, circumstances at work (such as when one or both parents work elsewhere), a prison sentence to be served, and so on. These break family ties and fragment the composition of traditional families.

Single parents find it difficult to fulfil the obligations of both parents, with the result that the learners are sometimes emotionally deprived. These parents tend to be either too strict or too indulgent, letting their learners do whatever they please.

McCall et al (1992:21) are convinced that the largest proportion of learners experiencing barriers to learning come from single-parent families and unstable homes.



- *How many of the learners in your class are from single parent families? How does this affect their achievement at school? (If you do not actually teach a school class, you could imagine some cases.)*
- *Explain how the fragmentation of families and the rupturing of family ties cause learners to develop learning problems. Keep your answers brief.*

2.3.3 SCHOOL FACTORS

There are numerous factors associated with education and school, which can also give rise to barriers to learning. The following are some of them.

Poor teaching

A major problem in South African education is that many teachers are far from good. Consider the following:

- Because of their lack of qualifications, many teachers do not have the expertise to teach the rarer learning areas and learning programmes (English, Mathematics, Natural Science). Teachers who themselves have a very superficial knowledge of something, are unaware of the problem areas or of where to place the emphasis.
- Unmotivated or lazy teachers who are not sufficiently concerned about doing their best for their learners usually spend far too little time on their preparation and therefore do not present their lessons in an attractive, logical way. Neither are the outcomes of the lesson clearly stated nor are the cognitive skills required for

successful completion of the task logically explained (Smey-Richardson 1988:6). This type of teacher devotes a minimum amount of time to marking the learners' homework or class work, with the result that the learners' problems are not traced soon enough.

- Teachers are not always sufficiently sensitive to the various needs of learners in the class. They do not take enough cognisance of the different developmental levels of their learners or their various styles of learning (Smey-Richardson 1988:14). This means that learners whose learning style or pace of work is different from the average learner are not accommodated (Tlale 1991:17).
- A large proportion of teachers tend to have stereotyped teaching methods: they do not deviate from these when it is necessary. They do not allow learners to show initiative or develop their own strategies for solving problems. These teachers prefer to settle for mere repetition of facts and for the monotonous use of unvarying methods. According to Felton and Biggs (1977:26) this gives a learner the impression that learning is a passive process, ''that he simply is the vehicle through which the material is passed from one source (textbook, or lecture) to another (examination) without that material really having been savored, digested, and absorbed. The resultant lack of nourishment often leaves him with a nagging emotional emptiness. He finds no meaning in his academic work''. These stereotypical teaching methods therefore fail to stimulate the learners' interest, develop their thinking skills and teach them good study methods. The adverse effects become obvious during the years at high school.
- Teachers are supposed to set their learners an example of dedication, a sense of responsibility and a positive attitude towards learning. If, by way of casual remarks or conduct, a teacher appears to be uninterested, this will influence the learners' attitude to that subject.
- Moreover, teachers have a responsibility to provide learners with emotional support. Should a teacher give the impression — in word or deed — of being irritated or exasperated by a learner or should the teacher ignore, disparage or belittle the learner, the learner will undoubtedly not be able to give that learning area his best.

Incomplete participation on the part of learners

As regards the participation of learners, the following factors could lead to poor achievements:

- Physical factors such as malnutrition, too little sleep, chronic disease, unhealthy habits such as smoking or drug addiction, and tiredness prevent learners from giving proper attention to their school work.
- Scholastic backlogs resulting from mediocre tuition in preceding years, or removals to other schools, are additional causes of despondency and lack of perseverance.
- Emotional problems such as unhappiness, anxiety, depression, self-consciousness and so on may also give rise to barriers to learning. These problems could so preoccupy individual learners that they are unable to focus their attention on their work. Instead, they tend to withdraw from their school work or try and avoid it in other ways.
- A learner who, for some or other reason, does not have a sense of belonging to a particular group in the class but feels left out or rejected, will not participate fully in the activities of the class. Such a learner will find it very difficult to work in a group (Schiefelbusch 1982:11). Some teachers ignore the fact that a learner may be rejected by a group, and this makes the learner retreat even more — to a point of real loneliness.

- Then again, a learner who feels that the teacher does not fully accept her, will also fail to participate unreservedly in class.
- Peer pressure features prominently in the achievements of learners. Sometimes a particular group assumes a negative attitude towards school work and, in order to be accepted by the group, a learner like the one mentioned in the preceding item will neglect or bungle her school work (Smey-Richman 1988:14).



Consider the following questions and write down your answers to them.

- *Have you encountered a peer group with a negative attitude towards the school?*
- *Jot down the characteristics of this group.*
- *How would you set about changing the negative influence of a peer group leader into positive constructive leadership? Give a step-by-step explanation of the method you would use.*

Inappropriate study material

milieu = background

Learners make the best progress when what they are learning is linked with their experience of life. If the study material is totally strange, as is the case when the learners' cultural milieu (background) differs markedly from that of the school, they will find the contents of the material boring and meaningless (Waxman et al 1992:24). This means that teachers should always link the contents of lessons with the learners' daily lives by selecting examples with which they can identify. When learning areas such as mathematics or science are presented in a purely scientific way, they will never have the same impact as when there are clear illustrations of their practical daily usefulness. There has been considerable criticism of our schooling in the past because subjects such as history and literature reflected a culture that was totally foreign to the majority of the learners.

Inefficient school organisation

In schools where the management is poor, where teachers are often out of their classrooms and discipline is inconsistent, a general laxness prevails and there is no culture of learning.

There are two distinct types of school management: autocratic and democratic. In an autocratic style, authority is vested primarily in those who are officially in charge — the principal and the teachers. The learners themselves have little or no say in such a management style. In contrast, a democratic management style implies that the authority is delegated, so that all those concerned — including the learners — participate in some or other way in the management.

In recent times we have become aware of the positive effect of a democratic management style — even in schools. This style widens the scope of learners' opportunities to participate in various activities and even to assume certain duties themselves. Their sense of responsibility is enhanced and they are motivated to study.



Discuss the following question in a group discussion with the other teachers in your school: How would you set about creating a democratic atmosphere in your class?

Crowded classrooms

When classrooms are crowded with learners whose contact with the teacher is limited (Waxman et al 1992:13) we usually find ineffective teaching, and authoritarian methods based on repetition and mere imparting of facts (Hundeide 1991:26). Such teaching methods which are the prevailing ones in developing countries are viewed as ''a dehumanizing system of rote-learning, where memory serves as a crutch for non-comprehension'' (Hundeide 1991:26).



You are a teacher with a class of 45 learners. How would you set about motivating these learners to study? What teaching strategies could you use to make their learning more effective?

At-risk schools

Waxman et al (1992:5) maintain that a school may be viewed as ''a school at risk'' when

- learners and teachers are estranged
- standards are low and quality is poor
- there are varying expectations of the same learners
- most learners do not complete their studies
- truancy and disciplinary problems are common
- learners' needs are not accommodated
- learners are not adequately prepared for the future
- teachers feel isolated in that they do not have opportunities to attend subject conferences, or suffer from ''burnout'' arising from the heavy demands made on them



- *What, in your opinion, are the characteristics of learners in an ''at-risk'' school?*
- *Why do you consider the school in which you teach to be a school ''at risk''?*

2.3.4 DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Culture

heterogeneous = different

Because South Africa has a heterogeneous population, there are noticeable cultural differences between its people. Although the various cultural groups in our country have far more in common than they are given credit for, there are differences which we should note. Think, for example, of the differences in language, traditions, social customs, food preferences, religious affiliation, sense of humour and so on.

Moreover, it has been established that persons from different cultural groups differ from one another in the styles of learning they prefer. Some cultural groups have a greater propensity for interpersonal relationships than others. In other words, they are people-oriented rather than task-oriented and they prefer learning situations that

are geared to cooperation to those that are competitive. The opposite is true of learners with a Western cultural background since they strive for individual rather than group achievements. Some cultural groups are good memorisers because they have an oral tradition. There may even be differences in the thought processes favoured by certain cultural groups. According to Smey-Richman (1988:11–12), some cultures prefer intuitive to inductive or deductive reasoning, and estimates to precise concepts of number, space and time.

Although the Constitution makes provision for all the cultures in our country, it is very difficult to accommodate learners from different cultural groups in the same class.

affective = relating to the emotions

As a teacher, you should be aware of the cultural differences between the learners in your class and you should make provision for these because learners who feel culturally excluded, may develop emotional, social and learning problems.

There will be a detailed discussion of study methods and learning styles in Module 4.

Language differences

Just as there are cultural differences between the various population groups in South Africa, so there is a variety of languages spoken. Although there are now 11 official languages, English will probably be viewed as the academic and political medium. In the past — and this is still the case — most learners (especially black learners) have been taught in English from grade four onwards. The following are just a few of the problems that have arisen in relation to this practice:

- Teachers themselves are not always fluent enough in English to teach in English. This is especially true of rural areas since English may be viewed as an urban language. The teachers' accent is not a good model for the learners to emulate (copy) and, because the teachers are unsure of their use of English, they often revert to mere repetition and memorisation which are extremely ineffective methods of teaching.
- The learners' basic knowledge of English is often so bad that they derive virtually no benefit from the tuition. What is significant, is that the progress of the learners at these schools leaves much to be desired. The large numbers of black learners who leave school at the end of Grade 5 or 7 can probably also be ascribed to this factor.
- Learners from rural areas in particular have so little exposure to English that there is no question of reinforcing what they learn at school. Even after a few years of tuition, they still find English a foreign language.
- The grammatical structure of English differs totally from that of indigenous languages. As a result the learners have difficulties with such things as sentence structure or the use of prepositions.
- Learners often find the culture reflected in English readers and prescribed books unfamiliar because it is not based on their world of experience.



Compile a list of any other difficulties learners may have with learning in English as their second language.

Those learners for whom English is a second language and who are placed in schools where the teachers are English-speaking, experience a different set of problems: these teachers are unable to switch with ease to the learner's first

language in order to explain certain points. In addition, these learners will find it difficult to understand the teacher — not just because he or she speaks so much more rapidly than a second-language speaker, but also because the pronunciation of certain sounds in local English differs markedly from that of ''standard'' English (Lemmer 1995:91).

(Problems of this type are covered more comprehensively in Module 4.)



Write brief answers to the following questions.

- *What is your opinion about an official language for schools in South Africa?*
- *How do you overcome the problems of learners who speak different languages but are placed together in one class?*

2.3.5 LIMITED JOB PROSPECTS

An additional extrinsic factor, which may contribute to the emergence of barriers to learning, stems from the prevailing limited job prospects. It is a well-known fact that because of the poor economic growth in South Africa in recent years, very few new job opportunities have been created. At the same time the number of school leavers has increased sharply. This means that many school leavers do not succeed in finding work. Consequently they lack the will to achieve. The choice of subjects and careers is complicated by the fact that aptitude and interests no longer feature so prominently: instead the deciding factor is the availability of jobs. There is a marked tendency among university candidates to underachieve and become depressed owing to a scarcity of job prospects in their fields of interest.

Read

2.4 SUMMARY

Schematically, sections 2.2 to 2.3 may be summarised as follows:

FACTORS CAUSING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Intrinsic factors	**Extrinsic factors**
• physical and/or physiological impairments that may become disabilities if society and the system of education do not make provision for these learners • personality factors, especially types of temperament and unsatisfied emotional needs	• environment • education • school • language • culture • job prospects

What *KNOWLEDGE* did you acquire in this study unit?

- it is important to know what causes barriers to learning in learners
- some learners with physical and/or physiological impairments and personality factors can develop barriers to learning and can then become disabled
- the majority of barriers to learning are caused by extrinsic factors relating to environment, upbringing, school, culture, language and job prospects

How could your *ATTITUDE* change? You now know more about the causative factors of barriers to learning that could result in special educational needs. You therefore *understand* the learner with special needs better and because of this you are more skilled in handling him or her in the classroom and on the playground. He or she is now a *person* and not a number or simply one of many in your classroom, or someone you greet briefly but do not really know.

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STUDY UNIT 3

PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Although by ''learners who experience barriers to learning'' we mean all learners who do not make the desired progress at school, and all parents at one stage or another in their learners's education feel that they are lacking, or that they do not know how to deal with their learners, this study unit deals only with parents and families of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments. The information can however also be made applicable to parents of learners who experience barriers to learning because of extrinsic causes. Many of the attitudes of parents that are discussed here can cause a disability in the learner because the attitudes and behaviour of the parents can disable the learner in his or her development.



Outcomes

At the end of this study unit you should be able to demonstrate that you

- *can list a number of factors that may determine the attitudes of parents whose learners have physical and/or physiological impairments*
- *can describe different patterns of the attitudes of parents whose learners have physical and/or physiological impairments*
- *can describe the importance of the life-cycle events for learners with physical and/or physiological impairments*
- *as the teacher can understand the parents' attitudes towards their learners and also their behaviour towards you*

Read

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Being a parent is a complex and demanding responsibility. It is a role filled with many challenges and many rewards. It is through the family that the learners first comes into contact with people, acquires the characteristic attitudes of the community, internalises its customs, and so becomes acquainted with that specific way of life which is unique to the learners's cultural group. Thus parents are the most important figures in their learners's lives — their first and most important teachers.



If you are already a parent, you will know what being a parent entails. Try to imagine what it is like to be a parent of a learner with a physical and/or physiological impairment.

- *How would you feel?*
- *What would you do?*

With a group of colleagues, discuss some of the extra responsibilities you think this would entail or interview a parent (or parents) of such a learners and write a short report.

When a child is born with a physical and/or physiological impairment the first people to feel that something is wrong are usually the parents. Most learners with physical and/or physiological impairments can grow up to be fully responsible, self-supporting, well-adjusted adults. This cannot, however, happen without the active support of family members and the child's parents in particular. Parents have to make a special effort to ensure the success of the education and development of their learners who experiences barriers to learning. It is important to remember that the birth of a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment usually results in a life-long series of adjustments by that learners's family.



Read the following case study and then answer the questions below.

Case study

The Smits are a middle-class family living in a rural area. Mr Smit (Jan) is a teacher at the local primary school. Mrs Smit (Lenie) trained as a nurse but gave up nursing in order to be a good mother to her five learners. Both Jan and Lenie are active members of the local church. When Lenie gave birth to her third child, Natie, her labour was complicated but no-one thought much about it until it became obvious that Natie was not doing the things normal babies or toddlers do. It gradually became clear that Natie had learning difficulties. By that time two more learners had arrived and the family was a happy, well-adjusted one.

Jan, who had been overjoyed at the arrival of a son with whom he could go fishing and encourage to play rugby and even show how to do carpentry, found that he had more and more to do at school in the afternoons. When his colleagues proudly talked about their sons' achievements he felt ashamed and disappointed. As a school teacher he felt strongly about educational achievement. He also felt that having a learners who experienced barriers to learning was a reflection on him as father.

Lenie adored Natie. He had a very loving nature. God had sent him to her for a special reason. She spent hours with him trying to teach him things the other learners had done naturally. She also had to learn to drive because she had to take Natie to Johannesburg for therapy and special classes. This meant that she was not always at home to cook and sew and supervise the learners's homework and after-hours activities.

Marie, the eldest daughter who was very bright at school, had to cook supper quite frequently, as well as look after the others — once even having to deal with a little brother's broken arm by getting a neighbour to rush him to the doctor. Her marks were no longer good though and, at times, she found herself crying for no reason.

The family had not had a holiday for two years. Jan found that the cost of travelling, medication and therapy left very little for saving or extras. In fact, he had suggested that Lenie return to nursing and she had retorted by asking what would become of Natie. He realised that she was close to a nervous breakdown.

Questions

- Which three factors do you think featured most prominently in determining Lenie's attitude towards Natie and his impairment?
- Which three factors do you think determined Jan's attitude towards Natie?
- Which attitudes towards such a learners with an impairment would you call important or unimportant?

Substantiate your answer in each case. (Watch out for the clues in the following section, which provides you with feedback!)

Study

3.2 SOME FACTORS THAT MAY DETERMINE PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS A CHILD WITH A PHYSICAL AND/OR PHYSIOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT

Since all family units are not the same, not all parents will respond in the same way to having a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment. The family's response, and therefore the individual attitudes of its members to the birth of such a learners may be related to some of the following factors:

3.2.1 THE GENDER OF THE CHILD

Parents seem to be less concerned by having a daughter with a physical impairment than a son.



Before reading any further, see whether you can answer the question ''Why is this so?''

FEEDBACK

According to Cunningham and Davis (1985:72), ''... this may be due to traditional sex stereotypes influencing aspirations, with girls being seen as fitting in with domestic arrangements and being more dependent than boys''. Commenting on this in their reviews of the work of various authors, Turnbull and Turnbull (1986:50–51) indicate that a son with a physical and/or physiological impairment has a greater impact on his father than on his mother. Fathers tend to be more adversely affected by a son with a physical and/or physiological impairment than by a daughter with a

physical and/or physiological impairment. This, according to Cunningham and Davis (1985:75), may be because fathers are more concerned with the achievements and development of their learners, but especially with those of their sons. Shea and Bauer (1991:26) however came to the conclusion that fathers have fewer opportunities to be with their child than mothers.

3.2.2 SIZE OF THE FAMILY

Larger families tend to be less distressed by having a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment in the family. This may be because, in a larger family, there are more people to assist with the child with a physical and/or physiological impairment. Furthermore, the greater the number of siblings, the greater is the atmosphere of normality in the family. Parents may be more willing to accept the child because of the presence of normal siblings — a factor which indicates that they are, in fact, capable of producing normal learners.

3.2.3 CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Cultural background lays a foundation of values and perspectives on the world. These values and perspectives feature prominently in parental responses to a physical and/or physiological impairment.

Some cultural lifestyles accept a physical and/or physiological impairment more readily than others and can assist the family in handling the implications of a learner experiencing barriers to his learning.

3.2.4 RELIGION

Usually, each family or cultural group is affiliated to a religious group and, according to Chinn et al (1979:368–370), religious affiliation and outlook have an effect on patterns of parental reaction to the birth of a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment. Parents who believe that a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment is part of a divine plan, find it easier to accept the child than do parents who have no particular religious affiliations. ''Thus some devout parents view a handicapped child as a religious responsibility'' (Chinn et al 1979:269). Such parents may regard a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment as a special gift placed in their particular care.

3.2.5 THE FAMILY'S SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS (SES)

A family's socioeconomic status (SES) includes its income, the level of education of the family members, and the social status implied by the occupations of its wage earners. One would assume that the higher a family's SES, the greater are the resources available to cope with a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment. Yet Turnbull and Turnbull (1986:33–38) make the interesting assumption that a higher SES does not necessarily result in better coping with a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment, because those in higher SES groups are more achievement orientated. They may be more apt to view such a child as a disappointment. Lower SES groups tend to esteem achievement less than other values such as family closeness or happiness.

3.2.6 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The stigma of a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment may be less in a rural than in an urban area because the learners might be more easily ''accommodated on the farm''. Yet as Turnbull and Turnbull (1986:36) correctly point out, it is usually very difficult to provide special education services in rural areas. Furthermore, because many families with learners with physical and/or physiological impairments feel isolated, ''... a rural family may experience even greater isolation if there are not other families in their immediate community whose learners have similar situations'' (Turnbull & Turnbull 1986:36). Also, if the impairment is slight, medical and social facilities within a rural community may cope with it. If, however, the learners has a severe physical and/or physiological impairment, specialised treatment in an urban area may be required.

3.2.7 DEGREE AND TYPE OF IMPAIRMENT

Physical and/or physiological impairments occur in various degrees of severity. Usually, the more serious the impairment, the more severe the impact on the family.

The type of impairment also determines the effect on the family. A passive, obedient learners with Down's Syndrome may cause much less stress to the family than a frustrated deaf learners who fails to make itself understood or an emotionally disturbed learners who continually disrupts the home routine and causes problems in the community.

However, while the degree of physical and/or physiological impairment is an important factor, it is difficult to predict whether parents will be able to adjust more adequately to mild or severe problems (Suran & Rizzo 1979:401). Chinn et al (1979:354) similarly observed that ''the degree of impact, frustration, or disappointment does not necessarily correlate directly with the degree of deficiency''. In some cases, especially in families with a low SES, a severe degree of physical and/or physiological impairment is welcomed as they live from the disability grant received from the government.

3.2.8 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS

Parents who themselves do not feel well or who suffer from some ailment may find it more difficult to cope with a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment. Often a learners who experiences barriers to learning may produce stress that triggers off psychological responses in the parents that may make them ill. Whether the physical problem is caused by worry about the learners's exceptionality or whether it has another source, the result is the same: reduced ability to cope.

The birth of any child requires a family to make adjustments. The manner in which parents react to the additional stress depends on the stability of the family, the amount of support within the family, the extent of the support from outside, the availability of services such as medical, educational and counselling. All these factors will have an effect on parental attitudes to the birth of a child who experiences barriers to learning.

3.3 DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES

Having a learners with an impairment affects various parents in different ways. As the situation of each parent is unique, parents should not, and cannot, be stereotyped in terms of behaviour patterns.

According to Holbrook (1996:51–52) there are no ''right'' or ''wrong'' emotions experienced by parents when told that their learners has a physical and/or physiological impairment — ''It is also perfectly normal for husband and wife to experience different emotions of different intensities, at different stages than one another.'' Holbrook (1996:52–57) says that the following emotions or attitudes are experienced before there is acceptance: grief, guilt, anxiety, resentment, denial and anger.

3.3.1 GRIEF

After the initial shock that their learners has been diagnosed with a physical and/or physiological impairment or defect parents experience a feeling of grief — they lost a dream of having a ''normal'' learners. It is not always a case of the parents not loving the learners, but that their hopes for their learners are now dashed. This grief is not very productive, and the parents should realise that it would be futile to sit and mope about what their learners will not be able to do.

3.3.2 GUILT

Many parents feel guilty and try to blame themselves or each other for their learners's physical and/or physiological impairment. It is particularly the mother who experiences these feelings. Some parents even try to look for the causes in their ancestors and blame each other. Parents should realise that in most cases nobody can be blamed for their learners's physical and/or physiological impairment.

3.3.3 ANXIETY

Anxiety usually goes hand in hand with worries about the learners's future. The extent of this worry depends on the intensity and degree of the physical and/or physiological impairment. Parents of a blind learners are for instance scared that he will fall and injure himself and then overprotect him so that he does not learn to be able to move around independently.

3.3.4 RESENTMENT

Sometimes parents feel that they are unique and that the problems they are experiencing with their learners are unique. They then resent other families for being able to lead a carefree life with their learners. They also resent people who make well meant, but nevertheless hurtful remarks. It also happens that their social life is hampered by the learners with the physical and/or physiological impairment, and that they blame the learners for it.

3.3.5 DENIAL

Parents often deny that there is a physical and/or physiological impairment. They

think that if they do nothing about the matter everything will come right by itself. It is particularly the father who may be guilty in this respect, particularly if the impairment is not of a serious or obvious nature.

Denial can also be productive in nature. It has happened that parents' refusal to accept doctors' diagnoses caused the learners to make much more progress than the doctors predicted. Thus it has happened that the doctors advised parents to put their learners in an institution and rather pay attention to their ''normal'' learners. The parents then refused to do so and did everything possible to help that learners to grow up as independently as possible — often with great success.

3.3.6 ANGER

Sometimes parents react angrily to their learners's physical impairment, towards everybody that gives them well-meant advice or towards everybody that does not react like they do. It is understandable that parents would react like that, but it is not very productive. Anger is hurtful, and it does not improve the matter. If the parents could learn to control their anger it would help to relieve tension and to focus their energy on activities that can be of benefit to the learners.

These attitudes and emotions are normal experiences, but parents should take care that they do not become permanent.

3.3.7 OVERPROTECTION

Overprotection is giving a learners more protection than the reality of the situation demands. This excessive protection, usually by the mother, is based on a distortion of the real needs of the learners. Overprotection may be based on a mother's low esteem of herself. Thus, by overprotecting her learners, she hopes to establish herself as a good mother in her self-perception and in the eyes of significant persons around her. Overprotection can continue until the parents themselves cannot care for the learners (who can already be grown-up) any longer. Such a learners will seldom become independent of others and will always be dependent on other people to organise his life for him.

3.3.8 REJECTION

According to Gallagher (Gargiulo 1985:34), rejection may be defined as ''... a persistent and unrelieved holding of unrealistic negative values about the learners to the extent that the whole behaviour of the parent towards the learners is coloured unrealistically by this negative tone''. For some parents, the diagnosis of having a learners with a severe physical and/or physiological impairment is so traumatic that they avoid contact with their learners. In extreme cases they find it difficult to feed, clothe or play with the learners. Thus the rejection of the learners may manifest itself in physical separation from the learners, or as psychological aloofness in which little interest is shown in the learners's activities (this can be called ''covert rejection''), or as inconsistent feelings such as one moment too much concern and indifference the next.

Another form of rejection on the part of parents is that of desertion or leaving the household. By abandoning the learners with the physical and/or physiological impairment the parent is rejecting it. A form of subtle rejection would be to place the

learners in an institution or school at a great distance from the parental home, although similar facilities may be available nearby. A further type of subtle rejection is shown by a parent who is so preoccupied with various responsibilities that there is little time to be involved with the learners with the physical and/or physiological impairment while he or she is awake.



Read the following scenarios and then answer the questions. There is a question after each scenario and questions on the scenarios as a group. You will find clues to these questions in the previous section as well.

Scenario 1

A couple living in Soweto was looking forward to the arrival of their first baby. Thandi had waited longer than most of her circle to start her family because she had wanted a career. Jakes, her husband, had agreed with her and the two of them had managed to own a pleasant house in one of the better suburbs. Jakes ran his own business in a tent, catering for various clients such as firms who wished to throw a party, or families arranging weddings.

The baby arrived a little prematurely and Thandi had to be assisted by the doctors at Baragwanath Hospital but the couple was overjoyed. During an early visit to the clinic, a sister suggested that the baby be examined by a doctor. Thandi complied. The verdict was a shock. Little Mpho would never be quite like other learners — he would need lots of love and specialised education.

Thandi swallowed hard, hugged her baby closely and went home. When Jakes heard the news, he comforted Thandi but he did not quite know what to do.

Soon it became clear that Thandi was doing all she could for the little one. Indeed, she thought of nothing else. She worried about feeding, and clothing Mpho. She dressed him too warmly. She jumped up at night at the slightest sound from the baby.

Jakes felt lonely in his simple kitchen. One day there was a fire in the tent and he tore about trying to put it out. Thandi hardly listened to his tale of woe.

Soon Jake began to feel unwilling to return home at night. Thandi hardly seemed to notice his absence. After one or two further setbacks — which also seemed to pass Thandi by — Jakes just packed a bag one night and went to see his brother in Boksburg. He did not come back.

Questions

- Which attitudes on the part of this mother can you identify?
- Which attitude on the part of this father is apparent to you? (Again, you could find your answers on the material in the previous section.)

Scenario 2

Sara was only 14 years old when she fell pregnant following a brief relationship with an older man. Sara was forced to turn to social workers for help. One or two of them made her feel that she was to blame for her situation. She was undernourished, had no family support and was grateful when a male friend of the family offered to help her. This was an abusive relationship

but she had no choice. Soon after the birth the baby was diagnosed as having a severe hearing impairment — probably owing to a bout of German measles early in Sara's pregnancy.

Sara and Agmat, her partner, found the care of this little learners quite beyond their ability. They were soon drinking too heavily — they probably felt quite desperate. This was made worse because the community seemed to hold it against them that they had a ''backward'' learners.

The baby, Fatima, was placed in a series of foster homes, few of which did much to help her progress.

In some instances she was physically abused by the learners in the foster home. They could not understand this little girl who seemed so morose and unable to react to anything they said or did.

Eventually, however, she was placed with a family who did help her and love her. These parents had previously learned sign language and cooperated well with both social workers and school teachers. Fatima who, as a toddler had acquired some antisocial behaviours, began to develop into a more friendly little girl. Her language and arithmetical operations at school also improved.

Sara and Agmat decided to take Fatima back into their care but, unfortunately, they lacked the necessary maturity or financial means to maintain this attempt at meeting their parental responsibilities.

Fatima returned to the foster family and is at present doing well in their care.

Questions

- Which parental attitudes are apparent in the last scenario?

(To assist you we suggest a few key-word clues: cultural background, socioeconomic status, degree of physical and/or physiological impairment, personal characteristics of parents, feeling rejected as parents — see following sections.)



Questions on both scenarios

- *In the case of each of the parental attitudes depicted in these scenarios, which is positive or negative?*
- *In your opinion, what is the most positive attitude a parent can exhibit towards a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment?*
- *Which do you regard to be the most negative attitude that parents can exhibit toward their learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment?*
- *Are there any other possible parental attitudes, not mentioned in this study unit, that you consider important in a relationship between parents and their learners with physical and/or physiological impairments?*

3.3.9 COMPENSATION

Parents of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments often compensate, consciously or unconsciously, for their true feelings toward their learners. Parents who compensate tend to be unrealistic, rigid and overprotective. Bryant (1971:327) believes that learners of compensating parents are not as happy as

learners who know that they are loved and accepted in spite of their physical and/or physiological impairment. Learners of compensating parents are often tense, anxious and afraid of their parents' disapproval. The compensating parent tends to try ''too hard'' for his or her learners.

3.3.10 FEELING REJECTED AS PARENTS

One form of rejection which is seldom recognised, although its effects may be just as damaging and far-reaching, is the rejection that parents of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments experience at the hands of professionals such as nurses, doctors, teachers and social workers.

This feeling of rejection on the part of parents may have an adverse effect on their willingness to accept total responsibility for, and actively participate in the education of their learners.

3.3.11 ACCEPTANCE

Although parents may accept the physical and/or physiological impairment as well as the learners, negative feelings are never completely resolved. Gargiulo (1985:30) states, ''... they can occur and recur ... . Parents learn that acceptance involves not only accepting the learners but also accepting themselves as they are and acknowledging their individual strengths and weaknesses''. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their learners, and themselves, parents adjust. Acceptance implies that the family makes a conscious decision to love the learners and do everything possible for the learners.

Study

3.4 LIFE-CYCLE EVENTS AND PARENTAL ATTITUDES



So far we have thought in general about the advent of a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment. Such learners pass through a number of stages as they grow up. What do you think these phases are? Write them down and then compare your answers with the feedback below.

One of the most important factors determining attitudes to having a learners experiencing barriers to learning should be seen in terms of the ''family life cycle''.

The family life cycle presents specific transition points that appear to be times of increased stress in families. Moores (1978:96) for example, identify the following periods of stress in the family life cycle of a learners experiencing barriers to learning:

3.4.1 IDENTIFYING THE PHYSICAL AND/OR PHYSIOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT

The period in which parents are informed of their learners's physical and/or physiological impairment is one of the most distressing periods in their lives.

3.4.2 ENTRANCE INTO THE SCHOOL SITUATION

Learners with physical and/or physiological impairments often have to get specialised teaching from an early age, or even have to go to school. At that stage, the parents' choice of school for their learners who experiences barriers to learning is of the utmost importance. Decisions revolve around whether the learners will attend a day or residential school, or an ordinary or special school, or a special class at an ordinary school. ''Decisions typically are made in the face of conflicting professional opinion, appeals to emotionalism, predictions of failure, and threats if the right choice is not followed'' (Moores 1978:100).

As mentioned before, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 leaves the choice of a preprimary school or school to the parents. It however seems to be a difficult decision, since specialised support is not always available everywhere.

3.4.3 BEGINNING OF ADOLESCENCE

According to Schlesinger and Meadow (Moores 1978:100), adolescence represents a period of particular stress for learners experiencing barriers to learning and their parents. At this stage it often happens that the gap between learners with physical and/or physiological impairments and their siblings becomes more noticeable. Parents may now also start comparing the gap in maturity and abilities between the learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment and its siblings. Furthermore, the usual problems experienced during puberty and adolescence may be even more pronounced in learners with physical and/or physiological impairments.

3.4.4 TIME TO LEAVE SCHOOL

By this time learners with physical and/or physiological impairments and their parents have already realised that there is no cure. According to Minel and Vernon (Moores 1978:101), ''... it is at this time that many parents see their hopes smashed, their dreams for 'normalcy' crushed''.

3.4.5 EARLY ADULTHOOD

During this phase the parents wonder if their learners will be independent and able to work. Learners with physical and/or physiological impairments worry if they will meet members of the opposite sex and whether they will be able to get married and whether they will be able to get work and become financially independent. Unemployment among people with physical and/or physiological impairments is much higher than among other people.

3.4.6 AGEING PARENTS

Parents often wonder what will happen to their learners with physical and/or physiological impairments once they are gone. They often expect their other learners to be responsible for this learners once they are dead.

Thus it is clear that, as a family moves from one stage to another along the life cycle, the parents of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments experience different feelings and attitudes. This is because the needs of learners with physical

and/or physiological impairments differ according to their position along the life cycle.



- *In your opinion, which stage of the life cycle of a learners with physical and/or physiological impairments presents parents with the most difficulties? Please substantiate your answer.*
- *Which stage of the life cycle of a learners with physical and/or physiological impairments, do you think, makes the least demands on parents' coping abilities? Can you give examples from your teaching experience?*

Study

3.5 THE EFFECT OF THE BIRTH OF A CHILD WITH A PHYSICAL AND/OR PHYSIOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT ON THE DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY



How do you think the presence of a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment could affect the various members of the family to which it belongs? Imagine you are (or perhaps you know someone who is) a mother, father, brother (or sister) of such a learners. What do you think the effects on these family members could be? Now look at the feedback below.

3.5.1 THE MOTHER

As far as a mother of a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment is concerned, besides the ordinary responsibilities of maintaining a household and attending to the needs of the other siblings, the additional demands of caring for a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment can be overwhelming. The mother may suffer from physical exhaustion because of long hours of care, not only for the learners with the physical and/or physiological impairment, but also for the family as a whole. Feeding, bathing, attending to special medical needs, carrying out special home training programmes, and providing other forms of therapeutic intervention — all may contribute to a state of chronic fatigue. This may be particularly true when the learners and its mother are involved in a home-based training programme. The pressure to provide training at home may prevent a mother from meeting her own needs for relaxation or having time with friends, and make it difficult for her to attend to other responsibilities around the home. This can particularly happen when the mother regards the home-based training programme as her responsibility alone and excludes the other members of the family from it.

Luterman (1979:136) describes another problem which places an enormous amount of strain on the mother. He believes that there is a danger that ''parent education'' can become ''mother education'' because of the way our present society is structured. Since most parent education programmes usually take place during the mornings (while the husband is at work) it is the mother who attends these programmes. As a result of this, ''... many mothers begin to feel acutely the

responsibility for learners management and for weighty educational decision-making without the benefit of a particularly informed or involved husband'' (Luterman 1979:136).

3.5.2 THE FATHER

If it is true, as Turnbull and Turnbull believe, that a father is more adversely affected by a son with a physical and/or physiological impairment than he is by such a daughter, because his son's impairment prevents him from sharing male hobbies with his son, this may result in the father feeling that ''... he is my boy and my learners, but he will never fully be my son ...'' (Turnbull & Turnbull 1986:51). This attitude of nonacceptance of the learners by the father may have a detrimental effect on the boy's education. If the father cannot identify with his son, the learners's educative needs are neglected. This implies that the father is not really interested in challenging the learners to actualise his maximum potential and capabilities, and he leaves more of the learners's educative needs to his wife. In some cases this may even lead to fathers employing avoidance techniques which add to their wives' burden.

The father image is also of crucial importance to a girl since it is an identification figure which mediates a sense of security and a set of norms and values. If a girl is deprived of stable support from her father, she has no adequate model to use as a guide when she has to make a final choice of a marital partner later in life. Experiencing the security which a positive father figure mediates is therefore also essential for a girl. Her behaviour is guided by the norms and values of her father.

The withdrawal of the father from his educational responsibilities may arise from the fact that he realises that the learners cannot live up to his expectations and ideals. His disappointment may therefore act as a further restraint on the learners's education.

3.5.3 THE SIBLINGS

A common concern of parents of a learners experiencing barriers to learning is the possibility that the presence of such a learners in the home may adversely affect the development and self-actualisation of the other learners in the family. According to Schwirian (1976:373–375), the disruptive effect of a learners experiencing barriers to learning on siblings is caused by the fact that normal brothers and sisters receive proportionately less of the parents' time and energy because so much is being taken up by the learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment. Siblings may frequently be asked to assume many responsibilities at a much earlier age than what they have, had there not been a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment in the family. Also, siblings may feel embarrassed by having a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment in the house (Holbrook 1996:47). They may not wish to be seen with, or take care of, this learners in public. At a time when they wish most to blend in with their peers, they may become identified as ''the brother of the deaf kid'', which may be painful to them.

The gender of siblings also plays an important role in their attitude toward their sibling with a physical and/or physiological impairment. Murphy (1979:375), for example, found that male siblings revealed a degree of factual ignorance about their siblings with physical and/or physiological impairments, whereas female siblings showed a closer relationship to this learners — not only in the early years, but also

into adulthood. ''It was noted that the demands on the female sibling were strongest when she was the oldest female learners in the family, and that the sibling closest in age to the disabled learners often has relatively more difficulty in overall adjustment'' (Murphy 1979:357).

According to Luterman (1979:144), an ideal family relationship may be achieved if ''... parents direct attention to the sibling as a person — not just a vehicle to help them produce a well-functioning handicapped learners. The sibling needs to be incorporated into all family discussions regarding his own welfare. He also needs attention in his own right''. This implies that the educative needs of the other siblings are just as important as those of the learners experiencing barriers to learning.



In the light of what you have learned thus far, and referring to scenario 1 above, briefly jot down what effect a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment may have on

— *the mother*
— *the father*
— *a sister*
— *a brother*

Can you give examples of the above from your actual teaching experience?

3.5.4 FINANCIAL BURDEN

The birth of any learners imposes an additional financial burden on the family. This applies especially to the families of learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment.

Often, prior to the birth of a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment, both parents are working. However, with the birth of such a learners, the mother may have to give up a job that contributes a substantial amount of family income in order to stay at home to care for the learners with the physical and/or physiological impairment.

All learners require a certain amount of financial support. A learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment, however, requires additional financial support over and above that required for normal learners. These expenses are usually related to medical care, therapy and education.



A colleague would like to know how parents with learners with physical and/or physiological impairments may find their

- *marital and family relationships adversely affected*
- *financial burden increased*
- *social standing restricted and facing possible stigmatisation*

How would you explain this to your colleague?

3.5.5 CURTAILING SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Caring for a learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment means more worries and more restrictions and leaves less opportunity for a social life and recreation. The parent is always ''on duty'', and great demands are made as far as love and sacrifice are concerned.

Because of the amount of time that has to be spent with these learners, little time is left for family activities and social outings. This, in turn, may have an adverse effect on these learners, since contact with the community is extremely important for their social development. By curtailing social activities, the parents may also be adversely hampering their learners's opportunities of exploring and experiencing the environment outside the parental home.

3.5.6 STIGMATISATION

A problem often experienced by parents of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments, is that of stigmatisation. The stigma spreads from the child with the impairment to its parents and family. Stigmatisation is part of a society's reaction to such members who are different and who do not conform to the usual societal expectations. Not only are exceptional individuals stigmatised because they are not normal, but they are also denied the opportunity to be normal by the very society that stigmatises them! We know that society, and particularly the ''disabled community'' (so called because they feel that they are disabled by society) rebel against this, and now also insist on their rights. Thus, legislation was piloted through Parliament to the effect that a certain percentage of the workers in a company should be ''disabled''. Also, a ''disability desk'' was established in the office of the vice president for preparing legislation regarding the disabled.

3.5.7 MARITAL RELATIONSHIP AND FAMILY HARMONY

The research literature tends to support the notion that a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment in the family greatly adds to the everyday stresses and strains of married life. A child with a physical and/or physiological impairment may aggravate existing tension or even precipitate conflict between husband and wife. This could be ascribed to the fatigue caused by bringing up such a child. Irritability and lack of tolerance for frustration, give rise to arguments, outbursts of temper and anger, and these are often misdirected at a spouse. Families may even blame one another for the ''bad blood'' that caused the physical and/or physiological impairment.

Among the factors Cunningham and Davis (1985:77–78) found in their survey of the literature covering the effects of a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment on family harmony were the following:

(1) There is no definite evidence that marital break-up and family disharmony arise from the advent of a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment.
(2) Marital satisfaction decreases over time in all kinds of families, and not just in those with learners with a physical and/or physiological impairment.
(3) Many families with learners with physical and/or physiological impairments remain intact.
(4) If there was a great extent of harmony in the family prior to the diagnosis of a

physical and/or physiological impairment the presence of a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment can even strengthen the family bond.

(5) Families with good organisation, cohesion and agreed role differentiation are more capable of withstanding the stress and strain of having a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment.

From the above-mentioned findings, it is evident that some marriages may deteriorate, while others may improve. This fact is clearly emphasised in the following quotation by Gargiulo (1985:48):

> While it appears that an exceptional child greatly upsets marital equilibrium, this is not true for all couples. Great diversity exists within individual families and even within and across categories of exceptionality. A reduction in marital stability is not necessarily an inevitable consequence of having an impaired child in the family.

Study

3.6 PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL AND/OR PHYSIOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS: A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

The ''new South Africa'' is the sum of all that has gone before and all that is happening at the moment. We have a mosaic of cultures and a spectrum of socioeconomic levels. The rural has been brought into the urban as seen in the squatter camps, while the aim of primary health care is to take Western medicine to distant rural areas in all the provinces.

3.6.1 TRIBAL DOCTORS

As a consequence we find parents in rural areas, squatter communities and townships turning to tribal doctors for answers to their questions and problems. These doctors are consulted for sickness, epidemics, lost property, failure of crops, calamity, infertility, ancestral favours and sudden deaths that cannot be accounted for (Lamla 1975:201). The advice of such doctors may affect parents' responses to their learners with physical and/or physiological impairments and in turn may affect the education of such learners.

3.6.2 ILLITERACY

Many parents living in both rural and urban areas are illiterate. This means that they cannot derive essential information about physical and/or physiological impairments from newspapers or magazines. Such parents may be referred to as being isolated, and the term ''isolation'' is used to indicate lack of education, remoteness and being out of contact, to some extent, with the scientific world. In many cases ignorance goes hand in hand with traditional beliefs and superstition — especially with regard to unfamiliar and bizarre physical and/or physiological impairments such as epilepsy and autism. Remoteness and/or illiteracy also prevent (disempower) parents from influencing the state on the selection of teachers who are suitable to teach their learners. The plight of most of these illiterate parents in rural as well as urban areas is aggravated by poverty.

3.6.3 POVERTY

Poverty in the family often leads to starvation and undernourishment. Poverty may also prevent parents and their learners from visiting medical centres, so they consult tribal doctors. In the absence of men — and this is often true of urban women as well — the women are the ones who bear the brunt of poverty and disaster such as floods and droughts.

A child with a physical and/or physiological impairment puts additional financial strains on the family. Parents may thus not be able to afford to send their child to school owing to transport costs and school fees. Tension resulting from financial problems may adversely affect the education of a child with an impairment.

Often, both parents work in urban areas, and the child with the physical and/or physiological impairment is left in the care of a grandmother in the country. It has been reported by teachers that parents send their child with a physical and/or physiological impairment from their community to the country because they are ashamed of the child, and scared of being rejected by their community. This also causes problems, since the grandmother may be very old and does not have the strength to look after a child with an impairment. In the majority of cases there are also not the necessary facilities such as medical care and schools that are prepared to take in these learners in the remote areas. This can lead to physical neglect of the child.

Study

3.7 POSSIBLE BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL AND/OR PHYSIOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS AS FAR AS TEACHERS ARE CONCERNED



Read again section 3.3 about the possible attitudes of parents as far as their learners with physical and/or physiological impairments are concerned. In section 2.3.2 we briefly touched upon the mistakes parents can make when bringing up their learners. Make a summary of most of these factors that you have come across in parents and of the consequences of these mistakes for the learners.
In this section, however, we wish to look at possible general behavioural patterns that parents have towards teachers. Gascoigne (1995:26–33) mentions the following:

3.7.1 ARTICULATE, ASSERTIVE, EDUCATED PARENTS

These parents appear to be assured; they communicate with self-confidence when speaking to teachers and other professional people; they will seek independent advice; they assume their own position in a discussion about their child and many of them will already have selected their own field of research in which they will have found and collected a great deal of information about their own child's problems.

This apparent show of calm and self-confidence is very often used to mask the parents' real feelings. Like anyone else, they too have guilt feelings, feelings of inadequacy and helplessness, in addition to being frustrated by the education system. Not always sensing these feelings, teachers might discuss with the parents their own shortcomings and particularly those of the system. This could induce the parents to take the initiative and launch their own support system.

3.7.2 ANGRY BUT KNOWLEDGEABLE PARENTS

These parents are well informed about their child's problems but unfortunately they cannot discuss them in a calm and collected way. They clash with the professional people because they think they know better.

Inwardly they are angry with teachers and other professionals because they believe that they do ''not understand their child and are therefore not doing enough for him or her''. They do not accept the fact that there are other learners who also need the teacher's attention and that resources are not always freely available. Many teachers find it difficult to remain calm when engaged in conversation with such parents. The most important thing to remember is that these parents are concerned about their child. Their chief aim is to negotiate the best education for their child.

3.7.3 SUBMISSIVE PARENTS

Submissive parents accept everything they are told about their child but they provide very little spontaneous information about the child: everything has to be drawn out of them.

These parents do not have the self-confidence in the presence of ''professional people'' to share what they know about their child with everyone. If they do not agree with a teacher, they reserve their criticism. They keep their feelings to themselves until they eventually reach breaking point.

3.7.4 UNCARING PARENTS

Some parents do not seem to care about the fact that their learners are having learning difficulties or problems with reading or mathematics. They place the responsibility for learning support squarely on the shoulders of the teachers. It would seem as if they are not interested in continuing the learning support programmes for their learners at home. They have no interest in their learners's homework. In some cases, domestic problems are transmitted to the learners and this manifests itself in behavioural problems.

These parents might have an inner fear of the education system. They themselves may have had a poor experience of schools which has left them with a low priority for education.

3.7.5 ANGRY, UNINFORMED PARENTS

The attitude of these parents is similar to that of the angry, informed parents except for the fact that their knowledge of their child's problems is extremely limited. Very often they do not understand the reason for the problem and believe that they are always right. These are some of the most difficult parents to deal with.

Although these parents misunderstand the problems that their child is experiencing, they care very deeply for their child. In addition, they do not understand the learning support strategies that are being used for their child.

3.7.6 QUARRELSOME PARENTS

These parents are so set on confrontation with the teachers and on accusing the teachers of not doing their work that they often overlook their child's problems. They are more intent on criticising the system and taking it to court than on attending to their child's problems.

These parents could be right because the system does tend to be cumbersome with the result that a great deal of time could be lost before decisions are made and executed. Teachers ought to be aware of the fact that each parent sees his or her problem as having top priority.

3.7.7 PARENTS WHO THEMSELVES EXPERIENCED BARRIERS TO LEARNING

These parents themselves experience barriers to learning: they may have the same problems as their learners, such as serious learning problems, communication problems and so on. They may find it difficult to express their thoughts in words; they struggle to read correspondence and reports about their child's progress; or the things they say are misunderstood. They may experience a language problem, in the sense that they cannot speak or even understand the language used in the school fluently. They therefore have to communicate by means of an interpreter.

Usually they understand their child's problems but feel frustrated and guilty because their child is manifesting the same problems as they have. They feel marginalised because they are not always correctly understood. Teachers have to devote more time to explaining the learning support to these parents and encouraging them to motivate their child.

3.7.8 GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

We cannot expect parents to present only one type of attitude. Like everyone else, they are also subject to mood variations. We need to be conscious of parents' feelings and behaviours and to realise that their feelings and actions do not always correspond. However, we must try to assist and support parents at all times. The better the cooperation between the parents and the school, the more motivated the learners will be to learn.



Think about the parents you have dealt with. Write down the different attitudes which parents have revealed. Now think about how you behaved towards them. Having read the sections above, do you think you might have behaved differently if you had understood their attitudes and behaviours better?

Donald et al (1997:248–249) gives teachers the following guidelines:

You must make time and find the space to conduct interviews with parents. When parents do not have access to transport to get to the school, you should make the effort to visit them. This will help to improve your relationship with the parents. You should be willing to listen to the parents, to ''hear correctly'' what they are trying to say about their concerns about their child's learning difficulties. Some of these parents might be tense and overwrought about their child's ability (or lack of ability) to achieve. Listen to what they have to say and try to give them practical examples of occasions on which their child has actually been successful at school. You should also discuss the learning areas in which the child has difficulties and give them hints on how to assist their child at home. This helps the parents to transfer their anxiety about their child's poor performance to specific areas in which this child does well and others in which he or she battles. It also helps them to become more involved in order to reinforce the child's successes and to help with his or her weaknesses. Be careful not to blame parents for their child's problems.

In all your relationships with parents you should emphasise the partnership which exists between the school and the parents in the course of the teaching of their child. With a positive attitude like this you will be able to win the parents' confidence and get their cooperation with helping the learner with specific tasks (such as reading) at home. The partnership between parents and teacher reinforces the school-family and school-community relationships. However, it requires hard work on the part of the teacher and cannot be accomplished in just one interview.

Finally, you should try to emphasise the positive side at all times; you should communicate to the parents what the learner can do and the methods which work for you. This tends to be more effective than complaining about the learner or blaming others for the barriers that the learner may experience to his learning.

Read

3.8 CONCLUSION

It is not the extent of the physical and/or physiological impairment that complicates his development, but rather the amount and quality of love, understanding and attention that the child receives within the family, and particularly from the parents. Although it has been said that a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment causes the family to be disabled, this is not necessarily true, provided that parents realise that this is not a problem child, but a child that can learn, according to his or her own abilities. If the parent accepts the child, the child learns to accept himself, and to accept others. Acceptance of a child with a physical and/or physiological impairment means that the parents fully accept the child in spite of the impairment. If this does not occur, the following unfortunate situations according to Thurman and Windstrom (1985:228–229) may arise:

(1) Conflict may arise because of disagreements by parents concerning the nature of the disability and the extent to which the needs of a disabled child should influence the needs of the rest of the family.
(2) Disharmony may occur between parents because of the disagreements about the management of behaviour problems of the handicapped child.
(3) Tension may arise because of the amount of time and energy spent on the disabled child and the resultant neglect of other family members. This may result in feelings of resentment in the husband and lead to tension and unresolved conflict in the marriage.

(4) Problems may occur when the family becomes unbalanced by an alliance between one parent and the disabled child, resulting in a feeling of isolation by the other parent.

In conclusion, please remember that a child who experiences barriers to learning presents a family with a variety of problems and many challenges. Parents must accept that their child has a physical and/or physiological impairment, but always remember that they can greatly influence the extent to which that impairment becomes a barrier or a disability or not (see study unit 2.2.1).

It is important to remember that parents of learners with physical and/or physiological impairment require support. This support may take the form of emotional support, family support, community support and often financial support. This support empowers parents to explore their situation fully and to test various ways of coping, without fear of doing irreparable harm to their child. In this way they slowly devise methods of coping. Once they feel that they are not alone they realise that they are able to succeed as worthy and caring parents in their own unique way. Parenting a child with an impairment is a learning experience and the parents will have to learn new ways of thinking, behaving and coping. As a teacher of learners experiencing barriers to learning you should have a thorough *knowledge* of the needs of both parent and child. This imparting of knowledge is not a one-way process flowing from the teacher to the parent, but rather a two-way exchange of information between parents and teachers. Sharing expertise about child development and those aspects that cause particular problems, gives the parents the necessary confidence to nurture their child with a physical and/or physiological impairment.



The following information was sent (available on the Internet) by The Council for Exceptional Children in England to all parents of learners with learning problems. You may possibly communicate this information by means of a workshop to the parents of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments.

(1) Learn all you can about the impairment.

Learning impairments take many forms. As a knowledgeable, informed parent, you will be better able to communicate with teachers about your child, help your child with schoolwork, and develop strategies to help him or her navigate social situations.

(2) Keep in contact with your child's teacher(s).

Teachers want to work with parents. Let them know how your child behaves at home, any difficult times he or she is going through, any subjects or lessons he or she has particularly enjoyed in class. Parents can also play an essential role in working with teachers to develop instructional and behavioral strategies that can be used both in school and at home.

(3) Keep a profile of what your child does well.

This can be important for your child at school and on a personal level. Too many times in the school arena, we tend to focus on the areas in which a child needs to improve. A ''Strengths Profile'' can help teachers and parents remember areas in which the child excels and that can be used to build a curriculum that is meaningful to the child. A ''Strengths Profile'' is also a handy tool parents can use to banish the times when a child is feeling frustrated, a failure, or unable to cope.

(4) *Help your child understand the effect the learning impairment will have on him/her in school as well as socially.*

Even when a child accepts that he or she has a learning impairment, the child may not realize how it will affect his or her life. Parents should help their child understand that the learning impairment may mean he or she will have difficulty reading, that others may become frustrated with the child, or that the child may misread social cues, which can impact his or her social life. Of course, the parents and teachers would also develop intervention strategies to help the child cope with these factors.

(5) *Help your child get organized.*

For many learners with learning impairments, organization is a difficult concept. Parents should not only buy their child an assignment book, they should also teach him how to use it. For example, the child should not only put down the day a project is due, he should also break the project into steps and assign due dates to each one. If possible, parents should also get extra copies of textbooks to keep at home.

(6) *Involve your child in extra-curricular activities.*

Some learners with learning impairments have a difficult time making friends and/or excelling in the school environment. Getting your child involved in extra-curricular activities provides another avenue in which your child can achieve success, as well as gain new friends.

(7) *Involve your child in helping someone else.*

Too often learners with learning impairments fall into the ''poor me'' syndrome. Parents can not only put a stop to this but also boost their child's self-confidence by giving him or her the opportunity to help someone else. Learners with learning impairments have successfully tutored younger learners, helped the elderly, worked in homeless shelters, or in other capacities. Even very young learners have served others successfully.

(8) *Keep your expectations for your child high but realistic.*

It is extremely important that you keep your expectations for your child high, and let your child know that you believe in him or her. If a particular task or assignment is difficult for your child, the answer is not necessarily to make it easier but to help your child find a way to do it. Also, don't forget to ask your child to think. Learners with learning impairments are often very creative and insightful. By asking their opinions and allowing them to figure out the answers to problems, you let them know you trust their intellect and their judgement.

(9) *Help your child learn to ask for what he or she needs.*

While learners with learning impairments often know what they need to learn (such as sitting close to the teacher), they may be afraid to ask for ''special treatment''. By teaching your child self-advocacy skills, you help him or her get the assistance they need to progress in any situation.

(10) *Join or form a group of parents with similar situations.*

You can learn invaluable information from other parents. And, they can be a much-needed source of support in times of stress!

In this study unit you acquired more *KNOWLEDGE* of the attitudes of the parents of learners with barriers to learning, the factors that influence those attitudes, and the effect of the birth of such a child on the parents and eventually on the whole family. You can apply your newly acquired insights *(KNOWLEDGE)* to picture the situation of such parents by imagining how you would cope if you were the parent of a child who was experiencing barriers to learning — your feelings, attitudes, anxieties, uncertainties ... If you can put yourself in the place of these parents you will understand them better and your *ATTITUDE* towards these parents will change. You will also become more expert at handling them effectively, since you will have acquired *KNOWLEDGE* of their situation and your *ATTITUDE* will have changed as a result of having learned to look at the situation ''through other eyes''.

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SECTION B

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TO EDUCATION FOR ALL



STUDY UNIT 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION INTO EDUCATION FOR ALL IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Read

In study unit 1 you were introduced to the new trends in special education and the fact that there was a worldwide paradigm shift from special education to the concept of ''education for all''. The high extent of confusion that exists as far as terminology and concepts are concerned serves as an indication that there are still ongoing debates worldwide about policies in this regard. There is one conference after another, and nobody can really keep up with the new developments. The new trends can also be seen in South Africa. You have already learned about the NCSNET/NCESS report. It seems as though the Department of Education has accepted most of the recommendations in this report on learners experiencing barriers to learning, and we can assume that our new policy concerning these learners will be an education-for-all policy. In this study unit we shall first look at the development of this education policy in other countries.

Although this is an outline of a history that is in the past, it does not mean that it has no meaning for us. It is important for us to see that the way in which persons with physical and/or physiological impairments were treated during a particular period, is a reflection of the opinions and value judgments of that period. Naturally it is still true today that the way in which we ourselves behave towards those who have problems, indicates an underlying attitude towards these learners. When you have studied this section, you should be in a better position to make a critical assessment of the way in which learners experiencing barriers to learning are treated and the extent to which their educational needs are met.

In this study unit we shall refer to ''persons with physical impairments'' rather than to ''*disabled persons*'' or ''*persons with disabilities*'', although the latter terms were used previously. The term ''*persons experiencing barriers to learning*'' with circumspection, since it is a wide concept including everybody experiencing learning disturbances or failure in learning. Previously, the emphasis was only on persons with physical impairments, and not on other learners who experienced barriers to learning because of extrinsic factors.



Outcomes

By the end of this study unit you should therefore be able to demonstrate

- *that you can take a critical look at the development of special education throughout the century, and that you can explain how today's policy of education-for-all developed from those early interventions with learners with physical impairments (the term ''disabled'' would also be applicable, since in*

- *those days these persons were also disabled by society — see study unit 1, in which the difference was explained to you*
- *how, in our history, we can distinguish certain phases in the way in which persons with physical and/or physiological impairments were treated, among others*

  — *primitive peoples*
  — *ancient civilisations*
  — *the early Christian period*
  — *the Middle Ages*
  — *the Age of Enlightenment*
  — *1900 to approximately 1965*
  — *recent decades*

- *that you understand the meaning of certain modern trends such as ''inclusive education'' and ''education for all''*
- *that you are aware of the fact that the education and care of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments were in the past, and still are today, influenced by certain value judgments*

Read

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We mentioned above that it is important to know the historical course of something specific because this can provide us with valuable insights into the matter. Now, when we begin to consider the ways in which our antecedents treated persons with physical impairments in particular, we can see that, in each case, there were specific motives for their behaving in the way they did. Finally it also helps us to evaluate our own situation more critically. Apart from this, you will see that, when we read history, we often notice that what happened in earlier times is really not so far removed from our own practices. Aspects of what happened then still occur today. Furthermore, you will notice that work with persons with physical impairments in the past can still teach us a great deal about them and the way in which they can be taught, even today.

In the course of the discussion we shall be distinguishing certain periods of history. These are not clearly delimited periods — they are phases in which certain characteristics feature more prominently than in others. This does not, however, mean that certain actions mentioned in one phase did not also occur during other phases. On the contrary, all the characteristics we discuss in the different phases may still occur today.

It is vital for you to understand that the way in which people behave towards learners with physical impairments is simply a reflection of what they believe and think about these individuals. Thus we need to note not only how communities behaved, but also why they behaved as they did.

Read

4.2 PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES

In primitive societies people's basic motive was a struggle for survival. They were

often forced to flee at short notice from such perils as wild animals or hostile tribes. In most of these societies it was common practice either to exterminate persons with physical impairments such as the blind, the physically disabled, and even the aged, or to consign them to their own destiny. We may assume that, in addition, there were all sorts of superstitions that justified these customs.

Although this practice of extermination may sound to us like something from the distant past, Heaton-Ward (1977:47) points out that these customs were followed well into the twentieth century, for example, by tribes in the South Sea Islands.



- *Why, in your opinion, did the primitive societies act as they did towards their persons with physical impairments?*

Read

4.3 THE ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

The custom of extermination was also practised in the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations. In these civilisations the interests of the state predominated. The physical health and strength of the inhabitants was of the utmost importance because it fostered success in battle. In the Greek city states of Sparta and Athens, the law stipulated that every baby should be inspected by the patriarchs before it was decided whether the infant could be allowed to live. Those babies which appeared to be weak or physically impaired were rejected and exterminated. The history books of the period tell us that these babies were cast into a river, left on a mountain side (Sparta) or left outside in clay pots (Athens). Roman laws stipulated that the father of a baby should do the inspection and decide whether or not the baby could live. Rejected babies were left in a basket on the River Tiber.

It is interesting to note that this practice of extermination was not adopted by all countries in ancient times. In ancient Egypt and in India there was legislation forbidding these practices. In the Old Testament and in the Talmud there are frequent references to the blind and the crippled. They were therefore allowed to live, although they often had to live outside the city and were not allowed to live among other people.



- *For what reasons were physical strength and beauty so important to these ancient civilisations?*
- *How did these civilisations treat their learners with physical impairments?*

Read

4.4 THE EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD

The first centuries after Christ saw the development of a new, more compassionate approach towards persons with physical impairments. In 300 AD the first Christian emperor of the Roman Empire retracted the right of fathers to decide on the life of their learners. All the same, persons with physical impairments and mental disorders were not welcome in communities. This gave rise to the custom of some

monasteries establishing asylums where these cast-out individuals could seek refuge, and, in turn, to begging, since these persons sometimes had to provide for their own care.

Read

4.5 THE MIDDLE AGES

The Middle Ages was a dark period in European history. Only those who lived in monasteries were literate. Some monasteries continued to have asylums for the rejected but the lifestyle of the ordinary people was very largely determined by superstition and tradition. Persons with physical impairments were treated in various ways — depending on what beliefs surrounded their particular malady. Those who behaved unnaturally, such as epileptics who suffered seizures, or the mentally disabled or deaf, were often considered to be possessed by the devil, and might be cast out, pursued, incarcerated or even burnt at the stake. Royal castles often retained persons with physical impairments such as dwarfs, simpletons or hunchbacks for the amusement and entertainment of guests. With a few exceptions, the life of someone with physical impairments during this period was difficult and wretched.



During this period superstition determined people's reactions towards persons with physical impairments.

Do you know of people who, even today, have a superstitious approach towards persons with physical impairments?

Read

4.6 THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The dark ages gradually made way for a more level-headed and scientific approach to life and this led to the Renaissance, the Reformation and the French Revolution. A period of great change and renewal in social, industrial and scientific endeavour was ushered in. The feudal system with its class differences was abolished, philosophers such as Locke, Diderot and Rousseau propagated the individual freedom of every person, and the right of all people to equal rights; there was great progress in the fields of physiology, neurology, physics and so on. This increase in knowledge and the new realisation of the inherent value of every person dispelled a great deal of the ignorance and superstition and gave rise to a more scientific approach to the treatment of persons with physical impairments.

This more enlightened view prepared the way for the first attempts at systematically teaching persons with physical impairments, and various pioneers in the field of caring for and teaching persons with physical impairments began to emerge.

As far as we know, the first of these leaders were a number of Spaniards who, as far back as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, devoted themselves to teaching deaf mutes. The Benedictine monk, Pedro Ponce de Leon (1500–1584) is generally acknowledged as the founder of education of the deaf. Starting with the written word, he taught these learners words and their meanings. Ramirez, also from Spain, showed greater insight into the nature of deaf-mutism, in that he realised that deaf-mutes did not have defective speech organs but that their impaired speech was the

result of an inability to hear. One of his recommendations was that deaf individuals should exercise their tongues in order to learn to speak more easily. Another Spaniard who became famous in this field was Bonet who, in 1620 wrote an excellent book in which he described in fine detail, how to teach deaf-mutes.

In 1765 in Paris, a young priest, Abbé de l'Eppée, also started teaching deaf people while, in Leipzig in Germany, a lawyer by the name of Heincke, founded a school for the deaf.

Some of the early innovators in the sphere of teaching the blind came from Italy. In 1670 a Jesuit, Lana Terzi wrote a book on how to teach the blind. However, the first school for the blind was established by a Frenchman, Valentin Haüy. He was fascinated by the fate of the blind people in Paris and by the achievements of blind people of that time, such as Maria Theresa von Paradis (in Austria). One of Haüy's bright learners, Louis Braille, developed the raised writing whereby blind people would learn to read hence the writing for the blind, still called Braille today.

Further dramatic developments during this period were Pinel's radical methods for the treatment of persons with intellectual impairments. Then there was a French doctor by the name of Itard, who was the first to try to teach people with severe intellectual impairments. This began when hunters discovered a boy who had been nurtured by wolves in a forest near Aveyron. They thought that this wild boy was half animal, half human, and took him to a hospital. Here he was christened ''Savage'' and came to the attention of Doctor Itard. The latter devoted a great deal of time and effort to the boy. He later called him Victor and eventually got him to the point where he (Victor) could speak and even accompany his teacher to a restaurant. In a book entitled *The wild boy of Aveyron*, Itard described his teaching methods, thereby achieving international fame.

During the same period in other parts of the world, there were individuals who pioneered the field of teaching persons with physical impairments. In some cases they were influenced by reports of the success of the people mentioned above. In other cases their work was independent. We can also refer to Nocholas Saunderson, a blind person, who succeeded Sir Isaac Newton as professor in Mathematics at the University of Cambridge.

In the USA too, it was a doctor by the name of Howe who began to teach the blind. He became famous for his success with the deaf and blind person, Laura Bridgman. He was also responsible for training Helen Keller's teacher. Helen Keller, another deaf-blind person, was exceptionally intelligent. She went on to write the story of her life, and even travelled all over the world, telling of her experiences.

Güggenbuhl was a young Swiss physician who felt a compassion for the difficult circumstances of the large numbers of persons with mental impairments. He built an institution for them on the slopes of the Abendberg where he treated and taught them, using Itard's method of sensory stimulation as well as other methods. Scientists from all over the world visited the institution which became the model for similar institutions in many other European countries. The story goes that Howe, the American, was so overcome while on a visit to the Abendberg that he cried out, ''The holy mount it should be called'' (Kanner 1974:25).



Consider the following

- *Do you notice that, in the beginning, it was mainly doctors who were involved in working with persons with physical impairments?*
- *Why, do you think, did educationists from this period still show no interest in persons with physical impairments?*

Nevertheless, even during this period there were certain groups of persons with physical impairments who still received very little attention. One such group consisted of epileptics who, up to the beginning of the twentieth century were still certifiable. They were often kept in institutions together with the mentally disturbed.

Read

4.7 1900 TO APPROXIMATELY 1965

On the basis of the successes described above, the education of the blind and the deaf in particular now began to gather momentum, and in most countries schools were built for the blind and the deaf. These schools were not, however, founded by education authorities, but mainly by religious associations. It was only some decades later that the education authorities began to take over these schools.

In the educational sphere it was always the particular characteristics of the group of persons with physical impairments that gave rise to a separate type of school for learners with that form of impairment. As knowledge increased and more refined means of diagnosis were developed, more and more categories of learners with physical impairments were distinguished and more and more types of schools were founded.

Because of the great numbers of soldiers who received head injuries in the Second World War, this was time of considerable research into brain functioning and the effect of brain damage. Consequently persons such as Strauss, Lehtinen, Kephart and Cruickshank gained exceptional insights into learners with brain damage. This gave rise to the concept of ''learning disabilities''. A learning disability is a physical impairment that, although it is not externally visible or noticeable, nevertheless gives rise to learning problems arising from neurological brain dysfunction. Initially it was called ''minimal brain dysfunction'' or ''MBD''. Later, the name ''learning disabilities'' was used. It was because of this development that schools for these impairments were established in the USA and elsewhere.

During this period and until recently, the education of learners with physical impairments was to a large extent influenced by the medical profession. Some of the characteristics of this are the following:

- Learners were grouped into categories on the basis of their medical diagnosis.
- Each category of learner with a physical impairment was taught in a separate school. These schools were usually located away from the mainstream and these learners had limited opportunity to mix with other learners or ordinary society.
- Education was usually geared to improving each learner's specific deficiencies and problems. (Just as the medical profession's medicines are intended to improve a diagnosed disease.)
- There was a multidisciplinary approach to education with medical and paramedical staff as part of the learner's educational team. Thus, doctor, dentist, psychologist, physiotherapist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, and

teacher form a joint team that decides on the learner's education. Teachers are often told prescriptively by specialists from the medical profession how they should teach the learners.
- The influence of environment and home was not seen as an important factor. From a very early age learners were often sent to school far away from their homes and had to adapt to hostel life. This caused these learners to become strangers to the environment and the community that they came from.
- The aim of education was mainly to improve individual learners's deficiencies (as mentioned above), and not so much to prepare them to become part of a community.

As a result of the above-mentioned characteristics of specialised education during this period we speak of the clinical, medical, individual or healing (curative) approach to specialised education. In fact, it is this approach that gave rise to the name ''specialised education'', which is now being objected against since once again these learners are being excluded and marginalised by the community because of the spesialised nature of their education. This often results in such a learner being stigmatised, so that he is not socially accepted. Burden (1999:13) also refers to the ''charity model'', in which persons with physical impairments were treated in a ''patronising and pitying manner'', ''making them objects of charity and not human beings of worth''.

Any reference in the literature to the medical, clinical or individual approach to the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning means that it has the above-mentioned characteristics.



- *Do you understand why this form of specialised education is called the ''medical'' or ''clinical'' model?*
- *What do you consider to be the advantages of this model? Write them down.*
- *Do you think that this model could have any disadvantages? Write them down.*

One group of persons with physical impairments whose education was greatly neglected during the first half of twentieth century was the group with intellectual impairments. Although both Itard and his successor, Seguin, did a fair amount of work among these people, their education did not develop to the same extent as did that of persons with other impairments.

One of the reasons for this was the prevailing concept of intelligence. Intelligence tests were developed by Binet and Simon in 1918. Since the intelligence quotient (IQ) was considered to be reliable, a person's inborn intellectual ability was believed to be unchangeable — even with good tuition. Thus, while schools for learners with various forms of impairments were established, persons with severe intellectual impairments were labelled ''ineducable'' and excluded from education.

No wonder that Robinson and Robinson (1965: preface) later wrote: ''The mentally retarded, in great number and in dire need, have remained until this decade among the most ignored and least regarded of all learners.'' Also commenting on this, McMaster (1973:105) asserted that ''There has been educational neglect bordering on the criminal''.

Later in this period however, schools for these learners came into being and the term ''ineducable'' gradually slipped out of use.

Study

4.8 RECENT DECADES

In recent decades people have become generally more aware of the importance of environment. Most social sciences such as psychology, education, sociology, theology and so on, acknowledge the decisive influence of environment. The effect of this in specialised education has been that the medical model has made way for the social or ecological model.

The Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, have been the forerunners of this movement. These countries have an exceptionally high level of provision for the sick, the aged, persons with physical impairments and others who are dependent on the state. Indeed, they are known as the ''welfare states''. As regards the education of persons with physical impairments, a group of Swedish parents of learners with physical impairments pressurised the government to provide their learners with ''normal'' accommodation and education. They also insisted that the concept of ''normalisation'' be inserted in the legislation on the treatment of persons with physical impairments.

''Normalisation'' implied circumstances that were as close as possible to ''normal'', including such aspects as a normal environment, a normal daily routine, normal education practices, a normal exposure to society, and so on. It also meant that a child with a physical impairment would be able to live in a normal home with his parents, brothers and sisters, in a normal society; that he would be taught to behave as ''normally'' as possible and that he would eventually be able to work in an ordinary community. Thus ''normalisation'' also means ''integration'', because, after all, a normal lifestyle is one in which one lives among ''normal'' people.

In many respects, the principles of normalisation and integration were diametrically opposed to the traditional customs in specialised education where learners were placed in separate schools, were seldom allowed to go home and, in many cases, had very little contact with other learners and normal society.



Do you think that all persons with a physical impairment can live a ''normal'' life?

- *Give an example of a person with a physical impairment (even an imaginary one) who, in your opinion, can live a normal life.*
- *Then give an example of a person with a physical impairment who, in your opinion, cannot live a normal life.*
- *How do you think society views these persons?*
- *Are they seen as ''normal'' by society?*
- *How should society feel about these persons?*

Two approaches to education which stem from the normalisation principle, merit further discussion:

Mainstreaming

The normalisation principle gave rise to the ''mainstream'' concept because, in order to live ''normally'', learners with physical impairments should, as far as possible, be educated under normal circumstances. In due course it was established that learners with physical impairments were able to learn a great deal under these normal circumstances that they were not able to learn in isolation. For example, they acquire language and social skills more easily when they are among ordinary learners than

when they mix only with learners with physical impairments. At the same time, the other learners learn to understand and accept the learners with physical impairments, and to behave ''normally'' towards them.

''Mainstreaming'' as an approach in education in which learners who experience barriers to learning were placed in mainstream education gained momentum in the late 1970s (Davies & Green 1998: 97), particularly in the USA. Epstein (1984:xii) writes that ''the least restrictive environment'' means not only ''assigning learners with special problems to regular classes'', but also providing these learners with ''a learning environment in which every possible obstruction to learning has been eliminated''.

In most countries, mainstreaming had the following implications:

- Each child has an individual teaching programme (Individualised Educational Program — IEP).
- The same multidisciplinary services usually provided in special schools now need to be available in the mainstream of education as well.

Although there were various placement alternatives (from ordinary schools, ordinary classes with specialised aid, special classes in ordinary schools, special schools, to institutions — depending on the nature and intensity of the physical impairment) and the learner had to be placed in that education situation that would, for him, be the least restrictive and the closest possible to the normal, there was increasing criticism against this approach. Polloway and Patten (1993:136) wrote that ''... students with disabilities have been placed or kept in the general program with little collaboration supporting their instructional needs and services''. This resulted in the learners being ''dumped'' in the mainstream without taking into consideration the diversity of these learners. These learners were also not really accepted in the mainstream: it was rather a case of them adapting to the system than the system providing for them.

Inclusion

''Inclusive education'' goes further than placing learners experiencing barriers to learning in ordinary schools. It refers to the philosophy of accepting all people as they are and the education of all learners as they are — education for all. The NCSNET/NCESS report (Department of Education 1997:54) says that ''appropriate and effective education must be organised in such a way that all learners have access to a single education system that is responsive to diversity. No learners should be prevented from participating in this system, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, language, or other differences''. This means that all learners should have access to ordinary education, to the curriculum and to supportive services when they need them.

''QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL'' therefore implies a shift from

- ''special needs and support '' to the development of quality education for all learners
- changing the child to make him fit into or to conform to the norms and standards of a specific society (barriers and exclusion) to changing society to accommodate all learners and to support them in order to learn effectively according to their ability and needs (removal of barriers and inclusion)

This change in school of thought or ''paradigm shift'' took place because of the

shortcomings or failures of previous worldwide approaches such as the medical model and the mainstream policy we discussed earlier on.

The rationale behind the above-mentioned decisions can be explained as follows:

Inclusive education and, by implication, education for all, therefore proceeds on the assumption that a society consists of persons with a diversity of cultures, languages, races, genders, abilities, and temperaments. When all is said and done, no two individuals are the same. Indeed, it is ''normal'' that in a society there will be a diversity of people. One is not better than another. All are people and all have the right to be part of that society. For this reason they need to be accepted and accommodated with tolerance. Thus, in reality, a society which excludes certain persons is not ''normal'' because it does not reflect the full range of diversity (see Burden 1995:45; Jenkins & Sileo 1994:16; Meyer et al 1994:16; Rankin et al 1994:237).

Learners experiencing barriers to learning (in the widest sense of the word) also form part of any normal community and thus of a normal-education community as well. For this reason, too, they should be accepted as part of that community.

The following statements from a few international policy documents serve as good illustrations of this approach:

(1) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Article 23 ... ''a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life in conditions which:

- ensure dignity
- promote self-reliance, and
- facilitate the child's active participation in the community

(2) Jomtiem World Conference of Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs (1990)

- the inherent right of all learners to a full cycle of primary education
- the commitment to a child-centred concept of education in which individual differences are accepted as a source of diversity, a challenge and not a problem
- the improvement of the quality of primary education including improvements in professional training, the provision of more flexible and primary schooling, with respect to organisation, process and content
- greater parental and community participation in education
- recognition of the wide diversity of needs and patterns of development of primary school learners, demanding a wider and more flexible range of responses
- commitment to a developmental, intersectoral and holistic approach to education and care of primary school learners

(3) Standard Rules of Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations General Assembly (1993)

Rule 6

- States should recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for learners, youth and adults with

disabilities, in integrated settings. They should ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the educational system
- General educational authorities are responsible for the education of persons with disabilities in integrated settings. Education for persons with disabilities form an integral part of national educational planning, curriculum development and school organisation

(4) Salamanca Statement (1994)

Regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combatting discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of learners and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

Salamanca Definition of Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN)

Learners with special needs include:

- those who are currently enrolled in primary school but for various reasons do not progress adequately
- those who are currently not enrolled in primary schools but who could be enrolled if the schools were responsive, and
- the relatively smaller group of learners with more severe physical, mental or multiple impairments who have more complex special needs that are not being met.

In the course of this world congress in Salamanca, Spain, during which the above-mentioned declarations were accepted, ''inclusion'' was accepted as the proper policy for the education of learners with special educational needs (as it was called then). In 1995, at an international congress on ''Special Educational Needs'' in Birmingham, this decision was confirmed. A congress following on the Jomtiem Congress in Thailand (1990) is held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 to discuss the progress of education in those countries who signed the declaration.

Thus the motives behind the principle of inclusion are about a specific view of people, specific attitudes and value systems (Hilton & Smith 1994:253, Burden 1999:15). It is a reaction against existing discriminatory practices of the past that led to the preference of certain groups to others. It is so easy to attach ''labels'' to people, thereby, as it were, expressing a value judgment about them. For example, they may be called ''fat'', ''mentally disabled'', ''environmentally disadvantaged'', ''homosexual''; they may be consigned to one or other minority group, cultural group or race group, they may live in ''that'' area, and so on (see Jenkins & Sileo 1994:84). The implication is that they are ''different'' and therefore ''not one of us'' or ''not normal''. An attitude like this may even conceal a hidden superiority, an attitude of ''after all, they are not worth as much as we are''. Even though these attitudes may not be expressed, they are nevertheless insinuated.

The outcome of these discriminatory practices is that those who do not belong to the ''normal'', are often kept ''separate'' — disabled learners were obliged to receive ''separate'' education and, in our country, persons of other races were also kept ''separate''. In this manner, individuals who did not belong to those groups were excluded from the ordinary experiences of life and were thus disabled by society.

Moreover, recent decades have seen the development of a critical school of thought in philosophy which has been reflected in education. It is known as ''critical pedagogics'' from the Frankfurter Schule in Germany. According to this, existing dispensations and practices are critically assessed in order to find out the extent to which they may also be responsible for people's problems. (In study unit 2 we saw how a child's environment may often be responsible for his problems.) For example, Hahn, an advocate of critical pedagogics, explained that a person's disability may arise from the inability of a society to adapt to the needs and aspirations of the disabled person, rather than from the inability of the person with the physical impairment to adapt to society.

Paulo Freire's writings about the *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1984) also greatly influenced criticism against society. According to Burden (1999:15), this approach is based on the sociocritical approach, or the sociopolitical theory (Thistleton 1992:397, Barton 1993:10). Skrtic (Burden 1999:15) emphasises the necessity of social reconstruction and the deconstruction as well as reconstruction of public education as an integral part of democratising society. Although Burden (1999:15) underlines the importance of this shift in education she warns that it runs the risk of being too subjective and relativistic in nature. In her opinion, however, this sociocritical approach is much more human in nature, provided that diversity is accommodated in an equitable and qualitative manner in society. ''The emphasis is on consolidation, unity, holism, inclusivity, equality (not sameness but commonalities as human beings) and changing the social context, not the individual.'' T*ransformation* should therefore begin changing the system and by removing barriers in the system hindering or preventing learners from learning, and not the individual, the person (Burden 1995:47). People should be respected, accepted and accommodated for who they are — namely worthy people with unique and diverse qualities — and not for what others and the community expect them to be to suit their criteria of normalisation and excellence. Burden (1999:15–16) comes to the following conclusion:

> In providing basic and quality education for all, and thus accommodating diversity according to the principles of equality and inclusivity, it is believed that all human beings should be enabled to affirm themselves and live and work in a dignified manner.



Case study

Read the following case study and then think about the questions that follow.

The role of society may be seen in the following case:

Ronnie is a seventeen-year-old boy who grew up in the country. Unable to use the limbs on his left side, he had a physical impairment. Thus he walked awkwardly, dragging his left foot. His left hand also had limitations. In addition his speech was indistinct because his tongue and the muscles of his mouth were partially affected. Like many other learners at the farm school, neither he nor his parents were very concerned about his academic progress. He dropped out of school just after completing grade six. He did not mind this because he found many pleasant things to do on the farm. He faithfully cared for the chickens and fed the pigs. Everyone who knew him could understand what he was saying and knew what they could expect of him. Furthermore, they were fond of him because he had an exceptionally loving, jovial and helpful nature.

When Ronnie's father went bankrupt and was forced to sell his farm, Ronnie had to move to the nearest industrial city with his parents. Here, after an enormous battle, his father eventually found a job as a truck driver. But Ronnie could not find work. His reading and writing skills were inadequate and he was not suited to manual labour. He found life in a flat extremely boring and this led him to spend more and more time in the streets. The people in the vicinity did not know or understand him and frequently called him ''mad'', ''drunk'' or ''stupid'' because of his strange way of walking and mumbling speech. As time went on, he became more and more involved with idlers and criminals.

Questions

- Can you see that, for Ronnie, his first environment was ideal since he could live a meaningful and ''normal'' life there while, because of his needs, the second environment was not the type of area in which he could live.
- Which of Ronnie's best characteristics did not emerge in the second environment?

FEEDBACK

You should be able to see that Ronnie was not the one who changed in this environment: it was the demands of society that were different. The second environment therefore ''disabled'' him and prevented him from leading a meaningful and ''normal'' life.

Inclusion thus advocates the acceptance of the learner ''just as he is''. Each child in the class should be viewed as an individual with his or her own needs — not just a learner with a specific problem. All learners can therefore learn, but not all at the same speed and at the same level. The curriculum, tasks and education strategies and methods should be adapted for each learner. Just like a clever learner needs certain special adjustments to the curriculum, the teaching methods or the class organisation, a learner who is a poor reader, who is hard of hearing, or who displays behavioural problems should also be seen as part of the ordinary class, and should be assisted accordingly.

Those who advocate the principle of inclusion like to use the concept of ''Education for All'' to emphasise this idea (this concept has now been mentioned several times). They disapprove of any ''labelling'' concepts — including ''learners with special educational needs'' (used in the **Salamanca** declaration).

Ainscow (1995:2) asserts that the old system ''... not only works to the disadvantage of particular learners but also acts as a barrier to overall school improvement''. According to Burden (1999:19) the concept of *''Equal and Quality Education for All''* has a specific meaning — it implies the availability of education to all and the inclusion of all learners in one system of education in an *equitable* and qualitative manner in order to attain excellence. This can be done only if the system is adapted and reconstructed in order to effectively accommodate diversity.



Consider the following questions:

- *Are persons with physical impairments in our communities viewed and accepted as part of normal society?*
- *Are learners experiencing barriers to learning at your school accepted as part of a normal school population?*
- *What is your attitude towards learners in your class who ''differ'' from other learners? How do you accept them? How do you provide for them?*

Read

4.9 SUMMARY

In this study unit you learnt how the education of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments developed from separate schools for each impairment to the concept of education for all that is now finding a worldwide response as a ''rectification'' of the ''wrong'' attitude towards and treatment of these learners in the past.

For centuries, however, there has been a long history of how communities treated persons with physical impairments. We also considered the fact that those practices masked certain attitudes or convictions and that these gave rise to the practices concerned. Today we believe that all people, whatever their mutual differences may be, form part of a normal society, and that they should be accepted just as they are. In education, this attitude has given rise to the principles of education for all.

Thus, we could summarise the contents of this study unit as follows:

- Specialised education in which learners were educated in separate schools arose from interventions with persons with physical impairments.
- The first attempts of educating persons with physical impairments came mainly from doctors and the clergy (ministers).
- It was only in the twentieth century that educationists became involved in the education of persons with physical impairments.
- Initially, the educational approach had a predominantly medical and clinical orientation.
- At present, the sociocritical perspective is the dominant perspective.
- Policies such as ''inclusive education'' and ''education for all'' are related to the above perspective.

In the next study unit we shall disuss the policy as it developed in South Africa.

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STUDY UNIT 5

THE DEVELOPMENT FROM SPECIALISED EDUCATION TO EDUCATION FOR ALL IN SOUTH AFRICA

The previous study unit contained a short historical overview of the development from specialised education to education for all as accepted worldwide today. Among other things we learnt that specialised education arose from the work done among persons with physical impairments; that, in fact, it was only in the twentieth century that there was any involvement in education for learners with physical impairments on the part of educationists; that the initially medical or clinical approach of specialised education began to make way for a sociocritical approach and that policies such as inclusive education and education for all are related to this approach.

In this study unit we shall be considering the development of specialised education in South Africa up to inclusive education. As one might expect, the history of our country has been influenced by developments in other countries. In broad outline, we have the same elements here as in other countries. There is, however, one big difference between the history in this and in other countries: the political history of our country has given rise to different education systems, with dramatic differences in quality between various systems.



Outcomes

At the end of this study unit you should be able to demonstrate that

- *you have an overview of the development of specialised education up to inclusive education in South Africa with reference to the*
  - *early years*
  - *colonial period*
  - *apartheid era (1948–1994)*
  - *new period*



PLEASE NOTE

The latter will be discussed very briefly since the current policy will be discussed in detail in the following study unit.

Read

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa the history of specialised education followed more or less the same course as in other countries — it was initiated by the clergy (ministers); this was followed later by the work of church organisations, the gradual involvement of the state, the addition of new types of schools as new forms of disabilities were diagnosed and, eventually, the growing realisation that these learners should not be isolated but be included in the mainstream of education.

Nevertheless, there is one aspect of the development of specialised education in South Africa that deviated from the course followed in the rest of the world, namely the extent to which it was influenced by political and philosophical thinking. This gave rise to a differentiated system of education with dramatic differences between the various systems. Although, in this advanced certificate, it is not necessary to distinguish between the various ethnic groups, we shall be referring to Indians, coloured, black and white people because, without doing so, we cannot describe the historical development.

South African history is divided into four periods: the early years, the colonial period, the apartheid era and the new period.

Read

5.2 THE EARLY YEARS (BEFORE 1652)

In the seventeenth century the southern part of this continent was inhabited by black tribes. There were the nomadic Khoi and San who inhabited the southern parts, while the Nguni, Sotho, Venda and Tsonga, each with its subtribes, lived in the central areas. Traditional tribal customs were passed on to succeeding generations by means of nonformal teaching methods. These tribal customs almost certainly included the handling of learners with physical impairments.

We may assume that, in those early years, extermination was practised — as it was in other unsophisticated communities. Sello (1995:135) claims that learners whose appearance was unusual or different such as twins or individuals with physical impairments were killed at birth. They were viewed as a bad omen or an indication that the ancestors were dissatisfied.

Read

5.3 THE COLONIAL PERIOD (1652–1947)

It was during the period of Dutch colonisation (1652–1795) that the first formal schools were established. They were small and simple and their purpose was to teach people to read the Bible. These little schools were under the direct control of the church (Behr & McMillan 1971:3).

The British occupation (1806+) saw the introduction of a formal system of education with English as the official medium of tuition (Hofmeyr 1982:6). After the Anglo-Boer War, when the independent Boer Republics were taken over by England, the Union of South Africa came into being (Jones 1979:44). Education now took on a characteristic form with state schools providing free and compulsory education for white learners but not for black learners. For many years the mission churches would undertake the task of educating the other race groups. It is in this regard that Graaf and Gordon (1992:209) declare that ''African education was mission education''.

As was the case elsewhere in the world, during these years there was no official education for learners with physical impairments. They remained at home. By the end of the nineteenth century, the first school for learners with physical impairments was established in South Africa when six Irish nuns of the Dominican Order of the Roman Catholic Church founded the Grimley Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in Gardens Square in Cape Town in 1863 (Behr 1988:121). This school was rapidly expanded into two, the Dominican school for the Deaf in Cape Town (for white learners) and the Dominican school for the Deaf at Wittebome (for coloured learners). Meanwhile, a group of ministers belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church also became concerned about the plight of deaf and blind learners and, in 1881, they persuaded the synod to establish the ''Doofstommen en Blinden Instituut'' at Worcester. The Dominican Sisters went on to begin other schools for learners with physical impairments, including the Dominican School for the Deaf in King William's Town (1886); St Vincent's School for the Deaf in Johannesburg, and the Athlone School for the Blind, in Athlone, for coloured learners. These were all private schools that received no financial support from the government.

From 1900 onwards, the education department became involved in specialised education for the first time when the Cape Education Department recognised these schools, sent a school inspector to inspect the schools and began to pay half the salaries of the teachers. With the promulgation of the Vocational Education and Special Education Act 29 of 1928, the Education Department now assumed responsibility for this education. This meant that the Union Education Department could establish ''special schools'' for white learners with physical impairments. The result was the founding of various schools, including schools for ''cripples'', ''epileptics'' and ''chronically sick'' learners (Behr 1988:122). Since there was still no compulsory education of black learners at this stage, there were no schools for black learners with physical impairments. Once again it was the churches who provided for this need.

The year 1937 saw the introduction of the Special Schools Amendment Act, according to which it became compulsory for all parents of learners with physical impairments to send their learners to school, regardless of how far they lived from such schools. This meant that these schools had to provide hostel accommodation and, naturally, there was a marked increase in the number of learners requiring these facilities.

The next development was that the government launched a comprehensive investigation into the need for specialised education for learners between the ages of seven and 18. The committee also had to make recommendations on ''mentally deviate'' learners and on the medical and therapeutic treatment required for these learners. The results of the investigation were published in the *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Deviate Children*. This report was followed in 1948 by new legislation, the Special Schools Act. From here onwards specialised education included the provision of ''medical and mental diagnosis and treatment''.



Now answer the following questions

- *When did the first schools for specialised education come into being?*
- *What were the characteristics of these schools?*
- *Why can we say that the approach of this education was still predominantly clinical/medical in nature?*
- *What was the situation of the majority of black learners with physical impairments?*

Thus it is clear that during the first three centuries of colonisation, the foundation was laid for compulsory specialised education for white learners with physical impairments in separate schools and characterised by a medical-clinical approach. Churches were the main agents for specialised education for learners with physical impairments from other race groups. Since schooling was not compulsory for these learners, however, most of them remained at home.

Read

5.4 THE APARTHEID ERA (1948–1994)

In 1948 the National Party came to power, bringing in its policy of apartheid. The cornerstone of this political dispensation was the Population Registration Act 30 of 1950 which classified everyone into one of four race groups. In order to promote separate development, 10 separate ''homelands'' were also established, and to facilitate separate education for each cultural group, 17 different education departments were created, all of which were under the central control of the state. The outcome of this was that the same posts, functions and responsibilities were duplicated 17 times. However, there was a radical difference between the per capita (per child) funding of the various departments.

During the apartheid era specialised education for white learners expanded in both quantity and quality. As in other countries, the identification of new categories of disabilities (we retain the term ''disability/disabilities'' here, as used at the time) gave rise to a multiplicity of new acts to meet the need. This is why there were separate schools for each of the following categories of learners: the deaf, the hard of hearing, the blind, the partially sighted, epileptics, cerebral palsied, physically disabled, those with specific learning disabilities, autistic learners and the severely mentally disabled.

Once again, as elsewhere, the education tended to be strongly medical. In terms of the Education Affairs Act 70 of 1988, specialised education was described as ''education of a specialised nature provided to suit the needs of handicapped learners''. Education included the necessary psychological, medical, dental, paramedical and therapeutic treatment: the performing of operations; the provision of artificial medical aids (such as artificial limbs); hostel facilities, the transportation of the learners and the counselling of their parents.

This era also saw the initiation of specialised training of teachers for these schools (Behr 1988:125). Naturally there was separate training for each of the different types of disabilities.



- *Look at the characteristics of a medical model of specialised education (study unit 4). To what extent did this type of education comply with those criteria?*
- *Do you find any indications of the sociocritical approach underlying inclusive education and education for all in this type of education?*

In the meantime (1960) the schools that had been founded by the churches were transferred to the various education departments which had been created for each of the different race groups. Education was then regulated by the following acts: the Bantu Education Act 24 of 1964, the Coloured Persons Education Act 47 of 1963, and the Indian Education Act 61 of 1965. Legally, however, there was still no compulsory education for black learners.

Most of the special schools for black learners with physical impairments were founded and controlled by missionary institutions, particularly those of the Roman Catholic Church and the Dutch Reformed Church (Behr 1988:125). Some of these schools, such as the Kutlwanong School for the Deaf and the Tshilidzini School for the Physically Disabled, became very well known. In addition, at this time, a Braille writing system was developed for Sotho, Xhosa and Zulu.

While there was remarkable progress in the area of specialised education of white learners, the provisions for learners of other population groups, especially of blacks, developed at a far slower pace. The result was that there were serious quantitative and qualitative differences between the various departments of education.

The unique needs in the area of education for black learners with physical impairments was indicated in various education documents, such as:

- HSRC (1981). *Report of the Working Committee: Children with Special Educational Needs.* This was part of a comprehensive investigation into education in the country undertaken by the HSRC in terms of a commission by the erstwhile government. The report above was undertaken by one of the 12 working committees.
- HSRC (1987). *Education for the black disabled.* During the international Year of the Disabled, additional research was done by the HSRC and, once again, these problems were mentioned in the report.
- The report of the *National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI 1992).* This report was issued by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee and set guidelines for education transformation. In the following study unit, when we shall discuss the education policy, we shall again refer to these reports.

Then, as a result of the publication of these reports and of increasing pressure from sources both internal and external to the country, there were gradual attempts to eliminate discriminatory practices and to eradicate the inequalities. All the same, it became evident that any attempts at renewal at this stage would be unacceptable and that there had to be a radical reform of education by a representative government.

Thus, to summarise, we could describe the situation during this era as follows:

- The education policy was characterised by differentiation based on race and colour.
- There was a fragmented system of specialised education with 17 separate education departments, each of which had its own posts, schools, support systems and staff.
- Authority was centralised. The decisions for all the departments were made at government level.
- There were separate schools for learners with various types of physical impairments and there were few possibilities of communication and movement between ordinary and specialised education.
- The approach to education tended to be strongly medical, with clinical criteria for admission, and multidisciplinary education teams.
- Services were separate and there was a lack of coordination between the various government departments such as Health, Welfare and Education.
- There were striking dissimilarities between the different education departments, including the following:
  - — terminology and classification of impairments
  - — accessibility (certain groups of learners were subject to compulsory education, while others were not)

— criteria for admission and discharge of learners (these were different for the different education departments)
— differences in the per capita expenditure
— discrepancies in the provision of schools (see table 1) — schools, particularly high schools — for black learners with physical impairments, were in particularly short supply, as was preschool education and parent guidance for black learners
— inequalities in the availability of educational support services (in the departments of white and Indian education the posts were usually filled, while there were virtually no such posts in other departments)
— qualifications (there were marked differences in the qualifications of teachers in the various departments)
— available teaching aids and equipment (in some departments these were highly inferior)

If the number of learners in special schools is expressed as a proportion of the number of learners in ordinary education for whom there is one place each in a special school, the situation for the different race groups would have been as follows (NEPI 1992:36):

TABLE 1

Number of learners in special schools in relation to the total school population of the different race groups

Race group	***Number of learners in special schools***	***Total admissions***	***Ratio***
White	14 969	932 181	1:62
Indian	5 580	233 101	1:42
Coloured	6 558	841 387	1:128
Black	9 811	8 143 217	1:830



Now see whether you can summarise the policy of this era by completing the following table.

Policy	**Key aspects**
Education policy Education system Seat of authority Educational approach Placement of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments Admission to education Service by various Government departments Involvement of others in decision making	

Study

5.5 THE NEW PERIOD (AFTER 1994)

Since the democratic election in April 1994 there has been a general resolve to cooperate and to collaborate in planning the future of an integrated system of specialised education. When all is said and done, those involved in this field such as policy makers, school principals, academics and persons with physical and/or physiological impairments themselves have held numerous meetings to discuss the future of this education in order to declare their joint ownership of it.

In influential documents which were published even before the new government came into being, certain general trends had already begun to emerge. Most of these are reflected in the new White Paper (February 1995) on Education and Training and in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

This new policy regarding learners experiencing barriers to learning and which includes learners with physical and/or physiological impairments is discussed in study unit 6.

Read

5.6 SUMMARY

In this study unit we considered the way in which specialised education developed in South Africa. We saw that, in broad outline, it resembled the development in other countries but that political influences were instrumental in allowing different systems to arise side by side, yet having vast differences. In the new period there is an endeavour to create a new uniform education system which will develop on the basis of joint deliberation and for which everyone will be able to claim ownership.

This new *KNOWLEDGE* of the course of development from specialised education to education for all is the foundation for a changed *ATTITUDE* to learners who experience barriers to learning, in that you will now have a better understanding of the present education policy (see White Paper, sect D), which will be discussed in the following study unit.

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STUDY UNIT 6

THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY ON LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Now that you have been given an overview of the history of specialised education — general as well as South African, and because you have also learned to take a critical view of the way in which learners who experience barriers to learning are treated, you should be ready to study and evaluate the current policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning in South Africa. It is important for you to form your own opinion of the policy. In the present climate of democracy, there are repeated appeals to any and every citizen to offer their inputs regarding the policy. You should therefore know what the policy entails and what you think of it. If you are not satisfied with it, you should say what it is that you are dissatisfied with, why this is, and what you suggest instead.

At this stage, this policy has not yet been made official in an Act of Parliament, but reports and white papers that were published give us a good indication that the policy of education for all (which is accepted internationally, as we saw in study unit 4) will also be accepted in South Africa.



Outcomes

At the end of this study unit you should be able to

- *write down the names of the documents containing the present policy on learners who experience barriers to learning, such as the White Paper on Education and Training, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, Notice 2432 of 1998 and the NCSNET/NCESS report, understand their implications and critically evaluate them*
- *explain to a colleague, a parent of a learner who experiences barriers to learning or another person what the policy is on learners experiencing barriers to learning*
- *tell learners experiencing barriers to learning what their basic rights are, according to the Constitution*
- *write a letter to a policy maker in which you state your view on the policy — in other words, say what it is you agree and/or do not agree with, giving the reasons for your opinion*

Read

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in the outcomes, this study unit will feature a discussion of the various policy documents containing the policy on learners who experience barriers to learning. You should however, realise the following:

- The current policy has not simply materialised from nowhere. It has been influenced by a considerable number of factors, both international and national.
- Nor is the policy finalised yet. It is undergoing a constant process of improvement. Various working documents were published that were debated by stake holders countrywide. Disabled persons (who, because of their physical and/or physiological impairments, were disabled by society and previous legislation) also participated in these debates.

Study

6.2 FACTORS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED THE POLICY

It is vital for you to realise that a great many factors have affected the policy on learners who experience barriers to learning. A number of these factors will be discussed in the following subsections.

6.2.1 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

At present there are certain worldwide views on learners who experience barriers to learning, and these are taken into account when policies are formulated.



Think back to study unit 4 and write down the most important prevailing overseas trends surrounding the topic of learners who experience barriers to learning. These trends have been made known by means of such sources as

- *new books and articles on learners who experience barriers to learning*
- *international congresses such as those at Jomtiem (1990), Salamanca (1994) and Birmingham (1995), where joint decisions on learners who experience barriers to learning are taken*
- *influential international organisations such as UNESCO, which provide valuable assistance — particularly in developing countries, thereby being allowed to participate in policy making (UNESCO is the educational section of the United Nations Organisation, the UN, of which South Africa has regained membership)*
- *special aid programmes emanating from developed countries like England, Denmark, Germany, Canada and Sweden, presented here and undertaken from specifically modern perspectives*
- *visits by international experts on inclusive education, such as Booth and Ainscow from England, Porter from Canada and Salé from the UNESCO office in Paris*

Thus it is clear that the world has shrunk — in the sense that it is easy to arrange contact between different countries. Nowadays, different countries have far more in common than they did previously. This means that what is accepted as correct and good internationally, also has to be regarded as important in this country.

All the same, this does not mean that we can simply apply in this country everything done in other countries. The circumstances elsewhere may possibly be very different from ours — they may have greater numbers of qualified staff as well as more available money. Similarly, the distances between regions may not be as vast as they are here. This is why we always need to consider our own circumstances very carefully before deciding on the extent to which we should adopt international trends here — and how to do so.

Study

6.2.2 IMPORTANT SOUTH AFRICAN INVESTIGATIONS

In the past two decades in South Africa there were several important investigations into learners who experience barriers to learning, and the results contained recommendations for a revised system of education. Although the recommendations did not always give rise to many changes, they are nonetheless still valid today. At this juncture we shall not be focusing so much on the problems that were brought to light by these investigations as on their recommendations, because our interest here is in the policy:

6.2.2.1 REPORT OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE: EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL (HSRC) (1981)

This investigation formed part of a comprehensive investigation into education in our country. The assignment for the investigation was given to the HSRC by the government of the day. Because the investigation was chaired by Professor De Lange, it is usually referred to, in short, as the ''De Lange report''. One of the sections of the report dealt with learners with special educational needs (as these learners were referred to in this report). It contained the following recommendations:

- That the term ''learners with special educational needs'' would be used as a broad term to include all learners who needed special educational assistance. (Thus there was a move away from the previous emphasis on learners with disabilities. The term also included learners with serious scholastic disadvantages.)
- Class teachers should assume the initial responsibility of identifying learners with special educational needs and providing them with the first phase of their assistance, and experts should be involved only during the second and third phases of the assistance. (This would serve to lessen the burden on the educational support services.)
- That the basic (pre-service) training of teachers should include a component that would equip them to teach learners with special educational needs.

6.2.2.2 EDUCATION FOR THE BLACK DISABLED, HSRC (1987)

This investigation stemmed from the previous one because that also contained indications of the serious differences between the provision of education to learners of various race groups. The following were some of the recommendations of this investigation:

- Instead of separate schools for learners with various forms of disabilities, there should rather be comprehensive schools where learners could be taught in

separate sections of the same school. (Note, this is a slight shift away from the absolute division between learners with different forms of disabilities.)
- There should be more attention to preparing disabled learners for a future occupation. (This indicates a growing awareness of the social needs of the learners.)
- The mass media should be deployed to raise the consciousness of the general public regarding the problems and needs of persons with disabilities.
- Community services, and regional and welfare organisations should present programmes for parents of learners with disabilities in order to give them the necessary guidance.
- A central authority should be created to coordinate the provision of both education and special services to the disabled.

6.2.2.3 NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY INVESTIGATION (NEPI), SUPPORT SERVICES (1992)

The NEPI was a project of the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) undertaken between 1990 and 1992. Its purpose was to investigate various possibilities for a new education policy that would reflect the values of the new democratic principles. All aspects of education were examined, including learners with special educational needs and the educational support services. A separate report on this was published.

The report emphasised the particularly high percentage of learners with special educational needs in this country, and various alternatives to the organisation of the educational support services were discussed.

6.2.2.4 LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION) (1994)

This investigation was undertaken in 1994 by the Department of Education. In the report with the above-mentioned title, the needs of these learners are highlighted, and there are suggestions for a new education policy. There are definite similarities between these suggestions and modern international trends as well as those reflected in other recent documents.

6.2.2.5 A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING (AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, ANC) (1994)

Before the general election the ANC had already held a series of workshops with the stake holders in the education of learners with special educational needs and, on the strength of these, they made recommendations for a new policy.

In the document mentioned above there is a section devoted to special educational needs; the rights of these learners are underscored and the importance of integrated educational assistance stressed.

6.2.2.6 DRAFT WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING (1994)

The draft White Paper on Education and Training was published in September 1994 to serve as a framework for discussions. It was published through the media and

people were requested to comment on it. It elicited a tremendous response from citizens and organisations and gave rise to the White Paper in its present form.

6.3 SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY ON LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Study

The complete policy on learners who experience barriers to learning is not contained in only one document. We shall discuss a few of the most important ones.

6.3.1 THE CONSTITUTION

The premise of the policy on learners who experience barriers to learning is already incorporated in the South African Constitution. The section on human rights sets out the fundamental rights of each person in this country. No aspect of the education policy may therefore conflict with these rights of human beings.

Some of the basic rights that concern us here are the following (see ch 3 of the Constitution):

Equality (point 8)

- Every person has equal rights in the eyes of the law.
- There may be no direct or indirect discrimination against any person on the grounds of his race, gender, ethnic or social descent, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, faith, culture or language.

Human dignity (point 10)

- Every person has the right to respect and to the protection of his/her human dignity.

Education (point 32)

- Everyone has the right to basic education and equal access to education.

On the basis of these rights there may be no discrimination of any type against anyone with a disability, nor may they be refused access to education.

6.3.2 WHITE PAPER ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The White Paper on education and training in a democratic South Africa: first steps to the development of a new system, February 1995, provides the framework for the provision of education in the country (*see sect D for more information on the White Paper*). In the foreword to the White Paper, the then Minister of Education, Professor Bengu, writes about the rationale behind it. He mentions that it is essential to establish an education system with which everyone in the country can identify because it meets everyone's needs and serves their interests. It shall be based on equality and will not be discriminatory. It shall respect diversity and strive for learning and for excellence. Communities and interest groups should be able to claim ownership of it and see to it that the existing sources are utilised in the most effective ways.

The White Paper starts by explaining certain values and principles on which education is based. These include the following:

- the basic right to education, regardless of race, class, gender, religion or age
- lifelong, good quality education and training
- free access to education
- redressing existing inequalities in education
- a unitary education system
- the total development of all learners, including their academic and occupational training as well as providing for their broad psychological, health and social needs

As regards learners who experience barriers to learning, the following points are specified: (the term ''learners with special educational needs'' is kept here because this term was used in the White paper)

- The education of learners with special educational needs and the educational support services should form an integral part of education, and should not be viewed as a separate section.
- The realisation of the importance of integrated assistance to learners with special educational needs within ordinary education should increase because this will contribute to the prevention of learning problems.
- The provinces themselves should assume responsibility for the provision and organisation of the education of learners with special educational needs. Central (government) level will undertake investigations, the broad formulation of policy and the provision of guidelines to the provinces.
- Authorised representatives of the education staff concerned with learners with special educational needs and of the learners themselves should serve on all legal and consultative bodies when special education issues are being discussed.
- There shall be an inclusive and integrated approach to the provision of services to learners with special educational needs. This means that the government departments involved with learners with special educational needs such as Education, Welfare, Health and Labour, will have to cooperate with one another much more closely.
- Two national commissions, the *NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SPECIAL NEEDS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING* and the *NATIONAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES* were established to thoroughly evaluate needs and to make recommendations to the Minister. In the investigation, special attention would be paid to the needs of young learners with special educational needs. The recommendations of these commissions, whose report was handed over to the then Minister in November 1997, will be discussed in more detail in the next section, since it looks as though the recommendations will be accepted by the Department of Education.

6.3.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT 84 OF 1996

Before discussing the recommendations of the above commissions we should, however, first mention the main principles of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. This Act prepared the way for the recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS report. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 makes provision for learners with special educational needs at public schools. The Member of the Executive Council of a province must, if reasonably practicable, provide education for learners with special educational needs at ordinary public schools and provide relevant educational support services for such learners. The Member of the Executive Council

must take all reasonable measures to ensure that the physical facilities at public schools are accessible to disabled learners (points 12.3, 12.4 & 12.5). The rights and wishes of the parents of learners who experience barriers to learning and development should however be taken into account (point 5.6).

In the meantime, Curriculum 2005, endorsing outcome-based education, was implemented as the new education policy from 1998 (in grade 1). We shall not discuss this policy here, but you are expected to be aware of Curriculum 2005 and the rationale behind it.

6.3.4 THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SPECIAL NEEDS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

By now you have heard a lot about the above-mentioned commissions. They amalgamated and issued a report entitled *Quality education for all: overcoming barriers to learning and development.* The recommendations of this report had far-reaching consequences and led to a completely new approach to learners with special educational needs. First, the commissions accepted the name ''learners who experience barriers to learning and development'' instead of ''learners with special educational needs''.



Look again at study unit 1 and make a short summary of the decision of these commissions on why they prefer the name ''learners who experience barriers to learning and development'' to ''learners with special educational needs''.

Further developments indicate that the name ''learners who experience barriers to learning'' will be accepted officially — that is why we used it in our discussions so far.

Secondly, the commissions accepted the policy of equal education for all. This report was thoroughly debated before it was issued, and people such as Professors Tony Booth from the Open University and Alan Dyson from the University of Newcastle in England and Dr Gordon Porter from Canada made contributions to this report. The main recommendations regarding the policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning are as follows:

- *All learners, particularly those learners in the compulsory-school-attendance age group, will have access to learning centres (including schools) and to the curriculum. It also implies life-long learning.*
- *The education process will prepare learners for their vocation and for life. This includes the successful integration of all learners into the community. The community should be optimally and effectively involved in the education of all learners at all levels.*
- *All learning centres will have the ability to react to diversity by supplying a flexible curriculum with an ethos of inclusivity, support, a culture of education and learning and effective community relationships and ownership. Learning centres will be provided with the support they need to develop in this manner.*

6.3.4.1 THE ROLE OF SPECIALISED LEARNING CONTEXTS (SPECIAL SCHOOLS)

A variety of learning contexts should be available. This includes ordinary schools as well as specialised learning centres (special schools). The latter will be defined by the curriculum and the support that is given, and not by a specific disability. For instance, schools that offer education and learning through the medium of South African Sign Language are not regarded as specialised learning contexts for deaf learners, but rather as schools that are identified by the medium of education and learning that is offered. Every learner (and/or parent or caregiver who makes decisions on behalf of the learner) however has the right to attend a learning centre of his choice — preferaby in his area. With a view to the Constitution, a variety of support and possiblities must be made available by the education support services. Financial limitations constitute but one of the factors that can lead to a limitation of the right to adequate support and provision of basic education. If the parents or the learner choose a learning centre away from the learner's home (eg a specialised learning centre) the costs should be borne by that particular family — unless there are indications that the necessary support cannot be obtained in the local community. Transportation will be the responsibility of the government department concerned if there is not a facility available nearby.

The present role of specialised learning centres will be changed from isolated centres to resource centres that provide other learning centres with expertise and aids for educating learners who experience barriers to learning and development. Key aspects of this role will be, among others, the following:

- providing specialised educational programmes for certain learners needing more intensive support
- preparing learners for inclusion into ordinary learning contexts
- providing extramural activities and specialised programmes (eg literacy classes for adults, educational-guidance programmes, enrichment programmes)
- providing and supporting Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes
- providing access to specific resources (eg Braille facilities, Sign-Language interpreters, specialised transportation)
- providing home support if necessary
- educators sharing their expertise with staff at learning centres in the surrounding areas in order to build up their ability of providing in specific educational needs and adequate support (this will include training programmes and ongoing consultation for parents, educators and other persons involved at ordinary learning centres within the context of coordinated district-support strategies)
- participating in community events that are conducive to the inclusion of learners from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences

Boarding facilities, including community homes, will be available for those learners in foster care, homeless learners and learners who are far from home.

''Reform schools, Schools of Industry and places of safety'' will offer residential education to learners in detention or learners in a place of safety. The Department of Education will cooperate closely with the Departments of Justice, Correctional Services, Health, Welfare and Population Development, the Police Service, et cetera. If possible, learners will attend learning centres in their area that have the applicable support provided by the centre-of-learning-based team.

Skills-training centres (eg technical colleges) will function within the NQF. They will be classified according to the programmes they offer, and not according to the

category of learners. Liason between these centres and other institutions within the Further Education and Development Band will be developed.

Learners will therefore be accommodated in a way that will be the most suitable to their needs, while keeping in mind that full participation and inclusion must be promoted in the education process and society as a whole. All learners should therefore be given maximum opportunities to liaise with one another in inclusive environments.

6.3.4.2 SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

''Special needs'' and support services should pervade the entire education system.

At government level

Each section of the National Department of Education and all nine the provincial departments of education must develop the ability of coping with a variety of learner and system needs. One of the key skills demanded by each section is the ability to establish intersectoral cooperation with other government departments and the establishment of constructive partnerships and work relations with other interest groups such as nongoverment organisations and consumer organisations. The following recommendation is made:

Each section of the department of education must make provision for one post or part of a post dedicated to addressing barriers to learning and development and must make provision for accommodating diversity, for example:

Curriculum	finances	buildings	early childhood development	transportation
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
A coordinating structure representing each section of the Department of Education (the ''dedicated posts'')				

The role of this structure will be to coordinate, and through it to bring about the cohesion and integration of all services. This means that the needs of all learners are not marginalised, underemphasised or overlooked and that the barriers to learning and development must be handled in all bands of education (NQF).

National and provincial education and training forums should be established. Nongovernment bodies and consumer organisations such as organisations for the disabled should also be represented on this forum.

At district level

Each province is divided up into districts. The new role of the support staff of a district office will be to offer support to educators, parents and other caregivers and to develop preventive and developmental programmes for learners. They assess and also support individual learners when the centre-of-learning-based team (also called the ''school-support team'') requires their expert input on specific problems.

At centre of learning level

Each centre of learning (including schools) at each level of education should have centre-of-learning-based support structures consisting mainly of educators. Specialist services such as the support staff of the district offices, educators of specialised learning contexts, community resources such as nongovernment organisations and parents, forums for the disabled, experts from other government departments (Health, Welfare and Population Development, etc) and even laypersons and peer groups can be accommodated, depending on the barriers to the learning of the learners concerned. The aim of the centre-of-learning-based team (CLBT) will be to identify, assess and support learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

When we discuss the network of support later on we shall touch on this aspect again.

6.3.5 NOTICE 2432 OF 1998

In October 1998, the Minister of Education gave notice (no 2432) to schools regarding the admission of learners who experience barriers to learning in ordinary public schools. It contains the following (this is copied from the notice; therefore the term *learners with special education needs* is used):

Learners with special education needs

22 The rights and wishes of learners with special education needs must be taken into account at the admission of the learners to ordinary primary schools. The South African Schools Act, 1996 requires ordinary public schools to admit learners with special education needs, where this is reasonably practical. Schools are encouraged to make the necessary arrangements, as far as practically possible, to make their facilities accessible to such learners.

23 Where necessary support which would facilitate the integration of a learner in a particular educational context, cannot be provided, the principal of the school must refer the application for the admission to the head of Department to have the learner admitted to a suitable public school in that province or to a school in another province.

24 Before the head of Department refers a learner as contemplated in paragraph 23, the head of Department must arrange for consultation with parents, educators and other support personnel concerned. These consultations must form part of the assessment of the learner before the learner is referred to another public school. This process should be handled as a matter of urgency to facilitate the admission of a learner as soon as possible to ensure that the learner is not prejudiced in receiving appropriate education.

25 Assessment and consultation relating to a change of placement must be carried out by a team based at the school in consultation with parents, educators and other relevant support personnel. The head of Department of the province concerned must approve the placement.

As you can remember, this notice, which came into effect on 1 January 2000, confirms the South African Schools Act of 1996. Some education support districts have already made certain arrangements to assist schools in the successful accommodation of learners who experience barriers to learning after the implementation of points 24 and 25 above. Some of these arrangements are the following:

- Extra time for examinations and tests (usually 15 minutes for each hour). This is allowed for slow readers and writers.
- Amanuensis. (The learner provides the answer of tests and examinations aurally to an independent person who writes down verbatim.) This is applicable to learners with cerebral palsy and learners with dyslexia (learners who cannot read or write but who have a normal level of intelligence).
- The mathematical marks of learners suffering from dyscalculia or acalculia (severe impairment in learning and using mathematics while having normal intelligence) are discarded for their examinations. This is applicable only to grades in which mathematics is still compulsory. The use of pocket calculators is permitted for learners who cannot do mathematical computations but who know how to do the sums.
- Tape aid for learners with reading problems and learners with visual problems.



Can you think of more arrangements which you can add to these to successfully accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning in your school?

Read

6.4 SUMMARY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DOCUMENTS

When summarising the above-mentioned documents we can come to the following conclusions about the new policy:

- *The term ''learners who experience barriers to learning''.* This term is used as an inclusive term for referring to all learners whose learning is failing in one way or another. This includes learners whose barriers stem from intrinsic or extrinsic factors. It is however assumed that the barriers to learning of a large percentage of learners stem from a reciprocal interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic factors.
- *Organisation and administration.* Provision for learners who experience barriers to learning will be organised on a central, district and local level.
- *Teaching approach.* The teaching approach will not, as in the past, be medically or clinically oriented. Instead it will strive for a model in which a diversity of learners receive quality and equal teaching so that the barriers can be prevented, decreased and removed. The emphasis should be on the optimal development of the potential of all learners.
- *Acceptance of the policy of inclusive education* founded on the principle of education for all. Total inclusive education is accepted as a long-term objective. In the medium to short term this can however be problematic, since there are not enough support services available. The plan, therefore, is that in each district there will be one or more schools that will accept learners with physical and/or physiological impairments. This will facilitate the availability of support services.
- *Involvement of interest groups.* Interest groups such as national councils, parent bodies, relevant nongovernmental organisations, teachers' associations, labour associations are involved with policy making.
- *Involvement of the disabled.* Persons with physical and/or physiological impairments and who are disabled because of shortcomings in society and in the provision of their education are also involved in decision making.



Now see whether you can summarise the differences between the new policy and the previous South African policy by completing the final column of the table:

	Previous education policy on learners who experience barriers to learning	1995 Education policy on learners who experience barriers to learning
	education policy education system	race discrimination fragmented — separate systems for different population groups and for ordinary and specialised education
	education, health and welfare services	separate functioning of Education, Health and Welfare services
	administration	centralised authority
	teaching approach	clinical/medical
	placement	separate schools for forms of disability
	involvement of parents and communities in decision making	minimum involvement
	access to education	compulsory education only for certain groups of learners

Read

6.5 SUMMARY

In this study unit we have seen that the current policy did not just materialise from nowhere. It is in line with international trends and has been influenced by the results of important South African investigations. Furthermore, it provides for human rights as stipulated in the country's constitution.

The present education system is a unitary education system that is responsible for the education of all South African learners, regardless of diversity. There has been a shift away from the previous medical-clinical model to one in which the policy of inclusion, based on the principle of education for all and community involvement comes much stronger to the fore and in which the elimination of inequalities was accepted.

This *KNOWLEDGE* of the path followed by development from ''specialised education'' to ''education-for-all'' is a good preparation for the information contained in section C, where your knowledge will prepare you to adopt an *attitude-of-willingness* to help learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and a desire to use your *SKILLS*, such as listening skills and observation skills, so that your support can be effective and unobtrusive.

Burden and Landsberg (1999:35–37) summarised the difference between the old and the new policies as follows:

A SUMMARY OF THE ESSENCE OF THESE CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION OF LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

	Old way of thinking	**New way of thinking**
Aim	personal development	preparation for society
Operation	in isolation	community
Vision	based on race, exclusion	nondiscriminative/equality, inclusive
Principle	denial of racial exclusivity; blocking of access	democracy, social justice, historical adjustment, discourse on rights
Promotes	inequality, unequal access; discrimination; marginalisation/ labels	equal opportunities, equal access to education, equal rights; nondiscrimination; accommodation of needs of diverse learners
Provision of service	fragmented; services in rigid structures; education-support services offered outside system; marginalised and segregated learners	integrated, holistic — range of support services (the system of education as a whole must provide, and must enable all learners to have access to education) The system needs support in order to react to diversity. ESS* key aspect of service, provision of service from inside — not ''added on''; learners fully included
Concepts	constructs vision	deconstruction and reallocation of terms based on vision; promotes new vision
Questions asked	What is the relationship between ESS* and ELSEN**? What is wrong with the individual learner? How can we solve the problem?	What is the relationship between ESS* and the needs of diverse learners? What is wrong with the system of education? How can we provide for the needs of the learner or solve the problems of all the diverse learners?
Educational needs	segregated learners	need for the system to change; needs and priorities that need to be addressed so that the system can react effectively to diversity in the learner population
Diversity	based on race and category; promotes segregation	diversity cuts across race, gender, categories, etc; acknowledges the diverse needs of diverse learners, thus all learners; promotes integration
Learners	segregated on the grounds of categories and labels	rights to which learners are entitled based on principles and vision entrenched in the Constitution
Curriculum	rigid	flexible, accessible, inclusive
Education	supports status quo	transforming agent of change; promotes equal opportunities for race, disability, etc; provision of service holistic in nature
System	inequal access	promotes life-long learning

* educational-support services
** education for learners with special educational needs



See if, from the above-mentioned differences between the old and the new education policies, you can complete the previous activity.

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SECTION C

EDUCATION-SUPPORT SERVICES



STUDY UNIT 7
SUPPORT SERVICES IN EDUCATION

For learners who experience barriers to learning to get effective help, the responsibility cannot be left to teachers alone — educational-support services should also be organised in an effective way. It is therefore the general opinion (also that of the Department of Education) that the key to uncovering and addressing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in strenghthened educational-support services.



Outcomes

At the end of this study unit you should be able to demonstrate that you

- *understand the work and responsibilities of the educational-support services offered at the different levels*
- *understand the responsibilities of the educational-support services offered at all educational levels*
- *can apply the procedures that are followed*

Read

7.1 INTRODUCTION

We have seen that the quality of educational support depends not only on the policy that a country adopts, but also on the way in which learning support is organised. It is similarly important for educational-support services (ESS) to be very well organised. In this study unit we shall discuss the organisation of these services at various levels of education. We shall be indicating how, at present, in conjunction with the shift towards education for all, there have been important changes in the way these services function. Nevertheless, you should understand that the situation in South Africa is still very fluid and that we are not as yet quite sure about all the aspects of how the new system will function. Consequently our discussion will be based on the recommendation of the NCSNET/NCESS report, in accordance with the trends in other countries and in terms of what has already been applied in some provinces. It will not necessarily be representative of what is being done in the different provinces in South Africa. Moreover, at the moment in certain districts there are still vestiges of the previous educational dispensation, while in other areas no support could thus far be organised.

7.2 NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATIONAL-SUPPORT SERVICES

At the time of writing this study unit the Department of Education is preparing a White Paper that will accept certain recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS report. It looks as though the educational-support services will be extended and strenghtened.

7.2.1 A DEVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Recently, in conjunction with the principles of inclusion, there has also been a clear shift in emphasis in the way assistance is given to learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Previously it was believed that assistance to these learners was so specialised that only specially trained individuals were capable of providing it. This meant that learners experiencing barriers to learning were taught in special schools by specially trained teachers or, if they encountered difficulties in the mainstream, they would be referred to educational-support services where specially trained helpers had to assess the learners and assist them. Thus the task of the school was simply to identify the learner and then refer him for assistance.

But the new approach is quite the opposite: it advocates the devolution of assistance to learners experiencing barriers to learning down to base level and suggests that it should, as far as possible, be handled by class and subject teachers themselves. Thus they have the responsibility of trying to solve the problems of these learners themselves first, before further steps are taken.

Gipps et al (1987:xi) describe the situation which has now arisen as follows:

> This highly skilled professional task was now to be seen first and foremost as the responsibility of the class teacher, perhaps helped by the support service, the same class teacher who in the past had usually been encouraged to pass these learners on to someone else for intervention.

There are two main reasons for the development of this new approach:

- The inclusion policy (see study unit 6) accepts that all learners can learn and that all learners at some stage or other need support that should be handled in class.
- A worldwide recession is compelling educational authorities to relinquish luxuries and expensive practices such as the one-to-one type of assistance in which learners are sent to school clinics to be individually tested and helped.

We shall now give a brief summary of the traditional and modern methods.

7.2.2 THE TRADITIONAL METHOD

Traditionally, the responsibility of assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning lay with specially qualified persons employed either by the educational-support services or by special schools. The following used to be the procedures:

(1) The class teacher identified those learners experiencing barriers to learning.
(2) The teacher discussed the matter with the principal.
(3) The teacher made a written appointment with the educational-support services.

(4) The educational-support services assessed each learner individually, using such means as formal assessment media (IQ and other tests).
(5) Depending on the findings of the assessment, one of the following methods was adopted:

    (a) The learner was referred to another (special) school.
    (b) The learner was given individual assistance by the support services.
    (c) The learner was referred to a private person (who had to be paid by the parents) for help.
    (d) The school was given specific guidelines for assisting the learner (such as placement in a special class).

However, the implications of this procedure were the following:

- Class teachers and even schools did not view the assistance of learners experiencing barriers to learning as part of their responsibility. All they had to do was to identify and refer and that was as far as their responsibility went.
- Because there was only a limited number of persons working at the educational-support services, there was no way they could handle the workload. Sometimes the names of learners experiencing barriers to learning remained on the waiting list for weeks and months on end before they were granted an appointment. It often happened that, in the meantime, the situation of the learners deteriorated, while the situation in the class and at home became far more complicated.
- As a result of these long waiting lists, it often happened that learners experiencing barriers to learning were only tested, but assistance never materialised.
- Because our country (and most other countries) do not have nearly enough qualified persons available to staff these regional clinics, there were (and still are) — particularly in rural areas — vast tracts of our country in which no clinics were available. Thus there was no-one to whom to refer learners who experience barriers to learning.

7.2.3 THE MODERN METHOD

The modern procedure is more or less as follows:

(1) The teacher identifies and assesses learners experiencing barriers to learning on the basis of their schoolwork and some problem or other that they may experience in that area.
(2) The teacher helps the learners as he would normally deal with problems that occur in the class.
(3) If the problem is not solved, additional attention has to be devoted to it. The teacher now proceeds to tackle the problem in a more penetrating way in order to find out more about its nature and causes (you will find these methods in Module 2 on assessment and assistance). This enables the teacher to provide the learners with help in a more intense and probably more appropriate way. We may call this ''first-phase assistance''.
(4) If the problem still remains unresolved, the teacher realises that additional assistance is required. He now collects all the data he has on the matter, makes brief notes about the case and proceeds to discuss it with the school's support team.

    They give him hints on how to set about finding out more about the learner and about how he should try to assist him or her. The teacher puts these hints into practice. This joint action continues until the problem is solved, or until they realise that the learner needs more specialised help.
(5) Should it appear, after intensive attempts on the part of the teacher and the

school's support team, that the problem remains unresolved, the team arranges to bring in regional assistants. This could be either at the school during one of their routine visits or at the offices of the regional services. The assistance will now consist of referring the learner to another school, assisting him or her at the regional office or, most probably, of advice that is given to the school staff on how to help the learner. In many cases, it is necessary to call on other experts such as a medical doctor, social worker or speech therapist.

Even this procedure has specific implications which we need to note:

- Teachers require specific knowledge and skills to enable them to identify and help learners who experience barriers to learning in their classes. This in turn has implications for both the basic and the further training of teachers. Teachers who have already completed their studies will therefore need to have in-service training to equip them for the task.
- Teachers and the other learners in the class will have to cultivate a positive attitude towards learners experiencing barriers to learning to ensure that they are willing to accept these learners in their classes and to help them.
- A thorough-going system of support ought to be organised for teachers so that they are not left on their own to grapple with the assistance of learners who experience barriers to learning.
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning should be divided among various classes in order to avoid a situation in which only certain teachers have learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classes simply because these teachers are prepared or willing to help, or because they have more knowledge of the matter.
- Learners who experience barriers to learning should be viewed as a normal part of the responsibility of the whole school, including the principal, all the teachers, learners, parents and members of the community.
- If possible, the parents and members of the community should also become involved in assisting learners who experience barriers to learning.



At this point again (as in study unit 6), see whether you can summarise the differences between the modern and the traditional functioning of support services by completing the final column of the table:

	Traditional functioning of support services with regard to learners experiencing barriers to learning	**Modern functioning of support services with regard to learners experiencing barriers to learning**
teacher's task	identifies and refers learner	
assistance only	specially trained persons	
placement of learners who experience barriers to learning	special schools or special classes in the mainstream	

Also look at the Burden and Landsberg's table in study unit 6 in order to help you complete this table.

Study

7.3 ORGANISATION OF EDUCATIONAL-SUPPORT SERVICES

Educational support services should be organised at various levels, namely at government, provincial, regional and school levels.

7.3.1 THE CENTRAL OR GOVERNMENT LEVEL

It is the responsibility of the Minister of Education to determine the policy on transformation and change in education for the whole country and to put it into legislation. The Department of Education with its advisory bodies must decide how the education should be organised, how it should function and how there will be cooperation with other government departments. They must also delegate responsibility and do job descriptions. They then give guidelines to the provinces in this regard. They must therefore focus on improving the capacity of the education and training system in order to include those learners that are the most vulnerable with regard to exclusion from the system of education. They must empower mainstream-education to detect and address the causes and effects of barriers to learning in ordinary classrooms.

For the proper execution of the above-mentioned task, it is naturally necessary to conduct research into the needs existing in the country. We already mentioned the NCSNET/NCESS report which played a significant role — the acceptance of new policy regarding learners who experience barriers to learning. Apart from the members of the commission, there was also provision for input from the various interest groups so that all interested parties became part of the policy-making process. Those involved include the following: members of the education departments responsible for the education of learners who experience barriers to learning in the nine provinces, experts, a representative from parents of these learners, delegates from the South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD) who represent persons with physical and/or physiological impairments, members of teachers' associations and so on.

The Ministry of Education should closely cooperate with the Ministries of Health and Welfare and Population Development in order to draw up early identification and support programmes for learners with physical and/or physiological impairments in the 0–9 years age group. There will also be close cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare and Population Development with regard to learners awaiting trial or who have already been placed within the judicial system so that there can be clear assessment criteria for the education of these learners to continue in an effective manner.

7.3.2 PROVINCIAL LEVEL

Similarly at provincial level there will have to be one or more persons to assume responsibility for the education of learners who experience barriers to learning. This person (or persons) will have to see to it that the central policy is actually

implemented in the province, that all services in the province are properly coordinated, that the money received from the central government for the education of these learners is judiciously spent, and that the most deserving projects are the first to receive assistance. Thus the different projects will have to be carefully coordinated and the priorities determined with discrimination. Needs determination surveys will also have to be conducted in the provinces in order to prioritise the projects. Ensuring the careful execution of the policy will raise the need for some or other type of inspection. Furthermore, the provinces will have to provide experts to act as consultants.

7.3.3 DISTRICT LEVEL

Each province has been divided into districts. The new role of the support staff in a district office will be to give support to educators, parents and other caregivers and to develop preventive and developmental programmes for learners. These persons assess and also support individual learners if their expertise on a specific problem is needed by the school support team. They are also responsible for the in-service training of teachers, for mobilising available services from the communities, et cetera. This team should include any, or more, of the following: the educational psychologist, who gives assistance particularly with regard to personal and behavioural problems, an expert in the field of learning problems, an expert in the field of educating learners with physical and/or physiological impairments, possibly also a social worker, school doctor or nurse, speech therapist, physiotherapist and occupational therapist. Some of the above-mentioned functions can of course be undertaken by the same person.

It looks as though most of the recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS report will be accepted and that special schools will continue to exist and will also take over the role of ''resource centres''. This means (as is recommended in the NCSNET/NCESS report — see section 6.3.4.1) that they will be integrated with the district support team in order to improve the latter's capacity for educational support. Their aim will be to give specialised, professional support regarding the curriculum, assessment and education at neighbouring schools. For special schools to perform this function, they must be upgraded to ''resource centres'' and their staff must be trained to perform their new role as part of the district support team.

It is envisaged that each district will have at least one ''full-service'' school in which particularly learners with physical and/or physiological impairments will be accommodated, instead of receiving the necessary educational support in an ordinary school. This will facilitate the educational support to these learners since all the additional aids can be centred in such a school (particularly if there is not a special school in that district).

7.3.4 SCHOOL LEVEL

According to the new approach described above, learners' problems should be dealt with by the school, as a first phase. This includes the identification of the problem, the assessment of the learner and learning support to that learner.

First of all, it is necessary for the school to formulate a clear policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning and to make sure that every teacher and parent knows the policy.

7.3.4.1 SCHOOL POLICY ON LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

The following aspects should be emphasised:

- the general policy relating to the identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning
- acceptance and accommodation of all learners in the school — also those experiencing barriers to learning
- strategies on the method of learning support learners to who experience barriers to learning
- a general system according to which a record should be kept of learners who require help
- guidelines for establishing a school support team and the functions of this team
- clear guidelines on the way in which parents can be involved in the assistance
- clear arrangements with the district support service regarding their cooperation with the school and with the ''full-service'' school and/or nearest special school for guidelines on specific learning support and reading strategies for specific learners
- clear arrangements with community services to ensure that the school and those agencies will know exactly how they will have to cooperate with one another, what type of problems they should handle and what procedures they ought to adopt

Persons who have specific tasks in relation to this matter are the following:

The school principal. It is a fairly generally accepted fact that the success of a school's acceptance of and learning support to learners who experience barriers to learning is determined largely by the attitude of the principal. If school principals are aware of their responsibility in this matter and take their task seriously, the learning support to these learners will proceed smoothly. Naturally the opposite is just as true. Teachers find that they cannot make an impact on their own. Even teachers who are specially trained for the task, find that if they do not have the principal's support, they cannot achieve much.

The school support team. As mentioned, at every school a team should be convened to support and advise teachers on learners who experience barriers to learning.

The names of these teams can differ from province to province. It is not important what this school support team is called, the main thing being that such teams do exist and that they function well. The responsibilities of these teams are, *inter alia*, the following:

- being available at certain times so that class and subject teachers can come and discuss learners who experience barriers to learning with them
- advising teachers on the treatment of learners who experience barriers to learning in their classes
- providing class and subject teachers with in-service training in order to equip them with the skills they need for identifying and assisting learners who experience barriers to learning
- helping with the guidance of parents of learners who experience barriers to learning, if necessary (parents whose child is being discussed should be members of the team)
- taking the initiative in involving experts or volunteers from the community in assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning

Teachers. We have already mentioned the fact that teachers now have a decisive responsibility regarding the education of learners who experience barriers to learning.

These responsibilities may be summarised as follows:

- They become aware of the fact that a learner may have some kind of problem with which he needs assistance. They make a deliberate attempt to collect more information about the problem (assessment).
- After having collected sufficient data on the problem area, they make a conscious plan — as a first phase — to assist that learner (or a group of learners with the same problem) and to carry this out systematically.
- During the assessment and the learning support they also often need to cooperate with others, for instance with other teachers, the parents, other learners, the principal.
- When they need advice, they approach the school's support team.
- In the case of serious problems they may also have to collaborate with the education support services of the district or with experts from the special schools or the ''full-service'' school and/or the community.



- *Briefly describe the responsibilities of the educational-support services at*
  - *— central or government level*
  - *— provincial level*
  - *— regional level*
  - *— district level*
  - *— school level*
- *Substantiate the statement that a principal plays a key role in accepting and accommodating learners who experience barriers to learning.*

Also read Module 2, study unit 8 regarding the functioning of the school's support team. It contains a more extensive exposition of the composition and functioning of the team.

7.4 SUMMARY

In this study unit we have seen that there have been important shifts in emphasis regarding the way in which education support services function. The modern trend is for learners who experience barriers to learning to be assisted as much as possible in the class and school instead or being referred to education support services from the outset.

Education support services are organised at different levels, namely at central or government level, provincial level, regional and school levels, and each level has its own responsibilities.

The fact that assistance to learners who experience barriers to learning has to begin with class and subject teachers, has important implications for the *KNOWLEDGE* and *ATTITUDE* of teachers and for the organisation in the school.

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STUDY UNIT 8

INFORMAL IDENTIFICATION



Outcomes

After completing this study unit you should be able to

- *explain what the aim of informal evaluation is*
- *do an initial assessment of a learner's problems*
- *identify learners with problems by means of the following informal evaluation methods*
  - *— educational intuition*
  - *— screening questionnaires*
  - *— identification*
  - *— observation*
  - *— listening*
  - *— questioning*
  - *— consulting learners' reports and school records*
  - *— compiling reports*
- *describe assessment as detailed in the report of the NCSNET and the NCESS*

Read

8.1 THE AIM OF INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

Wolfendale (1993:37) maintains that, from time to time, all learners have needs that require special, immediate and urgent attention.

In the classroom it is the teacher's task to find out what needs or problems are preventing learners from making the progress that is expected of them by their parents and teachers. This ''finding out'' is called informal assessment. It includes **identifying** the problems as well as **collecting information about individual learners and their problems.** Assessment is a joint activity that should involve teachers, parents, trained personnel in other services, and the learners themselves. ''Assessment is seen from an equal opportunities perspective, as a process in which everyone has a right to participate, particularly the person most immediately involved'' (Mittler 1993:xi).



We distinguish between identification and assessment.

- ***Identification*** *refers to recognising certain attributes which might indicate the presence of a problem (or problems).*
- ***Assessment*** *is a further step and this entails deliberately gathering information in order to ascertain whether the problem does in fact exist and, if it does, what*

the nature and scope of the problem is, and what steps could be taken to help the learner concerned.

Informal identification and assessment indicate that, as a regular teacher, you can make use of ordinary methods such as observation, interviewing and informal testing to ascertain whether learners have special educational needs.

The teacher should be able to make an informal assessment of

- the learner
- the learning environment, for example
  - — class atmosphere
  - — influence of friends and peer group
  - — the learning content
  - — the teacher himself or herself and his or her own teaching methods
  - — the school system and school facilities
  - — how involved the parents are
  - — the learner's home environment

The sooner a problem — of whatever nature or degree — is identified in a young learner, the better the chances are that the problem can be rectified or relieved. Early assistance is often more successful because it can be given before the problem assumes serious proportions. Thus it is your task as a teacher to follow up any ''deviant behaviour'' that you may detect in a learner, in order to obtain concrete proof as a basis for trying to solve the learner's problems, or for discussing them with others (school principal, parents, support teams within the school, etc).



The aim of assessment

Wolfendale (1993:xiv & 38) summarises assessment as follows:

- *Assessment should have a clear aim.*
- *It should be a continuing process, and not be based on just a single occasion.*
- *It should include parents as active participants.*
- *The methods that are used should allow for the learners' cultural and language background.*
- *It should be carried out with the necessary respect for the learners, their parents and other teachers.*
- *It should provide guidelines for assistance.*
- *It should not be a single event but should make provision for re-assessment.*
- *The methods and findings should be transparent and accountable.*
- *It should result in an improvement of learners' circumstances, their learning abilities and their development.*

Study

8.2 INITIAL IDENTIFICATION OF LSEN

When you teach, you usually face a class of between thirty and sixty or even more learners. Up to 50 percent of these learners may have special educational needs,

depending on where the school is situated (rural or urban area). This raises the question of how you are going to become aware of LSEN.

(This section should be studied in conjunction with section D, which contains more practical information.)

8.2.1 EDUCATIONAL INTUITION

Initial identification mainly depends on the intuition of the teacher but it is important to realise that intuition is always based on something: it is not simply a matter of coincidence. One's intuition is strengthened by one's knowledge and experience. We use the phrase **educational intuition** to indicate that a teacher's intuition is an instinctive feeling that emanates from his or her knowledge of, and insight into, the educational situation. Van Niekerk (1986:48) sees intuition as ''instinctive knowledge'' of the possible problems and needs that a learner may experience. Not only do teachers need to have a knowledge of and insight into the education and teaching of learners in general if they wish to improve their intuition; they should also show a dedicated interest in each learner in the class. As teachers you should therefore guard against viewing deviant behaviour or statements made by learners as inconsequential, and should always relate these to possible problems they may be experiencing at home or at school or in their own development towards adulthood. On the other hand, you should take care not to misinterpret a learner's behaviour because, in doing so, you might label the learner as someone he or she is not — and does not want to be. Thus you should subject your intuition to concrete scrutiny by systematically observing the learner in a number of different situations.

Sometimes the parents suspect that their child has certain problems or needs, and they will mention this to you for further investigation. Parents who are eager for their learners to do well and who themselves are professional people, particularly become concerned when their learners do not measure up to their expectations (McCall et al 1992:xvi). You should not ignore these concerns of the parents. The intuitive feelings of parents who take an interest in their learners's educational needs or the problems that their learners may be experiencing, are seldom wrong.

Nonetheless, the combined intuition of both yourself and the parents does not constitute sufficient grounds for a confirmation of learners' special educational needs.

8.2.2 SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRES

A screening questionnaire is an identification procedure that is used to identify a large number of learners who run the risk of developing learning and/or behaviour problems. Group tests such as standardised aptitude and intelligence tests are sometimes used for this. An entire class group is tested in order to identify learners whose achievements are significantly higher or lower than those of their classmates.

Examination papers and class tests may also be used in informal screening. Learners who do not perform as well as may be expected of them, may then be singled out for further assessment. There are also special screening tests designed to identify learners with visual and auditory problems.

Study

8.3 IDENTIFICATION

Hargrove and Poteet (1984:6) mention three basic skills that teachers should acquire before they will be able to identify problems in learners. These skills are observation, listening and asking questions.



- Observation: *This is the gathering of information through minute observation of the way learners behave.*
- Listening: *The things learners say should be ''accurately heard''.*
- Asking questions: *Questions may be put to individual learners in such a way that they are forced to think aloud.*

8.3.1 OBSERVATION

Hargrove and Poteet (1984:6) describe **observation** as ''visual inquiry conducted through systematic observation''. Teachers should have no preconceived ideas when they begin to observe and describe any behaviour which obtrudes on their attention.

By minutely observing learners' conduct in the classroom, on the sports field, during other extramural activities and on informal occasions such as school functions, one can decide whether learners manifest any deviant behaviour. In the classroom one should note whether a learner's current behaviour differs from his or her normal behaviour. This applies to discussion and working sessions: How do individual learners behave in various situations? What are they communicating to their teachers and fellow learners nonverbally via their body language, facial expressions and gestures? These things should be carefully observed in order to determine the nature of the learner's feelings (emotions).

As a teacher, you should also be aware of possible ailments such as asthma and migraine, mild degrees of disability such as a visual problem or a hearing problem, possible mild epileptic seizures, a motor problem, drug abuse, anorexia, malnutrition or insufficient nutrition. The sooner these conditions are identified and the learners concerned appropriately treated, the less they will affect the learners' achievements at school.

It is also important to observe learners in the learning situation. The following may be indicators of learning and behavioural problems:

- drowsiness and a lack of interest in the lesson
- homework that is either incomplete or not done at all
- written assignments that are of a poor quality and invariably submitted late
- books habitually lost or left at home
- tearfulness
- lack of friends
- a preference for remaining in the classroom during break (recess)
- losing the thread of a story while telling it, or when reporting back on something, and passing on to another event

The type of topic or the contents chosen for an essay (This can reveal much about a learner's thoughts, feelings, written language ability and possible causes of his or her learning problems.)

A sudden change in the physical appearance of a learner, such as untidiness or loss of weight as opposed to previous good grooming



Select two learners from your class who, according to your intuition and their test or examination results, may be experiencing learning problems. Observe them for one week. Notice their appearance, way of dressing, the friends they mix with, the way they speak, their nonverbal communication (body language) — on the sports field and when they are on their own — as well as the quality of their school work, and so on. Make daily notes of your observations and see whether these observations differ from day to day.

8.3.2 LISTENING

''Listening'' implies that one has to ''accurately hear'' the meaning behind a learner's spoken words. One would need to try and hear the motive behind the words, as for example in the case of a learner who constantly asks what the time is. This could reveal that he or she is bored. Moreover, odd questions, answers and comments should not be ignored. Their real meaning could be determined by asking the learner meaningful questions. The things learners say, the way they formulate sentences and the vocabulary they use, all provide a great deal of information about their oral language ability and their speech (such as the incorrect pronunciation of certain sounds).

8.3.3 ASKING QUESTIONS

An additional technique for getting to know more about a learner is that of asking questions. This method of asking questions differs from an ordinary discussion in the sense that it enables one to ascertain the significance of a learner's answers. You could ask individual learners to think aloud while they are trying to solve a problem, or to explain the sequence of their thinking. This means that they have to verbalise their reasoning. In this way you will gain a better understanding of where the learner's reasoning goes wrong. This is especially important in a subject such as mathematics, or in learning subjects where learners are expected to reproduce facts in a specific sequence. This way of asking questions forces learners to become more actively involved in their school work and it prevents learning problems from occurring in the future. The more involved learners are in their school work, the greater will be their motivation and the better their achievements at school.

Study

8.4 LEARNER REPORTS AND SCHOOL RECORDS

Because a school attendance register is an important source of information, it should be consulted. By doing this you can determine whether there has been a decline in the learner's school attendance, and when it began.

Learner reports and school records can provide additional information on schools previously attended, achievements and progress in previous grades, results of formal tests, health reports, personality problems, family circumstances, and so on. These data can reveal problems or needs that learners may have (Kapp 1991:37).

Study

8.5 WRITING REPORTS

You should make a point of noting down your observations carefully and regularly. You might lose important data if you try to rely on your memory alone. It is a good idea to keep a set of cards or a notebook on hand for making notes on learners' behaviour. These observations can be recorded on a report form at a later stage. This information should be consulted regularly in order to spot the relevance between a learner's previous and current behaviour.

Record keeping usually consists of filing regular reports on conversations with learners and their parents, reports on home visits, and reports on comments made about the learners concerned by other teachers and peers. Just the key points should be jotted down or else this will take up too much time and make the reports too long.



Draw up your own report form (for recording your observations) for a learner who is continually failing tests in those subjects that require memorisation. Indicate clearly how you became aware of the learner and what aids you used to identify the learner's problem.

Study

8.6 ASSESSMENT AS DESCRIBED IN THE NCSNET AND NCESS REPORT

The term assessment was used by the above-mentioned commission and committee in their report of 1998. We include an excerpt pertaining to assessment from this report to enable you familiarise yourself with the new terminology and new approaches.

ASSESSMENT

Previously the focus of assessment was to classify learners into certain categories for placement in special schools. On the other hand, the majority of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in disadvantaged contexts had no or limited access to assessment services.

a Early identification, assessment and intervention

It is most likely that barriers to learning and development, such as severe disabilities, will be identified by services within the health sector (eg community-based clinics) during the pre-formal schooling years. Parents, and personnel from the Departments of Health, Welfare and Education, should work together to develop appropriate early intervention strategies for those learners identified as experiencing barriers to learning and development. Links should be established as early as possible between community-based agencies and educators to ensure continuity of service delivery. In the formal education system, CLBTs will need to be centrally involved in identifying and addressing barriers to learning and development.

b Continuous centre-based assessment

The main purpose of assessment should be to inform effective teaching and learning, and to

identify types of support needed. Assessment has a dual outcome: It should determine the progress of learners and the attainment of learning outcomes. It should also involve identifying barriers to learning and development which are not directly related to the continuous assessment of the learning programme. The following recommendations have been accepted:

- *Continuous assessment must be part of the teaching and learning process. Its primary aim should be to maximise learners' access to the broad curriculum, thus to experience success.*
- *Assessment of barriers to learning and development will be the primary responsibility of centre-of-learning-based educators assisted by the CLBT.*
- *The outcomes of both forms of assessment should be a description of learner and system needs which should form the basis of interventions.*

c Role of education support personnel at district level in assessment

It is unrealistic to expect education support personnel to continue a primary focus on individual assessment of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. This will be the responsibility of the centre-of-learning-based team because they are more accessible for providing assistance to learners who need it. However, where educators in centres of learning do not have the necessary expertise, there will be a need for assessment by specialist education support personnel.

- *Education support personnel should focus increasingly on involving and supporting educators and parents in assessment, building their capacity and, where appropriate, should participate in developing appropriate interventions as well as preventative and promotional programmes.*

Read

8.7 SUMMARY

In this study unit you were introduced to the following concepts: identification, educational intuition, screening, observation, listening, asking questions, learner reports and records, and assessment. The aim was to assist you in informally identifying those learners in your classroom who may have special educational needs.

Your *KNOWLEDGE* of these concepts will improve your understanding both of official documents and of the terms that are in everyday use in the field of Education. This, together with the relevant, supplementary information contained in section D, will enable you to put your *KNOWLEDGE* into practice, by turning it into *SKILLS*.

STUDY UNIT 9

ASSISTANCE

In this study unit we will indicate which general guidelines should be taken into account when an assistance programme is developed. You will also learn more about metacognitive skills and how you can foster them, how to encourage positive emotional experiences, etcetera.



Outcomes

When you have completed this study unit you should be able to

- *develop an assistance programme*
- *help learners to experience their school work more positively*
- *support learners so that they can make use of the invisible curriculum*
- *motivate your learners better*
- *use cooperative learning methods and peer group intervention in the classroom*
- *modify the management of your classroom to render better assistance to LSEN (or learners who experience barriers to learning) and improve your classroom administration*

Read

9.1 INTRODUCTION

You as a teacher at a school have certain things which constitute a given situation, such as the building and the classroom in which you teach, the number and type of learners in a class, the curriculum that you must work through, and the support services and the logistics of the school. You cannot change these factors. In this unit we will try to enable you to use what you have to the best effect, and to make changes where possible, so that you can support all your learners and particularly the LSEN *(learners who experience barriers to learning)*.

Study

9.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

When teachers teach, they do so systematically. They have a particular aim in mind, they know what they want to achieve, they know what content to present, they decide in advance what method and what aids they will use, and they also know how to assess whether the learners have indeed achieved the aims of the lesson.

In the case of assistance to an LSEN *(learners who experience barriers to learning)*, the assistance programme is based on precisely the same principles. It is an attempt to

use a specific method to teach learners those contents and skills that they have not adequately mastered in the normal course of teaching. The difference is that, instead of the teaching being directed at the entire class, it is now specifically aimed at the situation of a particular learner (or group of learners). It takes into account what they already know, what problems they are experiencing, how they best learn and so on.

When you draw up an assistance programme you need to adopt the following procedure:

- Collect all the possible information about the learner's situation (situation analysis).
- Formulate the expected outcomes.
- Select the contents.
- Choose the assistance strategy.
- Decide on the implementation of the programme.
- Decide who else will be involved in the programme and how.
- Decide about the methods of evaluation.

These are a few basic components of an assistance programme. There are variations on this basic programme. Sometimes only five components are included, in other cases, more than the seven listed here. We could, for example, have included as another point: Decide which teaching aids you are going to use.

We will now consider each of the various components, or steps of the assistance programme, separately.

9.2.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

Situation analysis means that the total situation of the learner is taken into account. In other words, one looks at personality, level of development in relation to age, home circumstances, (including home language and cultural background), the school situation, relationship with friends and teacher, previous school records, particular needs (or weaknesses) and strengths.

What is important here is the attitude of the teacher. Klein et al (1979:84) compare this to the attitude of a detective ''critically collecting and interpreting clues to solve a mystery''.

Notice that although the situation analysis is the first step of the assistance programme, it is never completed or finalised. The teacher is constantly busy collecting information about the learner, even when he or she has already implemented the assistance programme.

9.2.2 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes flow from the situation analysis. With all the information about a learner at his or her disposal, the teacher can now ask: ''What do I want to achieve with the assistance programme?'' or ''What should be the result of the assistance given?'' It goes without saying that the expected outcomes should be directly related to the findings of the situation analysis.

In order for the assistance to be effective, the outcomes must be very specifically formulated. For example, it does not help much to formulate an outcome as follows:

To improve James's behaviour

This type of formulation is too vague and offers no support in the succeeding steps of the programme. Instead, formulate the aim of the programme as in the examples below, making sure that every step is formulated positively:

- To help Thabo to focus his attention on the lesson
- To help Susie, by means of study methods, to study more successfully
- To motivate Theresa to do better in mathematics

Often during a situation analysis the teacher discovers that the LSEN does not have only one problem but many which require attention. In such a case all the expected outcomes should be listed. An assistance programme is not designed for dealing with more than one problem at a time. Therefore the various characteristics must be listed in order of importance (that is, they must be prioritised). First, the teacher develops a programme to achieve the most important outcome. Once this has been done, attention is given to the second on the list.

On what basis are the outcomes prioritised?

It is not always easy to know which problem to tackle first. If a learner has reading problems, but also has the habit of hitting other learners in the class and so preventing them from learning, the behaviour problem must be dealt with first.

Sometimes the problems are more or less on the same level. One does not have a wider impact than others. It is then advisable to look at the subsequent steps in the programme and to ask: For which of these problems are the equipment and aids the most easily available? That problem must then be placed at the top of the list.

9.2.3 SELECT THE CONTENTS

The contents that will be presented in the assistance programme must be selected so as to give the learner the best chance of achieving the expected outcome. Usually the teacher selects contents from that part of the curriculum with which the learner is experiencing problems. It could also be necessary to use the curriculum of a year or two previously in order to meet learners at their level of progress. Only by doing this will learners be able to achieve success.

Naturally this step is applicable only to learners with learning problems. In the case of a learner with a behaviour problem this step would probably be left out and other steps would receive more attention.

9.2.4 CHOICE OF ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES

Next the teacher has to decide which methods to apply. Once again the methods selected should give the learner the best chance to achieve the desired result. Various aspects must be kept in mind, for example, whether the learner functions better in a group or as an individual, whether the learner is still dependent on concrete teaching aids to grasp concepts, whether the learner has so little interest in the subject that you will need to use something out of the ordinary such as a computer game, and so on.

9.2.5 CHOICE OF TEACHING AIDS

Together with the method selected the teaching aid must also be decided upon. The previous steps will once again influence the decision you make. The information collected in the situation analysis must also be borne in mind here. When working with learners whose eyesight is weak or with younger learners, we normally try to use colourful teaching aids. For learners with a poor attention span you should try not to present too much detail — only that one element that you wish to bring home to the learner should be highlighted. Always ensure that the teaching aid and the contents are well-suited to the learner's level of interest. It would for example be fatal to use reading passages from a primary school reader with adolescent learners.

9.2.6 DECIDE WHO ELSE TO INVOLVE

A decision must be taken about who else to involve in the programme. For example, it will not help if you as the class teacher decide to ignore the unacceptable behaviour of an attention seeking learner, but he or she succeeds in getting attention at home and in other classes through this very behaviour. In some cases another learner or a volunteer from the community can be drawn into the assistance programme.

9.2.7 DECIDE ABOUT THE EVALUATION

The last step of the programme is to decide when and how to evaluate the learner's progress. Will the programme last only a few days, a few weeks or a few months? It is important that the programme should last long enough for there to be a real chance of a positive outcome. On the other hand, it must not be so dragged out that both the teacher and the learner lose their original enthusiasm and the whole programme peters out. It must also be decided how the evaluation will be done. It may be necessary, in the case of a behaviour problem, to draw up a frequency table in order to see whether or not the unacceptable behaviour has lessened. In the case of a learning problem, the aspect of the work which causes concern will have to be tested in the normal manner. However, a child with a mathematics problem, for example, will not necessarily be able to catch up after only one programme. Three programmes might be necessary before the learner has caught up on all the work. It might also be necessary to follow an abbreviated assistance programme every week or every month for the benefit of an individual learner or a group of learners lest they fall behind again.

9.2.8 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

After the programme has been planned the implementation begins. During the presentation of the programme, small alterations can be made. Radical changes should however not be necessary, and if they were one would have to ask whether initially the situation had been properly analysed and the programme thoroughly planned.

Remember also that the success of the programme does not only depend on how well each step has been planned. To a great degree it is influenced by an invisible component, namely the attitude and disposition of the person providing the assistance. Learners must feel that this person is really interested in them, is on their side and really wants to help them. Think, for example, of a teen-year-old youth with

a behaviour problem. If he gets the slightest idea that he is a nuisance to the teacher and that the teacher does not really care about him, the chances that the programme will succeed are very slim.

The learner with the learning problem will also be very sensitive to the message that he reads into the teacher's attitude. The assistance provider must therefore, patiently and calmly, put the learner at ease, give him enough time to overcome his resistance, encourage him, notice the slightest sign of progress, and praise him for it. Eventually this invisible component will lead the young person not only to overcome his problem, but also to take part in classroom activities in the future with a completely new attitude.

9.2.9 THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROGRAMME

The last step in the programme is the evaluation of the learner's progress. When the desired outcome has been reached, the teacher can tackle the second problem on the list of priorities. If the desired outcome has not been achieved, the teacher can consider one of the following:

To continue with the programme for another period.

To change the strategy.

To change the time of presentation and to extend the duration of each session.

To involve more persons, or other persons, in the programme.

Study

9.3 STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTANCE

Teaching LSEN requires more than the learning strategies you would normally apply. In the opinion of Clark and Starr (1991:7) teaching is an art form rather than a science. Teachers should be so creative and competent that, at a moment's inspiration, they can make the necessary adaptations to every new situation that may arise. By way of resourceful planning, teachers continually create new strategies to attain their objectives. To be able to do this, you need to know a few basic strategies. Obviously there are numerous teaching strategies to choose from, and not all can be discussed here.

9.3.1 WHAT ARE TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTANCE?

We have explained above, that an assistance programme is nothing more than a normal teaching programme, specifically planned for a particular learner, or group of learners. In the same way an assistance strategy is a strategy, or method, that has been specifically selected for a particular learner. In other words, it is a strategy that will give the particular learner the best chance to achieve what is expected of him or her (in other words the learning outcomes).

It is precisely for this reason that some authors maintain that the education of LSEN does not really demand ''new'' skills from teachers. All that is expected from them is ''good teaching''. Thus, a normal teaching strategy becomes an assistance strategy when it is intentionally chosen and applied to facilitate the learning of a specific learner, or group of learners.

In the last few years the conviction has grown that it is not financially, or otherwise, possible to assist all LSEN individually. As a result of this, a great deal of research

has been done to search for strategies that will be suitable for groups of learners, and even for the whole class. What follows are some examples of these strategies.

9.3.2 TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTANCE TO A WHOLE CLASS

The method that is most commonly used by teachers is **direct instruction**, where the teacher tells the learner **what** and **how**. To make sure that learners understand and remember, they repeat what they have said. In other words, they make use of **repetition**. For those learners who still have problems, teachers use **drilling**. These methods are strongly criticised because they do not develop the learners' critical thinking abilities. Therefore we are going to look at a number of alternative methods.

The following are some **general** ideas to keep in mind:

- *Helping LSEN to plan their own strategies.* LSEN are often unable to plan actively how to solve a problem themselves. They tend to rely on a few familiar methods that they apply at random, or they simply guess. For this reason teachers should identify a few strategies for each learning activity and indicate steps to tackle the problem. When the learning activity has been completed, learners could be encouraged to explain **which** strategies they used and **how** they applied them.
- *Encouraging questions.* Questions can be encouraged by asking introductory questions such as:

  — What is this about?
  — What value does it have?
  — What do you know about the topic?
  — Do you understand what is being asked?

  By doing this, the teacher encourages learners to recall work that was learned previously, observe similarities and make associations. Therefore the most important aspects of the new work can be placed within a definite and familiar framework. This helps to systematise the new work to some extent so that it becomes more meaningful and easier to understand.

This brings us to:

- *Discovery.* Allow the learners to make their own discoveries. Current thinking holds that discovery techniques may be used effectively to stimulate and maintain interest, but these should be well planned and initiated by the teacher. This is also a means of developing creativity and originality. Sobel and Maletsky (1988:14) maintain that there are two different types of discovery approaches that can be used in the classroom:

  — *Guided discovery.* Most classroom situations lend themselves best to the guided discovery approach, in which the teacher leads the class along the right path, rejecting incorrect attempts, asking questions, and introducing key ideas where necessary. It is a cooperative venture which becomes more and more exciting as the final result comes into view.
  — *Creative discovery.* The purest type of creative discovery in a class situation occurs when the teacher presents a situation to a class and allows the learners to explore it on their own, using only their intuition and past learning, with little or no guided direction. This approach is well suited to the gifted learner and provides the type of experience that is necessary for independent learning. (This also gives teachers time to assist those learners who need more attention.)

There are many examples and challenging questions that resourceful teachers can use to stimulate discovery and I am sure this may encourage you to collect examples of your own to use in your classes.

Learners can be urged to guess or calculate possible solutions and, as they contemplate these, they can **think aloud** — which brings us to the next method.

- *Thinking aloud.* Encouraging learners to think aloud is accepted as an effective way of helping them to become aware of the working of their own cognitive processes and thus improve their problem-solving methods. It may be useful when learners are paired off so that while one thinks aloud, the other can check for accuracy. This strategy is of special significance in teaching mathematics, because it allows learners to work out a problem by talking about it.

  Thinking aloud stimulates the ability to think: it also focuses the attention on other possible solutions rather than on one only. Encourage learners to think aloud. The days when it was possible to hear a pin drop in class are gone forever!
- *Role-playing or modelling.* When introducing the first step in acquiring a new skill, do not just tell learners how to do it: show them. Model the skill once or twice, thinking aloud so that learners can see and hear the procedure. Perform the skill again as the learners, this time, talk you through the steps. Then have the learners perform the skill, verbalising the procedure as they do so. When they have successfully completed the last step, they may be ready to work independently.
- *Teaching according to the objective(s) of the lesson.* We noted above that teachers should determine which specific skill they want the learners to acquire. One could explain the skill, demonstrating it several times, then apply it in ways that give appropriate practice in the particular skill. Starting with learning material which requires the skill to be simply applied, one could gradually increase the complexity of the use of the skill. At the same time one could introduce differentiation by giving more advanced work to those who can manage it, and less difficult work to those who are not as quick. Some learners find it difficult to transfer knowledge from one situation to the next, therefore the skills are of little use to them. By showing learners how their new skills may be used with different objectives, you will also promote their ability to apply the skills to different situations.
- *Breaking up all new work, or concepts, into small steps, and teaching only one step at a time.* Determine the steps necessary for learning a given task and teach those steps individually. Most learners, particularly LSEN, will learn more quickly and more thoroughly when they only have to absorb small amounts at a time. This will also be useful in differentiating work in a class of learners with mixed abilities. The brighter learners will be able to absorb more material more quickly, whereas the slower learners will need smaller units and less difficult work.

  Make sure that learners understand the instructions and are ready to master the next step. If you move too fast, before the learners have fully mastered the previous step, they will fall behind and will not be able to absorb new information. This will cause confusion and frustration and will, in turn, add to your burden of helping confused learners to catch up.
- *Integrating the previously learned steps when teaching the new step.* Make certain that the learners see the sequence in their learning. New work always follows on work previously learned. Cumulative reviews of steps mastered ensure that learners retain those skills and understand their sequential relationship. Cumulative review is of great value to learners who have weak long-term memories and cannot remember the right sequence of steps in a process.
- *Reviewing.* The importance of reviewing cannot be stressed enough. After formal revision by the teacher, learners should also have the opportunity to take stock

and assess, discuss and criticise one another's ideas on the work being revised. This encourages learners to be good listeners, but also stimulates their own ideas. Examples of this strategy would be to say, ''I think you are saying ...'' or ''Come, let us take another look at John's explanation ...'' and then to repeat and emphasise the aspects which they did not grasp well.

- *Feedback to teacher.* By giving the learners the type of opportunity described above to explain what they have learned, you create a way of evaluating your teaching. You can see how successful it has been by asking the learners questions. This allows learners to tell you what problems they experience with your teaching. Instead of asking, ''Does everyone understand what I have explained?'', rather ask, ''Should I explain it again?'' or ''Should I go more slowly? Would you like more examples?'' Let the learners communicate any problems they may have with your method of presentation. In this way you will obtain information on learners' specific problems and you will be able to modify the presentation of the learning material in future. (Remember, we as teachers are not perfect and we can also learn from our own mistakes!)

9.3.3 PROMOTING THE USE OF METACOGNITIVE SKILLS



How do you study? (Have you ever thought about this before?)

Do you take your study unit to bed and read through it? OR

Do you sit down with paper and pencil, make notes, underline, formulate your own questions?

Have you ever thought about how you think?

There is no one style that is correct for everyone! What is important is to know which method works best for you! That you will only find out by trying out different ways of identifying your own specific metacognitive style.

In simple terms, metacognition is a process that occurs when individuals are aware of the strategies they use in their own thought processes. Osborne, Jones and Stein (1985) say that metacognition is the individual's knowledge of, and control over, his or her own thoughts and learning — in other words, the ability to know what you know and do not know (Smey-Richman 1988:17). When learners have learned metacognitive skills, they have learned more than subject content because they have also learned **how to learn**.

Research has indicated that metacognitive skills can be acquired on condition that learners

- are aware of what they are doing and how and why it is being done
- are not distracted
- understand the skills that are being learned
- are involved in regular uninterrupted practice of the skill
- get regular feedback and can use this to improve on future efforts
- have the opportunity to explain what they are involved with
- receive guidance in the use of skills when the opportunity arises to apply them
- are guided to apply the skills to different situations

9.3.4 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE POSITIVE EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

As early as 1962, Piaget (Smey-Richman 1988:25) claimed that **no cognitive function occurs without an emotional element and that no emotional experience is without a cognitive element.** If we accept that there is continuous interaction between emotion and cognition, then we must give more weight to emotions in our teaching of LSEN. Measures used to improve the academic progress of LSEN should also include elements that enhance learners' feeling of adequacy.

Positive emotional experiences can be promoted by applying some of the following strategies:

- Setting achievable and immediate objectives. (This ensures short-term feedback and a more frequent experience of success.)
- Linking effort to result. (Show learners that success can be ascribed to effort — for example, I attain success because I work hard.)
- Describing competence as a skill. (Let the learners think of a specific capability, for instance, being able to write well or read fluently.)

No one is born with this ability — we learn it through practice.

By making use of the above strategies, teachers can give LSEN the opportunity to be successful on the basis of reasonable effort in a sound educational climate dominated by mutual confidence and respect.

9.3.5 STRATEGIES USED IN THE ''INVISIBLE CURRICULUM''

Together with these strategies, it will also be necessary to teach LSEN *(learners who experience barriers to learning)* how to acquire such abilities as the correct attitudes, views, behaviour, working habits, communication skills and problem-solving skills. These skills are usually built into the normal school curriculum, but are not consciously taught. This has been referred to as the ''invisible curriculum''. The way in which this teaching occurs is directly linked with the message that the school and teachers convey to learners about the demands and valid values that prevail in the adult life awaiting them.

A comprehensive invisible curriculum would, for instance, emphasise good working habits (organisation, structure, planning, commitment and good school attendance), teamwork, determination, honesty, reliability, consideration for others and good interpersonal relations. These characteristics are just as important for future success in adult life as any academic knowledge or skills. It is important to nurture these, particularly in the instruction of LSEN *(learners who experience barriers to learning)* because they often have little self-confidence and, as a result of repeated failure, lack the will to succeed.



Compile a list of elements that could be included in such an invisible curriculum and show briefly how this could be implemented in the classroom.

FEEKBACK

The following are two examples:

- *Paying attention.* Before presenting important verbal information use a cue to alert the learners, such as ''Listen'' or ''Ready'' or ''It is time to begin our lesson''.
- *Classroom behaviour.* Coming late is inappropriate behaviour and must be resolved. Different methods may be used depending on the age of the learners: young learners may be rewarded for being on time. Another useful method is to schedule activities that learners enjoy at the start of a class period. With younger learners tokens, badges or special privileges may be used.

9.3.6 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE MOTIVATION

Poor motivation and apathy in learners is surely one of the biggest problems encountered by teachers. Not only does lack of motivation lead to poor learning results: it can also disrupt discipline in class. Learners are not the only ones involved in motivation: the teacher also has a very important part to play because effective and enthusiastic teaching creates enthusiasm in the learners.

Moreover, motivation is the key to both effective learning and good discipline. It goes without saying that teachers will engage learners in activities to ensure effective learning, since unmotivated and undisciplined learners will not wish to be involved.

Motivation is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by many factors. In a classroom it is determined not only by the learners' personal characteristics, but also by their attitude to the subject content, their previous experiences, their own interests, the degree of difficulty of the learning task, their personal style of learning, the teacher's style of teaching, the classroom atmosphere and the meaning or reward that it holds for the learner.



Why is there a connection between motivation and discipline?

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How can the LSEN be motivated?

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How can the teacher's attitude influence learners' motivation?

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FEEDBACK

Unfortunately there are no easy answers to these questions. Stimuli that motivate some learners, leave others cold. Here are a few general approaches selected from Clark and Starr (1991:75):

- Try to improve the learner's self-image.
- Exploit the learner's current incentive.
- Make the outcome of the learning meaningful for the learner.
- Help learners to see the possible applications in what they have to learn.
- Keep pace with the learner's ability and work tempo.
- Develop a receptive attitude in the learner.
- Create a pleasant and stimulating classroom climate.
- Help learners to cherish ideals and cultivate healthy attitudes to learning.
- Exploit reinforcement strategies.
- Set a good example so that learners can use you as role model.
- Be enthusiastic and creative.
- Use the learners' own field of interest.
- Show interest in the learners' home environment.

These motivational approaches may differ from child to child and the teacher's approach to younger learners will be different from the approach to senior learners.

The best measures and techniques for motivation are of a positive nature. In the past, there was too much emphasis on the negative, or on deterrents such as punishment, in order to motivate or discipline learners. It is far more important to allow underachievers to experience success, as success leads to greater success.

9.3.7 COOPERATIVE LEARNING METHODS

> ''People acting together in a group can accomplish things which no individual acting alone could ever hope to bring about'' — Franklin D Roosevelt

Since 1970 there has been a growing awareness of the value of cooperative learning in improving learning performance. It is characteristic of cooperative learning that learners are divided into smaller heterogeneous groups to work together on a specific task.

A group usually consists of four members — one who does very well, two who are average, and a poor performer. These learners should all learn work that is dealt with in class, and should help their team-mates to master the work.

It is characteristic of cooperative learning that the success of one learner ensures that the others also master the task because it is a team effort. The aim is therefore that the team not only has to **do** something, but also to **learn** something as a team.

Remember this is not a method which should be used too often or too regularly as it will lose its effectiveness. The subject, the topic, the objectives and the type of learners in the class will all determine the successful implementation of this method.

By grouping bright, average and slower learners together, one finds that the brighter learners usually take the initiative and help those who are not so bright. In addition, the weaker learners benefit from being exposed to the innovative ideas of the **brighter** learners.

Homogeneous groups may cause stigmatisation — a group of less bright learners may feel they are inferior, or a group of bright learners may act superior to the rest. Although the bright learners may have the advantage of healthy competition and may have more scope for creativity, the dull group may plod along without learning much.

Characteristics of cooperative learning

- *Team reward.* The entire team is rewarded if the objectives are met, for example, by obtaining tokens or other rewards.
- *Individual responsibility.* The team's success is dependent on the effective knowledge of each individual member. By explaining concepts to each other, for example, individual team members learn that they must be capable of fulfilling the assessment requirements without the aid of the other team-mates.
- *Equal chance of success.* Individual team-members have an opportunity to make a contribution in the team, and this improves their previous performance. This ensures that good, average and weak achievers are encouraged to give their best.

Two important factors that determine the success of these methods are

- clearly defined objectives
- individual responsibility

Therefore team objectives must be within reach of every team member and every team must know exactly what it wants to achieve. Also essential is that each team member must make a contribution in order to achieve the objective. To ensure individual responsibility and to prevent some learners from making no contribution at all, each team member is given a specific assignment for which he or she has sole responsibility and without which the task cannot be successfully completed.

It is clear that the successful implementation of this method requires thorough planning by the teacher. However, cooperative learning appears to have so many advantages, particularly where teachers have very large classes, that the planning involved would appear well worth the effort. According to Smey-Richman (1988:36) cooperative learning methods can be utilised equally well in all subjects in primary and secondary school classes. Urban and rural schools can use them and there is an improvement in performance in good, average and weak performers, for boys and girls, as well as multicutural learners.

9.3.8 LEARNING THROUGH PEER MEDIATION

This is no new approach as it has already been in use for many years. It is a form of cooperative learning which is less structured and is used as an alternative aid in traditional classroom instruction. It is known by different names such as the following:

- *Peer instruction*

One learner is used to explain work that he or she has already mastered to another, and still another is asked to be of assistance where necessary.

- *Older learners teach younger ones (buddy system)*

This generally takes place in classes where different standards are grouped together, but it can also be implemented with the cooperation of other teachers, by using learners from other classes.

In mathematics, a Grade 7 learner can assist, for example, a Grade 5 learner. This can be done after school hours or during periods when the older learner is available.

With this method of instruction one should be careful not to take advantage of the older learners or peers, thus causing their own learning to suffer.

- *Class wide tutoring*

The class is divided into two groups. Each half forms groups of two in which the one group plays the role of teacher while the other acts as the learner. The ''teacher'' gets the opportunity to teach the ''learner'' and after 15 minutes they swop roles. Points are awarded for good teaching, for explaining and conveying facts, correction of work, support and assistance. Team totals are calculated and the group that attains the highest marks is the winner. The value of this approach is that the learners become more involved and show greater responsibility for their own learning and for that of their classmates. This is particularly effective if the teacher has competently taught the learners how to play their role as ''teacher'', and it takes place under strict supervision.

Study

9.4 WHAT IS AN ASSISTANCE STRATEGY?

Teachers can also support the LSEN in their classes by managing their classrooms effectively. Good classroom managers are more capable of adapting their teaching to the needs of the learners than are teachers who regard classroom management as not very important.

At the beginning of a year, teachers are usually assigned a classroom, specific learners, guidelines for the curriculum to be followed and teaching material, such as textbooks. Thus teachers are fairly free to decide for themselves how they wish to arrange the furniture in their classroom, how they are going to use the time at their disposal, how they are going to present the learning material, and what teaching aids they will be using. Yet it does happen that teachers make these choices with their own preferences in mind and not always with the needs of the learners as their first priority.



Give some thought to the following:

Where do you find it best to study? In a quiet spot? With background music? Surrounded by people who are talking, or by the sounds of a TV?

- *Can you work in close proximity to visual distractions such as colourful posters on the walls, an open window, people moving about, a table cluttered with papers and books, and so on?*
- *When, for you, is the best time to work? In the morning, afternoon or evening? When are you most alert?*
- *For how long can you study at a time (ie without interrupting your study)? Till the section is completed? For half an hour, or less or more? How regularly do you need a break? After a break for rest, how quickly can you get to work again?*
- *Do you work slowly or quickly? How do you use most of your time: planning an assignment, or doing it, or revising it?*

This is an excerpt from a learning style questionnaire (Lewis & Doorlag 1995:191). Do you know your own style of learning and are you aware of the fact that the learners in your class may have learning styles that are different from yours? This means that your best way of working may not be the best for most of the learners in your class.

Thus it is a good idea to take cognisance of the needs and the learning styles of the learners when managing the learning environment.

ARRANGING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment consists of

- the furniture in your classroom such as chairs, tables, cupboards (which can or cannot be locked)
- the physical condition of the classroom such as where the windows are (do they admit a maximum of light?) and whether or not they can be closed, whether there is a door (that can be closed or not), the size of the classroom and the colour of the walls.

The nature of the physical environment and the arrangement of the furniture influence the performance and behaviour of both teacher and learners. This means that a Biology teacher may find it difficult to have all the learners do practicals in a crowded classroom, and a woodwork teacher will not be able to teach woodwork in the school hall. Moreover, a lack of equipment such as chalkboards on the wall, may make teaching difficult, but it dare not hamper the teaching process. Teachers may be able to correct some of the aspects of the physical environment by re-arranging the furniture but there is nothing they can do about a classroom that is too small.



Give a little thought to the arrangement of the furniture in your classroom. Did you, yourself, move your table to its present position? Why? Or did you leave it where you found it? Did the learners decide for themselves where they wished to sit in the class or did you move them elsewhere? Why?

We shall now discuss a few principles to be remembered when arranging the physical environment of a classroom.

- *Make sure that the classroom environment is safe and free of obstacles.* The safety of the learners should have top priority at all times in both the school and the classroom. This means that items of furniture should not be placed in corridors or foyers where learners might hurt themselves by walking into them. Avoid polishing verandahs and stairs until they shine because this can make them dangerously slippery.

  Classrooms, too, should be free of obstacles. The furniture should be arranged in such a way as to allow the learners to move around without walking into things. Teaching equipment such as bookcases, chalkboards and overhead projectors should be in convenient positions where they are accessible and visible to everyone. In your class you may have learners with disabilities such as a visual disability or a physical one necessitating the use of a wheelchair or crutches to get about. This will really make it necessary to have special arrangements to prevent learners with balancing problems or who use crutches from having needless falls, or those with poor vision or who are blind, from walking into items of furniture. The aisles between desks ought to be wide enough to permit wheelchairs to pass through. Moreover, one should warn learners who are blind or partially sighted when one intends moving any items of furniture around the classroom. Disabled learners sometimes require extra apparatus. For example, a blind learner would need a braille machine, braille books and a tape recorder. These should be kept in a safe but convenient place.

- *Make sure the working conditions are pleasant.* A pleasant physical environment ought to be comfortable as well as attractive.

  The temperature in the classroom ought to be moderate. Classrooms that are either too cold or too warm prevent the learners from concentrating effectively. Teachers cannot do much to change this, but you should use what is available correctly and to the full. The ventilation and lighting should be good. A classroom that is inordinately stuffy and dark also has a detrimental effect on concentration. Visually impaired learners such as learners with cataracts frequently need extra lighting in the form of reading lamps on their tables. Learners whose eyes are sensitive to light (photophobic) such as albinos should not be exposed to glare or excessively bright lighting if they are to see clearly. Learners like these should be seated away from windows in the darker parts of the classroom. Curtains may be used to regulate the amount of light entering the room, and to keep out noise. Noises tend to distract learners' attention or prevent them from hearing you. These are points to keep in mind when teaching learners with hearing disabilities and those who are easily distracted.

  An attractive classroom improves class attendance, learner participation and attitude towards tuition. Pictures, posters and displays of educational material and equipment all contribute to making a classroom attractive. Just remember to change them regularly so that you retain the learners' interest. Another point to remember is that if they are too bright or to numerous, they might actually distract attention from the lessons you give.



Since the school's budget may not provide for these things, how could you turn the decoration of the classroom into a class project without it costing the learners too much money?

FEEDBACK

It is always interesting to feature the latest news events on the walls of the classroom. An earthquake in Japan could give rise to a map of Japan, and displays of pictures and drawings showing how earthquakes are formed, and illustrating the damage, social and financial consequences of earthquakes. Similarly one could depict the results of a large-scale strike in South Africa. The subject one teaches will determine where one's emphases will be. Remember, however, to remove such materials after a few weeks. They may be re-used when the topic crops up for discussion again.

- *Make functional use of space.* Using space functionally in the classroom depends on the size of the room and the number of learners in the class. These factors merit consideration when one is planning the arrangement of furniture in the class. There are various ways of arranging tables and chairs. When your teaching is formal, you should make certain that all the learners can see you, and that you are close to the desk, the chalkboard and other aids. Rows of tables and chairs are probably best for formal teaching. If, however, you divide a large class into smaller groups for working together on individual projects, it is better to place the tables and chairs of a selected group together.

  The teacher ought to be able to pass easily between the groups of learners, and it is

important that the learners do not crowd one another. This may distract their attention, make them unhappy and raise the level of aggression. It would be best to test your arrangement of the furniture by using a few of the learners at a time when the classroom is empty. If there are disabled learners in your class, you should make allowances for their disabilities by, for example, making extra room for a learner with a braille machine. The same applies to learners in wheelchairs.

- *Remember teaching objectives when considering seating arrangements.* The seating arrangements of learners and their relationship with one another can affect their academic progress, their behaviour in the classroom and their social interaction with one another.

  Findings show that when tables and chairs are arranged in rows, the learners in the front and middle sections of the class participate to a greater extent in discussions, and devote more attention and time to finishing their tasks than learners in the back of the class.

  Seating arrangements also influence learners' behaviour in class. Those who are in the habit of arguing should be placed as far as possible from each other, as well as those who are incorrigible talkers. Inattentive learners and those who disrupt the discipline in the class, should be placed near the teacher.

ORGANISING THE TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

The teaching environment of a classroom includes the following:

- the procedures used by a teacher to subdivide the curriculum into smaller lesson units
- the organisation of learners into groups
- the use of teaching material, such as books
- the use of equipment such as chalkboards
- guidelines for improving learner behaviour (discipline)

Teachers can deploy it to improve learner achievement.

Study

9.5 CLASSROOM ADMINISTRATION

Classroom administration encompasses report writing and the filing of information.

Because teachers are involved in many activities, they receive a great deal of **general information** such as class timetables, rosters for extramural activities, attendance registers, newsletters on certain topics, information from the school principal and so on. There is so much more that could be mentioned. Much of this information is also of interest to the learners and could be displayed on the classroom walls. A certain section of the notice board could be reserved for this type of information. One should regularly draw learners' attention to new information.

Teachers also receive **information about the subjects they teach.** Syllabuses and report books should be kept in strategic places. Every year teachers compile a number of test and examination papers. It is always a good idea to keep copies with a view to re-using certain sections.

Confidential information about learners should be locked away. The SEN coordinator (special needs education coordinator) should handle confidential documents. They could also be entrusted to the teacher concerned. Test and

examination results also form part of those documents that need to be treated confidentially.

You need to plan your own filing system for these items of information. Rather than storing them in cardboard boxes you should keep them in cupboards that can be locked. File together information that should be kept together. One cabinet or a shelf can be reserved for general information, one for subject-related information, and another for information on learners. These are but three examples. You may require more storage sections.

Classroom administration also includes the filling in of forms, writing reports and so on. These should be completed and submitted promptly. A teacher who is well organised makes his or her own task easier. You will not waste valuable time looking for things and to the other teachers and the learners you will be settting an example which is worth following.

Read

9.6 SUMMARY

These are but a few methods and strategies that can be used to support LSEN *(learners who experience barriers to learning)*. The strategies (and the ways in which they can be applied) will be determined by the unique characteristics of the learner, the *ATTITUDE*, *SKILLS* and *KNOWLEDGE* of the teacher and the learning content. To ensure that the strategies used are effective, the teacher should experiment, make modifications and become proficient at using the best of the various methods. Many of these strategies are not easily implemented and will require dedicated practice and perseverance on the part of the teacher.

STUDY UNIT 10

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

In the previous study unit we concentrated on the educational support services that are provided at the various levels of education. In this study unit we go on to consider other forms of support that are available in the education of learners who experience barriers to learning. You will notice that, ideally speaking, there can and should be a whole network of support available. In describing such a network, we refer to a holistic and integrated form of support.



Outcomes

At the end of this study unit you should be able to

- *list all the partners that may be involved in assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning*
- *draw a diagram to represent the different partners*
- *describe the contributions of each of the partners*
- *describe the way in which each of the partners may be involved*

Read

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In discussing the nature, scope and causes of the problems of learners who experience barriers to learning (study units 1 and 2 of this module) you saw that barriers to learning can occur in a large proportion of learners, that these needs can assume various forms and that they can arise from a wide variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The problems of learners who experience barriers to their learning do not manifest themselves in a simple way and their causes are often multifactorial.



Note the following two examples of learners experiencing barriers to learning and answer the questions below:

(1) a learner who has epileptic seizures which affect his ability to pay attention to his work in class

(2) a learner whose school work deteriorates because of serious problems at home

- *Would a teacher single-handedly be able to solve this learner's problems?*
- *Why not?*
- *Who else should be involved — in each case?*

FEEDBACK

- Learners suffering from epilepsy need the appropriate medication, so their parents ought to seek expert advice. This means that a medical doctor should be involved.
- A social worker could be involved to assist the learner with the domestic problems (problems in the home).

Thus it is clear that it is not always a simple matter to support learners with their problems. Support often assumes various forms, and the services of various supporters from a variety of disciplines may be utilised. This is why there ought to be a network of support available for learners who experience barriers to learning.

In this study unit we consider the various role players of such a support network, namely those associated with education, health, welfare, labour and the community.

Study

10.2 EDUCATION

>In the previous study unit we indicated how the educational-support services are organised at various levels of education. Here we shall be discussing the educational-support services — with the emphasis on the services that ought to be available to schools within their communities.

10.2.1 EDUCATIONAL-SUPPORT SERVICES

Through the educational support services of the region concerned, any of the following persons can be available to support learners who experience barriers to learning:

- an educational psychologist
- a learning support coordinator (who coordinates learning support to learners with physical and/or physiological impairments)
- a vocational counsellor
- a learning support (remedial) teacher

The services that these persons provide may include the following:

- They provide the principal and staff of a school with guidelines on how to organise learning support to learners who experience barriers to learning in the school.
- They help with the organising of a school support team.
- They offer teachers in-service training on how to identify and assess and give learning support to learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- They act as consultants to teachers coping with learners who experience barriers to learning.
- They treat individual cases that are referred to them should the learners need more specific learning support.
- They are responsible for the coordination of learning support with special and ''full-service'' schools.
- They form partnerships with other agencies in the vicinity for getting involved in support to learners who experience barriers to learning.
- They get parents involved in the learning support and assist with guidance to parents of learners who experience barriers to learning.

These services do not necessarily exist in practice and, particularly in the rural areas, there are often no services at all. Therefore, education districts should as soon as possible begin to coordinate, establish and train school support teams. Teachers should be encouraged to be better equipped to support learners who experience barriers to learning.

In Kenya, the Danish government has developed the EARS programme, which seems to be particularly successful. EARS stands for Educational Assistance Resource Centres. These consist of fairly simple clinics that have been erected in rural areas and are staffed by a teacher, a nurse, and a social worker. These centres serve both schools and community. A similar concept may meet our needs.

10.2.2 SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN THE VICINITY

According to the new policy of inclusion, special schools now have a new role to play: to act as a source of expertise and advice for the surrounding area (see sect 6.3.4.1). Depending on the type of learner experiencing barriers to learning that is being catered for, special schools also employ the services of the following persons:

- specialist teachers
- speech therapists
- physiotherapists
- occupational therapists
- school psychologists
- school nurses

These persons usually have specialised knowledge and valuable experience which should be applied over a far wider spectrum than just at the school where they are employed.

Apart from this fact, these schools often have specialised equipment for identifying, assessing and assisting learners with a particular form of physical impairment.

Thus, besides teaching the learners placed with them, special schools can make additional, valuable contributions towards assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning in ordinary schools by, for example:

- advising school principals, the school support team and the class teacher about the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning (particluarly learners with physical and/or physiological impairments) in an ordinary school
- counselling the parents of learners with physical and/or physiological impairments who are placed in an ordinary school
- assisting with assessing the progress of these learners
- confirming, or refuting, the findings of the class teacher when there is doubt about whether a learner has a physical impairment (a learner's degree of visual loss may, for example, be established at a school for blind learners)
- assisting with the assessment of learners who have been admitted to ordinary schools (ordinary teachers do not always know how to test the progress of a learner with an intellectual impairment or a deaf learner)
- presenting in-service training programmes to teachers in ordinary schools, such as programmes on identifying specific forms of barriers to learning or on appropriate methods of teaching these learners



Please page back to section 6.3.4.1, in which the role of the special schools was envisaged by the NCSNET/NCESS Report.

Read

10.3 HEALTH

The community health services form an important component of the partnership that provides assistance to learners who experience barriers to learning — especially those with intrinsic physical and/or physiological impairments (see study unit 2).

This means that the Department of Education and the Department of Health should already cooperate on government level to identify, in particular, learners with physical impairments early in their lives and to give them early support, particularly to the parents, so that those learners are not disabled by the barriers that the community may put in their way.

Medical staff ought to be available to provide the necessary services to learners, teachers and parents. This will require joint planning and the creation of effective mechanisms for cooperation.

In some countries such as Chile and China, each school has a clinic for primary health care. These clinics cater for the health of not only the learners, but also the parents, younger learners and so on. The school thus becomes, as it were, a community centre.

The following persons could be employed in a community's health service:

- health inspectors
- district surgeon
- nurse
- dentist
- speech therapist
- physiotherapist
- occupational therapist

Of course we know that there may be radical differences between the health services of different regions. In certain regions — particularly urban areas — there are usually large hospitals where specialised services are provided, such as Pelonomi Hospital near Bloemfontein, King Edward Hospital in Durban, Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg, Pretoria Academic Hospital in Pretoria and Tygerberg Hospital near Cape Town.

In the rural areas these services are, however, often far from satisfactory: there are some regions that are not even visited by a school nurse. Because the primary health of young learners is so important, all sorts of alternatives for improving the distribution of health services are currently being considered. One of these possibilities is to deploy mobile clinics to visit those communities that do not have health clinics.

In some areas traditional doctors still play an important role. Thus the schools should cooperate with them.

The task of the community health services includes the following:

- They take preventative measures by vaccinating learners against diseases such as whooping cough and polio.
- They identify risk cases by noticing the first signs of conditions such as curvature of the spine.
- They identify physical impairments in learners with the aid of screening tests for visual, hearing, physical and other problems.
- They assist with the identification of other chronic conditions and diseases such as malnutrition, malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and asthma.
- They administer medication for conditions such as bilharzia or lice in the hair which could occur among learners.
- They refer serious cases for further examination and/or medication to the district surgeon or the learners' own doctor.
- They examine learners who have been referred to these services by the school.

Read

10.4 WELFARE

The government's welfare services in the regions are managed by social workers. These persons, too, are able to make a valuable contribution to the assisting of learners who experience barriers to learning because they have specific knowledge and skills that teachers do not have.

Thus their input is indispensable to the handling of all those problems that are in some way related to the social situation, such as cases of unstable domestic circumstances; poverty; orphans or street learners; learners of parents who are unemployed or in prison, juvenile delinquents, abused learners and so on.

The fact that social workers are trained to try and prevent social problems, means that they are able to assist with preventative programmes such as the prevention of teenage pregnancies, suicide among teenagers, dropping out of school, and so on.

Because they work in close cooperation with a variety of welfare organisations and with the Departments of Labour and of Health, they would also be in a position, where necessary, to refer learners who experience barriers to learning to the right agencies.

Read

10.5 LABOUR

Among the responsibilities of the Department of Labour is the provision of opportunities for sheltered employment to persons who will not be able to find work in the open market.

It often happens that schools procrastinate (wait too long) before they begin thinking about preparing learners who experience barriers to learning for future occupations. The ideal is for schools to begin cooperating with the Department of Labour a few years before these learners leave school, about the possible career guidance of the learners and about their eventual job placement. Part of this cooperation will also entail considering the labour needs of the community. In some regions there are many factories in which these learners could find some type of employment, while other regions depend on agricultural activities. All this needs to be taken into account by the partners in education, and in the field of labour.

Read

10.6 THE COMMUNITY

The community is singled out here despite the fact that the services mentioned above, such as schools and clinics, already form part of the community. Under this heading, however, we shall be considering the informal sector — that is, those groups or individuals that do not directly serve the state. Included among these are all ordinary members of the community, parents, parent committees, voluntary organisations (NGOs), religious denominations, and so on.

The members of any healthy community are interested in the welfare of their learners. They realise that the quality of our learners will determine the quality of our future communities. Moreover, generally speaking, communities are usually willing to become involved not only in giving their service through education, but also in making many sacrifices for their learners.

The following are examples of persons or agencies in the community that are also able to assist learners who experience barriers to learning.

The parents. The need to involve parents of learners who experience barriers to learning as much as possible in assisting their learners with their problems is now universally realised, for the following reasons:

- We now concede that parents have the right to become involved because learners who experience barriers to learning are their learners and they have the first responsibility towards educating these learners.
- It has been irrefutably shown that learners's problems are more easily solved when their parents are involved in the assistance.
    - — Parents are able to furnish valuable information about their learners's situation, such as past events, the course of their child's development and so on.
    - — Because parents spend so much time with their learners they have unique opportunities to observe the learners in various situations and then to report their observations to the teacher, for example, whether the child tires easily, whether he or she finds it easy to make friends, what usually triggers his or her epileptic seizures, what study methods the child uses, and so on.
    - — The parents can help to apply the programme of assistance, for example by continuing it for the teacher in the afternoon, over weekends or even during the holidays. This means that the parent may have to personally supervise the child's reading or arithmetic (or whatever the programme entails) for half an hour every day.
- Apart from the fact that this will mean that the problems of learners who experience barriers to learning are more easily solved, it will also generate better relationships between parents and school staff, improve the motivation and achievements of learners and make for better school attendance as well as reducing the incidence of premature school leaving.

There is no real prescription for how parents should be involved in assisting these learners. They can be of invaluable service to learners who experience barriers to learning as individuals, in groups, informally or in an organised unit such as a parents' committee. Since we shall be discussing the role of parents in greater detail later in the advanced certificate, we are referring to it rather superficially here.

Parent involvement also implies parent empowerment. The school should therefore

also play a part in preparing parents for this task (read more about this in Module 2, study unit 8).

There are several examples of what is being done elsewhere to elicit parents' interest in the school, while at the same time equipping them more adequately for their task. Programmes such as Even Start and Learning Together give illiterate parents or parents with a low level of education a chance to learn to read and do mathematics together with their learners. Early Morning Library enables parents and learners to choose books together for reading at home.



Do you have any additional suggestions for involving parents more actively in schools?

Volunteers. Other persons who are not necessarily parents can also be involved in educational support. The following are examples:

- Volunteers from the community (mothers, grandparents, pensioners, individuals doing their military service) are sometimes used as classroom assistants — without remuneration.
- Volunteers are appointed as tutors. These persons are then actively involved in teaching such learners by, say, helping them with their reading, mathematics, science or a second language. Schools in the USA that have managed to arrange this type of tutor for each child during the first school year, have succeeded in reducing their failure rate from approximately 50 to 2 percent.
- At some secondary schools, volunteers are used as mentors for certain learners. (In addition, each mentor may act on behalf of more than one learner.) The mentor is an older, more experienced person whose task towards those learner(s) assigned to him or her is to act as their role model, counsellor, helper and supporter. Mentors also provide information and refer learners to other resources. Thus they are able to create possibilities and opportunities for learners which they themselves would not be able to do. Ascher (1988:1) maintains that mentors help to ensure a better quality of life for adolescents, in particular. They are instrumental in preventing learners from dropping out of school, from landing in prison, and from having teenage pregnancies. They also assist learners to make a smooth transition from secondary school to a training centre or other form of continued training.

  Findings show that although a mentor has to be an older, more experienced person, the difference in age between mentor and adolescent should not be so great that the latter can no longer identify with his or her mentor. Nor should the social difference between them be so great that the mentor will not be able to understand the ''language'' of the adolescent and his or her frame of reference.

  As regards the development of this type of mentor-learner relationship, the creation of a relationship of trust is seen as very important. Should the mentor be unreliable, unpredictable, break promises, or should there be uncertainty about his or her availability, more harm than good will be done because this will probably reinforce any existing negative perceptions of adults the adolescent may have.
- Celebrities are periodically invited to secondary schools to address the learners and/or their parents. These schools try to single out individuals who have grown

up under the same conditions but who have succeeded in climbing the social ladder. These persons are an inspiration to the learners and their parents, to whom they can become identification figures.

To ensure the success of the cooperation between the school and the volunteers from the community, it should be well organised from the outset. This means that there will have to be firm written intentions on the part of the parties concerned, that the aims for each participant should be clearly stated and their various roles should be clearly defined. Furthermore in-service training ought to be available in order, where necessary, to equip the participants for those tasks to which they have committed themselves.



What other suggestions do you have regarding ways in which persons from the community could become involved in improving the quality of learners' education and achievements? Give a brief written answer.

Organisations

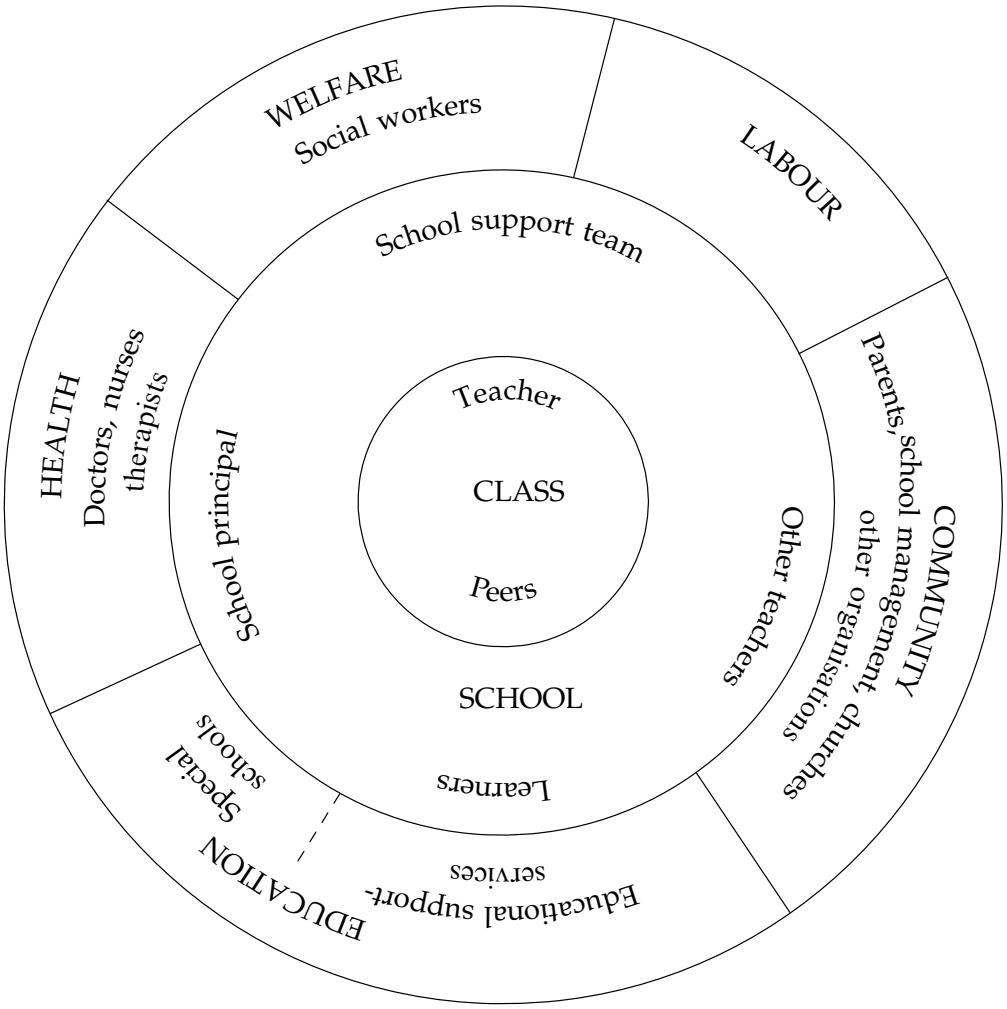
There are various ways in which voluntary organisations can be involved with schools. Providing learners with food or clothing and improving the facilities of the school are among the most common. Sports organisations can get involved in sports training and by providing sports facilities. Today sponsors often sponsor schools in some event or other.

Study

10.7 A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

It has become clear from the above that educational support to learners who experience barriers to learning is a joint responsibility. Its success will depend largely on the extent to which all these services are prepared to become involved and how well the different inputs are coordinated and balanced. In addition it requires joint dedication to the issue. The members of the community should view the learners of their area as ''their learners'' and for this reason they ought to be willing to cooperate and to make sacrifices for the welfare of these learners.

The network of services that could be involved in giving educational support to learners who experience barriers to learning at regional level may be represented in the following diagram:



Read

10.8 SUMMARY

There could be a whole network of support available for educational support to learners who experience barriers to learning in the various districts. Individuals themselves need not be trained assistants in order to help learners. What is necessary is a genuine attitude of caring: such people should be prepared to fulfil the role they assume with dedication.

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SECTION D

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION — APPENDICES

I am not who I think I am
I am not who you think I am
I am who I think you think I am
McNamara & Moreton



INTRODUCTION

The appendices to this section contain knowledge which you should use to supplement the information in sections A–C. The *KNOWLEDGE* that you will acquire in this section, will trigger a changed *ATTITUDE* within you, which in turn will guarantee more effective *SKILLS* to deal with and to understand the learner who is experiencing barriers to learning. The appendices are organised according to headings and letters of the alphabet, not divided into study units with the traditional outcomes and activities. In this section, there are no activities indicated that you need to complete. This section is loaded with facts that you must, start studying SOON AFTER YOU HAVE ENROLLED for the course. See the guidelines in this regard. Please note that the ''old'' concepts must be replaced by ''newer'' concepts of ''impairments'' instead of ''disabilities'' as well as ''learners experiencing barriers to learning'' instead of LSEN.

You do, however, need to study this section *THOROUGHLY* while you note the following: the causative factors and manifestation of barriers to learning, and especially the sections on assistance by the teacher to the learner who is experiencing barriers to learning.

You can add as many photocopies, newspaper clippings, research orders to this section and that can be used by you in future as a resource book. Please remember to complete the ''post test'' right at the end of this section and compare it with the pretest and see if you can detect any positive changes.

Appendix A: Visual barriers to learning

Appendix B: Auditory barriers to learning

Appendix C: Intellectual barriers to learning

Appendix D: Physical barriers to learning

Appendix E: Epilepsy as a barrier to learning

Appendix F: Perceptual-motor barriers to learning

Appendix G: Language as a barrier to learning

Appendix H: Learning problems as a barrier to learning: foundation phase and intermediate phase

Appendix I: Emotional and behavioural problems as barriers to learning

Appendix J: Barriers to learning related to spoken language

Appendix K: Barriers to learning related to written language

Appendix L: Barriers to learning related to reading

Appendix M: Barriers to learning related to Mathematics

Appendix N: White Paper 6

Appendix O: Pringle's emotional needs model

Appendix P: Counselling techniques for teachers

APPENDIX A

VISUAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

OVERVIEW OF THIS APPENDIX

This section deals with the following topics:

1 Eye conditions
2 Identification of learners with visual disabilities
3 Assistance to learners with visual problems

1 EYE CONDITIONS

We will discuss a few of the most common *eye conditions,* below.

1.1 REFRACTION ERRORS

Refraction refers to the bending of light rays passing through different media of density. Errors in the bending of the light rays can cause one of the following conditions:

(a) *Nearsightedness or myopia.* Light rays do not focus on the macula but in front of it. This means that the learners can see objects close to them clearly, but cannot perceive those at a distance clearly.
(b) *Farsightedness or hyperopia.* In this case, light rays fall on a point behind the macula. Learners suffering from hyperopia can see well at a distance but their close vision is poor.
(c) *Astigmatism.* Light rays do not fall on the macula but behind and in front of it. The learners find it difficult to distinguish between round letters like B and D or G and D or R and S. Refraction errors can be rectified by spectacles.

1.2 CATARACTS

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye. Normally the lens is transparent to allow light rays to fall on the retina at the back of the eye to provide a clear image. Cataracts occur commonly in older persons but can also occur in learners. It is caused by an injury to the eye or hereditary conditions. The lens (or both lenses) can be removed when it becomes too cloudy, after which learners have to wear thick spectacle lenses to focus clearly on objects. In older learners, an artificial lens may be transplanted in the place of the original lens.

1.3 STRABISMUS (SQUINT)

When there is an abnormality in the functioning of some of the eye muscles, the two

eyes do not focus simultaneously on an object. This means that the affected eye is pulled to one side and does not look straight at objects. The result is double vision since each eye sees separately.

The brain receives two images but suppresses the weaker image of the squint eye. This results in the weaker eye becoming lazy and disused and even losing its function. Squinting is common in babies up to about the age of six months, because the eyes are still uncoordinated.

Spectacles can help the eye muscles to learn to work together. The lazy eye may also be forced to look by covering the healthy eye. In more severe cases, the eye muscles may be corrected in an operation.

1.4 NYSTAGMUS

This is an involuntary oscillation (to-and-fro movement) of the eye especially when the child concentrates on near vision activities. This movement can be jerky or rhythmical. It is usually accompanied by refraction errors and albinism. Nystagmus causes serious reading problems and cannot be corrected.

1.5 ALBINISM

As already mentioned, albinism is manifested in the child by the presence of a white skin, white hair and even white eyebrows and eye lashes. The eyes and the pupil are reddish. It is caused by a lack of pigment throughout the body and is observable from birth. The child's eyes and skin are extremely sensitive to light and the child is severely photophobic.

To keep most of the sunlight out of the child's eyes, a child with albinism should wear corrective sunglasses.

1.6 TRACHOMA

This is an eye disease caused by a microorganism and is very infectious. The disease is carried by flies from the tears of contaminated eyes. It begins with inflammation of the conjunctiva (the inner part of the eyelid) and goes through various stages until the victim is totally blind. Scars and blisters are formed on the cornea, and this may permanently damage the cornea. The patient becomes photophobic (sensitive to light). In the final stage the infection clears up but damage has already been done to the cornea.

Retention of vision is possible only if trachoma is treated in its early stages.

Trachoma is common in the rural areas of the Northern Province and Mpumalanga. Hygiene and clean water are necessary to prevent trachoma. Hands should be washed frequently. The eyes should not be rubbed with dirty hands. Hygiene and clean water keep the flies away (Pauw 1992:23).

1.7 CONJUNCTIVITIS

This is an infection of the membrane covering the surface of the eye. Causes of this infection may be: bacteria, viruses, parasites, allergic reactions and chemical

irritations. The infection makes the conjunctiva itch or burn and the eyes become red and irritated. The eyelashes sometimes stick together because of an excessive secretion of pus. Bacterial conjunctivitis usually reacts favourably and quickly to treatment with antibiotic eye drops. This form of conjunctivitis is usually not dangerous to sight, but abscesses on the cornea can leave small opaque scars which interfere with the transmission of light. In exceptional cases such abscesses may damage the cornea to such an extent that bacteria enter the eye itself, and this could lead to blindness (Pauw 1992:22–23).

1.8 GLAUCOMA

Although glaucoma normally occurs in adults, it could also be present at birth or could develop at any time up to the age of three years. It happens when too much aqueous humour is produced in the front chamber of the eye and the outflow is restricted or blocked in some or other way. Painless pressure builds up in the eye and damages the optic nerve, causing loss of vision.

1.9 MACULAR DEGENERATION (VAUGHAN 1995:40)

When macular degeneration appears in learners, it is usually hereditary. In this condition the macula progressively degenerates. The sharp central vision in this part of the retina is gradually destroyed so that the person has only side or peripheral vision. These people usually turn their heads to the side to see from the corners of the eye.

1.10 RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA (VAUGHAN 1995:40)

This is a retinal condition. There is too much pigment or colouring matter in the retina of the eye and this causes a gradual deterioration of sight. It occurs from the outside inwards so that more and more peripheral vision is lost until only central vision is left. It is as if the person looks through a narrowing tunnel. The condition appears first in learners when they are about six years old and they can lose most of their sight by the time they are fifteen years or older.

There are many more types of eye conditions, such as retinoblastoma, but those mentioned above are the most common in learners.

2 IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNERS WITH VISUAL DISABILITIES

It is sometimes impossible to identify learners with visual disabilities by only looking at (observing) their eyes, because their eyes look normal. Here are a few manifestations of eye problems which you should be aware of when teaching (Lewis & Doorlag 1995:421, Smith 1993:210–211).

TIPS FOR THE TEACHER: SIGNS OF POSSIBLE VISUAL PROBLEMS

BEHAVIOUR

The child

- *rubs eyes excessively*
- *shuts or covers one eye; tilts head or thrusts it forward*
- *has difficulty reading or doing other work requiring close use of the eyes*
- *blinks more than usual or is irritable when doing close work*
- *is unable to see distant things clearly*
- *squints eyelids together or frowns*
- *is clumsy in movements, sometimes drags feet and appears to ''feel'' with the feet and*
- *steps too high or too low when going up or down stairs*
- *refuses to participate in ball games*
- *moves the head when looking at pictures or when reading*
- *loses place frequently when reading*
- *confuses letters of similar shape such as B, D or R, P*
- *holds reading material unusually close to the eyes or unusually far away from the eyes*
- *has poor spacing when writing*

APPEARANCE

The child has

- *crossed eyes (squint)*
- *red-rimmed, encrusted, or swollen eyelids*
- *inflamed or watery eyes*
- *recurring sties*
- *whitish skin, white eye lashes*
- *white pupils (so-called ''pearl in the eye'')*
- *learners of uneven size*
- *drooping eyelids*
- *one eye higher or lower in relation to the other*
- *eyes that move excessively*

COMPLAINTS

The child complains of

- *itching, burning, or scratchy feeling in the eyes*
- *inability to see well*
- *dizziness, headaches, or nausea, following close work*
- *blurred or double vision*
- *inability to see in bright light*

Teachers should be on the look out for conspicuous behaviour and complaints on the part of learners in the class, which may be associated with eye problems. The

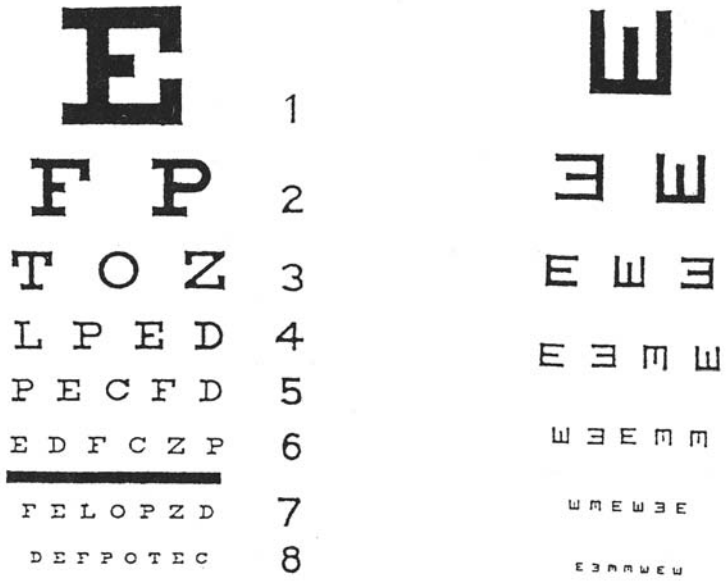
appearance of the child's eyes should also be observed. Take note of the severity and the frequency of the problem.

If learners exhibit any of the problems mentioned above over a period of time, they should be referred to the school nurse or nearest medical clinic or doctor. You will find a Snellen chart behind the door of the doctor's or nurse's consulting rooms. The doctor or nurse can determine learners' visual acuity (sharpness of sight) by means of the Snellen chart, but if the learners' vision is affected they should be referred to an optometrist, or an eye specialist (ophthalmologist). An ordinary medical doctor can neither determine the degree of visual loss nor prescribe the correct spectacles. A Snellen chart contains letters which are arranged in rows, from large print on the top row to small print on the bottom row. A Snellen E chart is used for learners who can't read yet. On this the letter E is printed in different sizes, from large to small with the prongs of the E pointing in different directions. The learners are required to say or show which way the E is pointing.

On the basis of the size of the letters that they can identify, as well as other aspects of their vision, learners are categorised as being able to see, partially sighted or blind.

FIGURE 3.2

Examples of a Snellen chart and a Snellen E chart



3 ASSISTANCE TO LEARNERS WITH VISUAL PROBLEMS

Whereas blind learners can only experience a personal life-world by means of their remaining senses, partially sighted learners have the use of all their senses, even though vision is imperfect. Loss of or restricted vision also influences the language, motor and socioemotional development of a child.

This means that blind learners should be taught to make better use of their remaining senses, while partially sighted learners should be taught to use vision together with the other senses. Special attention should also be paid to language acquisition, to the development of socioemotional skills and to orientation and

mobility. If this is not done from an early age, blind and partially sighted learners will lag behind in their total development.

3.1 STIMULATION OF THE SENSES

(a) Blind learners

Blind learners cannot use their visual sense because they cannot see. However, the other senses should be stimulated from early childhood to try and compensate for the loss of the visual sense. The other senses are the sense of hearing, touch, smell and taste, and the kinaesthetic sense which involves the sense of touch as well as movement.

- *Sense of hearing.* Blind learners's **hearing** should be developed and sharpened. The ability to listen, and especially the ability to localise environmental sounds and to estimate the distance between themselves and some object, should be improved, since such abilities play a crucial role in a child's orientation to surroundings and movement towards a certain spot. This is how blind learners get to know their environment: they learn to know where streets are and to distinguish certain noises as signs that it is safe to move.

  Blind learners should also be taught to make optimal use of auditory memory, since they need to rely on it to a far greater extent than sighted learners do, particularly with regard to remembering numbers such as telephone numbers. Listening and memory exercises are vital.

The following are examples of auditory exercises to improve the hearing sense of learners:

- Let the learners in your class sit quietly and listen to the noises around them. Ask them to tell you from which direction specific noises are coming, and what the noises are.
- Read them a story and let them tell the story.
- Ask them what they do during weekends.
- *Sense of touch and kinaesthesis.* Blind learners have to depend upon their senses of touch (**tactile** sense) and movement (**kinaesthetic** sense) to detect shape, line and texture, and to orient themselves in a limited space (eg within a room). Blind learners's fingers must learn to be dextrous and their sensitivity should be improved. They must practise their sense of fine tactile discrimination as they will find it helpful to be able to recognise objects by their shape and form. Shape or form is a better indication of the nature of an object than its texture. For instance, a mug can be made of either porcelain or enamel but it is its shape that tells us what it is.

  Nevertheless the identification of various textures, such as hard, soft, rough or smooth, is important. When an unfamiliar object is put into the child's hand, its distinctive characteristics (shape and texture) should be pointed out.

  The development of touch and kinaesthesis is also of the utmost importance for Braille reading and writing. Blind learners read Braille with their fingertips. They need fine tactile discrimination and fine motor coordination to move their fingers in a straight line over the Braille dots and to interpret the different combinations of dots as different letters and/or words.

Here are a few examples you could give blind learners to improve their *fine motor coordination:*

- Punch holes with a paper punch, use clay and play dough, tear paper in strips, button and zip dresses, jerseys and shirts.
- Match shapes: sort blocks, or figures of various shapes.

Blind learners do not spontaneously learn to discover new objects because there is no visual stimulus. Moreover, blind learners cannot watch others and imitate them. If a blind boy does not know that there is a ball near him (if someone does not tell him and indicate where it is), he will not play with it. We should, however, guard against depriving blind learners entirely of their own initiative. For example, when a blind boy has been shown how to play with a toy car, he should be allowed to decide what he wishes to do with it.

The sense of touch also has its limitations. The blind can never really form an idea of objects outside their tactile reach (eg mountains, the heavenly bodies), objects which move (a rolling wheel), objects too small and delicate to touch (bubbles, flies) and ephemeral objects (eg flames). Models may be used but they are not always adequate for proper formation of the concept involved because they tend to rely on visual cues.

- *Senses of smell and taste.* Similarly blind learners's **sense of smell and taste** should be stimulated and reinforced. The sense of smell, in particular, could play an important role in orientation and mobility. The smell of food indicates the way to the kitchen, the smell of cowdung indicates that there is a kraal nearby.
- *Residual vision.* A few blind learners may not be able to read with their eyes but they may have **residual vision** to walk freely. Like partially sighted learners, these blind learners should be taught to use their remaining vision in conjunction with their other senses.

  The age at which blindness occurs is also important. Learners who have lost their visual ability before the age of five to seven years, retain no usable visual and colour impressions. However, the teacher is responsible for motivating the learners to retain visual impressions as far as possible by using every opportunity to encourage them to describe stories and events from their sighted past.

(b) Partially sighted learners

You should always remember that partially sighted learners can see and that they are not blind. Therefore the visual sense should certainly be stimulated but the particular eye condition and degree of residual vision should be taken into consideration. The partially sighted should be encouraged to combine vision with nonvisual methods. This leads to heightened efficiency.

Partially sighted learners should be taught to utilise residual vision fully. The previous contention that much use of the eyes is detrimental to vision has now generally been refuted. In fact, the contemporary view is that the more the eyes are used, the better they function.

Partially sighted learners are inclined to see only globally. They must be taught to observe finer details. For example, on excursions their attention must be drawn to details such as the various shapes of flowers, leaves and other objects such as insects. Where possible, partially sighted learners must be encouraged to use their senses of hearing and touch simultaneously to reinforce their visual impressions.

3.2 LANGUAGE STIMULATION

From birth the language acquisition of the blind starts to lag behind that of sighted learners because they are not visually stimulated to reach out to objects. Functional and personal articles such as the child's chair, lunchbox and clothes may be used to explain these concepts.

Visually impaired learners must therefore have a solid base of concrete experience before they can understand the language that describes that experience. Parents and teachers should talk to blind learners. They must receive running commentary on what is going on around them. Describe and explain objects to them while they are observing and touching them. Field trips (even around the school and home), extensive use of ordinary manipulative materials, social play involving conversation about the activities, finger plays and many stories used in the primary classes are all excellent ways to stimulate language development, excellent for visually impaired as well as sighted learners.

3.3 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

From birth, visually impaired learners's motor and physical development trails behind that of sighted learners because they are not stimulated by sight to reach out to objects or to move towards objects in their environment. They must be purposefully taught by means of sounds and touch to crawl and to walk. Movement games (rhythmic movements) may help visually impaired learners to acquire a rhythmic walk. They should also be taught balance and correct posture. Lack of direct intervention could lead to incorrect postures which may hamper their social interaction with sighted people.

Physical movement exercises are of the utmost importance to visually impaired learners. Such exercises not only contribute to sound motor development, but also serve as an escape valve for pent-up emotions.

3.4 ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

Scholl (1986:315) states that orientation has traditionally been defined as the ''process of using the senses to establish one's position and relationship to all other significant objects in one's environment''.

Referring to blind people, we might define orientation as the plan for a particular route which blind people work out in their mind by using other senses and which they wish to follow to reach their destination.

Mobility also includes the *actual locomotion from a starting point to the anticipated destination in another environment.* That means that the orientation plan is now physically applied.

To develop sound orientation and mobility visually impaired learners's laterality should be well established. Laterality forms the basis for acquiring a sense of the true relation of parts of the body, developing good posture, localising objects, and moving safely and confidently. In other words, blind learners especially should be purposefully taught which sides the left and right sides of their bodies are, from which direction sounds are coming (localise the sounds) and their relation to objects in their environment (directionality).

Partially sighted learners should learn to use their residual vision in addition to their other senses in order to orient themselves to their environment.

3.5 SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Socioemotional development of visually impaired learners need not lag behind that of sighted learners. It depends mainly on the sighted people around them how they will develop. Blind learners ought to have the experience of playing with other learners. There will be activities that they cannot do, but there are many more that they can do. Other problems are that blind learners may appear to show little respect for the rights of others in a group as they are hampered in their ability to realise exactly what a group is and how many other learners also need to share the teacher's time and attention.

Learners with strabismus may be teased because of their squint and learners with cataracts may be called names because of the thick spectacle lenses they have to wear. This behaviour on the part of peers may cause partially sighted learners to withdraw from them and subsequently become loners.

Because their disability is often inconspicuous, some partially sighted learners may have additional problems with social interaction. For instance, friends may sometimes be amazed that myopic learners cannot see a ball or a car at a distance. They sometimes cannot even see what is happening on the other side of a street. Subconsciously this can make these learners try to hide their defect by thinking up excuses for their ''inexplicable'' behaviour. Such behaviour could cause tremendous tension for partially sighted learners. Parents and teachers should support them and help them to accept their problems. Their good points should be pointed out to their friends so that they learn to appreciate them despite the disability.

3.6 CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE

The type of eye condition and the amount of residual vision would determine the assistance given to a learner in class.

Learners with myopia and cataracts should sit in front, near the chalkboard. You should also allow them to sit closer to the board to see better. It is a good idea to repeat what is written on the chalkboard to help the learners check their own written work.

A magnifying glass may also be used if large print books are not available. Instead of using ordinary classwork books with dull lines, one could draw parallel lines on blank A–4 paper, using a black pen (a marker pen or ''koki''). This will be more visible to learners who find it particularly difficult to write between the lines. The space between the lines may vary according to the residual vision of the learner, but the lines could be further apart than those in the classwork books.

Printed material should be clear, attractive and meaningful. Reading materials that display the greatest contrast between the print and the paper are the easiest to see. Black print on white paper with fairly large letters and good spacing is best. When handing out duplicated copies to learners, make sure that the visually impaired learner receives the darkest, clearest copies.

Learners with hyperopia would prefer to sit at the back of the class. They would enjoy outside play but may not be interested in school work.

Learners suffering from albinism should sit in a darker place in the classroom, away from the windows. Curtains could regulate the light coming in through the windows. To avoid a glare, learners should work facing away from a window if no curtains are available. To avoid sunburn when they are in sunlight, these learners have to wear long sleeves and long trousers made of cotton material instead of nylon, and hats with wide brims. As a result of the lack of pigmentation to protect the skin, they are very susceptible to skin diseases and even skin cancer. As an additional precaution, a doctor could prescribe medicinal skin creams to be rubbed on the delicate skin of the face, neck and eyelids.

Textbooks can be recorded on tape for learners who find it difficult to read their textbooks. (This applies to blind learners as well.) Please make more than one copy because the learners may mislay their tapes. A master copy should be stored in a safe place. Learners then need tape recorders and they should know how to manage them. You can record the reading yourself — or any other person who is willing could be asked to do it. Just make sure that background noise is limited and that you read fluently and not too fast. It is a good idea to make sure that the learners find the recording easy to follow, by playing one paragraph to them for their comments before reading the whole chapter. Questions about the content of the chapter may be asked at the end of each chapter. (Tape recordings of some textbooks are available for purchase from the Pioneer School, 20 Adderley Street, Worcester, 6850.)

Doors should be kept either opened or closed because open doors can be a potential safety hazard to visually impaired learners who could bump into them and hurt themselves. Passages between desks should be clear to prevent visually impaired learners from stumbling over stray objects on the floor.

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APPENDIX B

AUDITORY BARRIERS TO LEARNING

OVERVIEW OF THIS APPENDIX

This section contains the following topics:

1 Introduction
2 Causes of an aural disability
3 Manifestations of an aural disability
4 Identification of and assistance to a learner with an aural disability
5 Assisting learners with a hearing loss

1 INTRODUCTION

The term ''aural disability'' is an umbrella term denoting some degree of hearing loss that may range on a continuum from a slight to a severe hearing loss.

1.1 DEGREES OF HEARING LOSS

We usually distinguish the following three categories of aural disability.

- **Partially hearing** implies a hearing loss of less than 35 dB.
- **Hard-of-hearing** is indicative of a hearing loss of between 35 and 65 dB.
- **Deaf** usually indicates a hearing loss in excess of 65 dB.

2 CAUSES OF AURAL DISABILITY

Two main types of hearing loss are usually distinguished. These are

- a *conductive* hearing loss
- a *sensorineural* hearing loss

2.1 CAUSES OF A CONDUCTIVE HEARING LOSS

Conductive hearing loss occurs when the conductive channels, such as the auditory canal, the middle ear and the windows that divide the middle from the internal ear, are affected. Disorders that cause conductive hearing loss damage the middle ear or auditory canal in a way that prevents sound waves from being conveyed through the conductive channels and thus they fail to reach the middle ear, even though the auditory nerves and their connection with the brain are completely normal.

A conductive hearing loss may be caused by some of the following factors:

- a blockage by superfluous secretion of wax and the hardening of the wax
- a blockage of the auditory canal by an object
- external otitis (otitis external)
- inflammation of the middle ear (otitis media) (This inflammation occurs frequently with a cold or allergic reactions in young learners. The inflammation causes fluid to collect in the middle ear. Any excessive pressure of the fluid may cause intense pain. Chronic otitis media should always be regarded in a serious light since it may cause permanent damage to the hearing. In fact, it may cause adhesions forming on the ossicles, or such serious damage that the ossicles become unable to transmit the sound waves. Later on, as a result of repeated ruptures, the tympanum may cease to heal and be left thickened and scarred.)

Persons with a conductive hearing loss can follow a conversation if it is loud enough. Their hearing loss is over all frequencies and they can be helped by any form of sound amplification.

2.2 CAUSES OF SENSORINEURAL HEARING LOSS

Sensorineural deafness is caused by the deterioration of the auditory cells of the organ of Corti, or the auditory nerve itself.

Sound waves do reach the internal ear but owing to some obstruction they do not reach the brain. A characteristic of sensorineural deafness is that the loss of hearing is usually not the same on all frequencies. Certain frequencies can be heard clearly, others poorly and yet others not at all. In most cases the hearing is poor for the high frequencies. Sometimes it deteriorates gradually and sometimes abruptly from the low frequencies to the high. The audiogram will show relatively little difference at the low frequencies and will drop swiftly at the high ones.

A sensorineural loss may be caused by some of the following factors:

- Deafness can be hereditary (see study unit 1). Congenital deafness is often hereditary and occurs in certain families.
- Deafness can be caused by antenatal injury to the auditory cells or nerve which is the result of a particular illness contracted by the mother during the first months of pregnancy. From the second to the fourth month of pregnancy the nervous system develops very rapidly in the foetus. If during this critical period the mother were to contract such a disease, the virus would also attack the developing nervous system of the embryo. One of the best-known examples of this condition, and one which can cause great harm to the embryo, is rubella (German measles). A mother suffering from congenital syphilis *(spirochaeta pallida)* also transmits the harmful effects of the disease to her child.
- Injuries during or just after birth can also damage the auditory cells. All the perinatal and postnatal factors that were discussed in study unit 1 can cause damage to important cells and nerves in the brain that have to do with hearing. Here we can mention for instance factors that can cause an oxygen deficiency, the use of instruments during birth and the Rh factor.
- Illnesses, especially those accompanied by a high fever, can also damage important auditory cells. Illnesses, for example, encephalitis, measles, mumps and meningitis fall in this category.
- In some people deafness is caused by the use of drugs. Some individuals are far more sensitive than others to certain drugs and may lose their hearing as a result of using these drugs. So, for example, the excessive use of quinine and aspirin may cause deafness. A number of the new antibiotic drugs (streptomycin, neomycin) also affect the hearing in certain people and should be used only when strictly essential.

Sensorineural deafness is incurable and there are no methods of improving the hearing. Through auditory training, however, learners can be taught to make better use of their residual hearing.

3 MANIFESTATION OF AN AURAL DISABILITY

3.1 CONDUCTIVE HEARING LOSS

It is sometimes possible to deduce from a person's voice the type of hearing loss from which he or she is suffering. We hear our own voices partly through bone conduction and partly through air conduction. A person suffering from conductive hearing loss hears badly through air conduction and relatively better through bone conduction. Often such individuals think that they are speaking too loudly and so disturbing others — hence the tendency to lower the voice and speak very softly.

Those who suffer from conductive hearing loss have no difficulty in following speech provided that it is *loud* enough. Their loss of hearing is approximately the same for all frequencies. If the sound is amplified, it is amplified to the same degree for all frequencies and does not worry them.

Sufferers from conductive hearing loss often complain of continued buzzing sounds in the head and ears *(tinnitus)*. These sounds are caused by a continuous irritation of parts of the organ of Corti. The condition is exceedingly unpleasant, and some sufferers are never free from it.

In very noisy surroundings persons suffering from conductive hearing loss characteristically hear even better than normal people — a phenomenon known as *paracusis Willisii*. This phenomenon is explained as follows: in noisy surroundings, for instance in a factory, a train or an aeroplane, people are inclined to speak sufficiently loudly to hear their own voices in spite of the noise. Consequently, their speech is often loud enough to be audible to the partially deaf. Moreover, the background noise is softer and less disturbing to the partially deaf than to those with normal hearing. Persons with defective hearing have had so much practice in trying to understand and interpret indistinct speech that in noisy surroundings this too is an advantage to them.

3.2 SENSORINEURAL HEARING LOSS

When sensorineural deafness sets in, not all the cells and nerves are affected simultaneously. The deterioration usually begins in those parts that perceive the highest frequencies, and gradually spreads to those that perceive the lowest. In some instances however the organ of Corti is affected only in certain places. Since loss of hearing varies so greatly for the different frequencies, it is understandable that complex sounds can be changed beyond recognition. Individuals suffering from sensorineural deafness can easily *hear* speech, for they clearly hear the low frequencies. They will have difficulty in *understanding* speech, however, for, owing to their loss of hearing for high-frequency sounds, many words will sound similar to them. In distinguishing between sounds they will sometimes be dependent on very small differences.

Unlike sufferers from conductive hearing loss, they will be totally unable to hear in noisy surroundings, for the small differences on which they depend will be further

masked by the noise. Nor will it help them if the voice is raised or the sound amplified since their problem is not *hearing* but *understanding*. The sounds that are readily audible to them will be excessively amplified and distorted, whereas the others will remain inaudible. To such people, not loud, but clear, slow speech is the most easily comprehensible.

Another extraordinary characteristic of sensorineural deafness is the very slight difference between a sound that cannot be heard at all and one that is unpleasantly loud. This is called the *recruitment factor*, and explains why people who are hard of hearing will complain at one moment that speech is inaudible to them and at another that they are being shouted at (or that a sound is altogether too loud).

Tinnitus (head noises) may also accompany sensorineural deafness and cause much discomfort. Here the buzzing or ringing is caused by the degenerative processes in the hair cells or nerves. The sounds cease only when the part affected has been completely destroyed, but by that time other parts will probably also have been affected, so that the head noises will merely assume a different tone.

4 IDENTIFICATION OF AND ASSISTANCE TO A LEARNER WITH AN AURAL DISABILITY

It is vital to identify a hearing loss in a young child as early as possible (preferably within the first year!) so as to prevent the child from being labelled uncooperative or lazy, unobservant, wilful or even stupid. A child suffering from a hearing loss could exhibit many of the following characteristics which could assist you, as a teacher, to identify a possible hearing loss.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER: SIGNS OF POSSIBLE AUDIORY PROBLEMS

The child/learner

- *often misinterprets instructions*
- *turns its head to listen*
- *watches the teacher's lips*
- *cannot understand the teacher if the teacher's head is turned away or the teacher's lips are covered*
- *finds it difficult to locate the source of a sound*
- *speaks too softly or too loudly*
- *speaks monotonously*
- *speaks too quickly or too slowly*
- *experiences unusual emotional problems*
- *is often inattentive*
- *stares out of the window if the teacher stands at the back of the classroom while giving instructions (child cannot see the teacher's face)*
- *may have difficulty in hearing the bell ring*
- *finds it difficult to associate with friends*
- *cannot follow instructions given in a large hall such as the school assembly hall*

- *cannot follow what is being said in a noisy or rowdy group*
- *experiences problems with auditory memory*
- *finds it difficult to retell a story (The content is sketchy because of omissions, is altered by the child's own additions and obscured by confused facts.)*
- *finds it difficult to discriminate aurally between pairs of words starting and ending with different consonants, for example, between rub and rug, pool and tool, map and nap, shot and shop, and so on (Similarly, these learners often find it difficult to distinguish between pairs with different vowels, such as pat and pot, pen and pin, thank and think, bead and dead, moon and moan, and so on.)*
- *relies heavily on gestures*
- *avoids oral activities*
- *asks the teacher or friends to repeat statements or instructions*
- *turns up the volume when listening to audiovisual aids such as televisions, radios, and cassette players.*

If a teacher suspects a learner may be suffering from a hearing loss, it is advisable to discuss it with the principal so that the parents can be notified and the necessary arrangements made for a thorough audiometric examination.

5 ASSISTING LEARNERS WITH A HEARING LOSS

When teaching learners with an aural disability, it is important to differentiate between a hard-of-hearing child and a child who is deaf. Those normally called ''deaf'' are those who were born deaf or who became deaf at such an early age that they were unable to acquire speech and language in a natural way. The ''hard-of-hearing'' are those learners whose hearing loss is such that they are unable to acquire speech and language by more or less normal means. These learners have sufficient hearing left to enable them to acquire speech and language, even though their accomplishments in both these directions may be poor in many respects.

It is essential to remember that the natural environment of the hard-of-hearing learners is that of the hearing community, and their proper place is amongst the hearing — that is, in regular schools.

Hard-of-hearing learners may be best assisted in class if they wear a hearing aid and sit in front of the class so as to see the teacher's face most of the time. If there is either hard-of-hearing learners, or deaf learners in the class, the teacher must always remember never to speak to them without facing them. This means that the teacher should never turn towards the chalkboard while giving explanations or instructions to the class. A hard-of-hearing child should benefit from the use of a suitable hearing aid.

For this to be successful, the teacher will have to be knowledgeable about, and understand, the special educational needs of a deaf child. Furthermore, the parents of the child will have to be actively involved in the child's education by providing the necessary resources and rendering assistance in the afternoons. One method here would be to have the lessons recorded on tape. The parent goes through the tapes after school and adjusts the child's notes taken in class. Deaf learners often require

additional therapy, such as speech therapy or physiotherapy, which the parents would have to attend to during the afternoon.

If you should have a deaf child in your class, you would be advised to contact the nearest school for the deaf in your area and obtain advice from one of the teachers especially trained to teach the deaf. You may also contact DEAFSA (Deaf Federation of South Africa) at 011-725-1326, for assistance.

According to Salend (1990:271), the following suggestions for adapting instruction for students with hearing impairments should help you to assist learners in your class, suffering from a hearing loss.

- Use an overhead projector to present material: it allows the student to view a visual presentation of the material and watch the teacher's lips simultaneously.
- Assign a peer to take notes using carbon paper for the hearing-impaired student and to point to speakers during a group discussion. A peer can also ensure that the student is following in the correct place when the class is working on an assignment.
- Speak clearly in a normal tone of voice and at a moderate pace.
- Use visual signals to gain the student's attention.
- Ask questions to check understanding of orally presented directions and content.
- Rephrase content or questions to make it more understandable to hearing-impaired students.
- Supplement information presented orally with visual aids.
- Give test directions, assignments, and lecture outlines in writing.
- Cue the student visually to indicate that someone is talking over the intercom. Make sure that someone explains the intercom message to students with hearing impairments.
- Provide the student with outlines, assignments, vocabulary lists, and the like before introducing new material. Encourage the student's parents to review these materials with their child.
- Remember to present all spelling and vocabulary words **in sentences**; many words presented in isolation look alike to lip-readers.
- Establish a visual signal to alert students to dangerous situations.
- Shine a light on the speaker's face when the room is darkened for films or slides. Providing the student with the script of a record or a filmstrip can help the student follow along.
- Try to limit movement and unnecessary gestures when speaking to students with hearing impairments.
- Repeat and summarise main points of orally presented information.
- Provide written models to aid hearing-impaired students when checking the accuracy of their assignments.
- Teach the student to look up difficult-to-pronounce words in the dictionary.

5.1 SPEECH READING (LIP READING)

Speech reading involves the identification, discrimination and short-term storage of a rapidly moving sequence of visual images that must be translated for comprehension through auditory models. The deaf child ''reads'' speech and the ideas it conveys, so that the focus is not only on the lips, but on the form and movements of the whole face as well as additional facial expressions that colour the meaning of speech. As a rule speech reading is a difficult skill to master, and individual learners differ considerably in their ability to become proficient in it.

To teach a deaf child speech reading requires special training. However, the following suggestions may prove useful to you, should you have a child in your class who has already been taught how to speech read.

- Your mouth and face should be adequately lighted. You must therefore always assume a position where you are **facing** the light.
- There must be no other lights or mirrors reflecting light **behind** you. They cause the child to experience eyestrain.
- Lighting should be ample. Evening light can be deceptive since it casts shadows on the speaker's face. Never sit directly under a light, but preferably at a distance from it so that it illuminates the face.
- Your face should be as near as possible to the level of the child's eyes. A person who teaches small learners should sit on a low chair.
- Speak as naturally as possible: not too slowly, not too fast, not with excessive mouthing and not without voice, for then the movements of the lips are unnatural and the learners find speech-reading more difficult.
- Always speak in complete sentences. Avoid baby-talk and single-word sentences.
- Do not add gestures to the words. The child looks at the larger movements of the gestures and not at the lips.
- You should keep your head as still as possible. Since the mouth is quite small, any other movement will hamper the child's efforts to speech-read.
- An expressive face is easier to read, just as a musical voice is easier for hearing people to follow. Facial expression to a deaf person is the same as voice modulation to ordinary people.

5.2 FINGER SPELLING

Finger spelling involves using the hands and fingers to indicate the letters of the alphabet by specific positions. Words can be fully ''spelt'' on the hands, thus showing a resemblance to the written word.

Finger spelling may be done with the aid of a one-handed alphabet in which the fingers of one hand only are used. An example of this would be the American manual alphabet.

An example of a two-handed alphabet, in which the fingers of both hands are used, would be the British manual alphabet.

If you make use of either alphabet in your teaching you must remember that finger spelling requires a level of maturity and language experience similar to reading or writing.

5.3 SIGNING

From the earliest times, the deaf have used signs to communicate with one another and with other people. Signing represents a visual-manual communication system which uses manual gestures, known as signs, to do the work normally done by the words of spoken language to convey meaning. Signs are definite positions and/or movements of the hands, particularly the right hand, by means of which certain ideas are expressed. A sign may express a word, a phrase or even a complete sentence. The concept of ''love'', for example, is indicated by placing the open right hand on the heart; ''roof'' or ''house'' by placing the fingertips of both hands together at an angle to indicate the shape of a roof. As signs became more refined and systematic, sign language evolved.

You may find the following two dictionaries of South African signs useful:

- Penn, C. 1992. *Southern African sign language dictionary.* Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Nieder-Heitman, N. 1980. *Talking to the deaf/Praat met die dowes.* Worcester: De la Bat School.

5.4 SIGN LANGUAGE

Not just one, but many sign languages are used by deaf people of different countries. Sign Language has a *separate grammar that is not based on any spoken or written language* such as English, Afrikaans or Tswana. It is important to remember that signed English, Afrikaans or Tswana is not Sign Language. Signed spoken language uses the grammar and vocabulary of the spoken language and augments it with some signs. Thus signed exact English or any other signed exact language uses a sign for each spoken word based on spoken or written language. Thus Sign Language is a language in its own right (not connected with any other language) used by deaf people.

Assisting deaf learners in your class by means of either exact signed language or Sign Language, would require you to undergo a formal course in Sign Language.

However, everyday ''natural signs'' may be of assistance in communicating with deaf learners in your class, such as raising your hand, palm upwards, and beckoning with the fingers to indicate that the child must come to you.

5.5 HEARING AIDS

One further way of assisting hard-of-hearing learners in your class is to encourage them to wear a hearing aid. The purpose of a hearing aid is to amplify sound to make it more audible to a person suffering from loss of hearing. It is important to remember that a hearing aid cannot provide normal hearing (as spectacles can provide normal ''sight'') — it merely acts as an aid to amplifying sounds. This means that it amplifies all sounds — not only speech but also background noises. Speech heard through a hearing aid is often distorted and indistinct.

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APPENDIX C

INTELLECTUAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

OVERVIEW OF THIS APPENDIX

This section consists of the following topics:

1 Introduction
2 Explanation of concepts
3 Classification of the intellectually disabled
4 Incidence of intellectual disabilities
5 Causes of intellectual disabilities
6 Additional disabilities
7 Characteristics of the intellectually disabled
8 Teaching intellectually disabled young learners

1 INTRODUCTION

An intellectually disabled child is a child whose mental capacity is below what is regarded as normal. This lesser intelligence means that this child does not learn as easily as other learners. Baroff (1974:252) writes: ''the most salient characteristic of retarded persons is the impairment in both rate and amount of learning''. This does not mean, however, that all learners who learn with difficulty and have therefore fallen behind in their development are necessarily intellectually disabled.

An intellectual disability is the most common of all the different forms of disabilities among learners. Hence it is not only possible that you will have an intellectually disabled learner in your group at some stage, it is also probable.

As well as hampering a learner's performance when the time comes to attend school some day, intellectual disability also greatly influences development and personality from an early age.

In a preprimary class, learners like this can create a problem for the teacher. The position of intellectually disabled learners is even more difficult. Their disabilities do not evoke understanding and sympathy from bystanders — they appear too normal for that — yet they experience continually that they cannot keep up, that they do not understand what is expected of them, that they cannot succeed in doing what others do so effortlessly and that they are ''stupid'', ''lazy'' and ''slow''. The longer this continues, the more the self-concept is impaired and eventually these learners develop certain patterns of behaviour which are unacceptable to others but which make it easier to escape from demanding situations. The fact that the learners now no longer participate meaningfully in class activities, exacerbates their problem. Now the learners not only learn with difficulty because of this intellectual disability but also learn less than they should because of the undesirable attitudes and behaviours already acquired.

For these reasons it is extremely important for teachers to understand what intellectual disabilities mean, to understand these learners' problems, and to know how these learners could be helped with their problems.

2 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

2.1 INTELLIGENCE

You have probably encountered the term ''intelligence'' in one of the other modules. We shall therefore merely provide a brief summary:

Psychologists define intelligence as the ability to

- handle and apply abstract concepts
- see connections and master new learning content
- adapt effectively to new circumstances or situations (Plug et al 1989:159)

People's intellectual ability is measured with the aid of standardised intelligence tests. These tests consist of a number of subtests that each test a different component of intelligence. They are conducted under controlled conditions and the score which candidates are finally awarded is the total of their scores for the various sections and is regarded as their intelligence quotient or IQ. The IQ is supposed to provide a quantitative (and therefore measurable) indication of the relative level of intellectual functioning, in comparison with other learners of the same age (Plug et al 1989:159).

The assumption is that an IQ figure

- is valid — in other words, it truly represents what it is supposed to measure
- is reliable — in other words, if the same people's intelligence is tested again after a year or more, they should obtain the same score or at least be in the same interval

An IQ of 100 is considered to be average. IQ scores 10 points higher are therefore above average or 10 points lower, below average.

Another concept used with regard to intelligence is that of ''mental age''. An IQ figure can also be expressed in terms of a mental age (IQ divided by 100 x actual age). A child with an IQ of 100, whose IQ therefore corresponds to that of most other learners, would therefore have a mental age of five at the age of five years. Learners with an IQ of 120 are above average in intelligence and have a mental age of six years when their chronological age is five. They therefore have the insight that one would expect of an ordinary six-year-old. Conversely, at the age of five learners with an IQ of 80 could still have the mental age of a four-year-old. Note that the older the learners are, the greater the difference will be between them and an ''average child''. Learners with an IQ of 120 will have a mental age of 19,2 years by the time they reach the age of 16. The advantage of one year which they had at the age of five has therefore now become an advantage of 3,2 years.

This method of measuring intelligence has come in for a great deal of criticism in recent years. This can be ascribed to growing support for the following ideas:

- The sum total of the separate items of which an IQ test consists cannot be regarded as a reliable measure of a person's total intelligence — people's intellectual functioning is far more complex than it appears at first and cannot be represented by a number of items in an IQ test.
- An IQ score cannot be used as a reliable basis for predicting future functioning.

(Learners with a lower IQ may be more successful later in life than others who were considered ''cleverer'' or ''more intelligent'' at school.)
- IQ tests are not always valid because they are not entirely independent of culture — people who grew up in non-western cultures may be at a disadvantage in the tests.
- Environmental influences play a very important role in the level at which a person functions intellectually and these influences cannot readily be taken into account in an IQ test.
- Intelligence is not a permanent immutable characteristic, as was initially thought — intellectual capacities can be developed.

2.2 INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

The term ''intellectual disability'' refers to a limited intellectual ability. Someone of this kind would experience problems with the functions equated with intelligence in the above passage. (Compare Plug's definition.)

Various terms are used to refer to limited intellectual abilities of this kind. In South Africa we speak of intellectual disability. In English literature on the subject one comes across *mental handicap, mental retardation, mental subnormality* and *intellectual handicap.* The most widely used definition of mental disability is that of the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD), which is also used by the World Health Organisation:

> Mental retardation refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period.

You will note that three criteria are used:

(1) a notably subnormal level of intellectual functioning
(2) accompanying problems regarding ability to adapt
(3) the problem must have manifested itself during the person's development period, that is before the age of 18 years

The latter criterion indicates that people who have lost some of their normal level of intellectual functioning as a result of conditions such as a stroke or senility should not be regarded as intellectually disabled.

3 CLASSIFICATION OF THE INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED

Different categories of intellectual disabilities are identified on the basis of the severity of the disability. The classification system commonly used in medical and psychological circles is that of the American Association on Mental Deficiency. It also correlates with the new updated Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM IV (American Psychiatric Association 1994:45–46).

• the mildly intellectually disabled	—	IQ 50/55 to about 70
• the moderately intellectually disabled	—	IQ 35/40 to about 50/55
• the severely intellectually disabled	—	IQ 20/25 to about 35/40
• the profoundly intellectually disabled	—	IQ below 20/25

The DSM–IV classification system makes additional provision for a potential measuring error of five points.

Approximately the same classification system is used in South African medical and clinical circles, except that the upper limit is set at 75 (Grover 1990:164).

In education, however, we do not use the same classification. Until quite recently it was common practice to distinguish three groups of disabled people on the basis of what was expected of them academically.

(1) *The mildly disabled.* Learners in this group were expected to master the basic academic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic), but at a slower tempo. A further assumption was that they would be able to complete the first six or eight years of schooling. They were often placed in special classes. From the age of approximately twelve, they generally received occupational training in subjects such as panel beating, gardening, hairdressing and agricultural skills.
(2) *The moderately and seriously disabled.* Traditionally, these learners were taught in separate schools and the greater part of their curricula consisted of nonacademic subjects such as communication, personal care and hygiene, socialising and simple occupationally oriented skills.
(3) *The profoundly disabled.* Only very few exceptions from this group are able to master the skills listed under (2). Most of these learners either remain at home or are cared for in institutions. In certain, more sophisticated countries, even these learners are included in/admitted to schools where a multidisciplinary team collaborates to teach them the basic perceptual-motor skills, personal care and hygiene, and language.

The latest trends relating to these learners, however, are the following:

- Learners who are mildly disabled are not categorised or labelled. Instead, they are referred to as learners with learning difficulties.
- The degree of retardation is not indicated: learners who are mildly, seriously or profoundly disabled are simply referred to as ''intellectually disabled''.
- In step with the principle of inclusion, learners who are intellectually disabled are not admitted to separate schools, but taught in normal classes in ordinary schools. This obviously entails adjustments in terms of the tempo of tuition, types of learning aids and so forth.

4 INCIDENCE OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

On the grounds of a great number of tests to determine how many people from a normal population are intellectually disabled, the incidence of intellectual disability is most commonly cited as three percent of the population.

- 30 out of every 1 000 people are intellectually disabled (all categories)
- 25 out of every 1 000 people are mildly intellectually disabled
- 4 out of every 1 000 people are severely intellectually disabled
- 1 out of every 1 000 people is profoundly intellectually disabled

These figures also give rise to questions, for example:

In most populations it is found that there are more people who are mildly intellectually disabled in poorer communities than in more prosperous communities. The question then is: Are the people who are intellectually disabled really disabled or can their intellectual impairment be ascribed to negative evironmental influences?

Another very interesting phenomenon is that the percentage of intellectually disabled is much higher among school populations than among adults. One realises

then that persons are sometimes incorrectly labelled as intellectually disabled. When the same persons become adults, they cope quite well.

5 CAUSES OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Intellectual disability can be caused by a great number of factors. These factors can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Studies of the causes of disabilities of persons who are intellectually disabled show that there is a marked difference between the causes of the milder grades of disability and those of the more serious disabilities.

5.2 INTELLECTUALLY MILDLY DISABLED

The intellectually mildly disabled form the biggest section of persons with intellectual disabilities, namely 83 percent of the total. In this particular instance there is no presence of a pathological organical condition that could have caused the disability. These persons therefore function on a slightly below normal level for one of the following reasons:

- *Genetic factors.* They are intellectually less gifted because one or both parents have a lower level of intelligence. In these cases we usually find that brothers or sisters or other family members have learning difficulties.
- *Unfavourable environmental circumstances.* Researchers have become increasingly aware of the fact that some circumstances in which learners grow up do not stimulate their intellectual development in the same way as other circumstances do. We are not going to discuss unfavourable environmental circumstances again, as they were discussed in the module Special Educational Needs A, study unit 2. We will just mention some of them:
  - — malnutrition
  - — poor medical services
  - — a lack of stimulating learning conditions
  - — a lack of cognitive stimulation
  - — unmotivated parents

Other factors are not excluded. Any of the following factors can also be relevant here.

5.3 INTELLECTUALLY SEVERELY AND PROFOUNDLY DISABLED

This group is much smaller than the one mentioned above as it only involves more or less 5 of the 30 out of every 1 000 relevant people. In this group we usually find that there is some or other syndrome present that is responsible for the intellectual disability. (A syndrome means that there are a number of symptoms that appear together and are indications of a specific organic or physical condition. For instance, a high fever, sore eyes and a typical skin rash are an indication that a person has measles.)

Medical researchers have shown that there are many syndromes that can be associated with intellectual disability.

The following are causes of profound intellectual disability:

- *Chromosomal abnormalities* (see study unit 1). An abnormal chromosomal composition in learners can be the cause of intellectual disability, for example: Down's syndrome, Turner's syndrome (just in girls), or Klinefelter's syndrome (just in boys).
- *Genetic abnormalities* (see study unit 1). In some cases an abnormal genetic composition can cause the disability, for instance phenylketonuria of Tay-Sachs disease.
- *Prenatal, perinatal and postnatal factors* (see study unit 1). In many cases the brain of the baby develops normally but is injured before birth, during the birth process or after birth in such a way that the child becomes intellectually disabled.
- *Brain, skull or spinal cord abnormalities.* In some cases the brain, skull or spinal cord of the child develops abnormally as a result of some or other problem. Damage is not the cause here, but impaired development of either the brain, skull, or spinal cord. Examples are craniostenosis (premature closure of the sutures between the cranial bones), hydrocephalus (fluid within the cranial vault) or microcephaly (abnormal smallness of the head).

It is important to mention again that if a child is intellectually disabled as a result of intrinsic factors, then extrinsic factors can either aggravate or relieve the condition, depending on the quality of the extrinsic environment.

6 ADDITIONAL DISABILITIES

Additional disabilities often accompany profound intellectual disabilities. One can understand that the same factors that affected the intellect of the child could also have caused other problems such as epilepsy or sensory disabilities.

7 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED

We said before that an intellectual disability affects not only the child's school performance but also the whole personality. To the teacher, it is particularly important to know how the disability affects the child's development and mode of learning. We shall discuss these aspects separately.

7.1 DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Just like other learners, intellectually disabled learners are unique individuals. They do not all exhibit the same traits. Even though two intellectually disabled learners might have the same cause underlying their disabilities, their potential and their problems are different.

7.1.1 General characteristics

Intellectually disabled learners develop according to the same pattern as normal learners, but not at the same pace. The developmental deficit of these learners increases as they grow older. There is a strong correspondence with learners of the

same mental age. Intellectually disabled learners may experience certain developmental deficits and strongly marked inequalities may occur.

Next we shall examine the characteristics of the intellectually disabled in various fields of development. Note however that these characteristics will not necessarily be found in all intellectually disabled learners. Obviously these features will be more marked among the severely intellectually disabled than in the mildly intellectually disabled.

7.1.2 Cognitive development

Young learners with intellectual disabilities experience problems in their cognitive development. The rate of development is slow, the level reached is below normal and there are specific deficits. A mildly disabled child will, for instance, develop at three quarters of the rate other learners develop and a profoundly disabled child will only develop at half or even less of other learners. They will also achieve not nearly so much as other learners. Remember, however, that this is no general rule, but only an indication of what can happen.

7.1.3 Language development

Deficits in language development are common to all intellectually disabled young learners. Vocabulary is limited and lacking in variety. It is essentially very concrete (indicating difficulty with the language of thought) and emotional. Sentence construction is simple and stereotyped; understanding of high-level language is low; articulation is poor; and voice errors are common.

7.1.4 Perceptual development

Young learners with intellectual disabilities generally also experience perceptual difficulties. Research results have shown that perceptualisation is less precise and more superficial than that of other learners. They don't see differences easily. In general they give greater preference to visual than auditory modalities. (They therefore learn more easily by seeing than by hearing.)

7.1.5 Motor development

Young learners with intellectual disabilities usually have difficulty with their motor development. Developmental milestones are reached later than usual and when compared with other young learners these learners usually appear clumsy. As regards their fine motor development, they experience difficulty in mastering intricate skills.

7.1.6 Affective development

As a result of their repeated failures, these learners often experience anxiety and tension. They cannot easily assess situations and are not able to predict the results of actions. They learn not to trust their own efforts and therefore often become dependent on others.

7.2 LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS

The rate at which these young learners learn is consequently slower than that at which other learners learn and the amount they learn is also less.

It is important for you as a teacher to find out how these learners learn and what their learning problems are. If you know why they learn with difficulty, you also know how to help them to learn more.

7.2.1 Motivation

The learning problems of intellectually disabled learners often begin with their initial motivation to do a learning task. These learners show a lack of that inner vitality which should move them to learn. They experience failure so often that they grow discouraged and do not wish to try again.

7.2.2 Attention

Human beings cannot learn without paying attention. Intellectually disabled young learners take longer to be able to attend; their resistance to distractions is weaker and their span of attention is briefer than those of other young learners. In other words, they lose interest quickly while paying attention because they cannot concentrate as well as other learners can.

7.2.3 Conceptualisation

Intellectually disabled young learners have difficulty with conceptualisation because of the poor quality of their perception. They are also slow to carry out cognitive operations such as grouping, sorting and arranging. Their thinking is more concrete and not as flexible as that of other young learners and therefore they cannot easily think or reason in terms of abstract concepts.

7.2.4 Memory

Intellectually disabled learners experience more problems with short-term memory than with long-term memory. They have to hear something more than once to be able to remember it. They can also only cope with a small amount of information.

7.2.5 Transfer

The intellectually disabled find it difficult to transfer what they have learnt to different situations. This applies to rules they have learnt, to methods of solving problems, and to certain forms of behaviour.

8 TEACHING INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED YOUNG LEARNERS

8.1 EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The mildly and moderately intellectually disabled (group I) can attend ordinary preprimary schools. The seriously intellectually disabled (group II) can be admitted

to special training centres for the intellectually disabled but can also be encountered in ordinary schools.

Some of the centres for the severely intellectually disabled provide for learners from the age of three, but these facilities come nowhere near meeting the need for preprimary education for this group. These learners may then not be turned down by preprimary schools and ordinary schools.

8.2 GUIDELINES FOR THE SPECIALISED HANDLING OF INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED YOUNG LEARNERS

From what has been said so far in this study unit we come to the important conclusion that intellectually disabled learners play a far lesser role in their own development than learners of normal intelligence do. Because they have so many difficulties with learning, important learning opportunities pass them by. They do not learn spontaneously like other learners. They do not observe the relationship between cause and effect and cannot apply what they learn to new situations. The major consequence of this is that intellectually disabled learners have a special need for the teacher's attention, help and support in assisting them to learn.

Apart from these principles, we should also like to provide the following hints or guidelines on how to handle these learners in your group:

- See to it that the curriculum is suited for the child.
- Give continuous individual attention to a learner or group of learners with corresponding educational needs to ensure that they receive a task that is on a level that they can cope with. More difficult assignments should thus be altered for these learners.
- Divide longer assignments into smaller units (task analysis) so that the learners are able to master them step by step.
- Stress the relevant information. Remember that the learner is not always able to distinguish the relevant aspects of an issue or a problem.
- See to it that the child achieves success. If you have succeeded in incorporating the above hints in your teaching, the child should achieve success. That in turn will be additional motivation to the learner.
- Help the child to overcome problems with short-term memory, by making sure that information was fixed. Make provision for enough repetition.
- Do not confuse the learners by changing classroom rules or procedures regularly. Do not expect different things from the learners from time to time, for instance in the way in which they have to set about to start on a new task.
- Become accustomed to the fact that you have to verbalise all explanations. Teach them to verbalise the different steps of a task first loudly and later softly. It helps the learners to regulate their actions and to use language while thinking.
- Let the learners experience that you accept and love them.
- Give the learners a great deal of encouragement to make it easier for them to tackle a task and see it through.
- Praise the child for each small section of a task completed.
- Build up the learners's self-concept intentionally by letting them experience the fact that they can contribute in class.
- Try to reinforce the learners's motivation by giving individual attention and indicating what the result of their effort could be.
- Use external means of motivation (such as awarding stars, a turn to walk in front) to motivate the child.

- Help the learners to pay attention by calling them by name each time, by letting them sit near you and by keeping them as involved as possible in the lesson.
- Do not expect the learners to see similarities and differences. Point them out.
- The learners must experience objects sensorily by seeing, hearing, touching and, where possible, also tasting.
- Help the child to remember by repeating the names of objects more often than you would for other learners.
- Provide the child with associations which make it easier to remember things.
- Teach the learners to rehearse (for the sake of short-term memory) by making them repeat aloud a few things to be remembered.
- Help the learners with transfer by reminding them what has been learnt and by showing them how it can be applied.
- Make sure that instructions are within the child's capabilities. A composite task must be subdivided so that the child can perform it step by step.
- Speak clearly and use words which the learners can understand. It is often necessary to address the learners individually to make sure that they have understood.
- Be consistent about rules, class organisation and the methods you apply. Consistency provides the learners with security and helps them to know what you expect from them.
- For the same reason the intellectually disabled child should not be unnecessarily moved from one class to another or from one position in the class to another. This might prove confusing.
- Give the learners time. These learners need more time than others to think of a solution or to find an answer. Do not answer on their behalf or let another child answer if there is no immediate reaction.

8.3 IDENTIFYING INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED YOUNG LEARNERS

At preschool level it is not easy to distinguish between a child who has developed slowly because of an intellectual disability and one with other problems (sensory, affective, neurological, and the like). From the preceding section you probably realise how complex the causative factors are and how interrelated the various aspects of development and learning are.

The teacher needs a sound background knowledge and very acute powers of observation to identify an intellectually disabled child, particularly one who is mildly disabled.

HINTS TO THE TEACHER: INDICATORS OF A POSSIBLE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM

The following could be indicative of an intellectual disability:

- *The child has a developmental backlog when taking into account chronological age — particularly with regard to language.*
- *The child does not understand instructions quickly. They have to be repeated two or three times.*
- *The child does not easily follow stories which are told without illustrations.*
- *The child finds it difficult to learn recitations or songs.*
- *The child needs more time than the others to complete a task.*
- *The child is easily confused — for example, by a new daily programme or a different method of working.*

- *The child finds it difficult to imitate complex movements.*
- *The child finds it difficult to carry out complex instructions (eg to put away the crayons, close their suitcases and stand in a row).*
- *The child finds it difficult to repeat a long word or a sentence correctly.*
- *There is little variation in the child's playing and drawing patterns.*
- *The child is often left out of games.*
- *The child prefers playing with younger learners.*
- *The child seems clumsy.*
- *The child finds fine motor coordination difficult.*
- *The child struggles to understand abstract concepts.*

Naturally many of these characteristics are found among nondisabled preschoolers and learners with other disabilities. Only when the overall image created by these characteristics fits the child do we suspect an intellectual disability: note, **not diagnose** one.

Conversely, the intellectually disabled need not have all these characteristics. There are exceptions, for example, a child with quite normal language development or a child whose motor development is adequate, but who nonetheless has very poor understanding. These unusual combinations occur very frequently in learners with brain damage in whom certain functions are more greatly affected than others.

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APPPENDIX D

PHYSICAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

OVERVIEW OF THIS APPENDIX

This section consists of the following topics:

1 Introduction
2 Types of physical disability
3 Cerebral palsy
4 Identification and treatment of physical barriers to learning
5 Classroom assistance to learners with physical barriers to learning

1 INTRODUCTION

We are all acquainted with people in wheelchairs, people who have lost an arm or a leg, people who suffer from epileptic seizures, people who are deformed and people who have limited use of only one side of their body. All these people represent the category of physically disabled.

2 TYPES OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY

In this study unit a few of the more common physical disabilities will be discussed in brief. However, there are many other types of physical disabilities that will not be discussed.

2.1 NEUROLOGICALLY RELATED PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The brain has already been mentioned in study unit 1, section 1.2. The word ''neuron'' refers to the microscopic small cells in the brain. (And there are millions and millions of them!) The brain and spinal cord form the central nervous system. Therefore, all physical disabilities that involve the brain or spinal cord are neurologically related.

(a) Spina bifida

There are different types of spina bifida, but for the purposes of this discussion, we shall confine ourselves to a general discussion.

In the case of spina bifida, one or more of the vertebrae of the vertebral column are not completely formed and the baby is born with an opening in the spinal column that can be ascribed to insufficient development of the spinal column in the early development stages of the embryo. It is usually the posterior process (the ''back part'') that is lacking. At the opening the membrane may bulge to form a sac

containing cerebrospinal fluid and part of the spinal cord. Learners with severe spina bifida need specialised nursing.

(b) Paraplegia and quadriplegia

Paraplegia is an inability to move and an absence of sensation in the lower limbs, while quadriplegia involves all four limbs. In lay terms one would say that the quadriplegic is completely paralysed. Injuries or damage to the spinal column suppress the transmission of impulses between the brain and the muscles. Remember that the brain is still able to plan the action and that the muscle can still perform the action. However, since there is no connection between the brain and the muscle, no movement can be created. This form of paralysis differs from cerebral palsy in it that the problem here lies with the spinal cord and not in the brain itself.

(c) Epilepsy

Epilepsy is very common among learners and in study unit 7 we will take an in-depth look at epilepsy. At this stage it is sufficient to mention that epilepsy is also a physical disability with a neural connection.

We are familiar with electricity and we know that faulty wiring can cause a short. The activity of the brain also relies on the same principles of electricity and faulty brain activity could cause a ''short'' in the form of epilepsy. Epilepsy is defined as a sudden disturbance in brain function caused by unusual electrical activity in the brain cells. The disturbance is temporary and once the activity returns to normal, the person functions in the same way as before the seizure occurred (study unit 1, section 1.1.2).

(d) Cerebral palsy

Cerebral palsy is very common and occurs often in regions where mothers don't receive adequate medical care while pregnant and during the birth process. It is for this reason that we discuss this disability in more detail.

(1) A section of the brain has been damaged, or has failed to develop, before the brain is fully grown.
(2) There are observable signs that the motor system has been affected because of a lesion in or inadequate development of the central nervous system.
(3) The disability may vary in degree from mild (scarcely noticeable) to severe.
(4) The condition is complex because there are usually other malfunctions in addition to the damage to the motor system.

(e) Postpoliomyelitis

Poliomyelitis (commonly called polio) is an acute illness which results in physical disability. It is a viral infection which damages the motor (or ''movement'') cells in the brain and spinal cord.

The muscles are affected in a great variety of ways. It is often the lower limbs and muscles of the trunk which are affected. It is a flaccid paralysis accompanied by atrophy (wasting away) of the muscles. Deformity occurs because the affected limb remains small.

2.2 PHYSICAL DISABILITIES OF THE SKELETON AND MUSCLES

In the case of these physical disabilities, the muscles and skeleton are affected. The brain and/or spinal cord are/is not affected.

(a) Amputations

Amputation refers to the loss of a limb by accident or through surgery. Serious consequences may follow an amputation. If, for instance, a child's legs are amputated, its mobility will be affected.

(b) Deformed limbs

A child may be born without a limb or a part of a limb. In addition, the part of the limb which is present may be deformed.

(c) Burn lesions

The skin is the largest and one of the most important organs of the human body. The majority of injuries from burning are caused by exposure to flames. The burns may be so severe that parts of the skin are destroyed and the person becomes physically disabled.

3 CEREBRAL PALSY

3.1 DEFINITION

In the previous section we indicated that cerebral palsy is a neurological condition that is directly related to some or other pathological or abnormal condition of the brain. The detrimental factors that cause the condition are already at work prenatally, at birth or directly after the birth of the child. Paralysis occurring later in life, such as that caused by a stroke, cannot be classified as cerebral palsy. Furthermore, cerebral palsy is also permanent.

The following is a shortened definition that was accepted by the World Commission for Cerebral Palsy:

> Cerebral palsy is a persistent but not unchanging disorder of posture and movement due to a dysfunction of the brain before its growth and development are completed. (Many other features may be part of the condition.)

3.2 CAUSES OF CEREBRAL PALSY

Cerebral palsy is caused by an underdevelopment of, or damage to, certain parts of the brain concerned with movement. A basic understanding of the structure and functioning of a human being's neurological structures is necessary in order to understand cerebral palsy. The areas of the brain affected by the different forms of cerebral palsy are the motor cortex, the basal ganglia and the cerebellum.

This condition can be caused by prenatal, perinatal or postnatal factors (see study unit 1). If one looks for the causes of cerebral palsy, one should always bear in mind

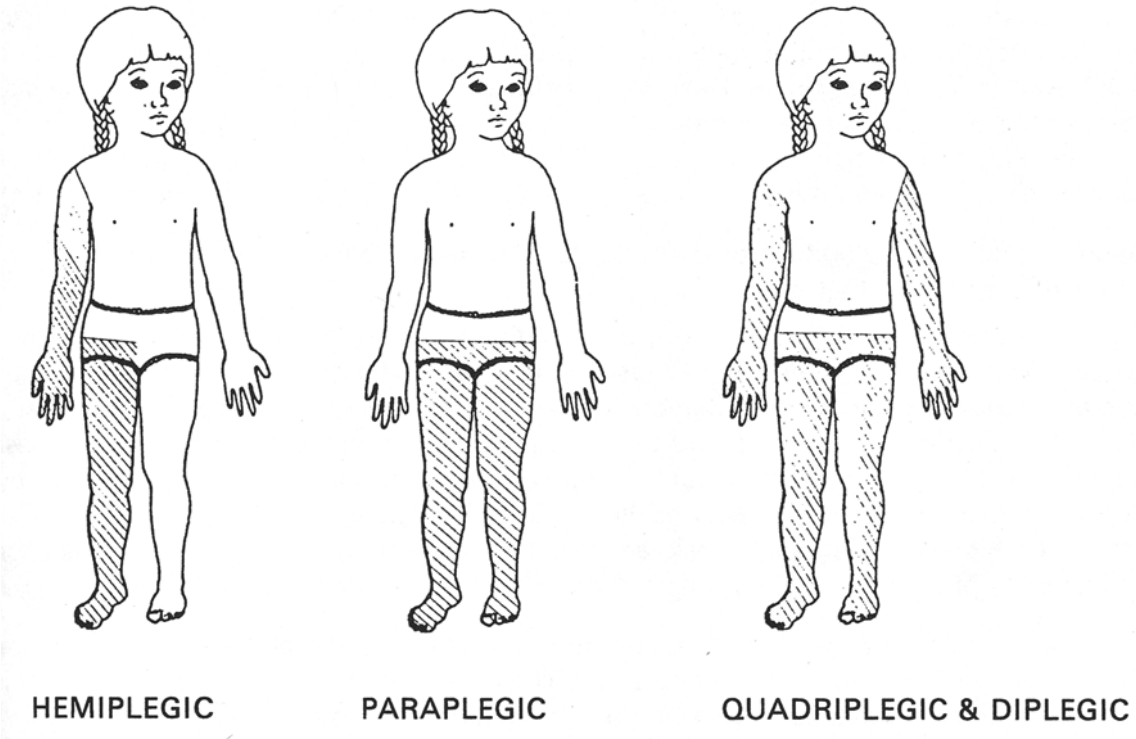
that *anything* that prevents the brain from getting an adequate supply of oxygen from the blood (anoxia) can cause brain damage.

3.3 CLASSIFICATION OF CEREBRAL PALSY

Damage to or underdevelopment of different areas of the brain causes various symptoms of motor dysfunction. The disorders are classified according to two factors: the topographical classification is based on the part of the body which is affected and the physiological classification on the movements of the individual (Bleck & Nagel 1982:60). These two classifications are usually used in combination when naming a palsy, for example, spastic hemiplegia.

FIGURE 14.1

Topographical classification of cerebral palsy



(a) The topographical classification (based on the part of the body which is affected)

The topographical description of symptoms specifies the condition of a particular child (fig 14.1). This classification includes the following:

(1) *Monoplegia.* One limb is affected.
(2) *Hemiplegia.* One side of the body is affected.
(3) *Paraplegia.* The lower limbs are affected.
(4) *Triplegia.* Three limbs are affected.
(5) *Quadriplegia* or *tetraplegia.* All four limbs are affected. When the legs are more severely affected than the arms, the term *diplegia* is used.

(b) The physiological classification (based on the individual's movements)

Cerebral palsy may be observed because of the individual's motor dysfunction. The physiological classification identifies the following categories: spasticity, athetosis, cerebral ataxia, rigidity, tremor and the mixed group.

- *Spasticity.* Spasticity is the most common form of cerebral palsy. Bowley and Gardner (1980:29) estimate its occurrence at approximately 75 percent. Because of this high percentage, cerebral palsy is sometimes wrongly referred to as spasticity. Muscular stiffness is characteristic of spasticity. When a spastic child tries to move, some muscles contract when they should relax, with the result that the movement is disharmonious and jerky. Voluntary movement, particularly fine muscle movement, is seriously impaired. Some muscles tend to contract more than others, giving rise to contractures which can shorten the limbs permanently. Flexion, particularly of the large joints, is characteristic of spasticity. Flexion of the elbow and wrist joints also occurs. The forearm bends upwards against the upper arm and turns inwards in a typical ''chicken wing''. The thumb is folded into the palm of the hand. The legs may also turn inwards and bend or flex at the knees. Because of the shortening of the muscles these learners are inclined to walk on their toes and because the muscles are twisted they tend to sit with their knees together, the feet wide apart and the posterior on the ground between the feet. You must change this sitting posture by helping the learners to sit with legs crossed or stretched out in front or by teaching them to sit on a chair. These young learners tend to avoid using the disabled limb. Particularly in the case of spastic hemiplegia, the disabled arm and leg are ignored.

  Spasticity is caused by damage to or underdevelopment of the motor cortex — the part of the brain which controls movement. Note that a lesion on the right side of the brain is manifested in the muscles on the left side of the body, and vice versa.
- *Athetosis.* The basal ganglia work together with the cerebellum to make it possible for the individual to move in a well-organised, graceful and economical way. Athetosis is caused by damage to these basal ganglia. It has become less frequent, however, since the introduction of treatment for Rh incompatibility and jaundice. The main characteristic of the child with athetosis is a lack of control which manifests itself in repeated involuntary and exaggerated movements, giving the impression of someone trying to walk inside a bus driven by a reckless driver. Hearing loss and speech defects often occur. These may hamper the acquisition of language. These learners may also have difficulty swallowing and chewing, which may impede feeding. When they are asleep, however, these learners seem perfectly normal. In infancy they often manifest muscular atony (lack of tension).

  According to Bowley and Gardner (1980:30), less than 10 percent of learners with cerebral palsy have athetosis.
- *Cerebellar ataxia*. The cerebellum controls coordination of body movements, posture and equilibrium. A damaged cerebellum causes a disturbance of equilibrium and coordination known as *ataxia*. Learners with cerebellar ataxia are unsteady on their feet when they walk, their balance is disturbed, and they cannot control fine motor coordination. These learners walk with a propulsive gait — it looks as though someone is holding them by the scruff of the neck and the seat of the trousers and pushing them forward. They also manifest a high-stepping duck-walk, an uncertain gait and wobbling of the leg as soon as weight is put on it. They may have coordination difficulties. Ataxia is rare.
- *Rigidity and tremor.* Rigidity and tremor are two forms of cerebral palsy, both very rare. Rigidity is a severe degree of cerebral palsy. The person is excessively

spastic. Tremor is manifested in spontaneous, regular, rhythmic, involuntary movements.

- *The mixed group.* Although there are various kinds of cerebral palsy, the following categories are the most important for our purposes: spasticity, athetosis, ataxia and mixed group. According to Bowley and Gardner (1980:30), almost 10 percent of the cerebral palsied belong to the mixed group. There are various mixed types of cerebral palsy, which may be manifested in different combinations, for example, athetosis and spasticity combined (Bleck & Nagel 1982:66).

3.4 DISABILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

A cerebral palsied child does not necessarily present additional disabilities, but many do. The brain damage resulting in cerebral palsy may cause a variety of associated disabilities, which may occur singly or in combination in the same child. Brain damage which may cause cerebral palsy of one arm, or one arm and one leg, may cause additional disabilities such as mental retardation, impairment of vision, hearing, speech, perception and epilepsy (Bleck & Nagel 1982:70–74). Bowley and Gardner (1980:31–32) mention that between 25 and 35 percent of all cerebral palsied learners are subject to epileptic seizures.

The distorted appearance of the cerebral palsied often causes the uninformed to think that they are mentally retarded. There is no direct relation between intelligence and the degree of cerebral palsy. A child may be severely cerebral palsied and yet be mentally gifted, whereas someone with a very mild degree of cerebral palsy may be severely mentally retarded. Nevertheless, brain damage does affect the intelligence of a large number of the cerebral palsied. We must not judge the cerebral palsied child's intelligence by physical appearance.

In many cerebral palsied learners, control of the muscles is affected. Lack of control of mouth and throat muscles causes difficulty in chewing, swallowing, speaking and even control over drooling. Therapists say when normal learners are sad, they cry; when cerebral palsied learners are happy, they drool! Sometimes the cerebral palsied have no control over their facial muscles and they appear to be constantly grimacing.

3.5 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

As a result of the physical disability caused by cerebral palsy, the mobility of the young child is limited and this leads to deprivation of life experiences. Through movement, young learners explore their environment and thereby gain important experiences. The baby and the preprimary child who are not disabled accompany their mother on outings to shops and on visits to acquaintances, friends and family. Disabled learners are often left at home and so are deprived of these experiences. Learners who are seriously physically disabled often have difficulty in activities such as handling toys, feeding themselves, dressing and undressing, helping mother in the home, and playing with sand while the father works in the garden. The parent who is in a hurry does things for the disabled youngster which normal learners would do or try to do for themselves. This is to the disabled child's detriment. It is important, therefore, that special provision should be made to enable cerebral palsied learners to broaden their experiential life.

Safford (1989:ch 7) describes the teaching and education of young learners with cerebral palsy. Cruickshank and Johnson (1975:376) are of the following opinion:

Essentially, learners with motor disabilities and health problems are not very different from other boys and girls. Their psychosocial disabilities result, for the most part, from the impact of society's reaction to physical deviation, from the child's interpretation of this reaction to his limitations, and from discrepancies between his aspirations and capabilities.

4 IDENTIFICATION AND TREATMENT OF PHYSICAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

4.1 IDENTIFICATION OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY

It is usually not difficult to identify the more severe cases, because they are obvious and visible to the eye. If you learn on enquiry that such learners are under no medical supervision, you should refer them to a medical practitioner.

Many cases of physical disability, such as petit mal epilepsy, mild spina bifida and mild cerebral palsy, are not overly obvious and might go undetected for years. The teacher is challenged to observe, to examine, to conduct parent interviews and to refer, if she suspects that a child might be physically disabled.

4.2 TREATMENT OF PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Each condition calls for specialised medical intervention, and the treatment will depend on the severity of the condition. We shall take a brief look at medical treatment procedures.

Different kinds of **orthopaedic aids** such as wheelchairs, crutches, splints and callipers are available. An amputated limb may be replaced by a prosthesis (an ''artificial limb'') but this is a particularly expensive aid.

Surgery is often indicated for cerebral palsy while, in the case of spasms, **medication** may be prescribed to relax the muscles. Medication is indispensable in the treatment of epilepsy. Different types of seizures require various types of anticonvulsive medication. Most kinds of epilepsy can be fully controlled with medication and, as a result, the child's learning improves.

The following **medical and paramedical** (or ''assisting'' medical) **people** deal with the physically disabled:

- *Neurologists* are specialists in the field of the brain in particular and the central nervous system as a whole. They will examine and treat all the neurologically related physical disabilities.
- Through surgical intervention and the use of orthopaedic aids, an *orthopaedic surgeon* is able to rectify disorders in the skeletal and muscular systems, especially of younger learners.
- Physically disabled people who experience hearing problems, loss of hearing, breathing problems and excessive drooling (just to name a few), will consult an *ear, nose and throat specialist*.

- *Psychiatrists are* medical practitioners (remember that psychologists are not medical practitioners), and apart from psychotherapy for the physically disabled, they may also prescribe medication, such as Ritalin for hyperactivity, Melleril for excessive aggression, or Prozac for depression.
- A *psychologist* can determine the abilities of the physically disabled by means of an IQ or aptitude test. After evaluating the person's personality and interests, a psychologist might suggest future school subjects or career choices. In psychotherapy a psychologist may deal with behavioural problems or emotional problems such as a poor self-image.
- *Physiotherapists* assist the physically disabled to strengthen their bodies and to improve their posture, muscle tone and coordination.
- An *occupational therapist* concentrates more on the functional side of the body, dealing with questions such as, ''What will this person with this particular disability be able to do in the labour market?'' An occupational therapist is also involved in teaching learners everyday skills such as how to bath or how to butter bread.
- *Speech therapists* work with speech and language. If a person is unable to speak, as is the case with some cerebral palsied persons, a speech therapist teaches the person alternative communication (using means other than words).

The ideal is that all these people from the various disciplines should consult with one another in order to secure the best treatment for the child. This is called the *multidisciplinary approach* (ie, many teams working together).

5 CLASSROOM ASSISTANCE TO LEARNERS WITH PHYSICAL BARRIERS TO LEARNING

It is generally accepted today that not all physically disabled learners necessarily require special education. The particular child's needs especially with regard to physical potential and limitations should, however, be noted — chiefly regarding mobility. In the case of the more seriously physically disabled, the learners receive special education because they do not progress in any other way. In order to do their work, some of the physically disabled also need specific teaching aids, such as special typewriters, special book supports and special chairs and tables.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Young learners

- Arrange the furniture in the playroom in such a way that the cerebral palsied learners can move about freely. Also make sure that the washbasin and the toilet are easily accessible.
- Store apparatus and position activities in places where the learners will be able to reach them.
- Organise floor and table games which the cerebral palsied learners can manage and which will encourage participation.
- Provide aids where necessary so that the learners can learn to help themselves. For example, you can provide a special spoon to eat with and a frame around the table so that the learners do not knock things down so easily. You can stick the plate, paint and paper for a given activity to the table with Prestik.

- Encourage the learners to become independent by giving them opportunity to do things unaided.
- Give the learners tasks and responsibilities — with due regard to physical abilities.
- Encourage the child to use disabled limbs. Present activities which require the use of the disabled hand as well (in the case of a hemiplegic).
- Let the learners join in all the activities and feel an important participant in group activities, with due allowance for motor problems. For example, when some learners cannot dance like bees during the music lesson, they can hold the flowers for the other bees to dance around.
- Create a physically and emotionally secure space for the learners so that they can explore confidently.
- Remember that success and enjoyment encourage exploration.

School learners

- See that such learners are comfortable with their orthopaedic aids. Take time to introduce and explain these aids to the rest of the class.
- Try to make the classroom and other areas where learners would like to go, easily accessible. (Ask the woodwork teacher to build ramps, if necessary.)
- Learners should be able to move around freely in the classroom, using their aids.
- It is always advisable to build up learners's self-esteem. Physically disabled learners feel different from other people. We, as class teachers, can help learners to form realistic images of themselves not only as disabled persons, but also as persons of worth who have potential.
- If learners are on medication, make sure that it is taken regularly. You could even keep a timetable for when medication must be taken during school time, if applicable. Remember, of course, that teachers are not allowed to change scripts or dosages, even if consulted by the parents.
- As teachers, we should be prepared to improvise. For instance, what would you do if a wheelchair developed a flat wheel or a child outgrew its prosthesis? (One solution would be to divide the learners in the class into groups and let them take turns to carry their classmate.)
- If learners have difficulty with their handwriting, you could try to get hold of a typewriter, and spend time with them, teaching them to type. Typing is good exercise for the smaller muscles of the hand (or fine motor control) and the learners's self-esteem might also improve if their work is neater.
- We should allow for long absences (eg for operations) on the part of physically disabled learners and for the fact that we will need to help such learners to catch up with their work. A good option is to ask the academically stronger learners to continue the work in absent learner's books so that they can just revise it when they get back.
- If learners write extremely slowly, you may allow them to do tests or exams orally.
- You could disregard the spelling of learners with severe spelling problems. In order to eliminate subjectivity, it might be a good idea to ask a committee to decide on such issues.
- If learner's attention is easily distracted (as is the case with learners who have neurological deficits), try to restrict the incidents that might distract their attention. Instead of stimulating all their senses (multisensory stimulation), ask them to clean their desks before they start with work, give short and clear instructions, touch their shoulder in order to draw their attention to you, or try to address them in person and check their progress frequently.

- Provide washing facilities in your classroom for learners who wheel themselves in their wheelchairs, since their hands will be dirty.



NB: It is impossible to prescribe everything in textbooks or lectures. Sometimes we have to ''feel'' the situation in our class and act accordingly. We need to be creative, human, even bold.

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APPENDIX E

EPILEPSY AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING

OVERVIEW OF THIS APPENDIX

This section contains the following topics:

1 Introduction
2 What is epilepsy?
3 Types of epilepsy
4 Identifying the child with epilepsy
5 Assistance to learners with epilepsy
6 The responsibility of a teacher to learners with epilepsy

1 INTRODUCTION

The incidence of epilepsy is more common than most other forms of physical disability. Epilepsy may also occur ''invisibly'', without an observable external seizure, and it is possible to encounter certain problems in a learner without being aware that their primary cause is epilepsy.

2 WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

The origin of epilepsy is in the brain, but its effect is observed during bodily seizures. In the course of heavy seizures, learners will fall to the ground and their bodies will jerk or execute grotesque convulsive jerks (spasms).

2.1 THE BRAIN

Epilepsy is a discharge of abnormal electrical activity in the brain. For a better understanding of the process, we would need to consider the anatomy of the brain. A simple explanation would be the following.

The brain consists of brain cells (or neurons). Between two brain cells there is a small opening (or synaptic cleft). In the synaptic cleft there are certain substances which help to conduct the impulse from one neuron to the next. These substances are called neural transmitters. Basically, the conduction of impulses occurs in the same way as electricity. The content of a brain cell is electrically negatively charged while, on the outside of the membrane (that is, in the synaptic cleft), the electrical charge is positive. The neural transmitter is able to stimulate the membrane of the brain cell in such a way as to make it more permeable to the positive ions. The negative content of the cell and the influx of positive ions cause a type of ''short circuit'' which is

conducted to the second neuron. In this manner the impulse is conducted from cell to cell.

The explanation above refers to the normal conduction of electrical activity in the brain. When conduction is abnormal, it may happen that somewhere electricity mounts up, and this stimulates (or irritates) the neurons, giving rise to an epileptic seizure. This is why epilepsy is defined as a sudden alteration or disturbance in brain function resulting from extraordinary electrical activity in the brain cells. This may also be described as a momentary ''electrical storm'' in the brain. The symptoms (such as involuntary muscle spasms) disappear when the brain's activity returns to normal. Between epileptic seizures, brain activity is normal.

The type of seizure depends on the parts of the brain that are affected. Sometimes there is just a small area where the neurons are stimulated. Then only the specific functions controlled by that part of the brain are affected. Focal-motor seizures may be mentioned as an example. Botha (1986:164–165) mentions that abnormal brain activity in a small part of the brain can cause convulsive movements of a single muscle or group of muscles. It is usually the muscles of the hand or those of the face and tongue. The person affected is fully conscious and is aware of the convulsive movements but cannot control or stop them. There may also be rhythmical movements of the jaw, lips and throat, as well as salivating.

2.2 THE BODY

The reactions (or symptoms) of the body vary according to the type of seizure (types of seizures are discussed in the following section).

Certain seizures are symptom-free. In other words, the person shows no external, observable symptoms. This may sound like the ''best'' type of epilepsy, but it is very detrimental to a child's learning processes because teachers are unaware of the fact that a child in their class is completely unable to pay attention, and has missed part of the lesson.

In a heavy seizure (a tonic-clonic convulsive seizure — better known as a grand mal) the ''electrical storm'' in the brain causes the body to react violently. The person falls to the ground and, to start with, the body stiffens or becomes rigid. This is followed by sudden contractions of virtually all the muscles on both sides of the body. The eyelids and the jawbone are tightly set, the eyes are partly open, breathing ceases (apnoea) and the face turns blue. In addition an ''epileptic shriek'' may be emitted because the air is compressed in the lungs — as well as other moaning and groaning sounds. There will be massive convulsions of the entire body. These tremendous and uncontrollable convulsions which are rapid at first, and then slow down, end in a few large spasmodic jerks. Loss of bladder and sphincter control is possible, resulting in emptying of the bladder and defecation. Breathing resumes and the face begins to lose its blue colour. Breathing might now be jerky and laboured and there could be foam at the mouth. If the person has bitten the mouth or tongue during the seizure, the foam may be flecked with blood. At the end of the seizure the person falls into a deep coma during which the muscles gradually relax. This period of sleep enables the person to recover after the exhaustion of body and brain.

Looking at the reactions of the body, you would see clearly that the seizure had involved the entire brain.

3 TYPES OF EPILEPSY

From the preceding you will already have deduced that there is more than one type of epilepsy and that different parts of the brain are involved. All types of epilepsy are classified according to an international classification system. The teacher is not, however, required to study the complete system. Diagnosing types of epilepsy is the field of a neurologist.

3.1 CLASSIFICATION OF EPILEPSY

There are three principles for classifying seizures:

- If the seizure involves the whole brain (as in the case of the grand mal seizure described above), it is called a *generalised seizure*.
- If the seizure involves only part of the brain (as in the instance of the focal-motor seizure described above), it is called a *partial seizure*.
- If the partial seizure expands to incorporate the entire brain, is called a *secondary generalised seizure*.

A simplified summary of the classification would therefore be as follows:

- Generalised seizures without convulsions
- Generalised seizures with convulsions
- Partial seizures
- Partial seizures that become generalised seizures
- Unclassified seizures — in the case of learners, seizures are frequently not classified

3.2 A FEW TYPES OF EPILEPSY

We shall now briefly discuss a few types of epilepsy that often occur in the classroom.

3.2.1 Petit mal or absence

This is a generalised seizure during which a learner immediately and, without any previous warning, loses consciousness. A typical absence is of short duration and is observed as being a sudden immobility and a vacant stare which pass just as suddenly as they occurred. Teachers tend to confuse this with daydreaming. After an absence a learner is ready to continue with the work but, as already mentioned, the subject matter covered during the absence will have been lost.

Any number of such seizures could take place per day — up to 100 have been observed. You can imagine how detrimental it would be for the learning process if a learner ''cuts out'' or ''disappears'' at regular intervals.

There is more than one type of absence but these types are diagnosed by neurologists and need not be recognised by teachers. However, what teachers do need to recognise is the need to identify, diagnose and treat a child who suffers from absences. An absence is so ''invisible'' and symptom-free that it is often overlooked. (The business of identification is complicated when one considers human beings in general. During the course of a day everyone experiences lapses and peaks of attention which are not necessarily caused by epilepsy.)

General terms for absences are *black out* or ''the learner switches off''.

If the learner has an absence while the teacher is explaining a long mathematical calculation, the implication is that the learner has missed steps in the process. Repetition is a key concept to remember when one has a learner who suffers from absence in one's class.

3.2.2 Convulsive general seizures

Convulsive general seizures need not always assume the proportions of the tonic-clonic convulsive seizure described above.

- Certain seizures are accompanied by only one or more convulsions. These convulsions are called *myoclonic convulsions*. Because virtually all the muscles in the body are involved, the person is thrown to the ground.
- During *tonic convulsive seizures* the body goes into an extremely taut or tense spasm. The word ''tonic'' refers to muscle tension or muscle tone. Thus it is clear why these seizures are known as ''tonic'', because the seizure is manifested as hypertension of the muscles.

It is fairly general for the person to experience an aura before (a premonition of) this type of seizure. The aura could take the form of a certain sensation such as a tingling feeling felt beforehand. Visual disturbances such as moving spots of light are common. Auditory sensations could consist of a sound like the ringing of a bell. Olfactory (smell) sensations take the form of strange odours. Other examples of auras are a change in heartbeat, excessive sweating, tearfulness, dilation of the learners or skin reactions such as goose pimples or red flushes. The aura may be viewed as a seizure in its own right because it means that the brain is already giving an indication of a type of irritation. Typically tonic-clonic convulsive seizures are not accompanied by an aura.

At the end of the seizure the person may show symptoms such as confusion, listlessness, headache, slurred speech, intellectual dullness or temporary paralysis (known as apraxia). These symptoms do not invariably occur and are transitory. After a period of recovery, these symptoms disappear.

Generalised convulsive seizures are the easiest to identify (spot) because they are accompanied by symptoms that cannot be ignored.

3.2.3 Partial seizures

Partial seizures involve only a section of the brain. The *focal-motor seizure* has already been described as an example of partial seizures. Other examples of partial seizures include the following:

- *Jackson seizures.* Initially these look like a focal-motor seizure, but the seizure ''marches'' ahead through one part of the body so that more and more of the muscle groups are involved. These seizures are also known as the Jackson march. A typical march would, for instance, start with jerky movements of the thumb, spreading to the other fingers, the wrist, the arm and the face.
- *Versive or adversive seizures.* These are also called ''turning seizures'' because the person makes turning movements of the head.
- *Postural seizures.* During this type of seizure the person assumes a characteristic posture. The typical posture is a semiseated position with one arm raised and the head and eyes turned in the direction of the elevated arm. It looks as if the person

wants to point out something to someone. In addition there may be convulsive and contracting movements of the arm and face.

- *Seizures with vocalisation.* These seizures are accompanied by the utterance of a sound resembling loud, monotonous gibberish. Observing a seizure of this type for the first time is a strange experience. Such seizures are usually precursors of greater seizures like convulsive or psychomotor seizures.
- *Psychomotor seizures.* During a psychomotor seizure the people continue automatically with what they were doing when the seizure began. If they were running, they would continue running (even though their balance may no longer be so good). They may even run into a wall if confronted by one. When it is all over, they cannot remember anything about the seizure. Other symptoms that occur are chewing and swallowing movements, smacking of the lips, groping at bodily parts and unseemly speech (swearing). They resist interference and this could cause aggression.

Another question for you to think about is the following:

- Would you say that learners could provoke an epileptic seizure? How would they manage this? Why would they do something like that? How would you behave? Is it possible for learners to imitate a seizure? What, then, would your action consist of?

It is possible that learners could bring on a seizure by starting to hyperventilate (hyperventilation is rapid, shallow breathing). If you notice that learners are hyperventilating, you could admonish them to breathe normally. You could even go and stand next to them and breathe normally with them. A paper bag may also help to restore the concentration of oxygen and carbon dioxide during breathing. (The disturbance in the concentration of oxygen and carbon dioxide while one is breathing is the mechanism of hyperventilation, and the consequence is that too little oxygen reaches the brain.) Learners could unconsciously or consciously bring on a seizure. There could be many reasons for this, such as escaping from the need to write a test one does not want to write, or looking for attention when one feels left out or overlooked. If learners did this frequently, you would be forced to examine all the circumstances since this is indicative of a problem that is not related to epilepsy alone. It would mean that epilepsy is being used as a defence mechanism. Fortunately, this is not a common phenomenon.

Seizures could also be imitated. Adolescents might use this ''technique'' when they wish to avoid an obligation. If they do not feel like doing something (such as sport — note that learners with epilepsy **do** participate in sport) a seizure could offer them a way out. Seizures like these may be convincingly and ostentatiously imitated. Although teachers may be aware of the fact that the seizure is an imitation, they would nevertheless handle it as an ordinary seizure. Look at the directions for handling epileptic seizures in section 7.5 below. At the end of the seizure you could speak to other teachers and ask them whether they have the same ''feeling''. If this should happen frequently, you would need to investigate the circumstances that are causing the seizures.

You may be wondering why you have to know about the various types of epilepsy (and remember that the discussion above covers only a few of the types). The reason for this is twofold. In the first place it could help you to identify epilepsy in a learner. Supposing you had learners in your class who, from time to time, assumed the type of strange position that is described above under postural seizures and you had absolutely no knowledge of such seizures. You might think that the learners were a bit weird or seeking attention. With the knowledge you have already gained, you

would know that it is no use telling the learners to stand up because their bodies are at the mercy of certain messages received from the brain and there is no possibility of their being able to respond to your instruction.

In the second instance, you will learn that knowledge of a disability can do a great deal to change and remove a teacher's fear, prejudices and negative attitudes. Moreover, the teacher has a duty to convey this knowledge to the wider community so that their fears, prejudices and negative attitudes — which stem from ignorance — may be overcome.

4 IDENTIFYING THE CHILD WITH EPILEPSY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As a teacher you are not called upon to *diagnose* epilepsy in learners but you should be familiar with the manifestations of the various kinds of epilepsy so that you will be able to identify the various symptoms which could be related to epilepsy or which could be indicative of epilepsy. Your task is, therefore, the close *observation* of every child in your group. You should be extremely careful not to see any ''deviation'' in a child as a possible epileptic seizure! This warning cannot be emphasised too strongly!

An interview with the parents about each child's history, especially when the child is admitted to a school, can be very valuable for the principal and teachers. During the discussion information about the pregnancy, whether the birth was normal and whether there were problems during birth or immediately afterwards can be passed on. Past and current medical problems such as head injuries or poisoning can cause acquired epileptic seizures. Svoboda (1979:46) writes that ''an unexplained falling, headaches, colic, staring, breath holding, febrile seizures or nightmares may reveal previous unrecognised seizure manifestations''.

A survey of the learner's motor, language, speech and social development can assist you further in your observations. Causes of seizures can retard achievement of the normal developmental milestones in the above fields. Prior knowledge can prompt you to observe certain learners more closely than others, but take care not to see problems where there are none!

4.2 IDENTIFYING HIDDEN OR DISGUISED EPILEPSY

Hidden epilepsy is a condition that can exist. We often come across it in learners who show no outward symptoms of epilepsy. They may perhaps merely present the particular problems associated with learning disabilities, or else they may show behavioural problems. We should not rule out the possibility of hidden epilepsy whenever such problems make their appearance *suddenly, unexpectedly* and *sporadically* while the learners otherwise do not act in this manner. Learners subject to sudden spells of bad temper, aggressiveness, vandalism, and so on, or who are very prone to swiftly changing moods, who are at times very depressed, elated or fidgety, may possibly suffer from processes of irritation in the brain which do not result in epileptic symptoms, but in other symptoms which may take the place of epileptic seizures. It has often been found that such learners do betray *epileptic tendencies* which can be verified (eg by means of the electroencephalograph referred to above). Their behaviour may then sometimes change miraculously as soon as they

are treated for this condition. Instead of allowing such learners to go from bad to worse, finally becoming a serious problem to themselves, the school and their parents, they should be referred as early as possible to competent diagnostic centres which can often solve the seemingly impossible problems. Some learners with epilepsy show similar behaviour tendencies if their epilepsy has not been brought completely under control by treatment, but only just sufficiently to abolish the outward symptoms of epilepsy. It is essential that the physician responsible be consulted in such cases.

Teachers can do much for young learners by paying attention to suspicious signs. These symptoms or manifestations indicate that everything is not as it should be and that the learners are subject to disturbances which may have an epileptic basis or which may arise from slight dysfunctions (malfunctions) of the central nervous system. These phenomena need not cause undue alarm, in fact they should be evaluated realistically and level-headedly and their presence confirmed before teachers recommend that the learners be referred to a specialist for a neurological examination. Therefore, they should note the alleged phenomena carefully and if the learners' difficulties intensify or the suspicious symptoms increase, they should do something about it.

4.3 MISLEADING PHENOMENA

Numerous manifestations in the behaviour of learners can create problems in the school. Some of them appear to be and may in fact be possible manifestations of epilepsy, but they can occur in learners who are not at all susceptible to epilepsy or epileptic tendencies. Svoboda (1979, chapter 6) and Scott (1973, chapter 5) mention several phenomena which could be confused with epilepsy; for example, migraine, childhood fits, hysteria, fainting attacks, sleeping sickness (narcolepsy and cataplexy) and episodes of holding the breath, dizziness and fainting because of pressure on the artery to the brain.

We also find learners who do not pay attention in the class, possibly because they were emotionally unready to leave their mothers or their intelligence is below average. (Please consult the chapter about the mentally disabled learner.) Learners could have poor vision or hearing and not see or hear surroundings properly; could be suffering from diseases such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, malnutrition, or be subject to child abuse, all of which could result in their not paying attention.

4.4 THE NEED FOR OBJECTIVE OBSERVATION AND REPORTING

Now we come to the crux of the whole section about identification, namely careful observation and objective reporting. We have mentioned that teachers may not diagnose. They may also not evaluate learners purely subjectively and then make deductions. Therefore if they notice any ''deviation'' in learners which is strange or which was not present before, they must observe the learners carefully and objectively and describe the learners's behavioural manifestations in a factual report (a few sentences only). They must observe how regularly this ''deviant'' behaviour occurs and make a note of it each time.

If the learners have a supposed epileptic seizure teachers must note and record the following:

- *What happened before the seizure?* (Did they observe any unusual behaviour or

emotional change in the learners, did they complain of a funny sensation or smell, or of tingling hands?)
- *How did the seizure commence?* (For example, was there any sign such as fainting, turning the head or involuntary cry? Ask other learners if necessary.)
- *What happened during the seizure?* (For example, did the child become limp, fall, or jerk convulsively — on one side of the body [if so, which side?] or on both sides? Did saliva run out the mouth? Did the child wet himself?)
- *What happened after the seizure?* (For example, how long did it last? Did the child regain consciousness quickly? Could the child continue with previous activities or did he regain consciousness and then fall asleep? Was the child confused, nauseous, did he vomit?)

Note specifically whether any slight seizures occur; for example, staring eyes or the learners do not notice if teachers call them (but for goodness sake do NOT suspect that every fit of absent-mindedness is epilepsy!). Does the child appear to be ''not quite with it'' when told something or when busy with something? Did the child suddenly look confused? While busy drawing, did he seem to scribble and then continue, or repeat an action even if it was unnecessary? Are there signs of a varying ability to do something — now adequate then poor? Note the slight seizures and whether they occur in specific circumstances.

These factual notes must be submitted to the principal, who should discuss them tactfully with the parents. The school nurse or doctor should also be asked to help. The teacher should be prepared to provide only the facts, to the doctor and parents — not her own diagnosis.

If epilepsy is suspected, the learner should be referred to a pediatrician and/or neurologist. In addition to larger hospitals with outpatient facilities for learners, Schools for Special Education catering for learners with epilepsy have facilities for conducting examinations and making diagnoses.

5 ASSISTANCE TO LEARNERS WITH EPILEPSY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Ideally teachers should be told beforehand by the parents that learners suffer from epileptic seizures. Learners could have their first tonic-clonic seizure in the group which can be very upsetting and traumatic for them, the teachers, and the other learners if the teachers do not know what to do. The other kinds of seizures could easily pass unnoticed by the other learners. As the teachers responsible they should be on the look out for such seizures so that they can help the learners during and after the seizure.

Assistance consists in more than merely treating the learners during seizures. In between seizures these learners should be handled just like any other. Learners with epilepsy can be ''normal'' in every aspect, except that they may be subject to sporadic or periodic epileptic seizures. Sensible help and guidance can enable most learners with epilepsy to be ''normal epileptics''.

5.2 ASSISTANCE DURING SLIGHT SEIZURES

Absences occur without any warning and immediately afterwards the learners may

resume the activity they were busy with before the seizure. Teachers should be alert and record the incidence of seizures.

In the case of a partial seizure, learners do not lose consciousness completely, but merely suffer a diminution of consciousness. They may therefore be aware of what is going on around them, but actions will be confused and aimless. Should the teachers address the learners they will meet with no reaction.

If they are observant teachers, they will soon notice that something is wrong with the learners, since they either do not comprehend what is happening during a seizure, or engage in inexplicable activities. If the behaviour is due to a seizure, teachers should not oppose the child, or try to force him to act differently. Learners cannot be checked in this state, but they can be guided. Do not try to force the learners back to their chairs; lead them to their chairs. After a seizure these learners may complain of nausea, headache, or appear confused or suffer a bout of crying or anger. Comfort and pamper them a little, and then let them rest.

5.3 ASSISTANCE DURING TONIC-CLONIC SEIZURES

If teachers know beforehand that learners in their group suffer from tonic-clonic seizures, they should prepare the other learners for witnessing a possible seizure. They should not use the term ''epilepsy'' in this connection. With the learners they can dramatise a possible situation in which a learner faints, or is nauseous, or complains of stomachache so that the learners will be prepared if a seizure occurs in the group.

The question is what they should do as teachers when seizures occur. There is not much they can or should do except look out for any warning signs (prodrome or aura, particularly the latter) so that they can take the learners to an isolated, safe place where they can lie down and not sustain any injury.

If the learners do not exhibit these warning signs, teachers must, if possible, prevent the learners from falling. If convulsions or spasms occur, objects against which the learners can hurt themselves should be pushed out of the way. *Under no circumstances must anyone try to hold the learners and prevent movements of the body.* This may lead to injury of the muscles or joints.

The learners should be turned on one side so that excessive saliva, which is responsible for the foaming at the mouth, may run out freely and not clog the air passages, which may cause choking. *It is unnecessary to insert an object between the teeth to prevent the learners from biting their tongues.* This could easily cause more damage than the tongue being bitten, which in any case happens very seldom. Furthermore, the teachers should see to it that the learners's clothes are loose, especially round the neck and the waist. For the rest, they can but wait for the seizure to pass and in the meanwhile guard against panic and alarm by remaining undisturbed themselves and setting about things calmly and without any signs of agitation.

Medical assistance must be summoned in the following cases:

- If severe seizures are protracted or recur at frequent intervals.
- If the child chokes. In this case immediate emergency assistance is essential to clear the air passages.
- If injuries which the child incurred during the seizure warrant medical attention. Should the seizure continue unduly, the doctor ought to be able to give injections

to prevent further seizures. In rare cases respiration is impaired in a series of seizures *(status epilepticus)* to such an extent that oxygen may become necessary.

In any case, the learner's parents must be informed as soon as possible of any seizure the child may have had in the group. If teachers know all about the learner, they will know whether the learner recover relatively quickly from seizures or whether it is necessary to send them home. Most learners are able to resume their normal activities within a short time. In such cases, it is not necessary to call in a doctor as the seizure will have passed before the doctor arrives. If it is the first seizure the learner have ever had, that is another matter; then it would be necessary to inform the parents as soon as possible, or call a doctor, or summon the parents as well as a doctor.

5.4 THE USE OF MEDICATION

Regular use of medication is essential for the successful control of epileptic seizures. It is advisable for a teacher to be aware of the treatment of epilepsy and of the fact that it is protracted and sometimes lasts a lifetime. Teachers should point out to the parents that it could be detrimental to the learners to be continually changing doctors and to have medication altered arbitrarily. Teachers should also bring to their attention the consequences of using patent remedies. In the long run, consistent treatment by a neurologist usually causes the number of seizures to decrease and brings them under control.

Sometimes a protracted use of certain anti-epileptic medications may have harmful effects on the learners's general health. Teachers should report their careful observation of side effects and changes in behaviour in the learner to the parents and the doctor.

5.5 ASSISTANCE TO THE CHILD WITH EPILEPSY

5.5.1 The effect of epilepsy on the child's learning

Learners with epilepsy are in the first place learners, just like other learners, with the same basic needs for love, security, safety and the same basic feelings. They are different only in the sense that they suffer from epileptic seizures. These seizures can make these learners feel that they are different from other learners, however. Learners with epilepsy who are not treated correctly can easily become disturbed; particularly if other learners tease them about their seizures or reject them and they do not know themselves what is wrong with them. Learners with epilepsy could deteriorate into aggressive fighters or otherwise become negative, withdrawn and stubborn.

Learners with epilepsy — particularly secondary or acquired epilepsy — sometimes manifest deviant tendencies which they cannot always control and which therefore cannot be avoided. Such learners are sometimes restless, hyperactive and have poor concentration. They may be clumsy and inept in their movements, have perceptual problems, be subject to sudden affective changes and find it difficult to control their emotions. Fortunately these learners become more balanced as they grow older and are correctly handled.

Learners with epilepsy must be treated and guided sympathetically but firmly, so that they can grow up just as normally as nondisabled learners. If learners with

epilepsy are reassured, if their feelings of security are strengthened, if they receive special assistance to join in the activities of their groups, and if they are accepted by the other learners in the family or school and allowed to associate with them and to live normally with other people, then there is usually no reason why learners with epilepsy should become deviates. As seizures are brought under control by means of medication and as they learn to adjust themselves to the functional limitations which may accompany their brain damage, they can learn to fend for themselves and to become useful members of society. They may only be able to fill modest niches, but this need not affect their existence as human beings, possessing human dignity.

5.5.2 Circumstances in the class which may affect seizures

The seizures of some learners with epilepsy may increase if there are affective disturbances, exceptional excitement and upsets in the group. It is not always possible to avoid these circumstances or to protect the learners against them. These learners have to learn eventually to adapt to all circumstances and to meet life's demands, but to achieve this they need consideration and support. Unnecessary stresses and frustrations should be confined to a minimum. Learners with epilepsy should not be subjected to unnecessary tension or frustration which could lead to temper tantrums and even seizures.

Learners with epilepsy do not need to follow a special diet because of their epilepsy. Like all learners, learners with epilepsy must follow a healthy, balanced diet, and meals must be eaten at regular intervals. Too great an interval between meals can make the blood sugar level decline which makes some learners with epilepsy more susceptible to seizures than others. Emphasise particularly the necessity for a good breakfast before the learners come to school in the mornings.

5.5.3 Participation in everyday group activities

Learners with epilepsy should live normal, healthy lives. They can participate in virtually every kind of game but should be well supervised at the climbing apparatus and during swimming sessions. Games in which they can socialise in a relaxed way should be encouraged so as to promote social development. It is well known that learners with epilepsy have seizures less easily if they are active and if their attention is fully occupied by activities in which they are interested. Extremes should be avoided. (This is true for all learners.) Overexertion should also be avoided, but too much rest and sleep during the day can also lead to an increase in seizures. Teachers should see to a sound balance.

The learners with epilepsy have just as great a need for normal consistent discipline as normal learners. Be careful not to overprotect learners with epilepsy or to overlook misbehaviour. Apart from the fact that the learners could become demanding, leniency would also hamper social relationships with friends. Teachers should therefore accept learners with epilepsy and treat them like any other learner.

6 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A TEACHER TO LEARNERS WITH EPILEPSY

To conclude this chapter we shall summarise the responsibilities of teachers towards learners with epilepsy in their group.

(1) They should have sufficient knowledge about the various forms of seizures to enable them to identify and handle efficiently any seizures occurring in their group.
(2) They should know how to handle the group situation created by the seizure. They should not panic but should react in a matter-of-fact and calm way, in the interests of both the learners with epilepsy and the other learners in the group.
(3) They should know enough about epilepsy to realise when they are up against a real crisis which calls for professional, medical or other assistance. They should act accordingly without any signs of panic.
(4) Each seizure or series of seizures which they observe should be fully reported to the principal of the school, the parents of the learners, and the doctor. Therefore they should know what special observations to make and which details are important to relate.
(5) They should know what medical treatment the learners are receiving and how they can be of help in this respect. They should also be aware of the possible effect the medicine (usually in the form of tablets or capsules) can have on the learners so that they can take this into account and report any harmful effects observed.
(6) They should know how the learners's development, mental life and behaviour may be affected by the seizures, or by their reactions to them, as well as how other people react too. They must take this into account and try to avoid or counteract any possible harmful effects.
(7) As the learners's teachers they should be informed of the additional disabilities which the learners with epilepsy may suffer from, for example, learning disabilities of the same nature as those experienced by other learners with brain damage (severe or minor).
(8) The school affords a favourable opportunity for early identification of all kinds of handicaps to which the learners may be subject. Teachers should therefore be able to observe early signs of epileptic tendencies in the learners. This is also true of other problems which, though not epileptic in nature, may be related to epilepsy.
(9) They can do a great deal to help learners with epilepsy to attain a healthy, normal adjustment to life. They can help prevent the learners from being stigmatised because of seizures and from feeling rejected or insecure because of them.

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APPENDIX F

PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Learning is described as the acquisition of knowledge and skills through study, experience or teaching *(Oxford Dictionary)*. Learning thus refers to the **outcome or result** that is achieved through one of these learning processes.

Learning implies that some or other process or processes lead to the occurrence of learning, and that people behave differently on the basis of what they have learnt.

A person may learn in various ways, for example:

- *Learning through conditioning.* Conditioning refers to the pleasure-pain principle. Learning occurs here because people learn through experience that it is more agreeable to behave in certain ways. This may occur incidentally or be deliberately planned. For example, people discover incidentally that they hurt themselves and bang their heads if they walk under a low branch without bending. Next time they will bend down when walking under that branch: this change in behaviour is the proof that they have learnt something. Teachers give learners stars or some other form of reward to deliberately help them to establish correct forms of behaviour and to learn.
- *Learning through exercise*. Certain skills can also be obtained through successive excercises.
- *Learning through imitation (modelling).* People can also learn by imitating others. This is called modelling. Parents, teachers, older siblings and friends behave in certain ways. Learners pay close attention to this and imitate these people. This form of learning is especially important for the acquisition of social skills.
- *Learning through insight.* This is the highest form of learning. In this instance learners learn because they internally process and organise information and thus come to new insights. New information should thus be compared to old (existing) knowledge and correlations should be drawn, all of which comes to be stored in the memory. This demands intellectual, language and perceptual skills.

Learning difficulties

The term ''learning difficulties'' is a general umbrella term which is used to refer to any problems learners may experience with learning, resulting in their falling behind in comparison to other learners.

In the case of preschool learners, learning difficulties can lead to general language, cognitive and perceptual-motor lags.

In schoolgoing learners, the result is that they cannot achieve academically as desired. If these learners do not get additional help, it may mean that they will be unable to successfully complete their schooling.

Learners with learning difficulties constitute by far the largest of all the groups of

learners with special educational needs. Indeed, one seldom finds a classroom without learners with learning difficulties.

Learning difficulties may arise in any of the following situations.

- Learners do not get enough or adequate opportunity for learning experiences. (For example, they lack enough opportunity to practise the skills needed for school, such as the fine motor coordination needed for cutting out with scissors or developing a pencil grip, or exposure to books to develop visual-motor skills.)
- Learners have enough opportunity for learning experiences, but as a result of some problem (physical, visual, auditory or intellectual disability), they cannot benefit sufficiently from the opportunities presented. It is noticeable for instance that learners with intellectual disabilities do not learn as many things spontaneously and from own experience as other learners. The learning opportunity is consequently lost.
- Learners experience problems with cognitive functions (perception, attention, thinking, memory, transfer), or with one or more of the cognitive processes (input phase, processing phase, output phase) or with the ability to regulate and control own cognitive processes (metacognition).
- Related factors, such as those mentioned above (faulty motivation, disorganisation, poor perserverence), as well as emotional and/or behaviour problems can negatively influence learners's ability to learn.
- Numerous other factors, mentioned in the previous module on learners with special educational needs, may lead to learning difficulties. Here, for example, we may think of factors related to the school and home environment, the lack of a good role model or the negative influence of friends.

Naturally this explanation of the origins of learning difficulties is much simplified — there are usually a variety of factors that are influential here.

At school level the term ''learning difficulties'' usually refers to learners who experience problems in mastering the normal academic skills. Learners with learning difficulties will therefore not be able to realise their potential for learning at school. Problems may be experienced in all school subjects, certain subjects or in only one subject. Problems may also be limited to only certain aspects of a subject, and may be permanent or temporary, depending on the origin.

At some stage in their school career, most learners experience some or other problem area in their schoolwork. The problem or problems may appear throughout a learner's schooling, only during a certain phase such as the junior primary phase, during a single school year or during only part of the year.

Often a problem may clear up without any intervention and assistance from teachers or parents. In some cases it is sufficient for the teacher or parent to briefly re-explain a concept to the child. This occurs generally in the classroom in the course of the day or at home while the child is busy with homework. Most other learners resolve their problems after one or several sessions directed specifically at assisting the learner. The number of helping sessions is not fixed, depending rather on the learner's progress. The learners referred to here are the so-called *underachievers*.

In some cases the learner never overcomes the problem, despite intensive assistance. These learners may be classed as either *poor achievers* or *learning disabled.* There are some learners whose environments are so deprived that they experience problems due to the limited enrichment they receive from their environment. Some of these learners constitute the so-called *risk learners*. These learners generally experience problems in all their subjects and find it difficult to overcome their handicap.

Often several learners in a class will experience a similar problem regarding some subject. Even though the problem may be identical in each case, its manifestations and origins generally differ widely. For example, in a large group of grade four learners who experience difficulties with reading, one may struggle to recognise words on sight, a second may not be able to analyse and/or synthesise, a third may experience problems in recognising the letters in the words while a fourth may not be able to recall the sounds of the letters.

When we assist these learners, we would probably help the group as a whole because it is not practical to help each learner individually.

At preschool level learning problems manifest usually as developmental problems. We can also say that these difficulties have to do with preparatory learning skills as these skills later form the basis for academic skills such as reading and writing. Learners who show a lag in their development even before attending school are likely to also experience problems at school.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY MATERIAL

The following subjects are discussed in this section:

1 The importance of perceptual-motor development
2 Manifestation of perceptual-motor problems at the preschool level
3 Assistance to learners with perceptual-motor problems

1 THE IMPORTANCE OF PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Hardly any ordinary learning experiences exist where perceptual-motor skills do not play a role. Think of all the normal school activities such as reading, writing, copying notes from the board, deciding whether b's or d's face right or left, listening and remembering all that the teacher says, and so on.

Preschool learners learn with their whole body. They are also usually always physically busy. Learners develop quickly during the preschool years. They learn various skills and use their body as a ''spring-board'' for learning. When a small child experiences physical, perceptual or motor problems, this can result in further learning problems.

2 MANIFESTATION OF PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR PROBLEMS AT THE PRESCHOOL LEVEL

Problems in this area of development may manifest themselves as follows:

2.1 MOTOR MANIFESTATIONS

- Gross motor problems. Poor gross motor coordination causes clumsiness, poor

balance and uneven rhythm in the use of the larger muscles of the body, for instance, when the small child crawls, walks, runs, jumps, rolls, kicks, and so on. Problems in this regard can be observed during outside play, movement games and music.

- *Fine motor problems*. Learners with a lack of fine motor coordination will experience problems in the use of the smaller muscles which are used during creative activities and art, for example. Cutting, drawing and collage activities will create problems. These young learners also battle to do up buttons, thread beads, build with small blocks and page through books. Problems in this area can be picked up during art activities, while handling small educational apparatus and during inside play.
- *Visual-motor coordination problems.* Learners sometimes experience problems with the cooperation between eye and hand or eye and foot in order to successfully execute movements with the hands or feet. Problems manifest in poor finger and hand movement during activities that demand finer hand skills or poorly coordinated movements of the legs or feet, for example, when kicking a ball.

2.2 PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR MANIFESTATIONS

- *Spatial perception*. Learners first need to learn to perceive objects in an accurate relationship to themselves before they can perceive them in relation to each other. Activities and exercises to promote body awareness are very important in preschool: in this way learners learn that things may be far away, close, big or small in relation to themselves and, simultaneously, in relation to each other. Learners who experience problems in this regard cannot understand concepts such as above/beneath, in front/behind, under/over and beside; they cannot indicate first, middle and last; they cannot estimate time, depth or distance in ball games, for instance; they cannot determine direction very accurately and so often get lost (Deetlefs & Kemp 1990:17).
- *Laterality*. Laterality is not a learnt skill, but is a concept that must develop within learners themselves. The awareness of a left and right side of the body develops from the awareness of the operation of gravity (balance) and learners learn to manipulate their body accordingly (Smith 1993:163). Learners sometimes experience problems in crossing their imaginary middle line and so will not, for example, be able to cross their arms over their chest (eg left hand on right shoulder) or touch their right foot with their left hand. When these learners are asked to draw a horizontal line from the one side of their body to the other on a piece of paper, they will draw the line with their left hand up to the middle of the page, and then continue with their right hand. A broken line can then be noticed. It is still normal for a three-year old child to be unable to cross the middle line, although the problem should receive attention at preschool level as it may cause problems in the formal schooling situation. For example, a child might only write on the one side of a page, depending on whether it is to the left or right of his body.
- *Lateral dominance.* Dominance (the preference for a specific side of the body to take the lead) also develops from laterality. It is also a developmental process that learners progress through naturally. Learners sometimes learn to react correctly to orders to move to the left or right, although they have not yet developed a natural awareness of left and right. If learners reach the stage of formal schooling without having established their dominance, they may experience problems with the concepts of left and right outside of the body. Consequently they may experience difficulty in distinguishing the difference in direction between b and d, and this poses serious problems for reading, writing and spelling.

- *Directionality*. Direction certainty is also a consequence of laterality and has important implications for academic learning. In order to have a stable spatial world, learners must learn to know their body and be aware of it. Only then will they know exactly where in space objects around them are. Learners who experience problems with this will, for example, be unable to identify the one little duck in the row that is facing the opposite direction. In the formal school, these learners will experience difficulty with the order in which symbols are arranged and may, for example, turn numbers upside down (6/9) in arithmetic calculations or in written language (p/d, pot/top).

2.3 PERCEPTUAL MANIFESTATIONS

Preschool learners are still busy learning perceptual skills and it is therefore very difficult to establish whether a young child is merely developing slowly or whether there are perceptual problems. Learners with perceptual defects may show this in various ways. Some learners either do not perceive important visual details or focus on irrelevant details. Other learners cannot differentiate between rough and smooth surfaces when they touch them. Still others battle to distinguish the differences in spoken sounds. It is impossible to discuss all the aspects of perception here; rather, we focus on its most important manifestations. Perceptual defects can lead to reading, writing and spelling problems when learners reach the primary school phase.

- *Visual perception problems*. Young learners may experience problems with the sorting and classification of objects, especially according to colour, shape, size and type. Differences and similarities in pictures and patterns sometimes present problems. Some learners find it difficult to distinguish between and name various shapes, while others cannot identify shapes/objects that appear in a different position, size or colour to the ones they are familiar with. Other problems occur in perceiving an object against a background or in identifying fine details in a picture. They may also find it difficult to identify two objects which overlap. Learners also sometimes experience problems in recalling what they have just seen. For example, if the learners are shown a number of objects which are then removed, they may not be able to name the objects. Puzzles and other educational toys present problems for some learners who cannot bring separate pieces together in relation to form a whole (Deetlefs & Kemp 1990:15).

  Perceptual problems in one of these areas can lead to severe learning difficulties in the child in the primary school phase.
- *Auditory perception problems.* Learners with auditory perceptual problems may exhibit one or several of the following difficulties: learners may experience listening problems when they battle to distinguish and identify everyday sounds (voices/noises) and environmental sounds (birds/wind). Such learners cannot pay attention to the teacher's instructions and cannot differentiate between background and foreground noise in order to know where to direct their attention. These learners are easily described as inattentive and disorganised because they cannot block out the auditory stimuli that distract their attention. These learners also find it difficult to control the focus of their attention at will.

Some learners may experience difficulties in perceiving the differences and similarities between words. Contrasts in sound are difficult to distinguish, for example, hard/soft, fast/slow, high/low, far/near; beginning, middle and end sounds cannot easily be identified and rhyming words also present difficulties.

These learners may find it difficult at a later stage to differentiate between m/n or p/d. Letters and words that sound the same are confused.

In some cases, learners find it difficult to break words up into syllables or put them together again. Sometimes they may be able to distinguish between the various sounds but cannot put the sounds together to form a word.

Some learners struggle to memorise rhymes and songs, and find it difficult to repeat sound patterns. They struggle to remember and correctly carry out instructions, or cannot retell a simple story in a logical sequence.

Learners with auditory perceptual problems can probably hear well although they cannot properly interpret what they hear. The possibility of a hearing problem should first be ruled out before perceptual problems may be suspected.

The preprimary teacher must remember that perceptual problems are the specialised field of occupational therapists. Close cooperation between the teacher and occupational therapist is therefore desirable in the identification and assistance of a child with perceptual problems.

3 ASSISTANCE TO LEARNERS WITH PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR PROBLEMS

Perceptual-motor skills can in many cases be improved through the correct exercises. The following should be kept in mind:

- Learners do not find perceptual exercises as such to be very meaningful. For this reason, they should always be presented in an integrated way, as a game or as part of other meaningful activities. Learners should therefore not even know that they are busy with some or other exercise.
- Learners are inclined to avoid activities that they experience problems with. By pointedly giving attention to a child's weak areas (eg the clumsiness of a child's gross motor movements), you may achieve the opposite result in that the child will try to withdraw from such activities.
- Skills learnt in one situation are not necessarily transferred to other situations. Practising specific perceptual-motor skills in isolated situations does not mean that these will be transferred to other areas. This is another clear motive for working these skills as far as possible into meaningful, everyday activities.

There are many activities that you can present to develop perceptual and motor skills. When you plan a lesson, remember to keep in mind those preschoolers who experience problems, so that you can give attention to the problem during the course of the activity in an informal manner. Here are some practical hints:

- Lay out a track of various textures that the learners must walk on, crawl and/or slide across, for example, a corrugated piece of cardboard, a damp sheet, a rough mat, plastic with air bubbles and grass.
- Games such as ''I spy ...'' can be combined with motor movements, such as ''Jump like a frog and touch something red''.
- Learners come to know their body with games such as ''touch your knee with your hand''. In time, more difficult body parts such as elbow/knuckle can be used.
- Memory games such as ''I go to the shops and I buy ...'' can be played. One child

begins and each child after that then adds one item to the list (not more than 3–6 items, depending on the group).

Turner and Hamner (1994:167–173) provide more delightful ideas which you can peruse.

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APPENDIX G

LANGUAGE AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY MATERIAL

The following subjects are discussed in this section:

1 The importance of language development in young learners
2 Manifestations of language problems at the preprimary level
3 Assistance to learners with language problems

1 THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG LEARNERS

Let us start by clarifying the various aspects of language.

- *Spoken or expressive language* is the language expressed verbally to convey meanings to others.
- *Listening or receptive language* is the language one hears and attaches meaning to.
- *Inner language or the language of thought* is the language in which one thinks. It is not necessarily expressed verbally.
- *Speech* refers to the actual pronunciation of words and sounds. It requires normal speech organs. Persons who cannot produce speech sounds use manual signs or alternative forms of communication. **NB:** Speech is not necessarily language.
- *Written language* is an advanced form of spoken language.
- *Reading* is an advanced form of receptive language.

In their description of the importance of language development in learners, Cohen and Rudolph (1987:58–69) mention the following as background:

- The normal development of language abides by developmental laws: a baby's spoken language begins in the form of crying and babbling, after which the first word follows at about 12 months, two-word sentences at 18 to 24 months, and by the age of 4 to 5 years the child has a grasp of basic structure and syntax. All normal learners learn language as they hear it spoken — development thus occurs in close relation to the exposure and stimulation that learners receive.
- Talking (spoken language) is spontaneous and social: four-, five- and six-year olds are ardent talkers (can you imagine a quiet preschool?) and their vocabulary and experience are of such a nature that they can conduct a social conversation, ask specific questions, answer reasonable questions and understand important instructions. They use language to chat to adults and friends, to complain about something, to whisper a secret, to respond to a joke or to sing a song. Small learners are very fond of working in small groups where they can constantly chat and explain what they are busy with. Refreshment time, when they sit in groups around a table, also presents an opportunity for fascinating conversation. They

convey personal news, make comments on social events, make jokes, and listen and contribute to the ideas expressed by others. Talking in the preprimary school is not forbidden but is a spontaneous, enjoyable activity that learners will happily occupy themselves with.

- Inner language accompanies thoughts and actions: when young learners become occupied with an activity, they will often talk out loud and describe the process by which they are performing the particular task. Think, for instance, of a child making mudpies: ''... now I mix the eggs and the flour together; add a little salt; hmm ... quickly wash hands before I roll it in a ball ...''.
- Language reflects personal experience: learners express the familiar through play, and their language reflects the world in which they live. As such, the play of fishermen's learners will differ from the play of city learners.
- Language includes attitudes gleaned from the adult world: parents' views and attitudes are often reflected in what learners say and think. A child's perception of the different roles of men and women is an example of this (submission of the woman or equal rights). As learners learn their home language, so they learn the culture and values of the community as well as value judgements, views, information and certain emotional preferences of the community with regard to particular matters. Language is not learnt separately but is inextricably bound to people and life.
- Language also reflects level of thought: a baby's reaching out to and understanding of the world is on a completely different level to that of a young child. Language and thought develop simultaneously: learners's language provides the teacher with an indication of their level of thought and the experiences to which they are exposed. The initial global perception of things (viz to see an object as a whole) develops later to enable learners to break things up into smaller units (all animals with four legs are no longer dogs, but can also be cats, lions or buck).
- Feelings can also be expressed verbally, although it is far more difficult for learners to describe their feelings than it is for them to describe concrete experiences or attempt to define a concept. The ability to express feelings in words is an indication of a child's growing capacity to exercise control. Sometimes feelings are still expressed in a physical way. In addition, learners express their feelings honestly and directly, for example: ''I don't like you''. (Verbally, they still act untactfully and undiplomatically.) Gradually, learners learn how to interpret the feelings of others and to show compassion and sympathy.
- Misunderstandings: Learners interpret expressions such as ''Jack broke his arm'' literally and cannot understand the phrase in its figurative meaning. They would then imagine that Jack's arm has somehow been chopped in half!

Language is the most complex and fascinating function of humanity, yet learners worldwide normally learn their home language within only a few years after birth (Berk 1989:363; Berndt 1992:278). Although the ability to use language and to talk is part of being human, language must still be learnt. Young learners possess a remarkable ability to learn language (De Witt & Booysen 1994:94). Language makes it possible for learners to make the people around them understand how they feel, what they are thinking, what they want and what they mean. Through language, they can also understand what others think, feel, want and mean. In order to grasp a message through language and be able to transfer an understandable message oneself, it is necessary for learners to first know a few things:

- They must be able to relate spoken sounds to their meanings.
- They must be able to relate words with things and ideas.

- They must master the rules according to which words are combined into a language to communicate comprehensively.

(De Witt & Booysen 1994:94).

In summary it may be said that language in its various forms is central to all educational, teaching and communication transactions as well as to thought. Learners also need to have a grasp of language to be able to function effectively in a community; they must be able to communicate with people and form interpersonal relationships. Through language, learners can ask questions and receive answers; it is thus a way in which new insights may be transmitted to them. Language provides access to culture, knowledge, the past and daily happenings and all those things that teach them to become adult. It is through language that thoughts, feelings and ideas are expressed. Language is culture-bound and these thoughts, feelings and ideas are largely determined by the culture in which the child matures (De Witt & Booysen 1994:95).

1.1 THE ACQUISITION OF EMERGENT LITERACY

We have not given much attention to the aspect of written language in this study unit; nevertheless it is important that we are aware of this as it forms part of the young child's normal development. The traditional idea that learners should first be able to speak fluently before they are introduced to the written word has now been replaced with the view that the language processes: listening, talking, reading and writing, all develop in close collaboration (Strickland 1984:338). We do not know for sure what age is most appropriate for starting to teach learners to read, but we do know that learners as young as two years old start becoming aware of written language. This is natural for learners who grow up in an environment in which the printed word abounds and where they are exposed daily to written language (ie a print-rich environment).

As in all aspects of young child development, it is necessary that learners progress through a number of important and necessary stages.

Think, for instance, of households where newspapers, books and writing materials are freely available and which young learners are allowed to handle. In this environment, even babies have the opportunity to hold a little book with stiff pages in their hands, and, at the same time, to learn to page through it. Later they will be able to follow a simple story by looking at the pictures. Already then learners become aware of the written text and realise that it has something to do with the story that their parents read to them.

Learners who grow up in a home where some family members reads to them often and where they experience books and stories as enjoyable, form an emotional bond with books and so encounter literature as something positive.

A great number of four-, five- and six-year-old learners are already able to recognise a written word if it appears in a familiar context, for example, STOP written on a stop sign. (It also happens, however, that they find it more difficult to recognise the same word if it appears in a different context and not on the stop sign.) From this we may deduce that reading is a skill that forms part of a child's everyday life-world and that ''reading lessons'' are omnipresent. Learners want to know what that sign says; they want to know what that interesting picture can tell them and they are very keen to recognise their own name and naturally to be able to write it themselves later on (Strickland 1984:338; Brenner 1990:184–187).

2 MANIFESTATIONS OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS AT PREPRIMARY LEVEL

Language development plays a cardinal role in the preschool years. Language deficiencies mean that learners are impaired in terms of communication with the people around them and this not only negatively influences their learning skills but also their development.

Preschool learners are still in the phase of speech development and do not learn all the sounds at the same time. Consequently, various speech problems may still arise which will be resolved in time. It is especially sounds such as ''s'' and ''r'' that present problems. Learners may also stutter, which is more an indication of a search for the right word than of an actual problem. The preprimary teacher should always be aware of speech problems that persist and which will then need attention.

The Subject Committee for preprimary education in the Department of Education and Culture (1991:5–7) as well as De Witt et al (1994:105–106) provide guidelines for the recognition of language problems that may appear at the preschool level:

2.1 AUDITORY RECEPTIVE PROBLEMS (LISTENING LANGUAGE)

Although these learners can hear normally, they may make the following mistakes:

— They cannot clearly differentiate between the sounds that they hear. Consequently, they confuse sounds such as p/b, s/f.
— They cannot attribute meaning to what they hear.
— They find it difficult to distinguish between sentences where the emphasis or word order varies, for example:

> *Nelson kicks the ball*
> *Nelson, kick the ball!*
> *Did Nelson kick the ball?*

— They experience difficulty in answering questions about a story that has been read to them.

The following can also be confusing:

— Pronouns can refer to more than one object/person. For example, in the sentence *Maria thinks she knows everything*, ''she'' could refer to either Maria or to another person.
— The same word may have different meanings, for example *The soldier stands guard./The soldier is a guard*.
— Words with the same pronunciation may have different meanings, for instance *hear/here.*
— Words may have literal or figurative meanings: *The man broke his arm./The man is broke.*

2.2 SPOKEN LANGUAGE

- *Speech refusal.* Learners may refuse to speak to certain people (eg the teacher or friends). They are fully able to speak, can hear well and can carry out instructions correctly. This should therefore be viewed as a behavioural rather than a language problem.

- *Inadequate language*. Learners seldom communicate on a verbal level. Their vocabulary and language use is limited and inadequate for effective communication. Articulation deviations may occur.
- *Unintelligible speech*. These learners mumble and are therefore difficult to understand. This is often as a result of the incorrect pronunciation of many of the sounds. Such speech impedes successful communication and learners often experience frustration which then leads to emotional and behavioural problems.
- *Temporary hearing loss*. If learners experience temporary hearing loss (as a result of otitis media) while in the process of developing articulation skills, they may learn to pronounce sounds incorrectly. The articulation problem may persist after the hearing difficulties have been resolved.
- *Physical and/or structural deviations*. The speech of learners with a cleft lip and/or palate is usually nasal and certain sounds such as ''s'' cannot be pronounced correctly. Such learners often develop a poor self-concept.
- *Articulation and rhythm disorders (stuttering)*. Stuttering is one of the worst speech problems and requires referral to a speech therapist. As a result of this speech disorder, learners may become depressed or asocial or experience other psychological problems as they are usually very aware of their predicament. The problem is characterised by absolute silence; repetition of words (''She she she she wants to go with''); repetition of the first sound or syllable of a word (''p p p p p people''); or prolongation of sounds (''pe e e e e ople'').
- *Voice volume*. Voice tone can sound unnaturally hard or shrill or soft and unclear.
- *Vocabulary*. Young learners often use words that they create themselves and which are encouraged by the family, for example, *walkies* for shoes. They also replace words that they do not know or cannot pronounce with *thingy, thingamajig* or *whatsizname*. Words may be spoken correctly in isolation, but not in the context of a sentence.
- *Sounds*. Sounds in words are sometimes omitted, such as *leepy* for *sleepy* or *tain* for *train*. Certain sounds may be replaced with others, for example *fum* for *thumb*.

Learners with language and speech problems should be treated in the same way as other learners in the classroom and should not be continually reminded of their problem. In areas where the necessary services are available, learners can be referred to a speech therapist who would work closely with the teachers and parents in designing and implementing a language programme for the child.

2.3 PROBLEMS WITH A SECOND LANGUAGE

The language learners speak daily with their parents is learnt in a natural way while a second language must be taught — indeed, it is often forced upon learners (Dednam 1994:202). Because a language involves a cultural content and values, it goes without saying that learners with a cultural background which differs from that of learners in the school can experience problems in an environment which, to them, is foreign. Learners are taught to interact, feel and subscribe to the same beliefs as those of the community in which they find themselves. Language is an integral part of a group's general experiences; speaking the same language binds individuals together and provides the basis for a common membership within a specific group. It also provides learners with a definition of their ''self''.

If the cultures of the teacher and child differ, they cannot share similar experiences, beliefs and feelings, and it will be more difficult for the teacher to help learners express their feelings through language. Ways of communication between different cultural groups (communication styles) also vary, for example, in some groups it is

improper to speak out loud in class, while others are dependent on nonverbal cues, and so on (Bowman 1991:241).

Apart from the above, young learners are still in a stage where they are learning language. Consequently, in learning a second language, they may experience similar problems to those experienced in learning a first language. For learners who only hear a second language at school, the situation is much exacerbated.

2.4 A LACK OF EMERGENT LITERACY

Great difficulties are experienced by school beginners from risky environments when they begin to read and write because they have never been adequately exposed to literature before. They thus experience reading and writing at school as alien and threatening. To put it differently, the ''literacy'' of these learners has never had the opportunity to ''emerge''.

3 ASSISTANCE TO LEARNERS WITH LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

We have already mentioned that the environment in which learners grow up and the stimulation to which they are exposed greatly determine their language development. The preprimary teacher should ensure that a rich, stimulating language environment is created in the school so that the learners can expand their language abilities, and so that learners with language deficiencies may also benefit. Teachers' communication with the learners should not only occur in the form of instructions (eg ''put away your toys'' or ''come and eat now''), but should expose the learners to defining, labelling, analysing, questioning and comparing. Teachers should arouse their interest with questions such as: ''I wonder why ...'' and ''How did ...''.

Preprimary schools accommodate learners from all race and language groups and learners are therefore often taught in a language which is foreign to them. This education places high demands on the preprimary teacher. What is important here, however, is that teachers respect each child for what he or she is; try to understand what it is learners are communicating, and treat them fairly under all circumstances. If the language used is ''unfriendly'' to learners, at least the environment should be friendly and they should experience supportive love and attention.

3.1 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The following is of the utmost importance to the teacher:

- Take the learners's limitations into account. Do not use difficult language to ask or say something. There are various ways of saying the same thing, and although teachers need not use the simplest language, everyone should be able to understand them (eg ''We are now going to benefit from some refreshments'' versus ''We are now going to eat'').
- Speak directly to learners in an interested manner, and address them by name in a friendly, personal and warm way. Avoid the use of too many pet names, for example, ''sweetie'' or ''lovey'' — such communication is sentimental and impersonal.

- Do not use idiomatic expressions in your everyday language. Messages such as ''let's get the show on the road'' ''take the key and lock your lips'' or ''put your thinking caps on'' do not make sense to learners.
- Speak in a normal, natural voice. Some preprimary teachers seem to find it necessary to speak in a higher tone or to use baby language. This is unnecessary and learners experience it as insincere.
- Speak to learners on their level and make eye contact. Crouch down if a child comes to talk personally to you or sit on a low stool while activities are presented. Learners should not be faced with teachers' knees when trying to communicate with them.
- Try at all times to understand what a child is trying to say by paying attention to facial expression, body posture, tone of voice and so on, disregarding poor articulation or grammar mistakes.

3.2 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PREPRIMARY SCHOOL TO LEARNERS'S EMERGENT LITERACY

Not all cultures expose their learners to books and written language. In some households, newspapers and pen and paper are seldom available. The ''emotional bond'' that learners should form with books is consequently absent. Nevertheless the surrounding world is full of written language symbols and learners are naturally inquisitive beings. It is not difficult to arouse the interest of most learners and plenty of opportunity still exists for learners who attend a preprimary school to enjoy the necessary exposure to books and written language.

We do not wish preprimary teachers to ''train'' learners by forcing them to do reading and writing exercises if they are not yet ready for these. However, neither do we want teachers to discourage learners and to keep them back in what should be a normal part of their development.

Teachers should as far as possible observe the ways in which learners, at a very young age, begin to play with words in their own way. We often find learners of around five years old who fill an entire page full of scribbles that they call ''writing''. These scribbles may be numbers, letters and even words. Neatly formed letters, correct spelling and sentences that make sense are not important here! Such spontaneous writing should be praised and encouraged. Listen attentively to the messages or stories that may be deciphered by the young writer.

Dorothy Strickland (1991:340) gives guidelines on how teachers may create a milieu which provides rich opportunities for learners's literacy to emerge. Teachers should design the classroom in a way that invites learners to get involved and busy with literature. Part of any preprimary classroom should be an interesting reading corner, filled with books within a child's easy reach and most of which have already been read to them. A spot should also be found for a writing corner equipped with enough writing material, paper, magnetic letters and an alphabet poster. In addition, written material should abound all over the room: a message board with important news and events of the day, cardboard postboxes which encourage the writing of messages, and so on. It is important that there are a few sessions each day where learners are read aloud to, although there need not be a specific time designated for ''language teaching''. It should be integrated with everything that happens during the school day and should form an important part of every activity.

Brown (1991:347) offers the following guidelines on finding suitable story material.

Books should

- be interesting
- fit into a child's life-world and include familiar elements (stories need to correspond with a child's previous experiences and build on these)
- have a logical sequential story line (events that follow on logically from each other make it easier for learners to eventually read the story themselves)
- include repetition (stories with a refrain are greatly enjoyed and present an opportunity for learners to read together with the adult)
- have predictable endings (predictability provides a basis for problem solving in learning to read and encourages predictability as a skill. It thus involves more than mere guessing as predictability is seated in existing knowledge)
- be enjoyable for the teacher (pleasure and enthusiasm is infectious: if the learners experience reading as fun, they will be encouraged to learn to read by themselves)

Activities normally offered by a primary school and which contribute to emergent literacy are the following:

- an interest table with the necessary headings and notes (Remember that too many headings will only confuse a child. Headings make a child aware of the fact that everything has a name and can be named and that a written word exists for it.)
- headings for often used, everyday articles, for example ''washbasin'' and ''door'', which show learners that the object's name can also be written, just like their own name
- picture recipes in which the steps follow each other logically, used during baking activities
- learners's names which are written in their presence in the top left-hand corner of their drawings
- a sentence or short story in the learners's own words which is written in their presence on the drawings
- a book consisting of a series of drawings by older preschoolers (a sequence of events is drawn and the teacher writes the ''story'' alongside it and then staples the little book together)

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APPENDIX H

LEARNING PROBLEMS AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING: FOUNDATION PHASE AND INTERMEDIATE PHASE

OVERVIEW OF STUDY MATERIAL

The following topics are discussed in this section:

1 Introduction
2 The term ''learning difficulties''
3 Manifestations of learning difficulties
4 Causes of learning difficulties

1 INTRODUCTION

In the educational themes you were introduced to the concept **learning** and the **way** in which people learn. With this information as a basis you should be able to recognise inadequate learning or **learning difficulties** which will be discussed in this study unit.

Note that in this section, study units 10 and 11, we merely give a brief overview of learning difficulties. In the next module, Special Educational Needs C (SPO101), learning difficulties are dealt with extensively. In this module we firstly take note of the general manifestations of learning difficulties while assistance is discussed in study unit 11.

2 THE TERM ''LEARNING DIFFICULTIES''

The term ''learning difficulties'' is an inclusive or general term that describes the problems which learners experience with their academic subjects.

Learners with learning difficulties are any learners who do not learn or perform at school to an extent that is in keeping with their potential. The problems could include all the learners' school subjects, or they could be confined to some subjects or even just one subject. Problems could even occur in only one aspect of a subject. Furthermore, the problem could be permanent or temporary, depending on the underlying causes.

Some learners never overcome a learning difficulty despite intensive aid. In many cases the problem resolves itself after the learners have received intensive aid during

a number of sessions. The number of sessions is not fixed but depends on the progress the learners make. In some cases the problem is resolved without any intervention and aid from either teacher or parents.

Most learners have problems with some aspect of their school work at some stage of their school career. The problem/s could last throughout their school career, or could be confined to a particular phase, such as the junior primary phase, or to a school year or part of a school year.

It often happens that a number of learners seem to have the same kind of problems in the case of a particular school subject. Despite apparent similarities between their problems, the errors they make and their behaviour, the manifestations and causes of the problems are mostly diverse. If, for instance, a number of learners in a specific grade have reading problems in respect of word recognition, one may have difficulty in recognising the words on sight, another may be unable to analyse and/or synthesise them, a third may have difficulty in recognising the letters in the words, while a fourth may be unable to recall the sounds associated with the letters in the words.

3 MANIFESTATIONS OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

In this section we should like to introduce you to the general manifestations or symptoms of learning difficulties, especially with regard to school work.

Since learning difficulties are widely varied it is impossible to discuss all their manifestations within the scope of one study unit. We shall try, however, to explain the most common and obvious manifestations.

Remember that all learners make mistakes from time to time and manifest certain negative forms of behaviour. This does not necessarily mean that they have a learning difficulty. A learner must display the same negative behaviour in a social or learning context for a few weeks or longer before it can be accepted as a symptom of a learning difficulty.

3.1 PROBLEMS WITH SCHOOL SUBJECTS

The following problems are common where school subjects are concerned:

(a) Mathematics

Foundation phase

- The learners cannot tell the difference between the different mathematical signs, namely + (addition), − (subtraction), × (multiplication) and ÷ (division).
- The learners cannot understand the two main forms of mental arithmetic (adding and subtracting).
- They cannot analyse and work out word sums.
- They are overdependent on concrete aids to work out an answer. Even in grade 3 learners will calculate a simple sum such as 1 + 1 by counting on their fingers.
- The learners tends to apply the same operational principle (addition, for example), to work out the answers to different kinds of sums: For example, 9 + 8 = 17, 4 + 3 = 7, 6 − 4 = 10, 2 × 5 = 7, 8 ÷ 2 = 10.

Intermediate phase

- The learners commit apparently negligent errors in basic operations.
- They have problems with sums presented in words.
- They use their fingers when adding.
- They are uncertain and have to think for a long time.

(b) Language problems

i Spoken language

Foundation phase

- The learners' sentences are short and the content insignificant or trivial.
- They avoid conversations.
- They find it difficult to follow conversations.
- They do not always understand instructions.
- They have a limited vocabulary.
- Their sentence construction is incorrect: the word order is wrong, or words are omitted or used incorrectly.
- Learners use incorrect past tense and plural forms. For instance, they are inclined to tag the same form indiscriminately onto any word: cows, bulls, oxes; I knitted, I jumped, I comed.

Intermediate phase

- The content of learners' sentences is trivial or rudimentary.
- They avoid conversations.
- They have difficulty in following abstract conversations, or statements with significant connotations. For example, they cannot understand (''catch'') a joke.
- They forget instructions.
- They have a limited vocabulary for their age.
- Their sentence construction is incorrect.
- They communicate straightforward or plain facts in a vague, rambling and roundabout way.
- They often use words like ''thingmebob'' and ''whatsisname''.

ii Reading

Foundation phase

- The learners do not know what sounds letters stand for.
- They do not recognise words on sight.
- They read slowly, vocalise words (pronounce letter by letter, or syllable by syllable) and so forth.
- As they read they either add or leave out words.
- They misread the text.
- They cannot answer direct questions on the section they have read.
- They cannot recount what they have read.

Intermediate phase

- The learners misread words and phrases.
- Their comprehension of the sections they have read is poor; in particular they do not understand the deeper meaning of the text.

- They read slowly and haltingly.
- They hesitate at longer words, read them incorrectly or cannot make them out at all.
- They have a poor understanding of punctuation.

iii Spelling

Foundation phase

- The learners do not know what sounds letters stand for.
- They have difficulties with vowels (eg reversions such as ''braed'' instead of ''bread'').
- They cannot identify the elements of words.
- They spell phonetically, that is according to pronunciation rather than according to spelling conventions (eg ''tuf'' instead of ''tough'').
- They cannot remember or apply simple spelling rules.

Intermediate phase

- The learners spell phonetically.
- They misapply spelling rules.
- They spell by trial and error without success.

iv Written language

Foundation phase

- The learners' sentences are short and rudimentary.
- The same sentence structure is repeated, for instance:

  The flower is very pretty.
  The cake is very sweet.
  The boy is very naughty.

- Their sentence construction (word order) is deficient.
- Their spacing of letters and words is incorrect or deficient.
- They can verbalise (utter) a proper sentence but cannot write it down correctly.
- They cannot take dictation.

Intermediate phase

- Sentences are short and the content insignificant and rudimentary.
- Written essays are short and the content incoherent and insignificant.
- Sentence structure (word order) is incorrect.
- Learners are incapable of writing down the correct version of a sentence they have formed correctly in speech.
- Work is often incomplete.

v Handwriting

Foundation phase

- Letters are poorly formed.
- Letters are formed incorrectly: there are rotations (eg 'r' looks like a 'k' in running script), inversions, et cetera.
- Line quality is poor: either shaky, or pressure applied in forming letters is too heavy or light.

- Pencil grip is incorrect and writing posture is poor.
- Spacing of letters and words is poor (irregular).
- Letters do not line up between lines, but drift randomly upward or downward, sometimes between and sometimes across lines.
- Letters do not line up with each other, for instance the top of the 'd' only reaches up to the 'oo' which follows and the 'r' extends above the 'oo': $_{d}$oo^{r}.

Intermediate phase

- Letters are poorly formed.
- Letters slant inconsistently, that is, at randomly varying angles.
- Line quality is poor: either shaky, or pressure applied in forming letters is too heavy or light.
- Spacing of letters and words is poor (irregular, varies at random).
- The learners invert (swap around) letters such as b and d (eg ''deb'' instead of ''bed''), even in running script.
- The learners' books containing written work look untidy.

Remember!

The manifestations described above are just some of the more obvious indications of learning difficulties. An awareness of these symptoms does not entitle you to regard yourself as an authority on learning difficulties. The information about them is merely given to heighten your awareness of learners who may be experiencing learning difficulties so that you can be more understanding in dealing with them.

3.2 BEHAVIOURS ASSOCIATED WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Learning difficulties can therefore cause behavioural problems. When this happens the learning problem is primary and the behavioural problem secondary. The opposite could also happen, namely that a child with behavioural problems later also develops learning difficulties, in which case it is the behaviour problem that is primary and the learning problem secondary. It can be difficult to determine whether a behaviour problem is primary or secondary, especially if there are clear signs of aggravating circumstances, such as unsatisfactory domestic and environmental conditions. It is therefore important to analyse the learning problem and the associated behaviour carefully to see how the one affects the other.

The following are examples of behavioural problems in the various phases and which may be associated with learning difficulties:

Foundation phase

- Insecurity, withdrawal, daydreaming, tearfulness, unfriendliness, stubbornness, hyperactivity, complaints about stomachache, nausea, refusal to go to school and so forth are often manifestations of avoidance because the learner cannot cope with the schoolwork.
- Excessive sweating of the hands, urinesis (inability to control passing of urine) and even **encopresis** (uncontrollable defecation or soiling) may occur.
- Excessive dependence on and seeking of approval from the teacher are common.
- Incomplete and untidy work is a common symptom among learners who are not progressing adequately in school.

- Attention problems: The learners do not pay attention during a lesson. They are inclined to look at or fidget with something or to sit and stare absent-mindedly.
- Perseveration: This problem occurs when people find it difficult to switch attention from one activity or idea to another. In this phase it is a typical symptom of this problem when they are inclined to tell the same story again and again, or tend to repeat letters or words when writing.

Intermediate phase

- Insecurity, withdrawal, daydreaming, rudeness, stubbornness, hyperactivity, perseveration, irritability and truancy often occur.
- Complaints of not feeling well are a symptom of escapism in some learners.
- Excessive dependence on, or alternatively aloofness (being unsociable, solitary) and withdrawal from friends may occur.
- Unfinished and untidy work is common among this group of learners.
- Attention problems may occur.

4 CAUSES OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

If teachers can identify the learning problem it is also important that they try to determine its cause. In many cases it is only possible to solve a learning difficulty once the underlying problem or cause has been established.

The many different causes of learning difficulties can be divided into learners' intrinsic problems, that is, problems arising from within themselves, and problems affecting them in their environment. It is sometimes difficult to decide, however, whether the underlying problem is intrinsic or extrinsic. Instead of this distinction, therefore, we will concentrate here on the general causes of learning difficulties referred to by Richek et al (1982:27–52) as the **ecological**, **emotional** and **physical** factors from which learning difficulties arise.

4.1 ECOLOGICAL FACTORS

(1) *The home environment.* In the early stages of their lives learners's language development and the building up of their basic skills and general knowledge are critically influenced by their parents. As role models, the parents affect the learners's progress at school. If parents have a negative attitude towards school their learners may display the same attitude and a lack of interest in school.

Communication within the family is very important for the learners's healthy development. Inadequate communication restricts the development of language and other basic skills, such as perception, which enable learners to learn adequately at school.

Lack of basic necessities, such as food and clothing, causes physical discomfort and problems within the family. This leads to psychic discomfort which hampers the learners's ability to pay attention in class and learn adequately. If parents lack the basic necessities they will have too little energy to pay sufficient attention to the learners's cognitive and intellectual development. The learners are then left to themselves for the greater part of the day and consequently they

have little opportunity to come into contact with good language and learning opportunities.

This, or any other kind of **neglect** of learners, as well as poor interpersonal relationships and conflict in the family, may cause emotional blocks in learners, which in turn may prevent them from learning adequately.

(2) *The school.* The quality of **interpersonal work relations** between learners, teacher and fellow learners is decisive for the learners's total development because they spend a large part of the day in school.

A child who is rejected and neglected by the teacher and ignored by fellow learners for having behaviour or learning difficulties becomes a ''nobody'' (Gouldner in Richek et al 1983:31) in class. Social unpopularity causes a sense of **rejection** which leads to a low self-image. The learners withdraw from class activities and their progress at school is unsatisfactory.

Inadequate teaching can lead to learning difficulties. If the teacher's subject matter and teaching methods are not suited to the learners's abilities and needs, the learners will experience frustration and then reject the teaching events.

Other forms of **poor teaching** can also cause learning difficulties. Learners will not perform adequately at school if the teacher is lacking in commitment to the teaching task, or is insufficiently trained or lacks the teaching skills to convey information logically to the learners. Teachers who are too strict or too indulgent (easygoing) will not have the necessary success with their learners because learners may reject or fear overstrict teachers, or they may ignore or ridicule (make fun of) overindulgent teachers.

Many learners receive instruction in a **language medium** (mostly English) which they do not know or do not know well enough to understand the subject matter properly and benefit from the teaching methods. A school system that teaches in learners' second or even third language contributes to their learning difficulties. The learners begin school with a language deficiency that is inclined to get worse because they have to use the time in which new subject matter is taught to them to master the new language as well.

Teachers themselves are often not fully proficient in the language medium in which they have to teach learners at school and, according to Squelch (1993:183), they do not always have the necessary skills and knowledge to work with learners with language deficiencies and learning difficulties. They are consequently unable to offer these learners the support they need to make satisfactory progress or to cope with their problems at school.

(3) *Social problems.* Learners's emotional and cognitive development is based on their social interaction with friends and peers. Learners learn the community's social norms and taboos in a random way. Satisfactory interpersonal relationships ensure the development of self-confidence and a positive self-image. Poor interaction with the community leads to emotional problems and inability to learn adequately.

Learners who perform well at school may be ostracised (marginalised or discriminated against as social outcasts) and branded or stigmatised by their peers as toadies (''teacher's pets'') who seek favour with the teachers. Sometimes such learners attach themselves to groups who scorn and reject the school system. To be accepted by the group these learners may deliberately neglect or refuse to spend time on their school work, with the result that they do as badly as their friends at school.

(4) *Cultural environment.* Gradual changes in learners's environment continually make new demands on them. Examples of important factors in this regard are poverty and family disintegration, which may cause changes in learners's cultural environment and weaken their ability to learn adequately. Most learners who have to cope with such circumstances can be regarded as learners at risk. They have few opportunities to build up their general knowledge, which they need for cognitive support. They reject the values upheld by the school and would rather identify themselves with a criminal subculture whose members are known for their alternative or abnormal use of language. Affecting this kind of language use typifies them as members of the subculture concerned but does not contribute to the cognitive development they require for adequate learning.

4.2 EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Emotional problems can affect learners's ability to concentrate on school work and may undermine their motivation in other ways. Such problems may arise in the case of

- a sense of continual failure at school
- conflict at home
- poverty
- a negative attitude to school in the home environment, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety and passive withdrawal

Learners who find it difficult to learn are mostly aware of their inability to perform adequately. Lemmer (1993:158–159) maintains that learners are inclined to develop serious emotional problems if their understanding of the language in which they are taught is inadequate and if their cultural background differs from that of most of the other learners at school. These learners develop a low self-image and are inclined to be anxious and intimidated (overwhelmed) by the task of mastering the different subjects. They become apathetic (unenthusiastic, demoralised) and, as Richek et al (1983:42) say, ''unavailable'' in the sense that their participation in the learning process becomes negligible.

Learners often display **hostile** and **aggressive behaviour** as a reaction to their sense of inadequacy. Such learners feel rejected and they believe that no-one understands or wants to understand them. In their hostility they readily align themselves with (become sympathetically inclined towards) criminal subcultures whose adherents or members reject the school system and everything associated with it.

4.3 PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

Although learners' physical problems are inherent to (an intrinsic or inseparable part of) themselves, such problems are often caused by external factors. How this happens will not be discussed here, however, because the subject is too extensive for this course. The following physical problems can cause learning difficulties.

(1) *Visual and hearing problems*. Serious learning difficulties can be caused by visual or hearing impairments that are so slight that only a trained person can detect them.
(2) *Ill health*. Ill health can incapacitate learners to the extent that they find it impossible to learn adequately. Disorders such as rheumatic fever, asthma, insomnia, a sugar imbalance and allergic conditions (eg caused by flavourants and colourants) as well as the side-effects of medication, often make inroads

(have a harmful effect), if only temporarily, on learners' ability to learn adequately. This leads to gaps in their knowledge which, if not rectified immediately, can lead to learning difficulties.

(3) *Neurological dysfunction*. Adequate brain function is essential for language proficiency, especially where complex activities such as reading and writing are concerned. Learning disability is an example of a neurological dysfunction that can lead to learning difficulties.

Learning disability is a neurological problem that may be caused by a dysfunction, an injury or some other factor that originates in the central nervous system and undermines the child's ability to learn adequately. Learning disability covers a wide range of deficiencies that impede the development of all aspects of language competence and/or mathematical ability. It sometimes also manifests in the learner's behaviour, social perception and interactions. Bear in mind, however, that learners with behaviour, social perception and interaction problems do not necessarily have a learning disability. Perceptual problems that can be detrimental to the learning process are a **general symptom of learning disability**. The following perceptual problems are noteworthy in this regard.

(a) *Auditory perceptual skills*. Learners who cannot distinguish between, attribute meaning to and interpret the sounds they hear become confused and uncertain in dealing with their school work.
(b) *Visual perceptual skills*. Learners who cannot recognise, distinguish different elements of, attribute meaning to and interpret what they see also find it difficult to learn.

(4) *Biochemical imbalance*. Learning difficulties can also be caused by an imbalance in the biochemical substances in the brain.
(5) *Intellectual disability*. Intellectually disabled learners are unable to perform adequately at school in comparison with learners of average or above-average mental ability. The inadequate scholastic performance of intellectually disabled learners is often consistent with their mental ability, though. The low performance level of these learners therefore cannot be regarded as indicative of a learning difficulty in the true sense, since a correct indicator would be a performance level below their mental capacity. It is very difficult to identify this problem, however, and specialised help is required to determine whether learners are performing at a level in keeping with their ability.
(6) *Gender differences*. It frequently happens that boys are not yet ready for formal education when they begin school because the physical and cognitive development of boys tends to be slower than that of girls. Boys who have this problem find it difficult to pay attention for long, continuous periods of time in a formal teaching situation and to handle writing materials and books. Consequently they perform less well than girls, especially in the initial grades.

Moreover, in a school situation emphasis is placed on such performance criteria as exemplary behaviour, neatness, modesty and obedience which girls find easier to comply with than boys because parents are more intent on instilling good behaviour in girls than in boys. Consequently teachers tend to find boys, rather than girls, naughty and disobedient. This perception among teachers is reflected in assessments of overall scholastic performance, which therefore tend to show that girls outperform boys at school.

(7) *Undernutrition*. Malnutrition and underfeeding at an early stage in a child's life causes anatomical and biochemical changes in the brain that could lead to the kind of dysfunction that causes learning difficulties. The incidence of this kind of brain dysfunction is exceptionally high in communities characterised by a high

degree of poverty and neglect, and learners' progress at school is affected accordingly.

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APPENDIX H

LEARNING PROBLEMS AS A BARRIER TO LEARNING

OVERVIEW OF STUDY MATERIAL

The following topics are discussed in this section:

1 General orientation
2 The concept of assistance
3 Individual assistance

1 GENERAL ORIENTATION

A few of the more prominent manifestations and causes of learning difficulties will be discussed in general terms. Since the assistance that can be given to learners with learning problems covers an equally large field we shall only provide broad guidelines in this respect, which means that we shall not be considering specific methods and procedures in the present context. For that purpose, you will have to study the next module in this field of study, namely Special Educational Needs C.

Although assisting learners with learning problems is a specialised enterprise that has been undertaken by specially qualified teachers to date, many school teachers are naturally sensitive to learners with learning problems and they may help these learners just as effectively as teachers who have had the benefit of formal training in the handling and assistance of such learners.

2 THE CONCEPT OF ASSISTANCE

Assistance is not simply a matter of conveying the same subject matter by the same methods used in class all over again. Instead, it involves an analysis of mistakes, an observation of behaviour, and determining of the causes of the mistakes and the behaviour concerned in the case of each individual learner. Assistance commences when you consciously involve yourself with a learner who displays symptoms of a learning problem in class. It is therefore essential that you take note of the learner as an individual and not as a member of a group.

3 INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

Traditionally, assistance was rendered mainly on a one-to-one basis. Every learner's problem was analysed in minute detail and the possible causes were established,

wherever possible. Then an assistance programme was drawn up with a view to determining, in the course of teaching, the underlying causes of the problem and to solving emotional and behavioural problems emanating from the learning problem.

3.1 ADVANTAGES OF INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

This method is easy to apply and it has the advantage that it allows attention to be given to one learner at a time, with the result that each problem, whether it is emotional or whether it is a learning difficulty, is dealt with intensively. Learners progress at their own working pace and are allowed to finish each assignment.

3.2 DISADVANTAGES OF INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

The disadvantage of individual assistance is that only a few learners receive assistance while large numbers who could also benefit from assistance receive none.

In view of the large numbers of learners who have learning problems at school, individual assistance has become a luxury from which only a few learners can still benefit. Because they receive inadequate assistance at school some learners with learning problems are taken to private practitioners, such as educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists and remedial teachers whose services have to be paid for. The majority of learners with learning difficulties are, therefore, totally dependent on their class or subject teachers to assist them with their difficulties.

3.3 GROUP ASSISTANCE

Group assistance has become necessary in order to cope with the large numbers of learners who have learning problems at present. According to Steinagle (Ekwall & Shanker 1988:499), learners who are assisted in a group of about five benefit even more than learners receiving individual assistance.

3.3.1 Advantages of group assistance

- Larger numbers of learners can be assisted.
- Learners learn skills of social interaction.
- Learners assisted in a group situation adjust more readily to a classroom situation.
- Language development is promoted and communication skills are learned.
- Group assistance enhances learners' motivation because they are accepted by the group, which improves their self-image.
- The learners assist and support each other, which enables the teacher to give more attention to individual learners in the group who have specific problems. All the learners benefit from this — the leader as well as the rest.

3.3.2 Disadvantages of group assistance

- The teacher cannot always attend to all the problems experienced by each member of the group.
- It can be difficult to assemble a sufficiently homogeneous group.
- Some learners tend to withdraw in group situations.
- Special management skills and intensive planning are required of the teacher who renders group assistance.

3.4 THE TEACHER'S ROLE

- *The teacher's attitude towards learners with learning problems*. The teacher's attitude largely determines the extent of a learner's success at school. A negative attitude markedly increases the possibility that a learner's attention in class will be inadequate. Often learners' performance levels at school remain steadily adequate during their school career and then slump dramatically during a specific year due to an unsatisfactory relationship between themselves and their teacher.

  Although some learners are more difficult to handle than others, it is always the duty of the teacher to ignore the negative behaviour and attitudes of learners and behave positively, maintaining an attitude of genuine acceptance towards them.

  Be on your guard against losing patience if a learner displays behavioural problems, is inattentive in class, works slowly and hands in unfinished and slipshod work. Patience and acceptance are vital when you work with learners who have learning problems. Learners who can count on acceptance from the teacher are more likely to be conscientious about school work and to perform to the best of their ability.
- *Organisation of the classroom and the lesson*. Classroom organisation is an important consideration in dealing with learners who have learning problems. Learners who hold each other back should be placed in separate groups. The same goes for scholastically competitive learners who learn well and learners who have learning problems, because an association between individuals with such divergent characteristics could have a negative impact on the self-image of those with learning problems. Restless and hyperactive learners and learners who find it difficult to concentrate and are easily distracted should not be placed near windows and doors if there is considerable noise and movement outside the classroom. Furthermore the classroom should not be overcrowded, nor the walls overdecorated, and objects on working surfaces should be restricted to the bare essentials.

  Also take care with the scheduling of work. For example, after breaks learners should not be expected to do written work that forces them to sit still and think calmly.

  As regards the teacher's general approach to teaching, comparisons should not be made between learners' work and behaviour in class. They should compete against themselves rather than with each other.
- *Planning assistance programmes*. An assistance programme is essentially a teaching programme with a shift of emphasis. The contents and methods are adjusted to suit the needs of learners with particular problems. The planning of an assistance programme for learners, whether as individuals or as a group, should always include the steps as set out in study unit 5 of the first module, Special Educational Needs A.

We now list the steps once more but will not discuss them. You should study the relevant section in study unit 5 of EDT301 together with this section.

(1) Collect all possible information on the child(s) situation (situation analysis).
(2) Formulate the expected outcomes.
(3) Select the content.
(4) Choose the assistance strategies.

(5) Decide on the implementation of the programme.
(6) Decide who you are going to involve in the programme and how.
(7) Decide on the evaluation.

- *Accompaniment of learners to deal with their learning problems.* This point will be discussed in detail in the next section.

3.5 ASSISTANCE WITH RESPECT TO SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES

3.5.1 Problems in school subjects

Mathematics

It is preferable to confine yourself to the curriculum when you try to assist learners with learning problems where mathematics is concerned. Rather than experiment with large numbers, learners should deal with numbers of the order prescribed for the grade concerned. The curriculum allows sufficient latitude for experimentation. It is imporant that the exercises done in mathematics classes be related to the life experiences of the learners so that they can appreciate the practical value of mathematics. If numbers beyond the prescribed limits are dealt with and the exercises are also not related to the learners's life-world, then the exercises may be no more than a form of mental gymnastics — a numbers game — that the learners play without realising its practical purpose and value. They often perform the mathematical operations successfully without realising the practical relevance of what they are doing.

Fairly mechanical explanations of how to arrive at solutions to mathematical problems will probably be necessary in the case of learners who have problems with mathematics since they are often incapable of working out solutions for themselves. If they are familiar with a specific method of arriving at solutions they can be accompanied to search for alternative methods on their own.

When you advise parents about the support they should be giving their learners at home where mathematics is concerned you should emphasise that mathematical operations should invariably be related to the child's actual environment. Parents must be careful not to attempt formal instruction of their learners in mathematics because they tend to pass on the explanations they heard from teachers at the time when they were at school.

The following hints may be valuable:

(1) Give the child the opportunity to help draw up the shopping list and to estimate and jot down the price of each item next to it. The difference between the actual and the estimated price of each item can then be calculated.
(2) Involve the child in collecting the ingredients specified in a recipe for a meal.
(3) Draw the family into a game of darts and encourage the child to keep the score and compare the scores of the different family members.

Foundation phase

Initially mathematics exercises should be done in a concrete way. Rather than merely using concrete apparatus, such as counters, operations should always be related to the child's actual environment by making use of examples and pictures from his or her environment.

The mathematical operations, that is to say the mathematical signs and combinations, must be shown and explained to the learners in each instance so that they become familiar with the operations and understand the differences involved.

Intermediate phase

Learners in this school phase are often still dependent on practical examples and apparatus. If they cannot solve mathematical problems abstractly they should be allowed to use concrete examples at first, but they should proceed to a more abstract level in every instance where they try to find a solution on their own without relying on apparatus.

Mistakes can be corrected by first explaining solutions to similar problems and then asking the learners to look for their own mistake. The mistake must then be discussed with the learners, who must try another way of solving the problem with a view to discovering their mistakes.

Language problems

(a) Spoken language

Since speech is central to human relations, enough time must be allowed for informal conversation. Learners must be encouraged to read on their own initiative because this is the most important means of expanding their general knowledge, their command of language and their vocabulary.

The most important advice you can give to parents is that they should make time every day for general conversation within the family circle.

Foundation phase

In this phase it is essential to read stories to the learners to familiarise them with the formulation of written language and with language structures. It also helps to extend their vocabulary. After such readings, the stories can be discussed with learners, and at the junior primary level this should mainly take the form of questions and answers. Learners can act out the story or aspects of it in dialogue, or they can depict it in drawings and then discuss their drawings with the teacher or their classmates.

You should never criticise learners' language usage because this inhibits spontaneous conversation among them. Instead you could simply correct the incorrect word or sentence structure in a reformulation without comment after the learners have used it. If learners repeat a mistake frequently it can be discussed with them in a systematic way without labelling it as one of their habitual mistakes.

Group discussions should be encouraged. If learners with a language problem have a story to tell, first discuss it with them and then encourage them to tell it to the group or class. Afterwards it can be discussed by the whole group who can then ask

questions about it which the learners who told the story can then answer. These discussions should be kept short, however.

Intermediate phase

Media reports or articles of general current interest as well as other material of more specific interest to learners should be read to them on a regular basis to familiarise them with the word order and sentence structures of written texts and to extend their vocabulary. Readings can be followed by discussion. In the case of a sensational topic such as Shoemacker's asteroid colliding with the planet Jupiter, the learners could work together on the project. News coverage of this topic could be collected over a number of weeks or even months and the developments could be discussed daily. A scrapbook could be started to contain the collected information. The learners could speculate about what would happen if one of the pieces of the asteroid collided with the planet.

Important events in the lives of some of the learners can also be discussed. Learners who have an interesting story could then act as the initiator who tells the others about the event, and they could then be given the opportunity to ask questions or offer comment about it.

(b) Reading

Learners are most encouraged to read when they can enjoy it. Reading should therefore take place in a relaxed atmosphere.

Parents should be encouraged to assist with reading instruction by creating circumstances at home that are conducive to reading. They can achieve this by taking the initiative and reading on their own account and by providing a steady supply of reading matter in the home. Regular visits to the local library are also valuable. Discussions about reading matter can be held in the home, or the family can undertake a project which requires the learners to read.

Foundation phase

At this stage it is essential to read stories to learners so that they will realise that written language is different from spoken language and will know how written language is formulated (ie, will know what it ''sounds'' like).

In this phase the primary object of reading instruction is to teach learners to read. Reading as a means of gaining information is a secondary matter. Since learning is so important you, the teacher, should ensure that learners with learning problems become competent at the two main aspects of reading, namely **recognising** and **understanding** the words. Enough time should be allowed for learners to become familiar with the most basic, high-frequency words to the extent that they recognise these words on sight, as well as with the sounds associated with letters. They should also become familiar with the composition of words and sentences and should be able to apply this knowledge by writing words and sentences on their own. The elements of reading should be taught to learners in a playful manner, and the formal, stereotyped vocalising method (pronouncing syllables or letters separately in sequence and then pronouncing the whole word) should be avoided. In fact, learners should be dissuaded from vocalising words if they are inclined to do so. Instead they should be encouraged to enunciate words as a whole without pausing between sounds. For example, words like ''cat'' should be pronounced as an inseparable

combination of sounds and not as c+a+t. The initial consonant and the following vowel should be enunciated as a unit, followed by the closing sound(s), that is: ca+t.

The learners should understand direct and concrete information communicated by the text when they read. Questions can be asked about the text that has been read. A case in point could be a story about the tooth fairy:

- Who is the tooth fairy?
- Where does she keep the teeth?
- What does she do with the teeth, and so on.

Anticipative questions could be asked, such as:

- Can you think why John is eager to have his teeth pulled?
- What do you think he is going to do with his tooth?

Do not concentrate on insignificant or digressive contents in the text that have little to do with the theme of the story.

For example:

- What colour is John's shoe?

Be careful not to ask questions that can be answered with a simple ''yes'' or ''no''.

For example:

- Is John going to get money for the tooth he had pulled?

Rather ask such questions as:

- How much money did John get for his tooth?

Do not allow any learners to fall behind the rest of the class as they proceed through the class reader. Instead of reading the whole lesson over a period of three or four days the particular learners could read a passage or a few lines of the lesson daily so that they can pass on to the next lesson with the rest of the class. By listening when the rest of the class read the story the learners keep up with them and do not lose the thread. At the same time the shorter text is more manageable and easier to learn. Moreover the halting and faltering reading of the learners should become less noticeable because they will probably get through the shorter passage with less difficulty.

Reading in unison (all together) and in sequence (teacher reads and class follows) can be done for variation. Learners can also make up their own stories and these can be written down for them. Then they can illustrate the stories and read them over (language-experience approach).

Intermediate phase

During this phase the learners move from the level where they merely learn to read to the next level of reading to learn. Although the first level will still be evident in this phase, the emphasis should shift to reading comprehension.

Instruction aimed at achieving word recognition at this stage is largely unsuccessful in the case of learners with reading problems. Many words are long and cannot be recognised at a single glance, so the structure of words should be taught to learners, for example by identifying the syllables of multisyllabic words in sequence. This can be done by drawing learners' attention to the vowel(s) appearing in every syllable.

Anticipatory questions are as important for learners in this age group as for those in junior primary school, but the questions will also deal with the more profound meaning conveyed by the text. For example:

Why is the man carrying a raincoat over his arm?

Why do you think it is going to rain?

The language-experience approach can also be used for variation in this phase, but here the learners can be expected to write and illustrate their stories by themselves. If learners make numerous mistakes the text should be rewritten for them so that they can be exposed to correct examples. A few learners could write and read a story together as an exercise in applying the language-experience approach.

(c) Spelling and written language

These go hand in hand, so it is essential that in addition to being able to write words correctly on their own or in language lessons, learners should also be able to write words correctly in sentences in written work done for subjects such as mathematics, history and geography. Since correct spelling and sentence construction are important in all written work done by learners, they should be given plenty of exercises so that they will be able to form letter-sound associations and apply spelling rules automatically without conscious effort, which would interfere with his mental interaction with the knowledge content of the material.

Formal spelling instruction is not the parents' task, but they should be encouraged to motivate their learners to write correctly and to take pride in their written work. For example, when writing a letter to grandparents parents could allow the learners to contribute a paragraph or two to the letter. If they make many mistakes they could be asked to write their contribution on a separate sheet of paper. The parents and the learners can then check through the work and correct it together. Then the learners can copy the correct version into the letter on their own.

Foundation phase

It is crucial in the first place that learners know the relationships between letters of the alphabet and the sounds they stand for. They must be able to analyse words and sentences and apply simple spelling rules. The relationships between letters and sounds should be conveyed to learners by way of varied, playful techniques, and regular practice sessions should be held to fix the spelling structures in their memories because young learners find it difficult, and therefore tedious, to commit the arbitrary relationships between letters and sounds to memory.

Once learners have learned a new spelling structure, they should be exposed to other words containing the same spelling structure, for example

stow, window, mell*o*w, bell*o*w, yell*o*w;

c*a*t, c*o*t, c*e*nt, c*i*ty

(Spelling rule: The letter ''c'' followed by a, o, u is pronounced as k, and c followed by e, i, u, is pronounced as s.)

The learners must also learn to use the words in written sentences.

Intermediate phase

In this phase the learners are not fully conversant with either the associations

between letters and sounds or the spelling rules. They often have difficulty with the breakdown of words into syllables, particularly where spelling is not apparently in keeping with pronunciation or morphology. For example, it is difficult for the young child to understand or remember the double ''l'' in ''al-lure'' as compared with ''a-lone'' and the double ''g'' in ''ag-gression'' as compared with ''a-greement'', or the double ''n'' in ''an-nexure'' as compared with ''a-necdote''.

An important issue where spelling assistance is concerned is that learners must be made aware of certain regularities or rules in the spelling system that make it possible to carry over concepts from one word to another.

Because the spelling system in English does not correlate closely with the phonetic system of the language, learners have to rely more on visualisation in the sense that they have to remember the shape and particulars of the word.

Learners with problems have to be taught to apply spelling rules rationally when they have to write a word to which a particular spelling rule applies.

As in the junior primary phase, words in a spelling exercise must be used in sentences and written down to ensure that transfer (adequate learning) takes place.

(d) Handwriting

Handwriting should be practised by repetition of the penstrokes used in forming the letters.

In primary school the penstrokes can be made to music and in conjunction with other rhythmic exercises. Make sure that the writing movements are flowing and relaxed.

If learners form their letters irregularly guiding lines can be drawn for them to follow with their penstrokes.

The most important means of dealing with writing problems is to cultivate learners' pride in their work. They can create a good impression and show that they take pride in their work by spacing words evenly, refraining from scribbling and erasing, and keeping the general appearance of exercise books used for written work neat and tidy.

3.5.2 Assistance to learners who display negative behaviour

It is important for all learners to be aware at all times of guaranteed acceptance, interest and support from the teacher as far as their schoolwork and other problems are concerned. In brief, the learners must feel that the teacher is there for them.

It is also your duty to inform parents of their learners's behavioural problems and to advise them about handling such problems. Always start with the child's positive characteristics. Do not confront the parents immediately with the learners' negative behaviour and its possible causes. Place the negative behaviour in context with the positive characteristics when you discuss the learners's problems with the parents. Explain to them how the learners's behavioural problems detract from their positive characteristics and harm their progress at school.

Do not awaken guilt feelings in the parents, but be tactful. Involve them as equals in deciding on a plan of action and at the same time advise them on how to handle the learners at home. For example, advice could include the following points:

- Be patient with the learners. Do not pressurise them or become angry if they do not comply with requests.
- Do not be sarcastic towards or ignore the learners.
- Make the learners aware that you accept them completely despite their negative behaviour.
- Always be consistent in dealings with the learners.
- Structure the daily events in the life of the family.
- Reward the learners for good behaviour, but do not create the impression that everything can be bought at a price.
- Deprive the learners of certain privileges when they display negative behaviour, but explain to them the reason for taking away the privileges.
- Never compare learners in the family with each other.

Foundation phase

At this stage teachers still plays a key role in the learners's lives. They are extremely dependent on the teachers' support and approval, and their sympathy, acceptance and interest are vital to their performance at school. Learners with learning problems should receive a great deal of support and guidance with respect to their problems. The light, encouraging pressure of the teacher's hand often gives such learners a sense of security and the assurance of the teacher's interest and close attention.

External positive motivation, such as performance cards on which stars are awarded for good performance, has considerable motivational value for the learners.

Intermediate phase

Learners in this phase are less dependent on the teacher than they were in junior primary school, but they still need the assurance of the teacher's assistance and support if they cannot succeed in their schoolwork.

External positive motivation as discussed in the case of learners in junior primary school is still valuable, but now the awarding of privileges can become more important, and more emphasis can be placed on internal positive motivation, such as cultivating a sense of pride in work.

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APPENDIX 1

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS AS BARRIERS TO LEARNING

You are probably already familiar with the term ''behaviour''. For the purposes of this section, we consider behaviour as a broad concept which includes all acts, movements, facial expressions, attitudes, language use, actions in relation to others and secret acts.

The term ''behaviour problem'' is also a broad term which refers to learners whose behaviour is for some reason not considered to be acceptable.

In the same way that learning difficulties may take on various forms, behaviour problems also surface in a variety of ways, for example

- too much or too little of a certain activity, such as excessive activity (hyperactivity) or passivity (hypoactivity)
- behaviour that is inappropriate for a certain situation
- behaviour that does not correspond to the child's age (certain behaviours are acceptable in a four-year-old but not in a seven-year-old)

It is not always easy to decide whether a learner's behaviour should be regarded as problematical or not. The following are a few simple guidelines:

- Learners' behaviour may be regarded as inappropriate when the behaviour is detrimental to learners themselves and causes them to learn less than they are actually capable of
- the behaviour is detrimental to other learners (physically or emotionally) and prevents them from learning
- teachers are prevented from carrying out their task effectively.

A distinction should be made when judging a learner's behaviour between universal norms (what applies all over the world) and cultural norms. Honesty is a universal norm — it is accepted all over the world as a norm for acceptable behaviour. In other cases, what is acceptable or not differs from culture to culture.

In the same way that learning difficulties can lead to behaviour problems, so the opposite can also occur.

Although the percentage of learners with learning difficulties is usually greater than the percentage of those with behaviour problems, teachers agree that it is the behaviour problems that give them the most sleepless nights. The presence of only one or two learners with behaviour problems in a class can upset teachers to such an extent that they lose interest in education and may even cause them to consider another profession.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY MATERIAL

The following subjects are covered in this section:

1 The importance of emotional stability in young learners
2 Emotional and behaviour problems at preschool level
3 Assistance to learners with emotional and behaviour problems
4 Hyperactivity and attention deficiency
5 General causes of behavioural problems in primary school learners

1 THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL STABILITY IN YOUNG LEARNERS

The emotional life of learners has an enormous influence on their total development and thus on their social relationships, cognitive development, personality and motivation. Learners's emotions may be of a more stable or unstable nature and this influences the quality of their entire life.

Emotional stability encompasses more positive feelings such as contentment, happiness, perseverance and self-confidence in the disposition of a young child. These learners are easily adaptable; they fit in well at preschool and enjoy the challenges of new/strange situations (such as excursions). Positive personal characteristics will naturally also encourage the establishment of social relationships: friendly, spontaneous learners will find it easier to make friends and to get along with both adults and learners. These personalities are typified by their feelings: for instance, they are called a ''sunbeam'' because of their happy attitude to life.

Emotional stability is also a prerequisite for cognitive development, as learners who feel safe and secure participate with enthusiasm in activities and are prepared to dare and to find out about new situations. Cohen and Rudolph (1984:105) state: ''Emotions are an integral part of learning, whether the learning takes place through play or through formal lessons, whether feelings are positive or negative''. These learners are willing to venture and play freely on the climbing apparatus. Their motor achievements give them more self-confidence and this again has a positive influence on all other areas of their lives.

Emotional stability implies that learners can exercise some degree of control over their emotions and also that they are able to express their emotions in socially acceptable ways.

Emotional instability implies that learners's mood is overwhelmed by negative feelings such as fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. These learners quickly become unsure and tense in difficult situations and overreact (ie react to a greater extent than is justified by the situation). Learners who feel uncertain will not feel free to participate in activities and do not make friends easily because they are too afraid to venture. They are also reluctant to explore new worlds.

These learners may also be irritatingly clinging or pleasing in an attempt to gain attention. Such learners find it difficult to separate from their mothers: they cry when dropped off at school after which they will not let the teacher out of their sight for a moment.

They try to avert unpleasant feelings through *escape mechanisms* such as aggression,

regression, withdrawal, repression or projection. These concepts are further discussed in section 12.2.

An adult's attitude and approach plays an important role in the emotional development of the child. The teacher's attitude should show love, respect, caring, receptivity and acceptance. This will contribute to a boost in self-confidence and a more positive self-concept in the child (Deetlefs & Kemp 1990:49). Teachers should create a stimulating, positive and safe environment in which the child may experience emotional security. Teachers should also allow learners enough opportunity to give vent to their feelings. Especially tense learners who have an excess of unresolved feelings need some escape valve. Dramatising, free play and art activities are good ways in which young learners can give expression to their feelings or get rid of emotional stress and frustrations.

1.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG LEARNERS

Young learners's feelings are characterised by superficiality, changeability, impermanence and impulsivity. This heightened emotionality manifests in temper tantrums, intense fears and unreasonable jealousy. We can observe learners's emotions in their facial expressions, body posture and movement, tone of voice as well as through verbal expressions such as laughing uproariously, crying or screaming (De Witt & Booysen 1994:24).

Although the emotional and cognitive are closely related, at this stage there is still not much control over feelings. The correlation with the cognitive may be noted in the child's lack of differentiation between fantasy and reality: learners *become* Mom if they put on high-heeled shoes, and *are* the television hero when wearing a certain outfit.

Hurlock (1980) describes the general emotions that are usually found in young learners (De Witt & Booysen 1994:23–24; Deetlefs & Kemp 1990:45–49). A short summary follows:

- *Temper.* Young learners find it very difficult to control their rage. It is caused by conflict concerning toys, joining in with physical activities, wishes that are not fulfilled or failed attempts to do something. Temper tantrums occur in the form of crying, screaming, kicking, stamping feet, jumping up and down or falling down on the ground.
- *Anxiety and fear.* Preschoolers sometimes experience fear of animals, imaginary characters (ghosts and monsters), the dark, robbers, being left alone, fire, deep water and physical hurt. Young learners often experience anxiety especially when they are left alone or when separated from their parents. *Shyness* is often difficult to distinguish from fear in a three-year-old child and one may be unsure of whether the child is *shy* or *afraid* of the strange person. By the age of five, learners begin to experience real shyness when they feel embarrassed about failed attempts to get something right.
- *Jealousy.* Jealousy is a normal reaction to the loss of love, security and attention. The cause is usually social, such as the arrival of a new baby. Jealousy is not always openly displayed, but can find expression in infantile behaviour patterns such as enuresis (bed-wetting), aggressive actions, complaining and crying, regressions, and so on.
- *Curiosity.* Learners are naturally intensely curious about new things in their

environment, their body, other people and objects. Through sensory exploration and asking endless questions, they try to satisfy this curiosity. (Think about all those Why questions! A child's questions should be answered satisfactorily and not merely with ''just because'' answers!)

- *Joy and happiness.* Joy is a pleasant emotion that is easily enticed from a child. Any interesting new thing or event, funny situation or prank and any achievement makes a child happy. Happiness is shown in a smile, uproarious laughter, jumping, running, rolling, clapping hands or embracing the person, animal or object responsible for the happiness. Another characteristic that we can add here is the young child's *humour*. Preschoolers usually love jokes and enjoy especially the ridiculous, for example, someone with a funny hat or someone who trips. They are keen tellers of jokes that are often completely spontaneous and original and which have outcomes which are a surprise to both their listeners and themselves.
- *Unhappiness.* Learners become unhappy when they lose something that is precious to them — a person, pet, toy or item of clothing. Unhappiness is shown through crying, losing interest in everyday activities, nightmares and loss of appetite. However, learners also forget quickly, are easily distracted and accept replacements readily.
- *Love.* Preschoolers are extremely loving towards people, pets and even objects that give them pleasure. This love is expressed more on a nonverbal than a verbal level, for example by hugging, nurturing, kissing and stroking.

1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP

Preschool learners need each other. We all know that the adaptation of new learners to preprimary school is much easier if they happen to meet someone they know or quickly find a comrade. The three-year-old child begins to show interest in certain friends and likes to play together with others. They also begin to share and become increasingly unselfish. They can, however, play alone on occasion. Four-year-old learners enjoy the company of friends fully; they can play together in a group and often have a ''best'' friend (De Witt & Booysen 1994:31). By the age of five, learners are able to identify with the world outside of their immediate self and are curious about others, are ready to share and are less dependent on adults for guidance and companionship. Although the road to a balanced give-and-take relationship does not progress without hitches, five-year-olds are able to appreciate friendship and to flourish through them. The size of the class usually provides enough opportunity for learners to choose a suitable friend from the group (Rudolph & Cohen 1984:39).

Learners in various stages of social development are usually to be found in all preprimary schools. Some learners may still be only able to handle the friendship of a single friend, while some may form groups of two or groups of three to five learners who remain in the same group, or who reform around a central dominant figure or strong pair. Relationships in these larger groups can change from a smooth-running, cooperative attempt at working on a task, where there is complete consensus, to a situation where there is disagreement and squabbling over every little thing. Learners can also play together as a class, and this association with the class as a whole reassures learners that feelings are universal and gives them a special feeling of power that comes from the knowledge that they are one of many who are united by communal interests (''That is our teacher'', ''Those learners are in my class'') (Rudolph & Cohen 1984:40–41).

It is normal for learners to disagree and conflict and clashes occur often. Teachers should be aware that learners have a need to *practise* social relationships. Teachers usually intervene when an argument begins, but arguments can be a satisfying way of getting to know other classmates better and constitute a way of testing the effect of communication. Learning how to settle differences themselves plays an important role in the formation of a strong friendship relationship. It is often the best of friends in the preschool who have the most arguments. The teacher needs to listen and perhaps offer some observations before stepping in to put a stop to the argument because it may get out of hand. Arguments between learners usually blow over quickly and are not nearly as dangerous as they may sometimes seem! (Rudolph & Cohen 1984:43).

1.3 SOCIAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Learners do not only learn with their minds, but with their whole beings. For this reason, it is important that young learners develop the ability to differentiate between appropriate (right) and inappropriate (wrong), learn basic good manners and learn to accept discipline (Derbyshire 1991:197). According to Engelbrecht, Kok and Van Biljon (1982), parents raise their learners according to their own world-view, what they see as good and bad and what is valuable or valueless. This view will differ from culture to culture and teachers should take this into consideration (De Witt & Booysen 1994:32).

Learners are not born with a moral consciousness, but must develop their potential in this regard. Initially, the emphasis is on external control, in other words, the standards are set by others and learners experience this in terms of ''what will happen to me?'' External control such as punishment and reward play a central role here. When learners of two years old do something wrong, they feel insecure or unsafe because the punishment/reprimands they receive from their parents present a threat to them, while the loving praise they receive when they do something right is experienced as an encouragement. From the age of three years, learners begin to behave in certain ways in order to please adults, and four-year-olds begin to distinguish between good and bad without linking these concepts to the approval or disapproval of their educators. Learners will still misbehave in the absence of adults because they believe that nobody will see them. Moral actions are thus largely directed towards avoiding punishment.

From the age of five years, learners begin to differentiate between good and bad, although deciding what is wrong and right is still largely determined by the reward value inherent in their actions. Learners judge themselves and others according to their parents' norms.

Before starting school, learners develop a reasonable sense of responsibility, independence and politeness. A sense of duty, appreciation and respect for other people and for nature gradually develops from this stage onwards. Guilt feelings start to evolve and preschoolers will now ask for forgiveness for transgressions. They also now learn how to control their behaviour.

A child's level of moral development is related to age and level of cognitive development (Papalia & Olds 1993:405; De Witt & Booysen 1994:32).

2 EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS AT PRESCHOOL LEVEL

2.1 EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Learners, just like adults, are subject to stressful situations. Stress can never be completely avoided and some degree of stress is even beneficial for learners: it provides the motivation to learn, to develop, to achieve and to strive for a more satisfying life. Young learners do not always know how to deal with excessive stress and may begin to behave in a fashion that alerts those around them to the fact that not all is well with them (Brenner 1990:237).

We have now considered emotions that normally occur in the young child. These emotions are not always positive (eg loving and happy), but can also be also negative (eg jealous and sad). These negative emotions are not necessarily an indication of a problem, but teachers who are well acquainted with young learners will be able to identify the manifestations of a problematic emotional life.

There are a number of mechanisms that learners may use to cope with stress. De Witt et al (1994:151) mention the following mechanisms (to which we have added):

- *Withdrawal.* Learners become still and sullen and struggle to make contact with others. They often avoid specific activities. This is especially difficult to recognise in very young learners as there is no compulsory participation and learners may choose an alternative activity.
- *Denial.* If the stress becomes too much for them, learners may react by denying the situation. This involves the denial of facts or loss of memory of events, avoiding certain subjects or things and ignoring certain people or circumstances.
- *Thematic play, play and child art.* Young learners often make use of play to make sense of traumatic and stress-producing events. (Drawings can also reflect their emotional state.) On the other hand, learners may become so absorbed in their problems that they do not participate at all in play. Such learners cannot venture outside of themselves as they are completely wrapped up in their problem situation (Rudolph & Cohen 1984:106).
- *Anxious clinging.* Learners may cry or complain to an unusual extent and cling to parents or favourite objects and refuse to let them out of their sight.
- *Fear.* Learners become extremely emotional in an everyday situation, refuse to listen to a specific story, or do not want to discuss a certain topic. They fear strange situations, certain persons, events or objects. Dreams and nightmares may also accompany this.
- *Regression.* Young learners may try to adapt to a situation be reverting to previous developmental stages. These learners seek comfort, and by regressing, search for relief from their anxiety and for attention while trying to sort out new, disturbing information.
- *Compensatory behaviour.* Older preschoolers try to compensate for loss or for unwelcome changes in their lives by ignoring the situation, changing the situation or by taking revenge in fantasy, play or interaction.
- *Psychosomatic symptoms.* Physiological symptoms such as stomachache, headache, nausea and so on may be manifestations of psychological need. Sometimes it is only a search for a little extra attention, nevertheless, it constitutes an indirect communication concerning other things that are worrying them.

Learners with emotional problems may also develop other learning problems. Learners with emotional problems such as nervousness, anxiety, depression and

uncertainty, will not participate with enthusiasm in activities and will consequently miss out on important learning opportunities.

The corollary is naturally that learning problems can lead to emotional problems. Learners who continually fail can develop a low self-concept and withdraw from any demands that they find themselves confronted with.

2.2 BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

At any normal preprimary school you can witness a wide variety of different behaviours. Learners as individuals develop unique ways of reacting to the things that happen around them. Most of these behaviour patterns are acceptable and develop further if they elicit the approval of adults and peers. However, a class can include learners who hit each other, who disturb order in the class, who find it difficult to work with others or who often have little ''accidents''. Usually learners's unacceptable behaviour originates from a need for attention — learners learn from experience that the best way to obtain an adult's undivided attention is to focus that person's attention on them through their behaviour (usually behaviour that the adult disapproves of such as hitting another child). For these learners, negative attention is better than no attention at all (Essa 1995:20).

Prosocial behaviour is positive social interaction and includes behaviours such as imitation, healthy competition, cooperation, sympathy, empathy, social approval, readiness to share and attachment to others.

Antisocial behaviour, in contrast, is any negative social activity that evokes antagonism in the relationships between the learners and their environment. Antisocial behaviour that commonly occurs in the preschool years is selfishness, taking others' property, telling untruths and aggression. According to Hurlock (De Witt & Booysen 1994:28), antisocial behaviour patterns of concern when dealing with young learners are negativity, aggression, bossiness, selfishness, egocentricity, destructiveness, antagonism towards members of the opposite sex and prejudice.

Much negative behaviour forms part of a child's normal development. Teachers have the responsibility of guiding learners so that they learn what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Teachers should also not consider situations that occur sporadically to be behaviour problems. In the course of time, learners find socially acceptable ways of giving expression to their feelings and the behaviour may thus be of a purely transient nature.

However, if learners hurt themselves or others or place themselves or others in danger through their actions, such behaviour should not be allowed, and action should immediately be taken against this. (We will later consider ways of handling behaviour problems.)

Teachers should be sensitive to the so-called scapegoat, who gets the blame for everything irrespective of whether he was involved or not. These learners are usually the ''naughty'' ones who are generally responsible for conflict and pranks, although they then find themselves blamed for any and all of the other guilty ones.

Parents and teachers should consider manifestations of certain behaviours in a serious light when

- they occur to a serious extent and over a period of time
- the symptoms appear to worsen

- they occur in conjunction with social aggression
- they negatively influence the child's development

Furthermore, behaviour problems are unacceptable when they prevent

- other learners from participating in the class activities
- the teacher from managing class activities effectively

3 ASSISTANCE TO LEARNERS WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Behaviour problems can be caused by numerous factors. We have already discussed causes of problems in a previous study unit. It is important that teachers first investigate the causes of the problem behaviour before offering assistance.

Problem behaviour can stem from **nonvariable** external factors (Essa 1995:22). These are factors such as chronic illness, food or environmental allergies, or the child's diet. As a result, the child may feel irritated, function on a generally lower level or experience a lower level of tolerance. The cause of these problems may not be removed; nevertheless, the teacher should treat such learners with understanding and sensitivity, be supportive and try to create an environmentally friendly space for them.

Essa (1995:26–31) offers a number of guidelines for dealing with problem behaviour. We may also call these *behaviour modification techniques:*

- *Reinforcement.* Positive reinforcement is one of the most important techniques and is used in conjunction with others to change unacceptable behaviour or encourage positive behaviour. An adult's approval of a child's behaviour may be communicated to the child in various ways, for example, by saying something about it, or, in more subtle ways, by a smile, touching, eye contact or a hug. Learners should not only hear what is wrong, but also what is right.

  In some cases regular/repeated reinforcement is a good way of achieving quick results. For example, the positive behaviour of a child who hits others can be positively reinforced every thirty seconds. As the aggressive behaviour lessens, so the reinforcement can also gradually diminish.
- *Ignoring.* Ignoring is a very effective strategy, although it is difficult to use. It is especially useful when learners try to secure the attention of adults through their irritating or unacceptable behaviour. Thus, if the teacher decides to ignore the attention-seeking child when he behaves in an attention-seeking manner, but give attention when he acts positively, it will not help to ignore the child twice or three times only to then reinforce the negative behaviour by paying attention. Even a sigh, a facial expression or other nonverbal communication will undermine this method! This technique is also only effective if it is systematically applied by all the adults who are involved with that child. Because the child's negative behaviour is ignored, it is of the utmost importance that he receives attention and positive reinforcement when behaving well.
- *Time-out/Withdrawal.* This method is only used in special circumstances and then with circumspection. When aggressive behaviour should be stopped as soon as possible, this usually works well. The child should be warned beforehand and then only at the third transgression should he be removed from the group. Take the child by the hand and calmly lead him away to the isolation area. Explain

briefly why he or she has been taken out of the group. Take note of the time and then leave without looking or talking again to the child. If the other learners ask about him, explain briefly that he needs a little time alone. When the time is up, simply say that the child may rejoin the group. Reinforce positive behaviour as quickly as possible after this.

- *Self-chosen withdrawal/time-out.* Learners who are overwhelmed by the classroom activity and who are oversensitive to stimulation must be allowed to move to a quiet corner for a while until they feel calmer. The reason for their bad behaviour is external and therefore this strategy can help them to calm down.
- *Prevention.* Prevention is an excellent technique, but can only be used by a teacher whose powers of observation are keen and who is aware of what leads to problem behaviour. It is especially effective for younger learners who have little self-control and who do not yet have the ability to express themselves effectively.
- *Redirection.* This can be used especially well with two-year-olds by directing their attention away from something or by giving them a different toy to play with. Two-year-olds do not yet possess the social skills to handle the pressure of school and find it difficult to share things. Teachers should therefore help them to gradually learn these skills. Older learners should be guided towards successfully overcoming social problems themselves.
- *Discussion/conversation.* A child of four or five is often willing to change problem behaviour and feels embarrassed about an outburst. Teachers could therefore find a quiet, calm place where the problem can be discussed and can work as a team with the child to find a workable solution.
- *Special time.* When you as a teacher feel that learners's problem behaviour occurs as a result of a need for attention, you can use special time. This means that you set aside a special time which you can spend alone with a child, possibly every alternative day or twice a week. Although such a time would have to be cut short in a busy day's schedule with a classroom full of learners, with good planning it is possible to find a suitable period of time. Early morning or just before the learners go home, during rest time, and so on are good times. It may even be valuable here to ask a person from outside to come in and look after the class for a while. Remember that this time is put aside for the teacher and the child alone. Ask the child what he would like to do during the special time and try to comply with these wishes.

  It is amazing what a difference such a special time can make, and, in the long run, it saves time as the teacher will spend less time handling the problem behaviour in the classroom. It also contributes to a more peaceful classroom atmosphere.
- *Star chart.* Some learners respond better to a highly visible reinforcer. Remember that only positive behaviour (success) should be reinforced in this manner and that it should not be used as an indication of failure. A star chart is very easy to make. Simply draw two columns: days of the week in one column and a place for stars in the column beside it.

We have discussed a number of methods for handling problem behaviour. Remember that the use of a technique depends on the specific child and the type of problem behaviour. You as a teacher know each of the learners well and will in time develop a feeling for what techniques are suited to different learners. You will also have to use your judgement to determine which techniques can be used in which situations. You may even develop your own methods of dealing with problem behaviour. Prescriptions for the problem cannot be given because each child, each teacher and each situation is unique.

4 HYPERACTIVITY AND ATTENTION DEFICIENCY

4.1 MANIFESTATIONS OF HYPERACTIVITY AND DISTRACTIBILITY

Hyperactivity and distractibility actually form part of a phenomenon that is known as the *Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (ADHD). It is associated to a great extent with neurological dysfunctions. The most extreme form is found in learners who have some or other form of neural damage caused during or after birth.

Over the last few years, more and more experts have shown that the above is not always true. Similar characteristics can be found in learners who show no sign of any neural dysfunction. Nowadays, the following causal factors can be named: allergic reactions to colourants and preservatives, for example; negative parental styles such as a lack of structure and good routine; the reinforcement of negative actions instead of their elimination, or a lack of attention when the learner does indeed behave well; the presence of stress and crises in the learner's life — learners react to this by acting inappropriately or disruptively.

Young learners are usually active; they are busy discovering themselves and their environment through continual physical animation. Young learners are also by nature impulsive and curious and they react spontaneously to almost anything that attracts their attention. Other learners are simply undisciplined and their behaviour gives offence (Smith 1991:166). A learner is very easily incorrectly labelled ''hyperactive'' and ''impossible to handle''. Teachers should therefore be very sure that the learner is not merely undisciplined, bored or plain energetic. On the other hand, the incorrect handling of true hyperactivity only causes more problems for the learner. There are in reality only a small number of learners who are truly hyperactive.

Let us now look at the characteristics of hyperactivity and distractibility:

Hyperactivity refers to a surplus of motor activity. These learners are constantly busy fiddling and running around; they continue to be in motion without any apparent aim. They are practically never quiet and must touch and handle everything within their reach. They will therefore push or kick other learners without any reason. Their liveliness and goalless activity is disturbing and irritating for both classmates and teacher (Van Wyk & Du Toit 1988:121).

Distractibility is sometimes known as ''sensory hyperactivity''. Because it occurs so often along with hyperactivity, these phenomena are usually discussed together. Sensory hyperactivity or distractibility implies that learners are continually ''on the move'' as far as attention is concerned. Every sensory stimulus (things that they see and hear) is so enticing to them that they can do nothing but pay attention to it. It is therefore not a case of learners not being able to pay attention, but rather that they cannot concentrate on any one thing for very long. We could also say that they cannot control their attention. Any movement in the class or sound (such as footsteps or a passing car) distracts their attention. Because they are so distractible, they are seldom able to finish tasks but shift from one unfinished task to another.

Usually, hyperactive and distractible learners are not able to listen properly when spoken to. They consequently often misunderstand instructions and often fail to carry them out. They come across as undisciplined and cannot wait their turn during games or activities. They also act impulsively. In addition, changing moods and temper tantrums occur often which make these learners difficult to handle in the

classroom. They also often have a poor self-concept because they make so many mistakes.

Hyperactivity is more noticeable in structured situations where learners are asked to execute a specific, structured task such as listening to a story or painting a picture, than in unstructured situations such as playing on the climbing apparatus outside. The *quality* of movement, rather than its *quantity* distinguishes the hyperactive child from the ordinary overactive learner. Medication is often necessary for these learners, although this sometimes also has a negative effect.

Keep in mind that learners' many transgressions are not due to wilfulness or disobedience. Also note that many of the above characteristics are also found in normal learners!

Teachers should guard against drawing hasty conclusions. You would probably have to find out from the parents of such a learner whether or not the same problem is noticed at home. It is often the parents who come to ask advice from the teacher because the child is so difficult to handle at home and has problems sleeping. It is then important for teachers and parents to work together in searching for a plausible solution.

4.2 DEALING WITH A LEARNER WITH HYPERACTIVITY AND DISTRACTIBILITY

According to Painting (1983:82–83), dealing with a hyperactive young child is very difficult for both teachers and parents and often leads to anger, concern and bitterness. Parents and teachers try endless approaches in a desperate attempt to keep the learner's behaviour under control, usually without much success. Adults then feel affronted and unhappy because the latest of many attempts also ended in failure. The situation can eventually become intolerable.

The better our understanding of the origins of behaviour, the better our understanding of the behaviour itself. Better understanding of behaviour enables us to make a better choice in terms of appropriate and successful ways of handling the behaviour. We learn from our mistakes, and can therefore adapt our techniques to be more successful if we see that the technique needs alteration.

It is important to remember that change is subject to time and so we should not expect to see differences overnight. There may also be behaviour patterns that we are unable to alter successfully. In such a case we may have to compensate by finding a method of handling the child with the minimum of disruption to order in the class.

There is more than one way of effectively handling problem behaviour. Painting (1983:86–130) provides practical guidelines for handling young hyperactive and attention-deficit learners:

4.2.1 Recognise the symptoms: where must I begin?

- *Identify the learner's weak and strong points.* Teachers and parents separately should compile a list of the learner's weak and strong points. (The lists can later be compared.) It is very important in this case to be objective and to be a careful observer. When the list is completed, see what traits are characteristic of a learner in that particular age group and which are not.

- According to symptoms which usually occur in learners of that age group, also determine the frequency (how often) the behaviour occurs. You can then use a checklist to decide where the learner experiences problems, and indicate on a scale how often the behaviour occurs: 1 (always); 2 (often); 3 (sometimes); 4 (hardly ever); 5 (never). ''Always'' and ''often'' indicate a poor score while ''hardly ever'' and ''never'' should be seen as strong points.

Developmental and coordination problems	**Frequency**
(i) Gross motor: problems with coordinated use of arms and legs while running, jumping, riding a bike	1 2 3 4 5
(ii) Fine motor: problems with the use of fingers while cutting, fastening buttons, eating	1 2 3 4 5

  In this way you can cover all areas or aspects where problems may arise, for example, perceptual and conceptual problems, speech and language problems, problems with attention and memory, feelings of inadequacy and gaps in certain academic areas.

  Parents' and teachers' lists can differ and it is important that regular informal discussions are held to review the situation at home and at school. The learner should never be analysed from a distance nor be discussed in an intellectual way, but understanding for the child and his problem must be conceived so that a supportive, warm and spontaneous atmosphere at home and at school may be created.
- *Identify easy and difficult tasks and situations.* Tasks and situations where the learner experiences problems can now be identified. Do not be vague: for instance, do not merely refer to ''problems with social relationships'', but be specific and write down the exact circumstances and events. Does the child experience the same problems when playing with one friend as when playing with a group, with a younger or older child, in a structured situation versus an unstructured one, and so on? Does the problem occur often or only on occasion? Also keep in mind factors such as the composition of the group, the specific type of game, the presence of adults, how tired the learner is, or any other factors.
- *Identify skills necessary for each task and situation.* Determine which skills are needed for learners to be able to successfully complete a task. Any simple task requires certain skills before it may be successfully executed. Dressing oneself requires for example **abstract reasoning abilities** to decide what is on top, underneath, in front and behind on each item of clothing. **Gross motor skills and planning** are needed to put on each item in the correct order, **visual perceptual skills** are necessary for distinguishing between the left and right shoes, **fine motor skills** to fasten buttons, do up zips and tie shoelaces and **concentration and attention** to actually finish dressing oneself.

  When you have determined which skills are needed for a specific situation, you will be able to perceive a pattern of weak and strong points. When a learner experiences problems with the execution of various tasks, you can identify a pattern of related weak points. In tasks that the learner handles with ease, a pattern of good points will consequently emerge. You should by this time have a good idea of the skills and situations that lead to a particular learner's successes and failures.

  Because so many variables are at play in a certain learner's behaviour, this knowledge unfortunately does not guarantee an accurate prediction of the learner's future reactions; nevertheless, you will have a better understanding of

the learner and his problems and will be able to offer more opportunities for experiencing success.

- *Investigate your own thoughts and feelings.* Because hyperactive learners demand so much of a person's time and energy, teachers may harbour negative feelings towards them. Teachers may feel frustrated, threatened, angry and helpless because their authority is not accepted, they have no control over the learner's behaviour and because the learner upsets order in the class. Teachers may feel that all their hard work and preparation is in vain because the learner's disruptive behaviour turns everything upside down.
- *Other people's reactions.* The child's mother is often the first person to suspect that her child has a problem. These suspicions should not be ignored, since even though she may not be able to name or describe the problem, the mother is usually right. The teacher is usually the next person who intuitively feels that a problem may exist. The search for an explanation must therefore begin, and when parents and teachers come to some insight into the problem, this information should preferably be communicated to other people who have contact with the learner. The reactions of other people often make it difficult to come to a logical conclusion about the child's problem, with the result that in the end even the mother begins to doubt.

  To make other people aware of the problem is not all that easy. Grandparents can feel that parents are overreacting and make excuses for the learners's behaviour by naming examples of the parents' similar behaviour when they were young. Neighbours may feel that the parents are looking for excuses for their learners's misbehaviour and all that the spoilt brats need is a jolly good hiding. Other teachers may feel that the learners have an emotional disorder and should simply try harder as they are lazy learners, while classmates find the learners useful scapegoats and unfairly blame them for everything.

  It is only when everyone who is involved with the learners understands the problem that the attempts to help them can be of value.

4.2.2 Understand the learner's world

- *Learn to understand the learner's behaviour.* We all know the effect that depression, illness or stress has on our ability to handle situations, and know that everybody makes mistakes. We therefore sometimes have a temporary disability to handle situations in a way that we would like, while the hyperactive learner feels this way in almost all situations! These learners have little experience of success to motivate them in stressful situations and their shortcomings prevent them from fulfilling the normal expectations for their age group.

  We must develop a sensitivity to how these learners feel and why they act in certain ways. We should refrain from thinking that they can do better if they only wanted to. If they have the ability, we should help them to realise it. Also do not react too quickly: try to establish the true motivation behind an act and do not assume from the start that it is only naughtiness or attention-seeking behaviour.

  Teachers should also not give learners false hope by saying, for example,''It is very easy, you will get it right'' because if they fail, the faith that they placed in the teacher will be lost and once again they feel like a failure.

  A positive relationship must be built and maintained!
- *Keep the learner's level of development in mind.* Because hyperactive learners appear to be completely average preschoolers, high expectations may be levelled at them. Expectations should be tailored to their level of development: on some levels

according to chronological age, while on others according to a lower age limit. The learner should set the pace and not the teacher!

- *Discuss problems with the learner.* Parents often try to protect their learners by not telling them about their problem. Learners are, however, usually aware that something is wrong and so trying to hide it from them is unnecessary. Discussions concerning their problem can in fact help them to understand themselves better and adults can explain the situation to them in a language that they can understand. Talk to these learners about the things that they cannot get right and their feelings about this, but also discuss the things they can do well (positive points), and the things with which they have lately learnt to succeed. This also offers learners the chance to freely ask questions about the problem and to talk about it. (They should not, however, start to use it as an excuse, such as, ''I can't — I'm hyperactive''!)
- *Verbalise the learner's unexpressed feelings.* Because learners are often unable to verbalise their feelings, these come to the fore in unacceptable behaviour. Help learners to understand their feelings and put them into words:

  ''You probably feel very unhappy because you have to try so hard to get the puzzle right. I would also feel like that if I were you. I know that you feel downhearted, even though it is going better every day. I can understand that you feel jealous and maybe angry when your classmates get it right. That is maybe why you bother them while they are trying to build something. But you know, they can't run as fast as you or climb as high on the jungle gym as you! Next time, try rather to talk to someone when you feel unhappy about something, because a fight just makes everyone unhappy. If we work together, maybe we can find a better way to make you feel good about yourself. Come, I need a strong boy like you to help me with ...''

- *Communicate with more than words.* Hyperactive young learners are often very sensitive to veiled messages. Parents and teachers may choose all the right words, but when they are said with grit teeth, sarcastically or accompany an irritated, impatient body posture, the learner becomes confused and does not know what to believe: the words or the attitude? Words and body language (positive or negative) should therefore agree in order to avoid a mixed message.
- *Anticipate problems rather than wait for them.* If you observe learners closely, you will learn to know the early signs that warn of an outburst of frustration that is building up. Take positive steps to prevent potential problems and help learners to avoid situations in which they experience problems. It may be necessary in some cases to remove learners from a situation before they lose control. Sometimes you can intervene supportively and with humour, and sometimes learners may be left to handle the problem themselves.

  It is not possible to remove all sources of frustration and irritation from the learners' environment, however, it is good for them to be exposed to stressful situations to a small degree so that they may learn in time to handle them.
- *Distinguish between the learner and the learner's behaviour.* It is important that hyperactive learners are aware that the teacher accepts and loves them as a person and that the teacher will provide support if they need it. Although adults do not necessarily approve of their behaviour, this must be divorced from their feelings for the learner as a person.

4.2.3 Provide structure: small changes make a big difference!

4.2.3.1 Aim of structure

Hyperactive young learners need a framework which sets certain limits and in which their growth and development can eventually take hold in acceptable patterns of behaviour. All learners feel safer when there are fixed and fair limits (structure) in which they may optimally develop.

Because hyperactive/distractible learners seldom possess the inner control and skills needed to handle the demands made on them, structure becomes so much more important. Learners with learning and behaviour problems need help in structuring themselves and their daily routine. Control is the key factor in helping learners to overcome their problems. By practising external control, parents and adults can in the interim help learners to exercise inner control over themselves. Guidelines for control, planning in advance and the organisation and structuring of the daily routine are the key to success.

Structure can only be effective if it goes hand in hand with empathy, firmness (which does not include strictness) and consistency. Structure should also be adapted to the circumstances and the needs of every learner.

4.2.3.2 Types of structure

- *Relationship structure.* The attitude of the teacher is of cardinal importance in creating a supportive affective environment in which learners can fully develop. Because hyperactive and attention-deficit learners experience failure so frequently and have learnt that people are often disappointed in them, they very often have a low self-concept. Learners who feel that people love them and that their contributions are of value will learn new things and explore their environment without fear. The initiative lies with the teacher to structure the situation in such a way that learners succeed as often as possible. It is only when you come to know the learner well that you can plan a programme to accommodate him.

  A warm smile or a hand on the shoulder reassures learners of your support. Step in and help them to complete a task successfully when you see that they are battling. Always be honest and consistent in your dealings with the learner and build a relationship on trust, as it is in this way that behaviour modification techniques can be used to greatest effect. It sometimes also helps to share your own failures, problems or fears with learners so that they can see that adults also have shortcomings.

  Always be a good role model for learners — let them see how you handle difficult situations effectively so that they may learn from this.
- *Task structure.* Each task undertaken by learners should be presented in such a way that learners

  — understand what is expected of them
  — are not overwhelmed by the nature and scope of the task
  — have enough guidelines to reduce frustration
  — can complete the task with pride
  — can feel that they have achieved something

  You as a teacher should pay close attention to organising and planning teaching material step by step, although it should be flexible in order to adapt to learners' individual and specific needs and to their level of development. Begin with simple

tasks and as soon as the learner has mastered them, you can gradually progress to more advanced activities.

Parents and teachers would usually like learners to progress as fast and as well as possible (it is so agreeable to see results!), but progress takes time and remember that too much pressure on learners (too difficult tasks too fast) will have negative consequences. The learning situation in preprimary school should be informal and relaxed with fun and enjoyment as the chief motivation. The learning experience should be pleasant for hyperactive learners: consequently, continue with the ''teaching session'' for only as long as the learner's attention and interest persist.

- *Situation structure.* Do not assume that the hyperactive learner will be able to handle a situation. When the normal routine is disturbed, for example, by an outing or party, the learner should be prepared for this.

A few guidelines:

— Do not expose learners to situations in which they will experience problems. We do not want to deny learners important experiences, but unfortunately there are situations which they cannot handle and the consequences are unpleasant for everyone.

A big group of learners, with the associated noise and stimulation, may lead to problems. Activity control should also be applied — participation in activities which a learner cannot handle, such as a percussion band or a team ball game, should be limited. An assistant or a mother may be helpful to hyperactive learners during certain activities or can keep the other learners busy when the teacher wants to pay them individual attention. Involve the assistant or mother when going on outings, or arrange for the police or firemen to rather come to the school.

— Prepare the learner for any disruptions in the normal routine. Learners often feel uncertain in strange situations (pleasant or unpleasant) and they do not know what is expected of them. Chat beforehand with the learners and prepare them for what is waiting for them. How long in advance learners should be prepared depends on the particular learner. Some learners can be prepared already a couple of days in advance while others cannot wait for such a long time and only need to be told a couple of minutes before the time.
— Explain what behaviour is expected of them, the limits and consequences of their behaviour. Learners should clearly understand what behaviour is acceptable in a situation and what is not. Learners should also know what consequences they can expect should they overstep the boundaries.
— The duration of the situation should suit the learner's tolerance level. Do not expose learners to a situation for longer than they can handle.
— Reward positive behaviour. Initially you can use concrete rewards since verbal rewards may be too abstract. Later verbal praise or simply the inner pride that their behaviour was approved of may be enough.
— Do not convey vague, unclear or unfeasible consequences to learners. Threats such as ''I will never again ...'', ''Just wait and see what happens if ...'' or ''I won't love you anymore if ...'' should be avoided.
— Limit the learner's number of choices. Learners' attention is better held if there are only two or three toys available with which they may play than if they are overwhelmed by too many choices. Rather provide fewer toys but change them regularly to maintain the learners' interest.
— Follow a relatively constant daily routine at home and at school. The same rules in terms of table manners, for example, should apply both at home and at school.

Effective planning of daily schedules helps learners to anticipate events and prepare themselves for these, indicating thus a well-organised lifestyle. An organised external environment helps learners to develop internal control and, in such a way, to exercise control over their behaviour.

4.2.4 Therapeutic discipline

Discipline differs from punishment in the sense that it implies rather a form of education with the aim of correcting, shaping or reinforcing behaviour.

Therapeutic discipline is a teaching method that:

— tries to change, shape or reinforce learners' behaviour patterns
— is employed in agreement with the learner's level of development
— shows understanding for the needs of learners and is often more effective in dealing with behaviour problems than punishment.

- *Consequences for behaviour.* Learners must be aware of the repercussions that their behaviour can lead to (thus cause and effect) and the consequences of their behaviour should be discussed with them. Positive behaviour and the learners' attempts to do good should always be recognised and reinforced. Chat regularly to learners about their behaviour, both positive and negative, and the consequences of this. In such a way the relationship between teacher and learner is improved and as learners develop more inner control, so will they better be able to discuss their feelings.
- *Crisis control procedures.* In study unit 12 we discussed a number of behaviour modification techniques that you can use in dealing with problem behaviour in the classroom situation.

5 GENERAL CAUSES OF BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

In this section we especially consider factors that play a general role in causing behavioural problems in learners. Teachers should understand these factors if they wish to help learners to actualise their potential and to prevent the appearance of more serious behavioural problems.

You will note that in the majority of cases it is not so much intrinsic factors that lead to general behaviour problems as extrinsic factors, in other words, that which is found in the learner's environment. You should especially remember the important influence of meaningful role players (parents, teachers and peers) in the learner's life when it comes to behaviour.

Please note that while we give certain headings here, it is difficult to divide different factors into specific categories because they often fit under more than just one heading.

5.1 THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Booth (Montgomery 1990:124) emphasises the impact of the environment on learners' behaviour. He shows how the **structure of society** often unjustly condemns certain learners to failure because they cannot live up to the standards set by

members of the peer group. It is been found for instance that the social status of the family correlates strongly with learners' school achievements. Learners from poor socioeconomic backgrounds are not sufficiently exposed to appropriate learning experiences and can therefore not draw adequately on the advantages offered by education. They are vulnerable to learning and behavioural problems and can be considered to be high-risk learners (cf Chazan & Stott in Montgomery 1990:125).

Some environments cannot **ensure the necessary stability** for learners. This may also lead to behavioural problems. These environments are characterised for example by overpopulated houses, big families, a low and variable income resulting in a continual struggle to obtain necessities for life. Learners in these families are often exposed to dishonest practices in order to obtain basic necessities.

In poor social environments learners are often **exposed to persons who perform dishonest and criminal acts.** Some of the persons, such as the members of youth gangs can appear as heroes to young learners. Because both parents usually work and learners are frequently left to themselves, they often spend much of their time on the streets. This robs them from the controlling influence of their parents.

5.2 FACTORS WITHIN THE FAMILY

Various factors related to the family and parental styles influence the behaviour of learners.

Carson and Butcher (1992:570) refer to **psychopathological factors** within the learner's personal life-world that can lead to behavioural problems, for example, the breakup of the family, stressful circumstances, a parent leaving home or the death of a parent and child abuse.

Learners often experience **stress as a result of circumstances at home.** They worry, for example, about their father who abuses alcohol or who assaults their mother or other learners. Learners cannot then concentrate in school because they worry about their mother's safety while they are not there to stand by her. Montgomery (1990:164) further mentions the **lack of a suitable role model** for the learner. If parents themselves experience poor social integration or have poor interpersonal skills, they are poorly equipped to guide their learners in developing these. Learners who do not receive support at home in learning necessary social skills will try to seek attention at school through inappropriate behaviour.

Learners who are **exposed to stressful situations** at home, such as continual arguing, breakup of the family, illness and violence, become emotionally vulnerable and are often anxious and tense. When they find themselves in a stressful or crisis situation, these behavioural patterns will come to the fore. The possibility is then good that teachers and even the peer group will label such learners as aggressive, insolent or rebellious.

Robins et al (Montgomery 1990:130) found in their research that certain parental styles can lead to unacceptable behaviour in their learners, for example, the different ways in which parents discipline their learners — extreme physical punishment such as whipping and near abuse; inconsistent treatment by parents with the result that learners later feel rejected or neglected; excessive overprotection; or an overly emotional controlling parental style where love is withheld as the punishment for unacceptable actions — especially if the child cannot live up to the high standards set by the parents. These authors feel that the influence of these kinds of factors is so important that the term ''high risk learners'' should even be redefined.

Montgomery (1990:131) gives the following profile of the so-called **"model family"** whose learners are less likely to experience behavioural problems:

- the family is strongly supportive of the learners and their activities and friends
- there are harmonious relationships within the family
- the home routine is regular but not rigid
- the demands made upon the learners are consistent and supportive and leniency prevails over severity
- standards of behaviour and procedures are open to discussion
- the learners develop positive feelings towards the parents which are later transferred to others

5.3 SCHOOL FACTORS

Montgomery (1990) names factors that are related to the **school environment** and which can stimulate the occurrence of behavioural problems, especially in cases where learners already struggle to control their behaviour. These factors are the following:

- strict and inflexible maintenance of school rules
- a lack of mutual respect between learners and teaching staff
- a lack of responsibility in terms of independent learning as well as in terms of the school (promotes especially vandalism)
- a curriculum that overemphasises competition
- inadequate attention to learners as individuals — their needs and concerns are not taken into consideration, for example, perpetual changes are made to school timetables (learners' vulnerability is heightened if they feel that they are losing their identity)

Rutter et al (Montgomery 1990:128) further state that if **scholastic achievements are emphasised more than learners' personal needs,** it is possible that learners will be predisposed to failure, and can become ''problem learners'' in the eyes of the teacher.

Montgomery (1990:130) indicates that behavioural problems that manifest in school are often the result of influences outside of school, combined with the impact of the school curriculum, especially the so-called ''hidden curriculum''.

The inconsistent application of discipline in schools can also lead to unnecessary problems in learners' behaviour in school. Schools should have a clear code of behaviour which indicates what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. This prevents teachers from unnecessarily labelling learners as displaying problem behaviour. Learners and teachers should be thoroughly informed about this as well as the various forms of punishment that follow certain acts. In certain environments the practice of consulting learners when drawing up a code of behaviour is already established. Some schools use a point system which awards credits (positive) or debits (negative) for certain good or bad behaviour. Parents may also view this point system and it is also indicated on school report cards.

Sometimes problem behaviour occurs due to the **ways in which teachers act in the classroom.** Davie (in Montgomery 1990:129) mentions, for example, that teachers typify talking in class as one of the worst and most chronic forms of misbehaviour. If a teacher handles these learners incorrectly, humiliates them and injures their self-worth and self-concept in front of their classmates, this initial behaviour can deteriorate and prompt other, more serious forms of problem behaviour, such as rebelliousness, aggression or other forms of goading the teacher.

5.4 A COMBINATION OF SCHOOL AND HOME FACTORS

In most cases, behavioural problems in learners arise from a combination of home and school factors.

Learners who struggle in school and **experience learning problems** are especially prone to behavioural problems. They come to school in the mornings anxious and with their stomach in a knot over what the day is waiting to bring them and what demands are going to be made of them. In a school where a rigid authority structure reigns, they have to bottle up this tension until they can let it all out in an acceptable manner. They are actually ''conforming'' while they behave in a disciplined way, while their need slips by unnoticed. Sometimes these learners are irritable and snappy with other learners in an attempt to work off their tension. Other learners then single out the defenceless learner as a scapegoat. The need to express one's own tension and anxiety therefore leads to socially unacceptable actions. The result of this is that these learners are labelled as having behavioural problems.

Montgomery (1990:132) explains that learners with disruptive home circumstances or who experience learning problems and who attend a school where no provision is made for their individual needs are extremely vulnerable to the further development of problems and may therefore be typified as high-risk learners. If enough attention is paid to these learners in primary school, their exposure to even greater stress and pressure may be prevented. In this regard, the quality of their relationship with the teacher is of the utmost importance. High-risk learners who are lucky enough to get a teacher who understands them, who perceives their strong points and concentrates on these, who wins their trust and can motivate them, need never develop behavioural problems.

According to Mitchell and Rosa (Montgomery 1990), the behavioural problems which are generally associated with later criminal activity are the following: theft, destructiveness, running away from home and telling lies.

5.5 SOME CONCLUSIONS

- *Environments have an important influence on behaviour.* We thus see that factors in the learner's life-world and environment play a very important role in causing problem behaviour — whether it originates purely from the environment or whether it occurs in combination with other intrinsic factors. The impact of the environment on learners' behaviour can therefore not be reasoned away. It is extremely important for teachers to once again take note of this since the school, the teachers, the peer group and the parents are all part of the learner's environment.
- *Teachers are important role players.* If teachers understand that behavioural problems are, among other things, the negative consequence of unsuccessful relationships in the learner's lifeworld, they must also realise their own role in the whole course of things.

  Teachers can have a favourable or unfavourable impact on learners' behaviour and may even be the reason for the problem behaviour. **It is important that teachers keep this fact in mind when they are ready to pass judgement on learners on the grounds of their behaviour, while conveniently forgetting what their own share in the situation may be.**
- *Learners should learn coping skills.* Irwin and Simons (1994:234) explain that learners must learn coping skills in order to deal with the demands of their life-world and

the needs within themselves (eg need for security). We can deduce that learners with behavioural problems cannot cope with the demands of their environment and so react in a negative way. In so doing, they naturally affect the lives of significant others in their lifeworld.

- *The primary school phase is important.* During the primary school years, learners must learn a variety of skills to be able to solve their personal problems and to control their own emotions. Each of these coping skills can be focused on learners themselves, on their environment or on other learners. Each of these skills also includes certain aims such as collecting information about the stressful situation, to obtain the support of others to weather the stressful situation with one's sense of self-worth intact; to limit or inhibit one's initial reaction; to gain control over one's own emotions and to think clearly about the stressful situation.

  It goes without saying that negative skills can be so entrenched in this phase that they actually become part of a learner's personality and must later again be unlearnt with difficulty.
- *Learners' behaviour has an impact on others.* It is important that you help the learners you teach to understand that through their actions, they have an impact on the lives of those they come into contact with. In times of dissension, learners, and other people, are inclined to make a scapegoat of and blame only one party. Learners should be made sensitive to the fact that their actions affect others, just as others affect them. They cannot therefore blame their parents or teachers for things that go wrong because they too had a share in the origins of a problem. They are consequently equally responsible for the development of a problem, such as a poor self-concept. They must therefore realise that if they continually pester and taunt other learners, those learners will necessarily start to feel less and less good about themselves.

5.6 GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

5.6.1 Manifestations of disruptive behaviour in classrooms

Coping with learners with behavioural problems in the classroom is an unpleasant experience for most teachers, no matter how experienced they may be. Montgomery (1990:124) states that the classroom is most often the place where learners, with their individual needs, motives and expectations, come into conflict with what the teachers expect and want to convey to them in order to reach their teaching goal through educational teaching.

Just as parents are never trained in parenting skills before their first child is born, so teachers seldom receive the training needed to cope with learners with behavioural problems. It is necessary that teachers be trained to deal with classes which grow ever larger and which include a diverse group of learners, some of which will have behavioural problems.

In his research, Loewenstein (Montgomery 1990:132) found that 10 percent of learners in a class exhibit disruptive behaviour. Included here are

- talking out of turn (TOOT)
- hampering other learners (HOC)
- attention-seeking
- disruptive behaviour
- fighting

- aggressive acts
- negativism
- refusal to work or to work with others
- lack of motivation and interest
- boredom

To be busy with such learners the entire day is exhausting and frustrating, especially if teachers do not have a support network at the school. McDonald (Montgomery 1990:153) asserts that most teachers underestimate their own impact and influence on learners. In line with Satir's ideas about the family and parents' roles, his words may be applied to the school and the role and place of teachers in the lives of learners:



the school is the factory where a person is made.
You, the adults/teachers are the people-makers

Satir (1972)

5.6.2 General guidelines for dealing with behavioural problems

The following is a list of general guidelines for dealing with behavioural problems (Montgomery 1990:133):

- Intervene immediately and end an incident by removing the troublemaker or administering a warning.
- Analyse the group influences and group dynamics in the class and identify leaders.
- Do not blame the group leaders or the whole class for an incident (eg a theft) if there are actually only two culprits. Rather speak to the guilty ones directly after the class has left.
- Give learners the benefit of the doubt if they offer excuses that cannot be controlled, such as a bad stomachache when their work is not done.
- Defuse a potentially explosive situation by telling a joke, for example.
- Think twice before becoming angry about learners who eat in class — there are worse sins than that!
- Try to prevent yourself as a teacher from becoming too involved with a learner's problems and home circumstances.
- Be aware of your own feelings and state of mind and be careful to not overreact when you do not feel good — if you do decide to confront parents or a learner, do this in familiar territory and plan what you want to say in advance.
- Change the school timetable, curricula and internal school organisation so that the same teacher is not always exposed to the difficult learners or so that the composition of the class does not always include the same group of difficult learners. Periods with the same group of learners in the class may also be moved further apart.
- Avoid too rigid structures or forms of punishment. If a learner does not behave, you should be able to move from plan A to plan B or even a plan C. If learners become used to a certain form of punishment, they will later lose their fear of it and will persist with their unacceptable behaviour patterns.

Apart from the strategy used by the teachers to deal with learners with behavioural

problems, the axis around which everything turns is the attitude and actions of the teachers, as well as their insight into the situation. If teachers consider learners with behavioural problems to be ''troublemakers'', they will handle them according to the symptomatic behaviour, namely, their talking or walking around in class. To correctly handle learners who act like this, it is necessary that teachers refrain from only focusing on the ''symptom image'', but rather look at the whole picture, including causal factors and the psychological and social factors that can play a role. This wider understanding of the reality in which learners find themselves and which influences their behaviour means that the teacher's attitude to the learner as well as her presentation of the lesson content will change. According to Montgomery (1990:164), the teacher should fulfil a positive, supportive and constructive role in the management of the classroom, including handling learners' behaviour and the management of classroom activities. It is also important that as many learners as possible should share in the experience of success.

Other factors which teachers should give attention to (Montgomery 1990:135) include the degree to which learners are involved on a cognitive level with the curriculum and the teaching. If learners are not involved and do not feel stimulated on a cognitive level, they become bored and pass the time by playing the clown or amusing other learners with their disruptive behaviour. They interact socially with the other learners while the teacher is trying to teach. The excitement that learners should obtain from the discovery of new learning content is now sought through plaguing the teacher and upsetting the rest of the class. The inexperienced teacher can easily fall into the trap and overreact or struggle to regain control over the class. The negative influences of the peer group can reinforce and exacerbate the problem behaviour.

5.6.3 Effective organisation and management

Montgomery (1990:134) stresses that the following factors are also important in dealing with learners with behavioural problems.

- *The organisation and outlay of the classroom.* The grouping of learners around worktables in groups of two, four, five and six appears to function effectively. In this way, social interaction and group work are made possible. Learners with learning difficulties should be helped to remain involved and should not feel that they cannot participate and therefore leave the activity to the rest of the group. When learners are inclined to not pay attention, it is better to seat them in rows, to reduce the environmental stimuli so that they will not be distracted by this (sit in a corner) and to even use tape recorders and earphones to increase their attention span.
- *The position of the teacher.* In their research, Wragg and Kerry (Montgomery 1990:136) found that teachers should move around the classroom and teach from different corners in the room. If teachers move around, the chances are greater that more learners will be noticed by the teachers and this will prevent them from only asking the top achievers questions or concentrating on those who always answer the questions. Learners who are inclined to disrupt the classroom with their behaviour automatically place themselves at the centre of the teacher's attention, even though they may sit in the furthest corner of the class. These learners should be so placed that the teacher can easily control them — for example with an early glance or a gesture to prevent an emotional outburst which ends up upsetting the entire class.
- *The physical appearance of the classroom.* The effort that goes into the appearance of the classroom reflects the respect or disrespect that school authorities have for the

learners. This usually forms part of the so-called hidden agenda that directly influences learners' behaviour. If the furniture is of bad quality, for example, and a worn carpet lies on the floor, learners will sense that their educators do not care much about them. A carpet can make a big difference to a classroom by creating a homely atmosphere. Graffiti on the desks or chairs should be removed as quickly as possible since it only stimulates the appearance of more graffiti. Graffiti, among other things, is a direct indication of boredom with the study content and of teaching that does not address learners.

- *The organisation of materials.* The distribution of pens, scissors, books, crayons and so on can cause confusion and upset the class routine. It is therefore a good idea to mark the various materials and the places where they are kept with matching colour codes. Fixed rules and routines are needed to maintain class order — especially in terms of learners with learning or behavioural problems. In this way, order and security is created for the learner — especially for those who do not experience this within themselves but are troubled by insecurities.
- *Enough space in the classroom.* When a class contains learners with behavioural problems, it is better to have a bigger class with fewer learners in it so that there is space for learners to sit to one side. There should also be enough space to move between tables and chairs to prevent unnecessary trampling and pushing as learners move around. Ideally, learners should each have their own locker or storage place for personal belongings. Disputes often arise in classrooms because learners take each others' place or possessions.
- *Establishment of classroom rules.* There should be clear rules of which all learners are aware. These rules include, for example, how to enter and leave the classroom in an orderly fashion. Montgomery (1990:140) warns against teachers being guilty of shouting at the class, because if teachers shout, learners will shout at each other. Teachers should rather make it a rule that learners should enter the classroom quietly and should talk in quiet, low voices.

- *Classroom management and control.*

  (a) *Role division.* Classroom management involves role division and task fulfilment. Everyone involved should clearly understand their role in the class. For example, when a teacher appoints a class assistant, this person's role should be managed by the teacher and a clear statement of duties should be worked out for that person. Teachers can also put learners to good use by asking them to act as helpers for others or to hand out notes or materials. When learners work in groups and some struggle with certain activities, the results are usually positive if peer assistance is used. The scholastically stronger learners then help their classmates with the activities that they have already mastered.

  Montgomery (1990:147) uses the 3 Ms (Managing, Monitoring, Maintenance) for good classroom management.

  (b) *Management.* Good management implies a good, punctual and firm presentation of a lesson together with the maintenance of a good work tempo. By doing this, keeping the attention of the learners is already ensured.

  (c) *Monitoring.* Learners actions should continually be monitored. This means that learners who may possibly upset the class should be identified early and the potentially disturbing behaviour stopped short. A teacher may do this with a single glance in the direction of the learner, a frown, a meaningful pause in her discourse accompanied by a look, nod or shake of the head at the learner, a gesture, et cetera. This all forms part of the verbal body language by which teachers monitor or control the class. Such actions also prevent teachers finding it necessary to bear down on the learner. In primary school

especially, a teacher's aggression and nonverbal body language which indicates disapproval frightens learners and makes them feel insecure on the one hand, while provoking aggression on the other. It may even lead to the rejection of the teacher as an authority figure.
The opposite is also true. In their research, Wheldall and Merritt (Montgomery 1990:150) found that when teachers make physical contact with young learners, for example by touching them on the arm or shoulder or stroking their hair, the learners's scholastic performance improves.

(d) *Maintenance.* In the maintenance phase, teachers can move around in the classroom and establish whether individual learners need help or not. The individual involvement of teachers with learners allows them to keep pace with each learner's progress or problems. Learners who misbehave in class and tend to disrupt the lesson can be talked to individually after the class or an investigation be made into the causes of the problem behaviour. Often learners are not aware of their negative, disruptive impact on the rest of the class or do not realise how much lesson time they waste by sitting and telling jokes with friends, for example, while the teacher is busy with a lesson. A friendly, interested and nonaggressive yet firm discussion can therefore possibly solve the problem. If it is possible to make a video of the course of the lesson, this may provide learners with insights to enable them to identify and experience the negative impact of their behaviour. Threats should be avoided as far as possible, since learners are challenged to test the threat and see if the teacher will do as she says. If teachers do not follow through and act upon their promise, threats can cause uncertainty in learners. This can even exacerbate their behaviour. It is also important to remember that teachers should not only complain about negative behaviour while failing to notice or praise positive behaviour.

- *The number of learners in the class.* Montgomery (1990:143) points out that too big a class makes it difficult for the teacher to comply with all the learners' educational needs — especially in the context of a mainstream class where there are learners with different types of special educational needs. The yardstick for determining class size should be that the teacher should be able to give each learner individual attention against the background of the class as a whole.
- *The atmosphere of the classroom.* If the learners are to be able to achieve scholastically in any way, the atmosphere in the class should be relaxed and cheerful. It is important for teachers to know the names of the learners. The following is a list of expectations that learners may have of teachers, formulated by Hammersley et al (Montgomery 1990:146):
  - — They should be firm and strict, thus being in control of the class.
  - — They must be reasonable — if punishment must be meted out, it should be directed towards the guilty party only, and not the entire class.
  - — They should be consistent.
  - — They should be friendly and supportive.
  - — Tasks should be executed by the teacher in such a way that learners feel that they have progressed.
  - — They should show respect for the learners and treat them with dignity.

An unfortunate myth exists among teachers that implies that those who treat their learners with support and understanding are ''soft'', while male teachers may be accused of acting too femininely (Montgomery 1990:147).

The teacher's task of effectively organising and managing the classroom may,

however, be facilitated or hindered by the behaviour of learners. Behaviour patterns that are usually associated with teaching success include

— motivation
— emotional health (they experience security, safety, love, acceptance)
— sufficient attention to school work
— favourable reaction to teachers' guidance
— healthy relationships with peer group
— a healthy self-image

In contrast to this, behaviour patterns such as distractibility, aggression and irrelevant behaviour usually leads to scholastic underperformance, and later even behavioural problems (Dworkin 1985:155) which make the teacher's task even more difficult.

These general coping strategies can be used by teachers (in addition to other strategies) to put a stop to problem behaviour such as impulsivity and a lack of attention, catastrophic reactions, withdrawal, poor self-concept and social relationship problems.



Teachers themselves, their personality and the ways in which they handle problems, remain one of the most decisive factors.

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APPENDIX J

BARRIERS TO LEARNING RELATED TO SPOKEN LANGUAGE

OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING CONTENT

The following topics are discussed in this section:

1 Spoken language problems: a brief overview

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The concept ''language''
- 1.3 Dimensions of language
- 1.4 Spoken language problems
- 1.5 Underlying factors of language problems

2 Manifestations of spoken language problems and aid for them

- 2.1 Manifestations of spoken language problems
- 2.2 Aid for spoken language problems

1 SPOKEN LANGUAGE PROBLEMS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The ability to use language is unique to human beings. People use language to express their thoughts, feelings, needs and other things to others. People's environment and circumstances are not static but are continually subject to change, which has a direct effect on their language. Consequently, language is also subject to change, with new words being created and others gradually fall into disuse.

To understand the problems that young learners have with spoken language, you need to understand the concept ''language''.

1.2 THE CONCEPT ''LANGUAGE''

Language is generally taken for granted and only a few people try to analyse and explain the components of language or describe them in a definition. According to Titone and Danesi (1985:4–5), it is not possible to describe language in a single definition and, consequently, they summarise the concept ''language'' as follows:

- Language is a communication system by which people are able to express their

thoughts. It does not consist of a variety of random series of speech sounds but of language symbols that form a connected set of relationships and patterns.
- It is a set of conventionally arbitrary symbols (oral and written) that do not necessarily relate directly to the world of objects and ideas that they represent.
- It is related to a specific speech community and communicated on a cultural basis.
- Different languages have common features and noticeable likenesses.

When people listen to a foreign or new language, they only hear a variation of successive meaningless sounds. People who know the language recognise the successive speech sounds perceptually and reconstruct them into meaningful language structures like words and sentences that enable them to understand, store and later retrieve the message. This process takes place through four cognitive functions, namely:

- *grouping* information according to corresponding features (characteristics)
- *differentiating* between the language stimuli and the object
- *generalising* by classifying the information into categories
- *associating* the stimuli with the object (Titone & Danesi 1985:46–48)

These functions are made possible by people's *inner language system*. According to Phelps-Terasaki et al (1983:xiv), *inner language* is a representative symbolic thought (mental) system. This is the language in which people think. A message is constructed and communicated on the basis of the mental language. This also enables people to decode and understand messages that they hear. A variation of experiences is coded, organised and associated in the mind. The meaning that different individuals give to a single message differs because their inner concepts differ.

Inner language precedes actual language and does not stop when the learner has mastered the language structures. The development of inner language is closely associated with auditive receptive language.

Receptive language refers to the comprehension of auditive stimuli in the receptive areas of the brain. Incoming auditive sensations are processed perceptually in the auditive areas of the brain and organised and structured to form meaningful units. Memorisation is important here because it captures the structured information in the final stage of the cognitive processes. Receptive language is not always auditive (audible) but may be visual, as when people read.

Expressive language (spoken language), according to Phelps-Terasaki et al (1983:xiii), is the communication of experiences and meaning. Speakers utter a series of connected sounds in the form of words and sentences when they convey their message.

1.3 DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE

Language consists of different dimensions. To be able to express (send) and understand (receive) a message, the speaker and the listener must be familiar with the dimensions. Even though different languages can overlap, the dimensions of each language are unique to the specific language. According to Hallahan and Kauffman (1991:219), Richek, List and Lerner (1983:69) and Berko Gleason (1989:18–23), language consists of three dimensions: *form*, *content* and *function*.

1.3.1 Form

The *form of language* denotes the sounds of language that are grammatically connected and combined according to fixed rules (grammar) in a particular language. Form includes the following (Bayles 1981:173, 178, 189):

- *Phonology.* This is the sound system unique to every language. This includes specific phonemes (speech sounds) that follow each other in ordered series according to a fixed set of rules to form words. Each phoneme itself has no meaning. Phonology also covers emphasis and patterns of intonation, such as pitch, pauses and accents, that occur when words and sentences are expressed.
- *Morphology.* This is concerned with the construction and combination of words. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit in a word. For example, in ''walked'', the *-ed* indicates the past tense and *walk* is the action. If words are broken down into smaller units of sound, they lose meaning.
- *Syntax.* This is the way words combine to form phrases and sentences according to fixed rules. Sentences always have an object and a verb. The way the words are combined is not fixed and the words can be transformed into various different sentences. The different parts of speech do not follow at random but according to a fixed syntaxical pattern.

1.3.2 Content (semantics)

Semantics is concerned with the meaning of words and sentences and covers the vocabulary of the specific language. Falk (1981:401–417) describes the following four types of semantics:

- *Lexical semantics*, which is the literal meaning of each individual word in a sentence. For example: *The grass is green* means: ''the green grass''.
- *Sentence semantics*, which is the meaning of the sentence. Here the meaning is contained in the sentence and not just in the words alone. For example: *The doll is cute* means: ''The doll is pretty.''
- *Interpretative semantics*, which is the different ways in which the same idea can be conveyed. For example: *The man is wise* and *The man is clever* means: ''The man is sensible.''
- *Semantic relations* are the relationships between the ideas in a sentence where each word performs a specific function. For example: *The delicious aroma of roast meat and fried onion comes through the window* means: ''Delicious food is cooking''.

For Lindfors (1980:164), semantic relations also fall into a *depth category*, say, ''plant'' and ''flower'', and a *horizontal category*, such as ''rose'', ''aster'' and ''daisy''.

1.3.3 Function (pragmatics)

Pragmatics is concerned with the verbal utterances as well as the nonverbal behaviour of the speaker during communication. It denotes the various ways in which a language is used to convey a person's thoughts to others in a specific situation. In a social situation, the language and verbal utterances are normally subject to various social conventions with implicit and explicit codes prescribed by the norms of the specific community (Berko Gleason 1989:22; Heatherington 1981:418). For example: formal: *Good afternoon*; informal: *Hello*; and slang: *Hi*!

1.4 SPOKEN LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Spoken language problems may occur in any of the aspects of language mentioned. Different learners may appear to display the same type of language problem, for instance, while the causes and manifestations of the problem differ completely in each learner's case. To fully understand these finer nuances of problems in a particular aspect of language and determine their possible causes, requires special knowledge of language, which falls outside the scope of this course. What is important, however, is for you to be aware of and sensitive to possible language problems that can occur in the different aspects of language. Accordingly, these will be explained briefly.

Some learners find it difficult to express themselves clearly because they have problems with language as a communication system. The following could be the possible causes of this problem:

- an inability to communicate on an abstract level
- cultural differences
- language differences between the speaker and the listener
- problems with the inner language system caused by an inability to decode, understand and construct a message
- problems with the receptive language system which make it difficult for the learners to understand a message that they hear because they have problems organising and structuring the incoming auditive sensations (sounds) into meaningful units, and remembering them
- problems with expressive language which make it difficult for learners to communicate their experiences and meanings because they have problems pronouncing (saying) the words and sentences

Language problems may also manifest in the different dimensions of language. Learners may have problems with the following:

- Language form. Learners have problems pronouncing words in their ordered series of language sounds (phonemes), understanding the word constructs or combinations (morphemes) and combining the words in the sentence structures (syntax) in the correct sequence.
- Language content (semantics). Learners with spoken language problems do not understand the language they hear because they are unfamiliar with the literal or figurative meanings of the message. This problem may also be due to the fact that the learners are not totally familiar with the language because it is not their home language. Another cause could be that the learners do not have the basic background knowledge of the subject because the information is unknown to them.
- Language function (pragmatics). Learners with spoken language problems do not understand the deeper verbal expressions as well as the speaker's nonverbal behaviour.

1.5 UNDERLYING FACTORS OF LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

The factors discussed by Richek et al (1983:27–52) as underlying reading problems also underlie language problems. These factors are divided into the following main groups:

1.5.1 Ecological factors

i Home environment

The preschool phase of learners's life up to about five-six years of age is the most important phase in their language development. This phase is affected predominantly by their relationship with their parent(s). The role model of the parents with regard to language, such as the quality of the language that they use, largely determines the quality of the language that the learners will use. Inadequate communication between learners and their parents will result in language problems. Parents' attitude to the second language also determines their learners's attitude to the second language.

ii The school

The quality of the relationship between young learners and their teacher and fellow learners is important for their total development and consequently also for their language development. A poor relationship with fellow learners and the teacher gives rise to limited communication, offering little opportunity for language development. Inadequate instruction by the teacher also impedes the learners's language development.

Many learners receive instruction in a language medium (mostly English) with which they are not sufficiently familiar to fully grasp the subject matter presented. Teachers have also frequently not fully mastered the language in which they are required to instruct learners at school and, according to Squelch (1993:183), often do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to work with the learners. Consequently, they are not able to assist these learners in their language development and progress at school.

iii Social environment

Satisfactory interpersonal relationships ensure the development of self-confidence and a positive self-image. Poor relationships in the community result in rejection, limiting communication opportunities with others and impeding the acquisition of language skills.

iv Cultural environment

Gradual changes in the environment in which learners grow up constantly make different demands on them. Poverty and broken families are two of the major factors impeding learning and language development in learners. A large percentage of these learners can be regarded as risk learners. A lack of the essential commodities and parents' inability to give attention to their learners's cognitive and intellectual development do not contribute to the ultimate development of their learners's language ability.

A school system that teaches through the medium of a second language also contributes to learners' language problems. The learners start with a language handicap in school that tends to get bigger because they also have to use the time when new subject content is being taught to them to master the new language. At break and outside school the learners communicate with each other in their home language, which consequently impedes the development of their first as well as second language.

1.5.2 Emotional factors

i Learning problems, a poor self-image, depression, anxiety and passive withdrawal

Most learners who learn with difficulty are conscious of their inability to achieve satisfactorily. According to Lemmer (1993:158–159), if they have not apathetic and, in the words of Richek et al (1983:42), ''unavailable'' and take little interest in learning activities.

ii Animosity and aggressive behaviour

Animosity and aggressive behaviour is frequently a reaction to a child's feeling of inadequacy. They see themselves as rejected and believe that no-one understands or wants to understand them. In this state of animosity they easily relate to criminal subcultures. The language used by such subcultures is usually different from that of the rest of the community, constituting a factor that further inhibits language development.

1.5.3 Physical factors

i Hearing problems

Hearing problems lead to language problems because the learners cannot hear all the speech sounds.

ii Visual acuity (sight problems)

A lack of visual acuity also leads to language problems because the basic language concepts are learned through the sense of sight since learners name what they see.

iii Neurological dysfunction and perceptual problems

The nervous system's normal functioning is essential for language development and for this reason learners with a neurological dysfunction will probably also have language problems.

Neurological problems frequently also lead to *perceptual* problems, which impede language acquisition. The following perceptual skills are important for the acquisition of language:

a Auditive perceptual skills

- Discrimination is the ability to distinguish between different sounds, words and sentences.
- Foreground-background differentation is the ability to concentrate on relevant sounds while other sounds are audible in the background at the same time.
- Sequence is the ability to determine and remember the sequence of sounds in words and sentences.
- Closure is the ability to determine language sounds and words if they are not clearly audible in words and sentences.

b Visual perceptual skills

Since the basic language concepts are learned largely through visual inputs, the

following visual perceptual skills play an important role in the acquisition of language:

- Discrimination is the ability to distinguish between different objects that the learner sees.
- Foreground-background differentiation is the ability to concentrate on relevant visual images.
- Consistency of form/shape is the ability to determine the consistency of the form (shape) of objects.
- Spatial orientation and awareness of direction is the ability to determine the direction of the objects.
- Closure is the ability to recognise and identify symbols even if they are not fully visible in the field of vision.

iv Intellectual disability

A characteristic of learners with an intellectual disability is their language backlog.

v Gender differences

Physical and cognitive development in boys is inclined to be slower than in girls. Consequently, boys are not always ready for formal instruction when they go to school. As a result they pay less attention when new language concepts are presented in the classroom situation.

vi Inadequate nutrition

Malnutrition and undernourishment in the early stages of a child's life cause anatomical and biochemical changes in the brain which can lead to possible dysfunction and subsequent language backlog. This condition is more commonly found in communities where poverty and neglect are rife.

vii Other problems

Diseases like rheumatic fever and asthma and conditions like lack of sleep and biochemical and endocrine imbalances (disturbances) can lead to an inability to pay sufficient attention and master language concepts. Other contributory conditions are a sugar imbalance, allergies and medication that can cause temporary attention (concentration) problems and accompanying lapses or gaps in knowledge. Flavourings, colourants and certain foods can also negatively affect learners's ability to learn adequately.

Spoken language problems manifest in particular ways in learners in the foundation and intermediate school phases. It is very difficult to relate the different underlying causes of language problems to their specific manifestations, however, because a specific language problem can be caused by more than one underlying factor and a single underlying factor can manifest in more than one way in language. Although the problems can differ in the foundation and intermediate school phases, there is often a great degree of overlapping because the transition from the one phase to the other is not sudden but gradual. The language of learners in the intermediate phase, then, has characteristics that correspond to that of learners in the foundation phase, particularly among learners in Grades 3 and 4. But there are typical manifestations of language problems in the two groups that can be distinguished more clearly in the one phase than in the other.

Because language problems cover a vast field and differ from language to language, we will only deal with some basic and typical language problems found in learners with language problems. Should you want more information about a particular language and the way problems manifest in it, we recommend that you embark on your own library search for literature on the particular language that interests you.

2 MANIFESTATIONS OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE PROBLEMS AND AID FOR THEM

2.1 MANIFESTATIONS OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

2.1.1 Foundation phase

The following manifestations of language problems may occur among foundation phase learners:

i Sentences are short with very simple content

The learners' vocabulary is limited and their language is predominantly concrete. They are inclined to use simple sentence constructions, such as a noun (subject)-verb- noun (object) structure. The absence of adjectives in their sentences is conspicuous.

They are inclined to use only short sentences that deal with the concrete world that surrounds them. Their conversation is directed mainly at what they perceive through their senses. They ''um'' and ''ah'' a lot and use stereotype phrases like *''you know''* and *''and then''* in conversation.

ii Avoid conversation

These learners frequently create the impression that they are inactive and lack energy. They are sometimes shy and avoid conversation with the teacher as well as with other learners. They are inclined to be loners or only have one or at most two or three friends. In a group situation these learners rarely take the lead and although they take part in group activities, they hardly communicate with members of the group. They may merely state something or, at best, enter into a question-and-answer discussion.

These learners' conversations with teachers and friends often boil down to questions with yes, no or one-word answers.

iii Have difficulty following conversations

There are obvious signs that these learners do not fully follow the conversation. They appear uncertain and respond with *huh*?, *what*?, *pardon*? or something similar. In some cases they may even create the impression that they are not listening at all to what is being said or asked and are wholly unaware of the fact that someone is speaking to them.

These learners' answers to questions may be completely irrelevant or their verbal response or conversation during communication may deviate from the subject or even have nothing to do with the subject.

iv Do not always understand instructions

They frequently create the impression that they have not heard the instruction and, consequently, do not respond to it. Their response to an instruction may be inappropriate or they may carry out an instruction incorrectly or complete only half the instruction. Their response may be, *''Oh, I forgot''* or they may ask for the instruction to be repeated.

v Vocabulary is limited

These learners substitute a word for one with which they are not familiar. This word is not always the correct synonym for the one that they actually require. Occasionally these learners try to describe the word. They also often pronounce the word incorrectly as they cannot recall the correct pronunciation. They may even be inclined to ask the teachers or their friends for the meaning of word that they do not know.

vi Use incorrect sentence constructs

The word order of sentences may be incorrect or words may be omitted or used incorrectly. Their sentences are often short and stereotype repetition of the same sentence structure often occurs, for instance: *The boy took his suitcase. Then he said goodbye to his mother. Then he walked out of the house. Then he walked to school. Then he got to school*, et cetera.

vii Use the past tense and plural form incorrectly

This problem occurs mainly in English.

viii Are inclined to speak a form of baby language

These learners use the same word form or sentence constructs inappropriately in similar but different sentences, for example: *the prettiest girl*, *the quietest child*, *the beautifullest picture* (instead of ''the most beautiful picture'') or *the most intelligent boy*, *the most capable worker*, *the most clear answer* (instead of ''the clearest answer'') et cetera.

2.1.2 Intermediate school phase

Some intermediate phase learners' spoken language to a great extent exhibits the same problems as those of learners in the foundation phase, although the problems are not always so noticeable and may occur less frequently.

i Sentences are structurally short with simple content

These learners' language is still very concrete and concerned with the here and now. The sentences are short with a conspicuous lack of adjectives. For instance, they may say: *Many birds are flying in the sky*, while the other learners will say: *A big flock of white birds is flying high in the sky.*

ii Have difficulty following abstract conversations

These learners will have difficulty in understanding the sentence: *The nations build bridges of friendship.* They will even concretise an abstract sentence. For instance, they

may interpret the teacher's sentence: *I expect civilised behaviour at the soccer match* as: *The teacher says that we must sit absolutely still and not say a word at the soccer match.*

iii Forget longer instructions

If these learners are required to carry out more than one instruction at a time, they may forget about one or carry out the instruction incorrectly.

iv Vocabulary is limited for learners' age

If they cannot recall a word they substitute *um*, *ah*, *whatsitsname* or *thingamabob*.

v Sentence constructs are incorrect

Their word order in sentences is not quite as poor as that of learners in the foundation phase, although obvious errors still occur, such as: *The red big sun sets behind the horizon.*

vi Describe a concept because they cannot remember the term for it

These learners will give a lengthy description if they cannot recall the name of an object. However, they do not usually have problems in identifying the word if they hear it. For instance, if they hear the word *platform* they will easily be able to indicate a platform on a picture or explain what it is. But if they have to recall the word themselves, they will probably say something like: *A place where the train stops and where people get on to or get off a train.* Some learners may even go a step further and explain that the ground or floor is filled up so that people can get on to and off the train easily.

2.2 AID FOR SPOKEN LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Spoken language is the most general means of building interpersonal relationships. Consequently, sufficient time must be made for spontaneous communication. Learners should also be encouraged to read on their own since this is the most important means of broadening their general knowledge, language ability and vocabulary.

It is important that you as a teacher should encourage the parents of learners to make time for free discussion in the family daily.

In assisting learners with spoken language problems, you cannot merely concentrate on one aspect of language, since spoken language is total activity. All human behaviour is largely supported by language. We think about something and then speak about it and, on the basis of our conversation with others, we adapt our behaviour and language to the norms of the community. Aid in spoken language must therefore not only be aimed at the single manifestation of a learner's language problem but at the conversational activity as a whole with strong emphasis on the specific problem.

Here are a few ideas for aid for the manifestations of spoken language problems that were discussed in the preceding section. These ideas are limited since they are of a general nature and applicable to most of the languages used in the RSA. It is also impossible to discuss all forms of assistance in detail here. You will therefore have to undertake your own search of the library shelves for more ideas on aid in a specific

language. It would be restrictive to refer you to a few books because valuable ideas and methods in books not mentioned would then go unnoticed. Students are generally inclined to concentrate only on the list of recommended books at the end of Tutorial Letter 101. Creative teachers can easily adapt the methods in most of the books for their particular teaching situation.

2.2.1 Learners in the foundation phase

In this phase it is essential to read stories to learners. This not only accustoms them to the way in which written language is formulated, but also familiarises them with the combination of language structures. It also contributes to the expansion of the learners' vocabulary. Once the stories have been read, they may be discussed with the learners. At this level the discussion will consist predominantly of questions and answers. The learners may retell the story in dialogue form, depict the events of the story in a drawing and discuss their drawings with you the teacher or with the other learners.

Never tell learners with spoken language problems that they are speaking incorrectly since this will discourage spontaneous speech. The incorrect word or sentence structure may be reformulated correctly immediately after they have spoken without any further comment. If learners with spoken language problems repeat specific errors, these may be dealt with step by step with the learners without accentuating them as some of their general mistakes.

Group discussions should be encouraged. If learners with a language problem have a story to tell, discuss it with them on their own and encourage them to tell it to the group or class. After that everyone may discuss it. In a group situation encourage the members to ask the learners questions about an occurrence or topic that they must answer or explain. However, these discussions should be brief.

The ideas and methods discussed below are aimed at the following type of problems:

i Structurally short and simple sentences

Regularly tell and read the learners stories to broaden their general knowledge and vocabulary. Give them frequent exercises requiring the use of more ''colourful'' language, such as adjectives. Let them discuss pictures and teach them to use adjectives in their sentences, for instance the sentence: *The learners play with the ball on the lawn* may be embellished in a concrete manner as follows: *The group of learners play soccer with the big red ball on the green lawn.*

The learners are thus taught to use adjectives together with objects.

ii Avoiding conversation

Involve learners in group activities. Let them work on a simple practical project in which all the members have to make a contribution to complete the project. The members of the group decide among themselves what each member should do. Let them discuss one another's tasks. But guard against one member dominating the whole project by being the only one to offer ideas and forcing the rest of the group to carry out his or her ideas. Each learner in the group with spoken language problems should have an opportunity to take the lead in completing a specific task. The learners should indicate what they are doing and how it fits into the project as a whole.

Frequently ask the withdrawn (shy) learners questions to encourage them to take part in the discussions. Avoid questions that elicit yes, no or one-word answers. Instead of asking questions beginning with *is*, *are*, *do*, *will*, and *can*, for example, begin your questions with words like *who*, *where*, *when* and *why*.

iii Difficulty following a conversation

This problem can frequently be attributed to limited vocabulary and often occurs when learners with spoken language problems are taught in a second language. Therefore the learners should be given opportunities daily to expand their vocabulary. This can be done through discussing pictures, reading or telling stories and excursions. Building the work in class around a central theme gives the learners an opportunity to expand their vocabulary on the subject. The new vocabulary can then be consolidated through repetition of the information.

iv Do not always understand instructions

Make sure that the learners have paid attention to the instructions that they have been given. If their concentration is particularly poor, it is advisable to make some form of physical contact with them as you give them the instruction. Also make sure that they look at you when you speak to them. It is also recommended that they repeat the instruction once it has been given. However, the latter strategy is valuable only if it is not used too frequently. Learners who have difficulty in paying attention tend to rebel if they first have to repeat every instruction.

If learners do not understand instructions because they have problems understanding the language, the instructions should be explained to them. You may also discuss the instructions with the learners in a question-and-answer conversation. Alternatively, the instructions may be dramatised for the learners before they are required to carry them out.

v Limited vocabulary

Make frequent use of pictures, models, excursions and activities to explain new information to the learners and expand their vocabulary.

vi Use incorrect sentence constructs

If learners with spoken language problems are inclined to use sentence constructs incorrectly, the correct sentence construction may be taped. You may even record a number of examples of the correct sentence structure. Let the learners listen to the correct sentence structure a few times. Then let them listen to the incorrect sentence structure and allow them to explain the difference between the correct and the incorrect sentences. Then present the learners with two sentences and ask them to identify the correct sentence. They should also explain why the one sentence is incorrect.

vii Incorrect use of the past tense and plural form, particularly in English

Learners must hear correct examples frequently. Do this by often reading or telling them stories.

Although the practice of drilling word and sentence constructions is discouraged at present, frequent repetition is essential for learners with serious problems with a

specific language structure or form. This may be achieved by means of simple rhymes, songs or dramatisation.

viii Speak a type of baby talk

If learners use this type of language, the first step is to secure the cooperation of the parents. Parents should avoid using baby language with their learners. The correct form of language should be repeated for learners if they have used an incorrect form. However, the learners should not be criticised every time they speak incorrectly.

2.2.2 Learners in the intermediate phase

These learners should be encouraged to read on their own. However, even in this school phase it is still important to read interesting stories to the learners for them to hear correct language construction and use.

Topical articles and reading material that interest the learners should be read to them regularly to accustom them to the word and sentence structures of written text and to expand their vocabulary. News reports and newspaper articles about topical events may be collected over several weeks and months and the sequence of events may be discussed on a daily basis. The collected information could be pasted into a scrapbook. Learners may even be asked to predict what might happen in the future.

Important events in the lives of some of the learners may be discussed. A learner with spoken language problems who has an interesting story may open the discussion by telling the group about the event. After that the other learners are given an opportunity to ask questions about the subject or event or to make their own comments.

Group discussions should also be encouraged. To promote conversation, a learner with language problems should be included in a group of learners with the same interests, such as sport and hobbies.

Spoken language problems in the intermediate phase manifest in the following ways:

i Short sentences with simple content

Teach the learners to use adjectives and to compose compound sentences.

ii Difficulty in following abstract discussions

Encourage abstract discussions by asking anticipatory and solution-oriented questions such as:

Why do you think ...?

What would you do if you were in his place?

Why was there ...?

iii Forget long instructions

Let learners with spoken language problems analyse the instructions and classify them as individual instructions. Then they may list them orally. For example, the instruction *Go and ask Miss Miller in the library to exchange this book on domestic animals for a book on wild animals* may be broken down as follows:

Instruction 1: *I must go to the library.*

Instruction 2: *I must ask Miss Miller to exchange the book.*

Instruction 3: *The book on domestic animals must be handed in.*

Instruction 4: *I must bring back a book on wild animals.*

iv Limited vocabulary

Encourage learners to compile their own dictionaries explaining the meanings of words. When new subject matter is presented to learners in different subjects, discuss the concepts with them and make sure that they understand them. Concepts that are new and unfamiliar to them should be included in their personal dictionaries to which they may refer later if they should forget the term or its meaning.

v Incorrect sentence construction

Exposure to the correct sentence structures is essential in this case. This can be achieved by reading stories, simple interesting articles or reports on topical events.

It is also important for the teachers to have a sound command of the language so that they use the correct words and structures in their daily communication with the learners.

vi Describe a concept because unable to recall terms for concepts

Learners should include concepts in their personal dictionaries for which they cannot recall the correct terms.

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APPENDIX K

BARRIERS TO LEARNING RELATED TO WRITTEN LANGUAGE

OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING CONTENT

The following topics are dealt with in this section:

1 Written language: a definition

2 The elements of written language

- 2.1 Essay
- 2.2 Spelling
- 2.3 Handwriting

3 Manifestations of written language problems

- 3.1 Problems with essay writing
- 3.2 Spelling problems
- 3.3 Handwriting problems

4 Help for problems with written language

- 4.1 General guidelines
- 4.2 Help with essay writing
- 4.3 Help with spelling
- 4.4 Help with handwriting

Written language is the most noticeable way in which learners' academic problems are revealed. This extends across the entire domain of schoolwork and is essentially the yardstick by which the quality of their work is measured. This also determines whether learners pass the year or not. Consequently, it is the duty of every teacher to act immediately if learners have a problem with their written language.

1 WRITTEN LANGUAGE: A DEFINITION

Written language is the highest form of communication. While reading is an extension of receptive language (audible language, ie, that can be heard), written language is an extension of expressive language (speech). Like reading, written language does not develop spontaneously, but must be consciously learnt. Both the activities of reading and written language have to do with meaning attribution via the use of written symbols (letters) (Dickinson, Wolf & Stotsky 1989:242–243).

Hammill (1990:179) describes writing as ''a highly complex method of expression involving the integration of eye-hand, linguistic and conceptual abilities''. Larson's (1987:35) description is more detailed: ''Writing is a highly complex form of human communication. To write effectively, a person must generate ideas to write about, select words that adequately express the thoughts, and use acceptable grammar. Additionally, the writer must transcribe the message through handwriting and typewriting, using punctuation, capitalization, and spelling rules to make it as readable as possible.''

Written language is based on a system where graphic symbols (letters) represent the sounds of the spoken language (Rosner 1993:64). The writer directs an appeal to the reader's visual senses. The reader must process the graphic symbols (letters) visually-perceptually and transfer them to the language sounds of the spoken language. In the case of silent reading, the symbols are interpreted in the mind into the ideas and thoughts for which they stand.

Written language has the following characteristics:

- The message can be interpreted at a distance.
- The interpretation can occur long after the message has been composed.
- This occurs independently of nonverbal language, such as gestures, intonation and facial expressions.
- To be able to understand the written text, the reader must be familiar with the language in which the writer wrote the message.

2 THE ELEMENTS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE

To use written language, learners must master the following three elements: the *essay, spelling* and *handwriting*.

2.1 ESSAY

In the case of an essay, writers put their ideas in writing according to particular grammatical structures, rules and language usage. Here the rules are applied more strictly than in ordinary spoken language.

2.1.1 Components involved in essay writing

In essay writing three related components operate, namely, the *cognitive, linguistic* and *stylistic* components.

i The cognitive component

The cognitive component of written language involves the ability to write logically, coherently and sequentially so that it is understandable for the reader (Hammill 1990:180). The writer makes use of a number of cognitive processes, such as thought and language and metalinguistic skills. The information is based on the writer's experiences and existing knowledge that has already been cognitively processed. Furthermore, cognitive processes such as comparisons, contrasts, analyses, syntheses and evaluations are needed (Dickinson, Wolf & Stotsky 242–243).

ii The linguistic component

The linguistic component has to do with the use of appropriate syntactical (grammatical) and semantic (meaning) dimensions, namely, words, plurals and

subject-verb correlations. Because the pragmatic dimension of language, such as facial expression and intonation, does not play a role, the writer must convey this dimension by means of word play and descriptions. The way thoughts are expressed differs among individuals, social groups, geographical areas and ethnic groups. The important thing, then, is that the written piece is understandable (Hammill 1990:180).

iii The stylistic component

This involves the use of capital letters and punctuation. Learners must first master the rules for capital letters and punctuation before they can write effectively.

2.1.2 Stages in writing an essay

The writer progresses through three stages in the composition of an essay (Hammill & Bartel 1990:182–183):

i Prewriting phase

In this phase people choose a subject, collect information on what they want to write about, and compose a framework for presenting this information.

Hammill and Bartel (1990:183) name three aspects that play a role during this phase: *input* — the collection of information; *motivation* — the need to communicate; *aim* — the intention.

ii Writing phase

In this phase writers are chiefly concerned with the meaning of their message. They use their handwriting and spelling skills and language ability, such as the use of words, sentence construction, paragraphs and the ability to organise information. At the same time, they check what they write.

iii Post-writing phase

In this phase the written product is completed.

These same writing phases apply when other forms of written work, such as stories, poetry, articles, letters, notes, records or applications, are written.

2.2 SPELLING

Spelling is the ability to put letters together according to accepted rules to form words. As Hammill and Bartel (1990:219) put it, ''Spelling is the forming of words from letters according to acceptable usage.''

To be able to spell, learners should be familiar with the following:

- letter-sound relationships
- variations of letter-sound relationships
- vowel combinations
- consonant combinations
- consonant-vowel combinations
- word analysis and synthesis of

— letters in words
— syllables in words

- spelling rules
- variations of spelling rules
- prefixes and suffixes
- punctuation

2.3 HANDWRITING

Handwriting refers to the ability to express understandable ideas and messages in the form of graphic symbols (letters, words and sentences) with a writing apparatus. According to Larsen (1987:41), this is the mechanistic component of written language. Handwriting is a visual-motor action and the quality of the letter formation largely determines the legibility of the written text. This requires the following from the writer:

- skilful hand-eye coordination
- knowledge of the direction of writing (from left to right)
- the ability to visually discriminate letters and words

The following factors can lead to handwriting problems:

- poor vision, perceptual and motor problems
- hand dominance (left or right hand preference) that is not yet established
- emotional problems, such as tension and anxiety
- poor motivation and an unwillingness to venture

In the first two school years, the emphasis falls on learning how to write. Through practice and repetition, the neuromuscular mechanisms develop which enable the writer to skilfully perform the act of writing. In the third school year, the learner's handwriting reaches a plateau. By this time, the formation of letters is largely established and the learner can automatically perform the writing movements quickly and fluidly.

3 MANIFESTATIONS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

3.1 PROBLEMS WITH ESSAY WRITING

Learners may have problems with one or more of the components involved in essay writing or in one of the three writing phases.

3.1.1 Problems in the components of essay writing

i Cognitive problems

These problems are difficult to identify because they are vague and subjective. As a result of disordered thinking and metalinguistic problems, learners' written expressions may be simple, repetitive, incoherent and disordered. In addition, their background knowledge can be limited and their thoughts purely concrete. This will

come to the fore in written work in the form of simple, short, repetitive and disordered sentences. The text may reflect superficiality, concrete thoughts and a lack of logical reasoning.

Cognitive problems can be caused by intellectual or learning disabilities. Environmental deprivation and poor home circumstances can also contribute to cognitive handicaps because these learners' learning opportunities are limited. They therefore do not possess the experience or general knowledge that would enable them to understand and master a variety of new concepts. At school, these learners have to master the basic concepts while the rest of the learners have already mastered them and only need to build further on them.

ii Linguistic problems

Learners with poor language abilities and a limited vocabulary tend to forget words, use the wrong words and keep their sentences short and to limit themselves to stereotypical sentence structures composed of basic high frequency words. They omit words or use words that do not fit into the context. They write merely because the teacher requires them to and do not go to much effort to express themselves properly in written language or to voluntarily contribute to the development of their written language abilities.

Although language problems can be caused by disabilities in the intellectual, learning or hearing areas, they may also be caused by a limited exposure to the language of instruction at school. The problem occurs especially in learners whose home language differs from the language media used in school. This problem applies to most learners in South African schools.

Language deprivation is another cause that teachers should always keep in mind. Learners who do not communicate at home and in their environment with adults and other learners (learners) with an advanced level of language development have little chance of using language at the required level at school. Many learners' parents are absent from home for the entire day and the learners' communication is largely limited to communication with other learners whose language skills are more or less on a similar level. In homes where learners also seldom come into contact with formal reading material, there is little opportunity for language enrichment.

iii Stylistic problems

Learners with learning problems often find the use of capital letters and punctuation difficult because they do not understand them and attach little value to them. They repeatedly begin written sentences and write names with small letters. The words and sentences flow into each other, with no spaces left between the words. The use of punctuation is limited and the entire section of text is written without any full stops between the sentences. Only the first word of the text begins with a capital letter and the last sentence ends with a full stop. Commas and other punctuation marks are completely omitted. By contrast, some learners use capital letters, full stops and commas freely and liberally — but not in the correct places. Learners with learning problems are often inclined to leave no spaces between words or to leave spaces in the wrong places in the words.

A major cause of this problem is that learners very seldom encounter written language before school or afterwards. Although disabilities can also lead to stylistic problems, these problems appear more often in learners from literature-poor environments and homes.

3.1.2 Problems in one of the writing phases of the essay

i Prewriting phase

If learners have sensory (hearing or vision), perceptual and/or cognitive problems, they will struggle to obtain the necessary information on a subject. The quality of their impressions will also be poorer than that of learners who do not have these problems.

Learners who are emotionally unsure may lack the motivation to want to write. They may possibly not even see or understand the purpose of writing.

ii Writing phase

Because of language or intellectual problems, learners may struggle to formulate their message clearly and logically. Problems with spelling and handwriting can also contribute to the learner's message not being transmitted clearly to the reader. Poor spelling and handwriting can render the text illegible.

iii Post-writing phase

If learners have problems in the first two phases, they will necessarily not be able to produce an adequate end product.

3.1.3 Problems in the foundation and intermediate school phase

The following problems occur fairly commonly in the foundation and intermediate school phase among learners who have problems writing an essay:

i Foundation phase

In this phase the following written language problems may be discerned:

- Sentences are short and simple, for example:

  I walk.
  Mary sits.
  Sipho walks around.
  Anna works hard.

- The same sentence construction (structure) is repeated, for example:

  The flower is very pretty.
  The cake is very nice.
  The boy is very bad.

- Sentence word order is faulty, for example:

  I want now the cake.

- Sentences are incomplete.
- Words are omitted from sentences.
- Words and phrases are repeated, for example:

  The learners sit in sit in *the classroom.*

- Learners can give a sentence correctly orally but cannot write it correctly.
- Learners cannot write dictation.
- Spacing between letters and words is faulty or poor.

- Learners use capital letters or punctuation incorrectly or omit them.

ii Intermediate school phase

The following written language problems may be discerned in the intermediate school phase:

- Sentences are short and simple.
- Written essays are short and the content is incoherent and simple.
- Sentence construction is faulty (word order)
- Learners can give a sentence correctly orally but cannot write it correctly.
- Work is often incomplete.
- No paragraphs are used.

3.2 SPELLING PROBLEMS

Gillet and Temple (1990:301) note that the spelling of beginners differs from that of older learners. When learners try to write words that they have not learnt before, they base this on their existing knowledge of spelling, in other words, letter-sound relationships, spelling rules, word analysis, and so on. If learners write these strange words incorrectly, you should consider this a ''discovery or an experiment'' rather than an error. These ''discoveries'' give an indication of the level of learners' knowledge of words in written form and, if they are not criticised, learners are encouraged to experiment further with writing strange words.

Learners in the foundation school phase tend to spell phonetically. Because some sounds can hardly be heard when pronounced in words, these learners, especially those with spelling problems, are inclined to ignore the letters that represent these sounds when they analyse the word, and omit them when they write it, for example:

- Nasal sounds [m] and [n] in front of a plosive, for example, *hand, stamp, number, wonder* are unclear and often written as *had, stap, nuber* and *woder* (in Afrikaans *kamp, rand* and *donkie* are written as *kap*, *rad* and *dokie*).
- The plosive in polysyllable words is omitted and only the nasal sounds [m] and [n] are written, for example *under* is written as *uner* (in Afrikaans *amper* becomes *amer*).
- Letters which are not pronounced are left out: *knee* and *lamb* are written as *nee* and *lam.*
- The neutral vowel [e] is often omitted, especially if learners are taught to pronounce the plosive with the [e] sound after the plosive, thus [pe], [be], [de], [te] and [ke], for example, *paper, bell* and *chicken* are spelt *papr*, *bll*, *chickn*.
- The neutral vowel [e] is added because learners have been taught to pronounce it when they pronounce the plosive [pe], [be], [te], [de] and [ke], for example, *pocket*, *dot* and *kind* become *peocket*, *deot* and *keind*.

When writing in English, learners with learning problems are inclined to spell phonetically, especially if the spelling system in their first language is phonetically based. Consequently, they find the different ways the vowels and vowel groups are pronounced confusing. Compare, for example, the **ea** vowel sound in the following words: *hear, bear, weak* and the **ai** vowel sound in words like *hair* and *wait.* Learners cannot rely on phonetic spelling at all when they try to write these words, but are dependent on the visual image of the words. Learners who have problems remembering the visual image more often write these words incorrectly.

The following are more typical spelling problems which occur fairly commonly among primary school learners:

3.2.1 The foundation phase

In the foundation phase the following spelling problems can be discerned. Learners

- do not know letter-sound relationships
- have problems with single vowels and vowel constructions (write them incorrectly or swop them around)
- are unsure of the consonant combinations, for example, *ng* and *nk* as in *thing* and *bank (bangk)*; and *sh* and *ch* as in *wish* and *which (whish)*
- cannot remember the visual image (sight words)
- cannot determine elements in words and consequently, omit or add letters, or write letters in the wrong sequence, for example, *tip, tirp, rtip* for *trip*
- write words the wrong way around, for example, *eno* for *one*
- spell phonetically, for example, *cot* for *caught* (faulty pronunciation in particular has an effect on spelling here: compare especially the word *work* which is pronounced *wark* and *sheep* which is pronounced *ship*. The pronunciation of a dialect is also reflected in spelling, for example, the word *no* which is pronounced *nei*.)
- spell a single word in different ways without success, for example, *to* is spelled *too, two* or *tou* (compare the spelling of *you*)
- cannot remember or apply simple spelling rules, so that a word is never given the *silent e (fairy e)*, for example

3.2.2 The intermediate school phase

Learners in the intermediate phase often make the same type of mistakes as learners in the foundation phase, except that the degree of difficulty of the words differs. For example, they will write certain high frequency words (such as *happy, light*) correctly, but more difficult and polysyllable words which have the same spelling structure are written in the same incorrect way as learners in the foundation phase, for example, *hapiness* for *happiness, litening* for *lightning,* and so on.

These learners

- do not apply spelling rules correctly or else ignore them (in Afrikaans, learners struggle especially with rules for open and closed-syllable words)
- add unnecessary letters to words, for example, *dress* is spelled *dresses*
- have problems in identifying syllables in words

3.3 HANDWRITING PROBLEMS

Although a neat and attractive handwriting makes written work more accessible, this should not be the teacher's greatest requirement. The important thing is for handwriting to be effective, in other words, legible. The following aspects enhance the legibility of handwriting:

- the formation of the letters
- the spacing of letters and words
- the slope of the letters
- the line quality
- the size of the letters
- the placement of the letters in the lines

Pay particular attention to the following aspects when you observe learners while they are writing:

- the learners' body posture, such as leaning forward against the table with their heads close to the paper
- the learners' writing speed, namely too slow or irregular
- the learners' pencil grip and how tightly (hard) or loosely they hold the pencil



Make sure that learners hold the writing apparatus correctly. The following is the correct way and facilitates the act of writing:

Let learners lean the writing apparatus gently against the front of the middle finger, opposite the nail bed. Press the writing apparatus lightly against the middle finger with the point of the thumb. (Interestingly, many writers, both adults and learners, press the writing apparatus incorrectly against the middle finger, with the joint of the thumb closest to the hand. This problem is mainly caused by teachers' inattentiveness during the person's first two years of school.)

- the pressure exerted by the learners on the pencil point (too hard or too soft)
- learners quickly become tired when they write
- the equal size of the letters
- the placement of the letters within the lines and on the paper, namely, parallel with the top or bottom edge of the paper
- letters do not fit into the line, but stick out above or under, or ''drift'' around within the lines
- learners stop often before changing the line direction of the letter, for example, during the formation of the letter *n*, they draw the first line downwards, then stop, and then they draw the line upwards and stop again before drawing the curve and the second downward leg
- the quality of the different letters and words varies
- the quality of the learners' handwriting changes from day to day
- the spacing of letters and words differs
- the slope of the writing differs from letter to letter
- aspects of letters are repeated or omitted, for example, the letter *m* is drawn with three curves above or only one.
- the handwriting is very shaky and uncertain

In addition to the above problems, foundation and intermediate phase learners may also have the following problems:

3.3.1 The foundation phase

In this phase handwriting problems manifest as follows. Learners:

- do not know the shape of the letter
- begin the letter in the wrong place, for example, drawing the stroke of the *d* first and then attaching the circle afterwards (and this way of forming the letters often causes learners to confuse the *b, d* and even the *q*, turn them around or even rotate them)
- leave out parts of the letters, such as the line that crosses the *t*, the second curve on the *m*, which is then written as *n,* or the second part of the letter *w*, which is then written as *v*
- add extra lines to the letters, *like r*, which is written as *n*, *n* as *m* and *v* as *w*
- write poorly formed and practically illegible letters

- have problems changing from printing to cursive writing
- turn the letters around (ie, reverse them) or rotate them, for example, by pointing the lower curve of the *t* to the left and confusing the *n* and the *u*
- place the letters incorrectly in the line, for example, in the word *tool*, placing the upper line of the *t* alongside the *oo* which follows, and having the *l* stand out above the *oo*, resulting in the word being written as *t*ool



Please note that turning the letters *b*/*d* around in the foundation phase is of no great significance, especially if the learners are still in their first or second year of school.

3.3.2 The intermediate school phase

In this phase problems manifest as follows:

- Learners confuse the joining line of the *r,* the *v* and the *w* with that of the *i* and the *u*, or vice versa, in cursive writing.
- The spacing of the letters in cursive writing is very wide — namely, the joining lines between the letters are very long.
- The handwriting is untidy and illegible.
- The slope of the letters is disproportionate.
- The size of the letters differs.
- The letters are spaced uneqally and erratically.
- The letter formation is faulty and letters may still be rotated and reversed.

4 HELP FOR PROBLEMS WITH WRITTEN LANGUAGE

4.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

Encourage your learners to read regularly and read stories to the class regularly yourself so that they become used to written language, enjoy it and develop an interest in it.

Hammill and Bartel (1990:198) provide the following general guidelines for developing learners' written language abilities (these guidelines chiefly apply to the phase although there are aspects that foundation phase learners could be introduced to):

- Make time for teaching written language. During these periods motivate the learners and give them adequate guidance. Also give learners the opportunity to write something themselves at least four times a week.
- Expose the learners to a wide variety of written tasks so that they can understand the purpose of writing. Vary the tasks by asking learners to convince their readers of something; to provide information or to entertain, for example.
- Create a social climate that is conducive to the development of writing skills by creating a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom and letting the learners develop a class newspaper together, for example.
- Integrate writing not only in languages but with other academic subjects too.
- Guide the learners to write meaningfully by explaining how they should gather

their information during the prewriting phase, write the information down during the writing phase and use the information in the post-writing phase.
- Help the learners to automatically use the skills which will enable them to write information down on paper.
- Develop the learners' knowledge of good written work by letting them evaluate the quality of their own writing themselves.
- Help the learners to do more sophisticated writing by setting guidelines.
- Show the learners how to improve their own quality of work by setting goals. Guide the learners to evaluate their written work and then set goals for improving on their efforts.
- Avoid teaching styles which do not contribute to the improvement of a learner's written work. For example, do not point out all learners' mistakes, but only the few that continually affect the written quality of their work, such as high frequency words which they use often but continually write incorrectly.

4.2 HELP WITH ESSAY WRITING

Always consider a learner's writing attempts as a learning opportunity. By being overcritical when learners make mistakes, you rob them of the confidence and daring they need to freely try to write. This often causes learners to write only the bare essentials and never venture to experiment with and expand their writing.

4.2.1 The foundation phase

Learners in this phase can be helped in the following ways:

- Expand their sentence construction by asking who, what, why and when questions. You would not ask all these questions to learners in this phase , but only one or sometimes two.

  If, for example, a learner's sentence reads, *Joe sits*, ask the question: Where does Joe sit? The learner's answer will probably be something like this: *On the chair* or *At the table*. Help the learner then to write the complete sentence: *Joe sits on the chair* or *Joe sits at the table*.

  The question that is asked generally depends on the type of sentence that the learner has written, for example:

  Sipho walks. Question: Where? or When?

- If learners repeat the same sentence construction, give them the first word or two of the sentence and let them complete it, for example:

  The flower is very pretty. The pretty flower ...
  The cake is very nice. The nice cake ...
  The boy is very bad. The bad boy ... and so on.

- If learners struggle with the sentence word order, say the correct word order first and follow this with their incorrect one. Let them choose the correct one of the two, for example:

  I want now to eat.
  I want to eat now.

- If learners do not complete their sentences, read the sentence to them and ask if it is finished. If they cannot hear it, ask a who? what? or where? question, for example:

Anne did not want. Question: What did Anne not want?

Repeat the sentences as the learners started them and let the learners repeat them and complete them.

- When words are omitted from sentences, you can repeat the sentences for the learners and ask them whether a word is missing. If they cannot determine where the word is missing, write the incorrect sentence on a piece of paper. Cut the words out and let the learners say the sentence while pointing to the words one by one. If they point to the incorrect word when they come to the place where the missing word belongs, try to discover the missing word with them by talking about it.
- If learners' oral sentences are correct but incorrect when written, give them a strip of paper, for example, and ask them to cut a piece of paper for each word that they say. Put the pieces next to each other and let the learners write each word of the sentence chronologically on the pieces. Another idea is to let learners record their sentences on a tape recorder and then read the written sentences together with the recorded ones.
- If learners cannot write dictation because they forget the sentence, they can cut a piece of paper for each word which is dictated. They must then try to establish which word represents each piece of paper. If learners still have problems with the sentence, with your help, they can write down each word on a piece of paper. Always begin with short sentences before attempting longer ones.
- If learners have problems with the spacing of words, they can use some kind of measure to place between the words. Ice-cream sticks are durable and ideal for this purpose.
- Learners who are inclined to leave out capital letters and full stops can write these in with a coloured pencil. For example, the capital letter of each sentence can be green, the first letter of a name, blue, and full stops, red.

4.2.2 The intermediate school phase

Because learners in the intermediate phase tend to exhibit the same type of problems as those in the foundation phase, the methods of help for the aspects discussed above are not repeated here.



Note:

Always remember to keep the level of the learners in mind when helping them. Guard against treating intermediate learners in the same way as foundation learners. The content that you present to them should also not be on the same level as the foundation phase. If you did, you would probably not succeed in capturing their attention, because learners in the intermediate phase are very sensitive to anything that still makes them look and feel ''like a little child''.

The methods used for foundation phase learners may be used for intermediate phase learners from time to time, but should not form part of your regular teaching style. Learners in the intermediate phase are reasonably prepared to accept these teaching methods as long as the reasons given for this are thoroughly discussed with them first and are limited. As far as possible, you should work out a strategy with the learner of how to try to solve a problem.

If learners' written essays are short and lack paragraphs, and you find that the content is simple and disjointed, you can discuss the topic with them beforehand.

You or the learners can write each aspect discussed on a piece of paper or loose card. Then, together with the learner, arrange the cards in their logical order. Then the paragraphs can be determined by dividing the cards into paragraphs. When both you and the learner are satisfied with the way the cards have been sorted, the learners can write their essay using the order and paragraphs indicated on the cards.

4.3 HELP WITH SPELLING

Gillet and Temple (1990:301) emphasise the interwoven link between spelling and word recognition. They compare this to the two sides of a coin, where the recognition of the written word is the one face of the coin and the writing of the word the other face. For this reason, these authors find it important that reading and spelling are taught in close interaction with each other. If spelling and reading are taught as two different subjects, as is done in many schools, the integration of reading and spelling is lost. Learners also have less opportunity to experiment with words by writing them down themselves, and have less chance to discover the spelling structure in written form.

Letting readers repeat words by writing them on worksheets and in spelling books, by sorting them into groups, completing sentences, learning lists and writing them in a sentence or two is of little value. The learners remember the words when they write a spelling test but forget them soon afterwards. When they write these same words in their functional written work or in other school subjects, they make a variety of mistakes. The frustration that teachers and parents experience when a child knows words one day and not the next is succinctly described by Gillet and Temple (1990:302): ''It's almost like their minds empty themselves in order to fill up on the next week''.

The most successful way in which learners learn to spell is to spend a lot of time reading both outside and in the school, doing plenty of writing work and experimenting with spelling and spelling structure while progressing through the various developmental stages of spelling.

Since spelling and written language go hand in hand, it is essential that the learners are not simply able to write individual words correctly, but that they can do this in sentences and other subjects such as Maths, History and Geography. Correct spelling and sentence construction in written text is therefore important in all the written work that learners do. For this reason, it is necessary that learners obtain sufficient practise in writing so that they know the letter-sound relationships and can automatically apply spelling rules without even having to work these out beforehand. This interrupts the flow of the learner's thoughts while they write.



Learners should also learn that written work serves a purpose outside the classroom by involving the parents with the development of learners' spelling skills. Nevertheless, it is not the parents' task to formally teach spelling at home. They should merely be encouraged to motivate their learners at home to write correctly and to develop a pride in their writing. For example, when parents write a letter to Grandma or Grandpa, they can let the child add a few paragraphs to the letter. If learners make many writing mistakes, they could first write the paragraph on a separate piece of paper and then parent and child can correct this together before the child rewrites the message themselves in the letter.

The following aspects should apply when helping both junior and senior primary learners:

- Concentrate on vowels, vowel combinations and consonants.
- Use cognitive input to help learners apply spelling rules, for example, each syllable must include a vowel or vowel combination.
- Emphasise word rhythm. By letting learners sing songs, an awareness of the different syllables in words can be nurtured. Complex words like lo-co-mo-tive have a certain rhythm when they are pronounced. In most cases, words like these are divided between the syllables.
- Let the learners use and write the words that they have to learn in full sentences.
- Encourage the learners to control every aspect of their written work before they are satisfied with it.
- Establish the link between the letters or letter groups by using repetitive exercises like card games or mnemonic techniques, for example:

  Look at the cook in the book!

  In Afrikaans, one could use something like: Oe! sê Boet, ''Ek is so moeg''.

- An important aspect of spelling aid is to make learners aware of certain consistencies within the spelling system which make it possible to convey certain concepts from one word to another. Although this rule applies to English, the English spelling system is less phonetic than Afrikaans, for example, and so learners must rely to a greater extent on visual imaging where they must remember the word on the basis of its form and detail.
- Teaching the spelling rules according to the learners' level. Learners should learn spelling rules as early as possible. Although these rules do not apply to all situations, they are valuable because they facilitate the spelling of many words with the same spelling structure. Spelling rules can usually be used more consistently in a language with a more phonetic spelling structure such as Afrikaans. The following Afrikaans spelling rules can be used fairly consistently with the last syllable of a word: when a word's last syllable includes the neutral vowel sound [e], such as in **besi**g, maklik, amper, tafel and kuiken, the [e] sound is written as an *i* if the word ends with the letters *g* or *k*. English spelling is less phonetic, although the following rule can be presented in the form of a mnemonic technique: draw a picture of the ''curly *c*'' and the ''kicking *k*''. The *k* kicks the *c* away like a rugby player kicking a ball. Explain to the learners that you never find a *c* after a *k* in a word because the *k* always kicks the *c* away.
- Use a mirror to make the learners aware of the difference between the rounded and unrounded vowels such as the *i* and *u* if they cannot differentiate between them. Learners can look at the shape of their mouths in the mirror when they pronounce the two letters. In saying the *i* sound, the lips do not form a round shape, while they are round when the *u* sound is pronounced.
- Never teach the letters *b* and *d* to learners in the same session, not only because the shape of the letters is similar, but because the sounds are also alike and can therefore be confusing. Concentrate on only one letter, depending on the letter which appears most in that particular lesson. (In Afrikaans, the letter *b* has a low frequency so that you would concentrate chiefly on the *d* sound.)
- Use rhymes to teach consonants and consonant constructions, for example: Baby Blue buys black boots. (In Afrikaans, one example is Die lang bang meisie sit al lank so stil op die bank.)
- Existing spelling programmes should only be worked in at the end of a lesson to establish a certain spelling structure. Never use such programmes from beginning to end. They are, however, useful for teachers who are not well enough acquainted with the teaching of spelling.

- When you teach a specific spelling structure, concentrate on high frequency words that the learners will use most often in their written work.



Motivate the learners to freely commit their thoughts to paper. Avoid an overemphasis on perfect spelling; this dampens learners' enthusiasm to write and they are consequently not prepared to experiment with written language.



Note:

If learners still experience serious problems with spelling towards the end of the primary school phase, you should consider not counting spelling during examinations. There are learners who never learn to spell correctly, although these are a minority. Never stop trying to help a learner with spelling by simply accepting that he or she will never be able to spell. Encourage them to use a dictionary if they are unsure of the spelling of a word. Always praise learners if they make a visible effort to try to spell words correctly or to revise and control their work when they have finished it.

4.4 HELP WITH HANDWRITING

There are learners who will never be able to write neatly. Their letters and the slope of the letters are uneven and their books are untidy, creating the impression of carelessness and a ''don't-care'' attitude. The pages are crumpled and the corners bent. In this case, it is extremely important that you encourage the learners to care for their books and try to write in such a way that they can be proud of their work. This can be done by spacing words evenly. Pride in writing should encourage learners to try to further improve their written work.



Note:

Never make snide remarks about a learner's handwriting. Such remarks are damaging and will never have the desired effect on the learner's handwriting.

- Make sure that learners begin words at the correct place. It could be useful to provide examples, to make a clear mark where each letter should begin and use arrows to indicate in which direction the letters should be formed.
- If learners experience problems with the spacing of words, they can use a measure to place between the words when they write. Ice-cream sticks are ideal and durable.
- Some learners tend to leave big spaces between printed letters. Encourage them to place letters so that they almost touch each other.
- Handwriting should be practised through repeated writing movements. The writing movements can also be practised to the sound of music or other rhythmic exercises. Ensure that the movements are made in a fluid and relaxed motion.
- If the letter formation is uneven, guidelines can be provided for learners to write inside.



You should give special attention to left-handed writers. Take note of the way that they place the paper in front of them as this contributes greatly to a more comfortable writing posture, better writing results and neater work.

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APPENDIX L

BARRIERS TO LEARNING RELATED TO READING

OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING CONTENT

The following topics are discussed in this section:

1 Reading: a brief overview

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The concept ''reading''
- 1.3 The components of reading
- 1.4 Reading readiness
- 1.5 Underlying factors of reading problems

2 Manifestations of reading problems

- 2.1 General manifestations of reading problems
- 2.2 Reading problems in a second language

3 Aid for reading problems

- 3.1 Planning the aid
- 3.2 Choice of reading material
- 3.3 General guidelines for reading aid
- 3.4 Help for reading coding and reading comprehension

1 READING: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Unlike spoken language, learners do not learn to read by simply watching and listening to how others do it. Reading is a skill that is consciously learnt and must be practised. There are learners, however, who learn to read without having had an adult deliberately teach them. These learners usually come into contact with written language at an early age, carefully observe how others read, associate written words with pictures and follow the written text while they are being read to.

Under normal circumstances, learners are ready to learn to read at about five to six years of age. If they learn the basic reading skills at this stage, they learn to read more easily and better than illiterate older learners and adults. People who learn to read as adults find it more difficult to learn to read fluently. They also seldom read so well that they can make a living from it or read for relaxation or as a hobby.

Successful readers are usually those who have been exposed to books and read to from an early age, and therefore, associate reading with something pleasant and relaxing and as part of their daily life. It is the task of teachers to help all the learners in their class to learn to read to the best of their ability and, even more importantly, to develop a love for reading.

1.2 THE CONCEPT ''READING''

The American National Institute of Educationis report, *Becoming a nation of readers* (1985), defines reading as follows:

> Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written text. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information (Ekwall & Shanker 1989:3).

For Dickinson et al (1989:231–233), the act of reading implies the following:

- It is an interaction between various complex cognitive components and processes, whose simultaneous integration ensures fluent reading.
- The gradual development from one reading developmental phase to another leads to the automatisation of the act of reading. Readers eventually do not concentrate on the perceptual subprocess, but can direct their attention to understanding and meaning attribution.
- The reader is continually involved with the written message.
- Learnerss' reading abilities and reading attitudes are not only influenced by their level of development and intellectual competence, but also by the presence of psychological and physiological problems and the method of teaching.

1.3 THE COMPONENTS OF READING

According to Ekwall and Shanter (1989:3), *decoding* and *reading comprehension* are the two main components of reading.

- *Decoding* occurs when written words are translated into spoken words. This requires a process of recognition and analysis. Decoding is therefore related to the *formal dimension of language*. Learners must learn to relate the sound units (phonemes), word parts (morphemes) and language rules (syntax) of spoken language with the written symbols.
- *Reading comprehension* is the main goal of reading. According to Best (1989:380), people read in order to understand the message, that is the content of the text. Reading comprehension is related to the semantic and pragmatic elements of meaning of language. For good reading comprehension, readers must understand the *superficial* information, in other words, the literal meaning of the words and sentences, as well as the *underlying* information. They must therefore be able to perceive the meanings that the writer wishes to convey without necessarily putting them into words.

Both *word recognition* (decoding) and *reading comprehension* must occur simultaneously when a person reads. For this reason, learners must learn from the very start to decode the written text and to give meaning to it.

1.4 READING READINESS

A prerequisite for reading is reading readiness. If learners are not ready to learn to read when they enter the formal learning stage, they will probably have problems in mastering the act of reading.

According to Ekwall and Shanker (1989:122–132), reading readiness is related to a number of aspects, which they list in the following order of importance:

- an understanding of what reading means, namely, that written text represents verbal language
- a certain level of language development, interest in reading, social and emotional readiness and a positive self-concept
- certain intellectual, visual, auditory and perceptual skills
- a level of development that is determined by aspects such as age, sex and general health

1.5 UNDERLYING FACTORS OF READING PROBLEMS

Apart from learners who are not reading ready, learners with learning problems can be divided into the following groups:

- *Learning disabled learners*, who may be considered dyslexic because they have problems reading due to neurological dysfunctions
- *Slow learners*, who, because of their limited intellectual abilities, cannot progress like the other learners in the class
- *Unwilling learners*, who feel negative towards reading due to limited reading opportunities and a lack of encouragement at home
- *Underachievers*, who do not read as well as they should, taking into account their potential (because these learners often read better than the average learners in the class they are generally not noticed by the teacher)
- *Learners with limited reading opportunities* who, because of the difference between their home language and the language medium of the school, do not perform according to their true potential. (If, in addition, these learners also come from deprived homes and have had limited exposure to reading, the situation is exacerbated — more about this later.)

2 MANIFESTATIONS OF READING PROBLEMS

According to Gillet and Temple (1990:361–362), learners with reading problems show the following characteristics (these characteristics also apply to learners who have reading problems in a second language):

- a poor sight vocabulary
- an excessive reliance on decoding, without success
- read stiltedly and disjointedly
- read slowly and inaccurately
- a poor reading comprehension
- limited reading opportunities, which further impoverishes their ability to read
- a poor general knowledge of language structure which is built up through reading experience
- a poor self-concept and low motivation to read

2.1 PARTICULAR MANIFESTATIONS OF READING PROBLEMS

Reading problems of learners in the foundation and intermediate school phases show many similarities, although their intensity may differ in the various phases. For example, foundation phase learners have a greater tendency to sound out each word before they read it, for example, *c-a-t, cat* and *t-a-l-k, talk*, while learners in the intermediate phase are more inclined to sound out longer, compound words, for example, *str-aight* and *ma-ter-i-al*.

The intermediate group, unlike the younger learners, are also not inclined to repeat the entire word after sounding it out.

As far as reading comprehension is concerned, it is not always so easy to discover when foundation phase readers' reading comprehension is poor. This is because their reading content usually concentrates more on the concrete level while that of more advanced readers requires a great deal of interpretation.

The following manifestations of reading problems occur in the various phases:

2.1.1 Foundation phase

In the foundation phase reading problems manifest as follows. Learners

- do not know the link between letters and sounds
- can only recognise a very few words on sight, such as their own name and high frequency words such as *is* and *and*
- can sometimes not even recognise simple high frequency words such as *the* and *did* and sound these out even when they must read them
- read slowly, sound out most words, repeat words or parts of words
- add words which are not there to sentence or leave words out
- read things that are not in the text
- cannot answer direct questions on the section they have read
- cannot tell about what they have read

2.1.2 Intermediate school phase

In this phase reading problems manifest as follows. Learners

- read words and phrases incorrectly
- show a poor knowledge of what they have read, especially do not understand the underlying meaning of the text
- read slowly and stiltedly
- get stuck on longer words, read them incorrectly or are completely unable to read them
- react poorly to punctuation marks
- avoid all forms of reading
- have problems with reading aloud
- show a poor understanding of reading work in all subjects
- find it difficult to make deductions from sections read and learn new concepts from prescribed written material

All the above characteristics also occur in learners who have problems with reading in a second language.

2.2 READING PROBLEMS IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

When young learners can already read in their first language, they generally learn to read in a second language easily. Bouwer (1992:82) ascribes this to three reasons:

- They have already mastered the techniques of reading.
- They can decode the text.
- They know that the written symbols convey meaning and that they can communicate with the text.

This does not mean that everyone is able to learn to read in a second language without any problem. According to Bouwer (1992,82), learners who can read in their first language often have problems when they have to learn to read a second language, for the following reasons:

- The letter-sound relationships and letter combinations differ in different languages. The methods learners use to decode words in their home language may not always be used equally successfully in a second language.
- Learners are not as familiar with the vocabulary of the second language and can consequently not anticipate words which appear foreign in written form.
- The text content is often foreign to their own culture and differs from the traditions, lifestyle and ways of life to which learners are accustomed. It also differs from the means of communication and style of interaction which is valid for the community. Text content which falls outside the learners' field of experience is difficult for them to understand.

3 AID FOR READING PROBLEMS

3.1 PLANNING THE AID

Aid for learners with reading problems takes the same form as aid for learners with other problems (compare course 2). When planning the aid, therefore, provision should be made for the following (note that the number of steps is not important but it is important to pay attention to these aspects beforehand):

Step 1: Analyse the situation

How does the reading situation manifest itself? What do the learners have problems with? To what degree do they have problems with decoding words? To what degree do they have problems with the meanings of separate words and with the reading content as a whole? What are the possible causes of the problem? What does their home situation look like? (These aspects must be established by observation, error analysis and so forth — cf course 2.)

Step 2: What is envisioned with the aid?

In the short term? In the long term?

Step 3: What reading material will be used?

Step 4: What strategies or method(s) should be applied?

Step 5: Where will the aid programme take place? In the classroom or another place? When (time)? What days? How long will each session last?

Step 6: Who will be involved in aid programme and how?

Step 7: When will the situation be reevaluated and how?

The complete aid programme will not be discussed here. However, the choice of reading material deserves special attention.

3.2 THE CHOICE OF READING MATERIAL

The choice of reading material largely determines whether the learner will want to read or not. Teachers often do not give much attention to what reading material they choose for the aid programme because they feel that the degree of difficulty of the reading material is the most important or even the only consideration.

The limited amount of reading material available in Afrikaans and African languages makes it difficult to obtain suitable reading material. Teachers must therefore often compile suitable matter themselves. This requires special talent, originality and creativity that not every teacher possesses. English reading material, although easier to obtain, should also be carefully considered as it often originates overseas and does not necessarily fit into the South African context.

The following points are important in choosing reading material:

(1) Text content should *suit the learner's age level*. Content that younger learners find interesting seldom captivates older readers and consequently does not encourage them to read.
(2) The content should be familiar to the learners and *fit into their world of experience (life experience)*. Reading material with a content that learners find strange does not interest them either, mainly because they find it difficult to relate to the concepts in their life experience. They should be able to evoke a mental image of the concepts that they encounter in the text. If the concepts are alien to them, their understanding may be inaccurate and distorted.
(3) The *degree of difficulty of the text should accord with the learner's reading level*. Cooper and Warden (1983:34), Ekwall and Shanker (1989:223) and Burns, Roe and Ross (1992:565) describe the various reading levels as follows:

    (a) *Independent reading level*: At this level, the learners can easily read and understand the reading material without the teacher's help. The readers enjoy the reading material without needing to analyse words or try to understand what they are reading. At this level, readers make less than one percent reading errors and also understand more than 99 percent of the text content.
    (b) *Instructional reading level*: Readers make some reading errors — they read about five percent of the words in the text incorrectly and their reading comprehension is higher than 75 percent. This is normally the entry level at which learners should receive help.
    (c) *Frustration reading level*: Here, the reading material is too difficult for

learners. They make many mistakes and struggle to understand what they are reading. They read more than 10 percent of the words incorrectly and their reading comprehension is lower than 50 percent. This text should not be used in the aid programme.

If suitable reading material is limited, the *language experience approach* may be applied. The reading material is created by the learners themselves. The learners tell a story while the teacher writes it down (older learners may copy the story themselves). The story deals with learners's own experiences, in a language that is familiar to them. After this, they are given the opportunity to read and practise reading the story. If learners write the story themselves, the teacher should rewrite the story correctly or type it out. The language experience approach is seldom effective when dealing with a second language if learners have not yet learned to express themselves clearly in the language. In this case, teachers must look for or compose their own suitable reading material.

3.3 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR READING AID

The following are general guidelines for improving learners' reading skills:

- The most important encouragement for learners to want to read is to enjoy it. For this reason, reading periods and reading instruction should always take place in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Learners must experience success. Reading passages should initially be short, but can gradually be lengthened as the learners' reading ability improves. Recognise every attempt that is an improvement on the last one.
- Do not let learners fall behind the rest of the class in the reader (prescribed book). Rather let them read just a part or several lines of the lesson each day and then let them progress to the next lesson together with the rest of the class. Because they hear the story when other learners read it, they keep up and do not lose the thread of the story. The shorter text is easier for these learners to learn and their poor reading style is then also less obvious because they are possibly better able to handle the reading lesson.
- Reading together and reading aloud to learners can be done as a change. Learners can think up their own stories which are written down for them. They can then illustrate them themselves and read them (language experience approach).
- Schools should make provision for reading periods where learners can practise reading in a controlled manner and where interesting stories and information are dealt with. The classroom should contain a collection of reading material (books and magazines) with fictitious and nonfictitious content. This could chiefly be related to the subject that is taught in that classroom, such as a collection of books and magazines with a historical theme in the history class. This reading material can naturally also cover a wider range.
- Parents' cooperation must be obtained when teaching learners to read. Parents must motivate and stimulate learners to read by themselves by creating a suitable reading atmosphere at home, and by setting an example by reading themselves and by making suitable material available in the house. Regular visits to the local library are also very valuable. Parents can also talk to their learners about what they have read, or they can work together on projects.

Gillet and Temple (1990:79, 303–364) add the following general guidelines (these also apply to learners who have reading problems in a second language):

- Create opportunities to practise verbal (expressive) language.
- Read aloud to them from storybooks.

- Make learners aware of the content of stories.
- Teach them the link between spoken sounds and letter symbols.
- Develop their knowledge of letters.
- Teach them how words are divided into syllables.
- Build up a sight vocabulary.

3.4 HELP FOR READING CODING AND READING COMPREHENSION

This section gives broad guidelines for improving reading coding (the recognition of words) and reading comprehension. For more detail or for guidelines for specific languages, teachers will have to read further themselves. If no literature is available on certain languages, they will have to adapt the methods described for English, for example, drawing on their own resourcefulness and ingenuity.

In discussing the two main components of reading, we separate word recognition and reading comprehension. You should realise though that both these components should receive attention simultaneously when teaching learners to read or giving aid.



Note!

The ideas and exercises discussed here are limited and probably not suitable for all learners with reading problems either. They are presented simply to stimulate you to think of other ideas and to work out your own methods.

3.4.1 Foundation phase learners

In this phase, the primary aim of teaching reading is to teach learners how to read, namely, to master the basic reading skills. Reading for the sake of gathering information only starts in the second and third years of schooling. Because it is so important that learners learn to read, learners' reading problems should be identified as early as possible and helped before the learners fall too far behind and develop a negative attitude to reading.

Reading stories aloud to learners is essential here for them to become aware of the relationship between written and verbal language and familiar with how written language is expressed.

i Word recognition

This is an abstract component that young learners find difficult to master. It should therefore be taught in an informal and playful manner. Avoid the formal and stereotype sound-and-say method as far as possible.

a Building up a sight vocabulary

- Set aside enough time for sight reading of the most basic high frequency words.
- Help learners to build up their incidental sight word vocabulary by putting the written words next to certain objects in the classroom, as in the preschool. Barr and Johnson (1991:187–188) and Ekwall and Shanker (1989:170) believe that it is

important that learners understand the meanings of the words they have to learn by sight. Accordingly, a word that is learnt by sight should always be presented to learners as part of a sentence. For the sake of progression to formal reading, the written words that are attached to objects in the classroom should also appear in a sentence, for example:

window: This is a *window*.
boy: The *boy* is walking/sitting/standing.
tree: The *tree* is green.

Through seeing the words in relation to a sentence, learners simultaneously learn to recognise articles, prepositions, verbs and so on by sight. These sentences should initially be read aloud to the learners while their attention is focused on each written word.

- Show the written word to the learners and let them repeat it several times while looking at it. After this, they should repeat it in varying degrees of loudness or softness and then discuss the external form of the words and the detail of the letters in the word. The word *cat* consists of three letters, for example, of which the first two fit together in a single line and the third extends above the line (Ekwall and Shanker 1989:170).
- Ekwall and Shanker (1989:171) suggest that the written words that have to be learnt by sight can be practised in a certain sequence, for example 1: *is*, 2: *that*, 3: *on*, 4: *it*, and 5: *there*. This can be repeated as follows:

  1, 2: *is*, *that*
  1, 2, 3: *is*, *that*, *on*
  1, 2, 3, 4: *is*, *that*, *on*, *it*
  1, 2, 3, 4, 5: *is*, *that on*, *it*, *there*; and so on.

- Games, such as the card game ''snap'' or dominoes, can be played. Instead of pictures or dots, there are words on the dominoes or cards. This can even be varied so that one card displays a word and the following card has the matching picture. Dominoes could be designed so that the one half shows a word and the other half the matching picture. The learners must then match the word with the picture. They can even just pair off the matching word and pictures.
- Barr and Johnson (1991:187–188) combine sight words with word building skills when they teach learners. The written word is shown to the learners and they are given the instruction to name other words that begin with the same sound; in other words, words with the same beginning consonant and following vowel, for example, *cat*: *car*, *cap*, *can* et cetera. Because learners often have problems in finding words themselves, teachers can use pictures which learners must identify. They must collect all the pictures that begin with the same sound as the word in question. The words are written down to make them aware of the grapheme-phoneme link and of the idea that different words can contain the same sounds. When learners master this exercise, the exercise can be extended to words with the same ending, namely, words with the same vowel in the middle and the same end consonant, for example *cat*: *hat*, *fat*, *mat* et cetera.
- The learners can build up a word bank of the words that they know by sight. The words in the word bank can be reread and sorted alternatively according to beginning, ending or middle letters to make learners aware of word detail.
- Through graphics, for example, learners can monitor their progress in learning sight words. This has strong motivational value and encourages learners to expand their sight vocabulary themselves.

b Learning a grapheme-phoneme relationship (letter-sound relationship)

The learners must be able to recognise the written vowels and vowel groups as well as the consonants and consonant constructions when they hear their sounds; the converse of this is that they must learn to give the sounds when they see the letters (grapheme) or letter constructions.



Note!

The pronunciation of letters with an explosive is important. An explosive is a sound that is closed off by the speech organs before it is pronounced, such as d, p, k, t, b and c. Their incorrect pronunciation can create unnecessary reading problems.

To pronounce an explosive correctly, it must be pronounced together with the sound which follows. In most cases, a vowel or vowel group follows, for example, da (dad), pe (pen), co (cot), ti (tick), boo (boot), ski (skip) and qu (queen)

Learners must learn to pronounce the explosive as an independent unit when they analyse or spell words. Thus: *d*,*p*,*k*,*t*,*b* and c instead of [d\], [p\], [k\], [t\], [b\], [c\]. There are learners who tend to write words and even read them as pe-at instead of *pat* and be-lack instead of black if they learn to pronounce the explosive together with the [\] sound. Learners who are chiefly analytical readers are especially inclined to make this kind of error because they sound the words phonetically and pay less attention to their meaning.

- Picture cards with words can be put together according to vowels, vowel constructions, consonants, consonant constructions, and special vowel-consonant combinations of the particular language. Depending on the work the learners are doing at the moment, these picture cards can be pinned on the notice board alternately. For the remainder, the cards should be filed in their groups and freely accessible to the learners so that they can page through them. They should even be accessible to individual learners to consult if they are unsure of the particular letter-sound relationships.
- If learners find it difficult to remember a specific letter or letter-sound relationship and often write it incorrectly, it can be written on a card and posted in a visible place on their table or personal little chalkboard.

c Word analysis and synthesis (construction of the elements of words)

In word analysis, the written word is analysed according to the letters (graphemes) and transformed into sounds (phonemes).

To analyse words correctly, the learners must apply spelling rules because the written word is constructed on the basis of specific, formulated rules. Initially, the learners only need to be made aware that the words that they can read consist of a number of letter units which, in themselves, play an important role in the written word (consonant-vowel-consonant [''cvc''] construction). They can cut out the letters and compare them to those on the picture and sound cards that are pinned to the notice board.

The learners must also cut the words up into sound units. Because some vowels such as the *ie* and *oe* and the consonant construction *-ng* are pronounced as a single unit,

and the vowel constructions *ou*, *ui*, *eu* and *ei* differ from the individual sounds represented by the letters, the learners should sound the words while they cut them out. They therefore depend simultaneously on the auditory modality instead of just noticing the letters visually. They can then see how many other words they can form with the letters or letter groups, for example, using the letters *e*, *t* and *a*, they can build the words *eat*, *ate* and *tea*.

Right from the start learners are also made aware of the rules that apply to word compositions. In the initial stage, the rules are usually simple and direct, for example, that a specific sound is connected to a particular letter or letter group, as in the case of the word *cat*, which consists of the consonant-vowel-consonant structure (cvc structure). Each letter represents a particular sound: *c + a + t*. There are, however, more indirect rules that must be learnt in this stage in order to decide which sounds represent certain letters. In the word *car* the sound represented by the letter *a* differs from the sound of the *a* in *cap* because the letter *p* which follows the *a* influences its pronunciation. In English, the vowel in a cvc construction is pronounced as a short vowel, for example, *mat, them, sit, rod and tub. When the silent e follows the last consonant, however, the sound structure of words remains a cvc construction although the vowel is pronounced as a long vowel, namely, mate, theme, site, rode, and tube.*



If learners sound a word, they should be encouraged to repeat the word after it has been sounded, for example, d-r-u-m, drum. Learners should also be taught to pronounce the sounds in words evenly and not letter by letter with a pause (#) between each sound, for example, d#r#u#m. Learners should thus learn to pronounce the beginning consonant(s) and the following vowels as a continuous unit. Although this way of reading is initially slow because learners are somewhat inclined to drag out the sound of each letter in their pronunciation, they learn relatively quickly to apply this method when they get stuck on a particular word. The learners' reading speed is consequently much faster and their understanding better because the flow of the story is not interrupted.

Word sorting games can be played. Words in a text that the learners have read can be written on reading cards, sorted according to the same beginning, middle and end letters and then read. The learners can also look for words from other texts or magazines which contain the same beginning, middle or end letters. Initially, the learners will only work with words that they understand. This sorting game can be extended to words with the same beginning consonant and vowel, such as *sit, sip, sing, and sir, or the same middle vowel and end consonant, such as run*, s*un*, f*un*, and g*un*. Learners or groups who read at more or less the same level and work at the same speed can compete with each other to see who can put the most words together or who is first to obtain a certain number of examples. These exercises can be extended to words with vowel and consonant constructions (*ea*, *eu*, *oo* and *pr-*, *st-*, *fl-* as well as *-nd*, *-rt*, *-mp*, and so on) at the beginning and end of words.

d Word structural analysis (division into syllables)

In the case of longer words with more than one syllable, specific spelling rules, which determine the sound structure of the words, must be applied. When polysyllabic words are read, spelling rules should be emphasised more firmly than when monosyllabic words are read. In the case of the word *supper* the following rules apply: The two syllables are divided between the two p's: *sup + per.* The first syllable consists of the ordinary cvc-construction *s + u + p* which is learnt in the

first year of school. The second *per* also consists of the usual cvc construction *p + e + r*. If the letter *e* is in the last syllable of the word, it is pronounced as a [\]-sound when it is followed by an *r*, *n* or *l*.

Many learners must be *taught expressly* that words consist of different syllables, which, in most cases, are clearly distinguishable. Music and song rhythm are an ideal medium through which to make learners aware of syllables. The learners can begin by clapping, stamping or moving to the rhythm of the music or song while they listen. (Learners find it easier to distinguish the word rhythm if the music is familiar to them as they do not need to pay attention to the words themselves and try to remember them, but can concentrate on the rhythm of the words.) These exercises can then be extended to speech rhythm. While the learners recite a poem, they can clap to the rhythm of the words. The speech rhythm can then be related to written words. The teacher can rhythmically point to each part of the word while learners say it aloud. (This method should be limited as it could encourage monotonous reading.) After this, words on reading cards can be cut up into syllables. Later, a line pencilled in between the syllables can be used to indicate the division, for example:

The chil/dren play mar/bles out/side in the play/ground.

If the learners understand this principle and can do it correctly, this may be extended to written text on worksheets. The learners can divide the words into syllables by drawing in dividing lines in coloured pencil.

This exercise can be expanded to sight word exercises. Instead of learners trying to sight read polysyllable words in their entirety, they must learn to recognise certain high frequency letters in the words by sight, such as the beginning syllables *re-*, *be-* and *de-* in words such as *re*turn, *be*lieve and *de*tail. The beginning syllables are then put together with other words that the learners can already sight read, such as *light: delight; low: below* and *fine*: *refine*. The same principle can be extended to high frequency syllables at the end of words, for example, *-er*, *-ed* and *-ing* in *faster*, *slower*, *waited*, *played*, and *eating, singing* and so on.

e Contextual clues

According to Ekwall and Shanker (1989:179), a reader can determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word on the basis of the accompanying words or the sentence structure in which it occurs. These are called the contextual clues.

Contextual clues depend chiefly on reading comprehension. Readers must thus determine the meaning of the unknown word in the text by themselves. This does not mean that they have to guess wildly at what the word means. The readers' language ability should be developed to such an extent that they will know how to construct the sentence correctly and, on this basis, to be able to make out what the word should be. Readers' inner language resources enable them to know what the word should be.

In the following sentence, the word cannot be recognised by the place where it appears in the sentence, for example, but on the learner's knowledge of the subject:

The — builds a nest in the tree.

Based on what they know of sentence construction, learners know that a word that follows the word ''the'' is a noun and therefore must be an object. From their

experience and knowledge of birds' nests, they can come to the conclusion that the word which is omitted must be *bird*.

There are words that cannot be determined by using contextual clues, however. In such cases, readers must pay attention to the details of the word and analyse it to be able to read it:

Compare the following two sentences, for example:

John — the tree in the hole.

John picks the lovely ripe — from the tree.

In the first sentence, *plant* is the word that fits logically. In the second sentence, more information about the tree is needed before readers can establish what kind of fruit John picks. For this reason, readers are obliged to inspect the word detail, namely, the letters in the word.

In the beginner classes therefore, it is important to give particular attention to language development programmes.

Before a reading lesson can be presented to learners, the subject of the lesson should be discussed with them so that they are familiar with all the information they will encounter in the text, however simple it may seem. It should be established whether there are words in the text that are unfamiliar to the learners. These words should be discussed so that the learners understand their meanings. After this, the words can be used in various sentences so that the learners are familiar with them. Lastly, the learners must compose their own sentences using the new words.

Practising using contextual clues can commence with leaving words out of sentences and replacing them with pictures. Later spaces are left in the place of the missing word. Learners can work in groups and see how many words they can think of which fit into a particular space in a sentence.

At the same time, learners must be taught to look at the word detail when they use contextual clues while reading. The following examples show a systematic build-up of exercises to consciously help learners to use contextual clues while also taking note of the word detail:

Harry plays with his d ... on the lawn. (The first letter is coloured.)

Harry plays with his do ... on the lawn. (First letter is coloured, the vowel following is not.)

Polly eats her ap at break. (First consonant construction is coloured.)

Words with more than one syllable can be built up as follows:

Nandi for ... her books at home.

Nandi forg ... her books at home.

Nandi forgo ... her books at home.

The use of contextual clues is individual by nature and determined by each learner's reading style and reading preferences. It also depends on the learner's ability to recognise words or word structures by sight and to analyse words, and particular reading speed. For example, stronger readers depend far less on contextual clues than average and poor readers because they possess the reading strategies that enable them to determine what each specific word in the text is. To enable learners to

use contextual clues, the teacher should concentrate mainly on the comprehensive component of reading.

ii Reading comprehension

The learners must understand the sentences, recognise facts in the text and be able to follow instructions in the text.

The learners should be able to understand direct and concrete information in the text when they read. Questions on sections read can be set, as in the case of a story about the tooth mouse:

Direct questions:

Who is the tooth mouse?

Where does he store the teeth?

What does he do with the teeth? And so on.

Indirect questions:

Why does the tooth mouse say that he hopes Jacob looked after his tooth well and that it is a healthy tooth?

Why does the tooth mouse fetch the tooth at night and not during the day?

Anticipatory questions:

Why do you think Jacob is so eager to have his tooth pulled out?

What do you think he is going to do with his tooth?

Do not concentrate on unimportant content in the text that has little to do with the theme of the story, such as:

What is the colour of Jacob's shoe?

Also guard against questions that evoke a ''yes'' or ''no'' answer, such as:

Will Jacob get money for the tooth that was pulled out?

Rather ask questions like:

How much money did Jacob get for his tooth?

a Aid for direct or literal comprehension

- Playing reading games

Playing reading games is extremely valuable. For example, the learners read a simple instruction and then carry it out.

Let the learners draw the story that they read. Provide the learners with a series of cards. The series consists of a number of word and picture cards. Each word card has a matching picture card. Let the learners sort the picture and word cards to match each other.

- Organising comprehension

Let the learners read a section of the text, after which they must place various pictures about the topic in the correct order.

Duplicate the written text and cut the sentences into individual units. Let the learners arrange the sentences in the correct order.

b Aid for indirect comprehension

Learners must be able to make deductions from the text and come to a conclusion. Let the learners read a sentence on a card, after which they have to look for the picture that deals with the sentence, for example:

He plays with wool and loves to eat mice
A picture of a cat

Let the readers predict a story based on the pictures in a book. After this, they can read the story and decide how their predictions compare with the actual story.

After the readers have read a section of text, they can predict what will happen next. Then they can see whether their prediction agrees with the text.

Let the learners make their own deductions, for example:

- Let them read the first part of the text. After this, skip a section and read the next part. The learners must then infer what happened in between, for example:
  - The text is about a boy who builds an aeroplane one evening.
- Then a section of the text is skipped. The section that follows describes how the boy does not want to go to school the following morning.
- The learners must then draw conclusions about why the boy does not want to go to school the following morning.
  - Possible inferences can be that he went to bed too late or that he really wants to play with his aeroplane.

The learners must then confirm whether their conclusions were correct by consulting the section that was omitted. (For this exercise, the learners' reading quality should be at such a level that they can read and understand very simple texts independently. This does not mean that they necessarily need to read within the reading level of their age group.)

3.4.2 Intermediate phase learners

In this phase learners move from a ''learning to read'' level to one whether they must ''read to learn''. Although the ''learning to read'' component will still play a part in the intermediate phase, the emphasis should move to reading comprehension.

As in the foundation phase, anticipatory questions are important for learners of this age. But the questions will also focus on underlying content, for example:

Why is the man carrying a raincoat over his arm?

Why do you think it is going to rain?

The language experience approach can also occasionally be used in this phase. Here, a few learners can work together to write and read a story.

i Word recognition and automatisation

a Building up a sight vocabulary

Gillet and Temple (1990:364) state that older learners' sight vocabulary should be built up in the same way as that of beginning readers, by repeatedly seeing the words. This occurs through readings where the learners can follow what is being read to them. After this, learners can read sections themselves and write down words that they do not recognise on cards or in a notebook. If the learners later recognise these words without a problem, they can store these in their word bank. From time to time, they can revise or check these again.

Learners' decoding skills should receive attention at the same time, so that they can decode and recognise strange words. These exercises should not be emphasised at the cost of fluency, however (Gillet & Temple 1990:368–368).

b Decoding of word structures

It is significant that the reading problems of so many learners in the primary school phase can be ascribed to their limited knowledge of letter-sound relationships. Their greatest problem lies with their poor knowledge of the vowels and vowel groups. Special attention should therefore be given to building up learners' knowledge of vowels and vowel groups. They must also be made aware of the specific spelling rules that apply to various word structures, since many of the rules are linked to the vowel groups in the word structures.

Words in the learners' word banks should initially be used for these exercises. The words can be sorted in various ways, for example, on the basis of the different vowels and vowel groups or beginning and end consonants and consonant groups. After that the learners should sort words that are not in their word bank according to the same rule and also find words in which the same rule applies.

Words with corresponding rules and structures can be written in their notebooks so that the words can be revised at the same time. While learners write down a word, they should pronounce it in order to benefit from a degree of multisensory input, namely, a simultaneous visual, auditory and motor processing of information.

c Analysis of syllables or word structures

Trying to let learners in this stage still recognise words by sight is usually unsuccessful for learners with reading problems. Many words are long and cannot be perused in one glance. They should be taught, for instance, to see the syllables in polysyllable word sequentially manner. This can be done by making the learners aware of the vowels that appear in each syllable of a word.

The application of the following simple rules is very valuable for learners in the intermediate phase who have problems with the identification of words:

- The vowels give an indication of the number of syllables in a word. The learners can identify the vowels in some longer words by underlining each vowel or vowel group, for example, *dictionary* (because the *y* sound sounds the same as the *i* sound here, the letter *y* is treated like a vowel). This enables the learners to determine the place of the three syllables in the word.
- The next rule that learners should be made aware of is that division into syllables usually occurs at the consonants between the vowels.

— If there are two consonants between the vowels, the division occurs between them, for example, *run/ning* and *won/der/ful*.
— If there are three or more consonants between the two syllables, readers should pay careful attention to the pronunciation and sound rhythm of the word in order to decide where the division is. Words like this are not very common though.
— In words which have only one consonant between the vowels, like *general*, the consonant in most cases shifts to the following syllable: *ge/ne/ral*.



Note:

This method does not apply to all words, but using it facilitates the learner's ability to identify longer words.

d Use of contextual clues

Older learners have to depend especially on contextual clues when they read. At the same time they have to learn to check whether the word used is correct by decoding and recognising it on the basis of grapheme-phoneme relationship. Like foundation phase learners, intermediate phase learners should be familiar with the language in which the text appears and have a general background knowledge of the subject.

The same methods can be used here as for the intermediate phase. However, it is important that the degree of difficulty and the content of the reading material used with older learners match their interests and reading skills.

ii Reading comprehension

The type of exercises used for the foundation phase are also included in the intermediate phase. The content and comprehension exercises should be adapted to the level on which the learners are operating as well as to their particular interests. The following aspects should be covered during reading comprehension exercises for senior primary learners:

a Literal comprehension

Learners should be able to understand the words and sentences in the text, recognise the facts and follow instructions. They must read the text and then be able to answer questions about literal facts. They can dramatise the events in the text or retell them in the correct sequence.

b Organisation of comprehension

Learners must be able to follow the main ideas in the text and understand the sequence in which the events occur. The text can be cut up into paragraphs and the learners can arrange the paragraphs in the correct order.

c Critical reading and making inferences from the text

To understand the events and make inferences from the text, learners should first be able to understand terms such as *concepts*, *sequence of events* and *main ideas*. These terms must be explicitly explained to the learners so that they know and understand them. They must also have some knowledge of the subject and understand abstract

concepts before they will be able to read critically. Facts in the text should be pointed out and explained so that the learners understand fully.

The learners must explain why events in the text took place in a certain way. If they struggle with this, leading anticipatory questions can be asked.

Methods similar to those used in the foundation phase can be used to improve the reading comprehension of learners in the intermediate phase, keeping in mind that the questions should be adapted to the level of the older readers.

Methods mentioned for word recognition and reading comprehension also apply to the aid programme for learners with reading difficulties in a second language, as they have to also consciously learn the reading actions for this language and be able to understand the language concepts in order to read.

Learners should be given sufficient opportunity to read silently because silent reading is valuable for speed reading. By limiting the amount of time learners have to read a specific section of text, they are obliged to gradually improve their reading speed. Learners should compete against themselves in this area. Comprehension questions are important here to ensure that the learners have indeed read and understood the given text.

Discussing a subject or judging a book's title page, title, illustrations, typesetting (font), et cetera can also encourage learners to read.

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APPENDIX M

BARRIERS TO LEARNING RELATED TO MATHEMATICS

OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING CONTENT

This section deals with the following topics:

1 Mathematics: a brief review

- 1.1 Mathematics as a concept
- 1.2 Characteristics of mathematics
- 1.3 Branches of Mathematics

2 The development of learners' mathematical concepts

3 Mathematical readiness

- 3.1 Preconditions for basic Mathematics
- 3.2 Preconditions for more advanced Mathematics

4 Factors that may lead to problems with Mathematics

5 Manifestation of problems with Mathematics

- 5.1 Problems in the foundation phase
- 5.2 Problems in the intermediate phase

6 Aid for problems with Mathematics

- 6.1 General guidelines
- 6.2 Particular guidelines

7 Parental involvement

1 MATHEMATICS: A BRIEF REVIEW

Mathematics has been part of daily life since the earliest times. Prehistoric people also depended on mathematical principles, for example when they had to take into consideration factors such as direction, speed and dimensions during the hunt (Rosner 1993:81). Despite their lack of formal interpretation of such mathematical calculations, they depended on these to the same extent that modern people do nowadays.

1.1 MATHEMATICS AS A CONCEPT

The concept *mathematics* refers to the formally descriptive system according to which

we work with numbers and figures. Rosner (1993:81) describes it as the ''mapping of language onto symbols''.

1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF MATHEMATICS

Mathematics

- concentrates on patterns and ratios
- has a unique language consisting of specific mathematical terms and symbols
- is an organised field of knowledge and has various branches like Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry and Statistics.

1.3 BRANCHES OF MATHEMATICS

The different branches of Mathematics, like Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry, are all related and interdependent.

In the foundation phase the emphasis falls mainly on arithmetical, geometrical and algebraic components.

- Arithmetic concentrates on the manipulation of numbers.
- The field of Algebra is characteristics, ratios, quantities and dimensions.
- Geometry concentrates on the measurements and characteristics of figures.

The components or branches of Mathematics build on one another in a hierarchy. The next step is always based on the previous one, hence *vertical extension* takes place. Simultaneously, there is also a *horizontal extension,* since every step is more extensive than the one it supersedes. Both vertical and horizontal extensions are characteristic of all the components of Mathematics.

Learners in the foundation phase are mainly involved with the arithmetical component of Mathematics, although they begin to get acquainted with elementary geometrical and algebraic concepts, too. In the intermediate phase most of the emphasis is still on arithmetical concepts, with the geometrical and algebraic concepts gradually gaining ground.

Bushbridge and Womack (1991:11–189) identify more *mathematical areas* with which primary school learners come into contact to a greater or lesser degree:

- the experiencing of quantities and numbers (everyday situations by informal experience)
- mathematical operations with integers (activities involving counting, adding, subtraction, multiplication and division, Algebra, factors, multiples and divisibility)
- rational numbers (fractions and decimals, and their addition, subtraction, multiplication and division)
- length, weight and capacity
- shapes and angles (and also measuring and adding angles)
- circumference, area and volume
- time, velocity and ratio or proportions

2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNERS' MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS

The comprehension of mathematical concepts develops early in the lives of learners. By the age of two, learners are already aware of notions like ''smaller'' and ''bigger'', and ''more'' or ''fewer''. For example, a toddler may object to getting a smaller slice of cake than a friend. Toddlers' play also often involves elementary mathematical principles like pairing off, comparison, sorting and quantities.

To be able to deal with mathematical concepts, the learner needs to have:

- a particular mental attitude to inductive and deductive reasoning
- the ability to reach conclusions through original thinking while simultaneously applying control strategies

In contrast to other subjects in which mastery often depends on repetition and memorising, the development of mathematical concepts requires mastery of *abstract concepts* (such as quantities and figures), *procedures* (such as adding and division) and *proportions* (such as greater than and half of). It is, therefore, closely linked to the extension of the learner's cognitive abilities.

The development of a learner's comprehension of Mathematics progresses according to a number of general rules or principles:

- from the concrete to the abstract level
- from incomplete understanding to complete understanding as more knowledge is acquired
- from unsystematic to systematic reasoning

This development, furthermore, takes place over a period of time. Also, all learners do not develop at the same rate. Development depends on their cognitive abilities, the kind of experiences they are exposed to and the quality of guidance and support they receive from their parents and teachers.

When learners have to deal with a new mathematical concept, the phases they go through may be roughly described as follows:

Phase 1: Their impressions are global-intuitive, vague and unanalysed.

Phase 2: Their grasp of the concept improves as they receive similar examples to deal with (inductive thought).

Phase 3: They come to a true realisation of the concept as they start to notice connections and come to an understanding of its systematic progress (deductive thought).

Phase 4: They understand the mathematical concept so thoroughly that they are able to apply it and describe it in precise mathematical terms.

As we mentioned above, not all learners will progress through these phases at the same rate. It is even possible that some will not reach the latter phases. Because they lack complete understanding of the concepts, they are unable to apply them properly and consequently keep on making mistakes.

Feedback: Always look at learners' mistakes in Mathematics from a diagnostic angle. The errors they make give an indication of the cognitive level at which their acquisition of mathematical concepts stands at a given time. To determine the level

of their knowledge, you should also ask the learners to explain how they interpreted an assignment. You have to analyse learners' errors systematically, as a matter of course (cf Error analysis in course 2). The types of mistakes they make will naturally give you an indication of how you should plan your next lesson.

3 MATHEMATICAL READINESS

There are learners who have difficulties in mastering concepts because they have not yet attained the level of readiness that enables them to do so.

According to Underhill (Kennedy & Tipps 1994:104–105), mathematical readiness refers to readiness in the following five areas:

- *Content ready* — They should have mastered the basic mathematical skills that preschool learners usually acquire informally, and also have the knowledge they need to be able to acquire new mathematical skills and concepts (eg, linguistic skills like more, fewer, bigger, smaller and circle).
- *Educationally ready* — They have to understand and be able to use the material so that they can solve mathematical problems by themselves.
- *Developmentally ready* — They should have reached the required intellectual level for dealing with mathematical concepts. Young learners in the beginner classes who are in the preconceptual phase of cognitive development still think in terms of images they form in their minds of the concrete matters they have to deal with. As their cognitive development progresses these images tend to become more abstract until the learners reach the stage where they think in terms of abstract concepts. The importance of the initial images should not be disregarded, as these are the foundation on which the more abstract concepts are going to be built.
- *Emotionally ready* — Learners should have reached a state of emotional stability that will enable them to pay due attention and be keen to work with mathematical concepts.
- *Contextually ready* — Learners ought to have reached a stage at which they are aware of how mathematical concepts impact on their daily lives.

Feedback: Here are a few examples: the purchase of food and clothing; the sale of products; adjustment of radio and TV channels; reading car number plates; using the telephone.

According to Hammill and Bartel (1990:291–298), there are two stages in mathematical readiness, namely preconditions for the acquisition of basic mathematical concepts and preconditions for the acquisition of more advanced mathematical concepts. The former is an automatic condition for the latter.

3.1 PRECONDITIONS FOR BASIC MATHEMATICS

The mastery of basic mathematical concepts depends on the following:

- *An ability to classify*. This is the ability to sort and collect objects on the basis of corresponding qualities such as colour, size and shape. This ability develops between the ages of two and seven years.
- *Knowledge of one-to-one correspondence*. This enables learners to learn to count and to grasp the principles of adding and subtraction.
- *Seriation or ordering*. This skill already begins to develop at the age of two to three years. It is the ability to perceive the orderly progression of objects or events.

Similar objects are to be arranged in a given order on the basis of size, height or length; in other words, from small to big, short to long, and so forth. Learners find that the most difficult task is to arrange quantities in a given order.

- *A concept of space and topological proportions*. This enables learners to understand the basic geometrical forms, series and fractions, as well as the basic arithmetical processes of adding, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- *Flexibility, reversibility and conservation:*
  - *Flexibility* refers to the ability to grasp that objects may be sorted on the basis of various criteria, for example, colour, shape or size; in other words, that an object may fit equally well into more than one category or subcategory.
  - *Reversibility* implies the ability to turn a matter around in the mind, or to change it back again. In other words, even if objects are arranged into a specific category, the possibility remains that they may be returned to the original category. In the mind of the learner, reversibility also implies the ability to reverse a process, for example 4 + 2 = 6, therefore it is also true that 62 = 4.
  - *Conservation* refers to the insight that the basic values of quantities or volumes remain the same, even though they would appear to be different. For example, the number of objects in a collection remains the same, despite a change in their positions or the quantity of water in a glass remains the same, even if one pours the water from a short, wide glass into a tall narrow glass, which would make the volume appear to have increased.

3.2 PRECONDITIONS FOR MORE ADVANCED MATHEMATICS

Mastery of basic Mathematics is a requirement for the mastery of more advanced mathematical processes. For example, a learner who has not completely mastered multiplication and subtraction is likely to experience difficulties with long division (Harwell 1995:216).

4 FACTORS THAT MAY LEAD TO PROBLEMS WITH MATHEMATICS

Bear in mind that all the factors governing the learner's ability to master mathematical concepts have a mutual effect on each other. So we find that intrinsic determinants such as physical, emotional and cognitive factors combine with extrinsic determinants like cultural, social, educational and environmental factors to play a part in learners' acquisition of mathematical skills. Since these factors are discussed in Section A of this study guide, we shall not repeat everything here.

An important factor that may cause problems with Mathematics and deserves attention here, is absenteeism or change of school. Since new concepts are always built on acquired skills, a period of absence or a change of school may cause gaps in learners' knowledge. They will therefore not be able to build new work on work that they lost because they weren't present.

Hammill and Bartel (1990:298) as well as Riedesel (1990:2) identify the following factors that could negatively affect the ability of learners to master mathematical concepts:

- Inadequate instruction by the teacher. Learners do not have the ability to discover

the formal mathematical concepts by chance, they have to undergo formal instruction. Sometimes gaps in learners' knowledge may be caused by the teachers themselves not having the required knowledge or not knowing how to present the knowledge, or lack interest. These gaps in knowledge may, in turn, lead to emotional problems or lack of motivation, which will further impede the mastery of Mathematics.

- Too much emphasis on drill work coupled with the aimless and stereotype application of certain methods to solve problems.
- Forcing learners to employ specific methods rather than giving them scope to try to find their own methods and solutions.
- The inclination to label learners who have difficulties with Mathematics as lazy or stupid rather than trying to help them by analysing their errors.
- The inclination of some teachers to drill learners in the manipulation of numbers rather than help them to grasp concepts. The ability to manipulate numbers often creates the false impression that learners are ''good at Maths'', while in reality they do not understand the concepts.
- Problems with reading may lead to problems with Mathematics. Learners who have reading problems may do well in tests of competency and in oral Mathematics, but come to grief in written Mathematics where they are expected to read the calculations for themselves.
- Negative attitudes to Mathematics or to the teacher, or emotional problems like anxiety or stress, may cause an inability to apply themselves cognitively to Mathematics.
- Parents may contribute to learners' difficulties with Mathematics, especially if they lead them to believe that they were also unable to master Mathematics when they were at school or, in the case of girls, allege that girls fortunately do not need Mathematics.

5 MANIFESTATION OF PROBLEMS WITH MATHEMATICS

Harwell (1995:215) contends that one learner in seven has problems with Mathematics. It is not always possible to identify these learners, especially if their learning problems are confined to Mathematics. Learners who are prone to problems with Mathematics usually have difficulty right from the outset, although it is possible that the problems will only manifest later.

Often the first indication of problems is when learners try to avoid the Mathematics assignment either orally or in writing. Signs of confusion are another fairly common symptom. The learners are unsure of how to set about the problem, and there is no structure in the method by which they try to reach a solution. They sit and think for a long time before starting with the calculation or giving an answer. The opposite could also happen, namely that learners start off impulsively and try to solve the problem without thinking at all.

Below is a list of problems with Mathematics that may manifest in foundation as well as intermediate learners. This list is by no means exhaustive. Should you come across a problem that is not mentioned there, please consult the syllabus for that Grade to ascertain whether the cause of the problem is indeed relevant for the age group in question. If it is work that was done in a previous year, it will also apply to the class in question, which means that inability to cope with it is a problem. Should

the problem be with a concept the learner chose to attempt or one that will only be dealt with in the following year, you need not spend much time on it because the learner may just not be ready for the concept yet.

5.1 PROBLEMS IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

The following are problems that feature in the foundation phase:

- difficulties with sorting objects according to various characteristics — first, colour, then shape
- inability to estimate quantities
- counting without comprehension — experiences difficulty to count beyond 20
- not understanding the use of the number line
- difficulty with counting on from a given number
- inability to see the relationship between mathematical concepts and everyday life
- inability to grasp numerical values
- not understanding positional values
- inability to distinguish between the mathematical signs +, −, × and
- not understanding the two main calculations, namely adding and subtraction — in the case of adding, the numbers grow bigger and in the case of subtraction, the numbers grow smaller
- not understanding that, in the case of subtraction, the second number has to be taken away from the first
- not understanding the = sign, namely that figures on either side of the = are of equal value
- not understanding the concept of tens and units
- inability to analyse and solve word problems
- being overly dependent on concrete aids and, even in Grade 3, still calculating simple sums like 1 + 1 using fingers
- being inclined to get stuck on one kind of calculation and do different types of calculations in the same way, for example 4 + 3 = 7, 6 − 4 = 10, 2 × 5 = 7, 8 ÷ 2 = 10
- not understanding the concept of 0
- inability to follow the repetitive component of multiplication
- not being able to distinguish between coins of various denominations or establish prices
- not understanding measures of weight and volume
- inability to tell the time
- difficulty in taking the most elementary measurements

5.2 PROBLEMS IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE

The following problems can be expected to manifest in intermediate phase learners. These learners

- are still subject to the same kinds of problems as the foundation phase learners, but they are not so conspicuous because they often depend on answers that they learnt by rote
- are unable to provide the answer to a problem in one of the four main calculations on their own
- make careless mistakes in basic calculations
- confuse the four main calculations
- have difficulties with questions phrased differently from usual, for example; How

many remain if I take six away from eight? (Because they are inclined to deduct the second number they hear from the first, their answer in this case is likely to be 0.)
- do not understand carrying over
- cannot grasp that a horizontal calculation works according to the same principle as a vertical calculation
- do not understand the repetitive concept of multiplication
- cannot comprehend long multiplication and division
- do not understand the concept of 0
- are unable to read numbers greater than 100
- have problems with word sums
- count on their fingers
- have difficulties with geometrical concepts
- have problems with money, capacity, dimensions, weight and so on

6 AID FOR PROBLEMS WITH MATHEMATICS

6.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines should be followed throughout:

- *Help the learners as soon as possible*. The Mathematics syllabi are compiled so that concepts to be taught in a certain school year serve as the basis for those to be taught the following year. If learners do not master certain concepts fully, then, they will have problems understanding the concepts that follow in the next year. This means that the learners' backlog in Mathematics grows as the school years go by.

  Any learner who has a problem and is therefore unable to master a concept in Mathematics ought to be helped as soon as possible. If this does not happen, the problem may become insurmountable.
- *Stress the utilitarian value of Mathematics*. Teachers ought to get learners to work with general information they come across daily. If the usefulness of Mathematics is emphasised, learners, including those who have problems, will be quicker to recognise the relevance of Mathematics and will therefore be prepared to accept the subject as relevant to their lives, too.
- *Plan thoroughly*. Mathematics should always be taught in a systematic, sequential and structured way (Ellis 1988:25). If this is true for everyday teaching, it applies all the more to learners who have difficulties with Mathematics. The aid to learners who need remedial attention cannot be allowed to proceed on the basis of trial and error, but should be planned thoroughly.
- *Use direct methods of instruction to begin with*. It is often desirable to explain to learners in a somewhat prescriptive manner how to solve a problem since they will probably not be able to find their own creative way of solving the problem. This prescriptive or formulary teaching method is called *''direct teaching''* (Meese 1994:282). As soon as the learners understand the mathematical concepts and become thoroughly acquainted with a specific method of solving problems, they may be guided to seek their own variations of methods for dealing with certain problems.
- *Foster interest and enthusiasm*. Teachers should really try hard to foster interest in and enthusiasm for Mathematics in their learners. Here are some ways in which teachers can achieve this goal:

— Assignments and goals must be within the scope of the learners — this will ensure their eventual success.
— Teachers' enthusiasm is contagious so their fervour will spread to the learners.
— Provide the learners with opportunities for self-discovery. This leads to insight, an improved self-concept and, ultimately, greater motivation.

- *Go from the concrete to the abstract*. In their acquisition of mathematical concepts, learners have to go through three stages: the concrete, the semiconcrete and the abstract phase. Teachers have to bear these stages in mind and ensure that the learners have really mastered each of them when they come to the point of explaining an abstract concept.

  Research has proved that the concrete handling of teaching aids will enable learners to engage the mathematical concepts at the semiconcrete and then at the abstract level. Language is also an important aid that enables learners to progress from the concrete to the abstract level. They should be guided in their efforts to give voice to the concrete activities, and to interpret and describe these. This helps along the progression towards the schematic and, ultimately, the abstract levels.
- *Provide opportunities for practice*. Learners ought to have plenty of opportunity to practise the new mathematical concepts and to apply methods at a level at which they are comfortable with the concepts and the methods. Teachers should explain the concepts of the various methods to the learners so that these can be firmly established.
- *Help learners to monitor their own progress*. Learners ought to be made aware of their own progress so that they are able to monitor it. For this reason it is very important to provide immediate feedback on the correctness of their answers. Adding machines may be used to check answers. The learners should discuss narrative problems among themselves and then compare the various methods of solving these problems. Learners who completely understand a concept should have the chance to explain the methods they followed or to help the other learners. Learners who had the wrong answers also profit by rapid feedback. The methods they employed will still be fresh in their memories and they will consequently be able to alter or adapt them. If they have to wait some days for feedback, the method of solution will have become vague and it will be all the more difficult to recall, alter and adapt.
- *Use group work*. You may resort to group work so that learners are able to learn from each other. Revise the cooperative methods of group work discussed in course 2. Learners who work in groups have the opportunity to learn from each other and derive encouragement from the realisation that there are others who also do not understand everything.
- *Be sensitive and empathetic*. A teacher's behaviour may contribute to the solution or otherwise of learners' problems. Here are two important pointers:

  — Avoid insensitive behaviour, such as negative remarks about test results.
  — Be prepared to admit to the learners that some of the questions are difficult, but that you have faith in their ability to be able to deal with those, too.

- *Show empathy and be patient*. Teachers' actions can be of great help in combating Mathematics anxiety by, for example:

  — informing learners in good time of forthcoming tests, and giving full information on the work that will be tested
  — coaching the learners in the techniques of writing tests

— returning the test results as soon as possible and explaining where learners made mistakes
— compiling the tests in such a way that learners can succeed, even if only in certain aspects
— announcing the test results in such a way that there is no damage to the learners' self-concept
— making use of various methods of evaluation
— allowing enough time for the completion of the tests
— underplaying rather that overemphasising the final answers
— writing positive remarks
— occasionally giving learners the opportunity of rewriting tests

- *Choose suitable content*. Teachers who wish to help learners who have problems with Mathematics are advised to stay within the parameters of the syllabus. For example, instead of allowing learners to experiment with large numbers, teachers should keep to the prescribed number limit for the grade. The existing syllabus allows enough scope for experimentation.

Furthermore, teachers should continually strive to link the material to the world of the learners. Should teachers work with numbers beyond the prescribed limits of the syllabus and the exercise have no bearing on the learners' field of experience, there is a very real danger that the teachers are busy dispensing ''mathematical gymnastics''; in other words, playing around with figures without a clear goal in mind. The learners may learn to do the calculations correctly, but they will see no point in the exercise.

Harwell (1995:216) believes that learners in Grades 0 to 3 ought to master the following components of Mathematics:

- one-to-one correspondence
- numerals and numbers
- sequences
- ordinals
- calculations with +, −, ×
- recognition of shapes
- simple narrative problems
- positional values
- counting money
- time
- taking simple measurements

Learners in Grades 4 to 6 should master the following components:

- division
- fractions
- decimals
- elementary Algebra
- advanced calculations
- elementary Geometry
- advanced narrative problems
- advanced positional values
- giving change
- advanced taking of measurements

6.2 PARTICULAR GUIDELINES

Rosner (1993:140–143) gives the following particular guidelines to teachers who are either planning or are engaged in rendering aid for Mathematics:

- Ensure that the learners know the basic facts, for example the correct mathematical terms and language, so that they will be able to grasp the aspects.
- Limit the amount of new information to be presented in a single lesson.
- Emphasise the aspects that demand special attention.
- Give the learners enough time to discover the link between the new work and the work they already know.
- If it becomes clear that a learner is able to complete smaller parts of an assignment successfully, the assignments should be subdivided into smaller units, as this will help the learner to complete the larger sections. It is better to lead the learner to the larger sections of work gradually than to introduce the greater task first and have to subdivide it later on.
- Provide enough opportunities for repetition, drill work and practical exercises so that the new information can be firmly established in the learner's long-term memory.

Harwell (1995:217–229) suggests the following pointers for dealing with specific problems:

- *Counting activities and one-to-one correspondence*. Get the learners to count concrete objects. It is possible to establish the counting sequence by using mnemonic techniques (memory techniques) like counting rhymes or songs.
- *Recognition and writing of numbers*. Compare numbers, place them in the correct sequence and trace them. Then get the learners to write the numbers on their own, without tracing them. They have to do this every day until they have mastered the recognition and writing of numbers.
- *Series*. When learners are learning one to one correspondence they must receive a series of objects or pictures that they have to count. They should write numbers next to the objects or pictures.
- *Establishing a relationship between series and elementary adding*. The secret here is for learners to avail themselves of self-accompaniment or verbalisation in order to solve the problems. This means that they will have to speak or verbalise the various steps to remind themselves what has to be done next. Learners also have to realise that there are specific combinations of numbers that will always give the same answer.
- *Elementary subtraction or the breaking up of sets*. Learners have to realise that adding and subtraction require opposite actions.
- *Counting from 1 to 100*. During the activity of counting learners also get acquainted with the concept of tens and units, in other words, with positional values.

Teachers must explain the concepts of more and less to learners in terms of the positional values of tens and units.

- *Ordinals*. Learners have to understand the terms ''first'', ''second'', ''third'', et cetera and be able to use them. They also have to grasp that they should link the terms to the direction in which the counting takes place.
- *Rounding off numbers to the nearest ten*. The teaching aid to use here is the line of numbers so that learners are able to see that the number 57 is physically closer to 60 than to 50. The same method may be used to teach learners how to round off numbers to the nearest 100.
- *Positional value*. Use concrete teaching aids to illustrate the grouping into hundreds, tens and units.

- *Adding by means of regrouping and carrying over*. By using the same apparatus as in the previous point, it is possible to explain and establish this concept in terms of complete groups of hundreds, tens and units.
- *Counting coins*. Learners first have to learn how to distinguish between coins of various denominations and then how to add up their values.
- *Time*. In order to tell the time, learners have to be able to count in fives up to sixty. Discuss the functioning of a clock and show precisely what it looks like. Start by reading the hours and then the minutes.
- *Reading numerals and numbers.* Learners should know numerals and numbers and have to be able to place them in the correct sequence.
- *Elementary narrative problems*. Problems that are expressed in words have to bear a relationship to the learners' concrete world. Alternatively, these sums may be represented visually or pictorially.
- *Multiplication*. Make use of verbal self-monitoring.
- *Simple division*. What is important here is that learners have to mention the dividend first, and then the divisor.
- *More difficult calculations*. Should learners have difficulties with spacing, they should get squared paper so that they can write one number in each square. This will enable them to get their numbers organised into columns and rows.

Take care that learners receive more than just one of a particular mathematical concept before going on to the next mathematical concept. Textbooks often do not provide more than one exercise covering each concept. If you follow the book slavishly, it may cause learners to move on to a new concept before they have mastered the previous one.

7 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Whenever you have to advise parents on how to support the learners at home with their Mathematics, stress that all mathematical calculations must be related to the learners' actual environment. Parents should guard against trying to give their learners the same kind of formal instruction that they themselves underwent when they were at school.

Parents have an important part to play in their learners's progress in Mathematics, for example by:

- encouraging them, trusting in them, and acknowledging their achievements
- refraining from setting unrealistic tasks that cause the learners to lose heart, and instead allowing them to make mistakes
- helping them to develop self-confidence and motivation
- encouraging them to try their level best in Mathematics
- refraining from letting girls know that it is acceptable for them to be inferior to boys in Mathematics
- discussing any sign of a learning problem with the teacher and deciding on a course of action in conjunction with the teacher
- guarding against transferring their own fears to their learners (if they themselves maintain a positive attitude to Mathematics, their example will go a long way towards motivating their learners to also be positive to Mathematics)
- creating ample opportunity for the learners to practise mathematical concepts at home. (Parents may consult with teachers from time to time if they find that the books and manuals are too difficult for the learners to understand.)
- arranging for extra classes for the learners, if necessary, to be taken by someone

who has the necessary knowledge of Mathematics (only when there is no help available from someone at the school and if learners are so far behind that it is impossible for them to catch up on the backlog with the help of the school)

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APPENDIX N

WHITE PAPER 6

EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6 : SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

This section contains a summary of the new Education White Paper 6, *Special needs education*: *building an inclusive education and training system*, which was published in July 2001. The publication of the White Paper heralded the Department of Education's acceptance of the policy of inclusive education.

Certain sections have been taken directly from the Education White Paper but the author has also compiled additional material.

To help you achieve the envisaged outcomes, we have organised the material under the following headings:

1 Inclusive education
2 Run-up to Education White Paper 6, *Special needs education: building an inclusive education and training system*
3 What is an inclusive education and training system?
4 What is inclusive education and training?
5 Building an inclusive education and training system: the first steps
6 The framework for establishing an inclusive education and training system
7 Establishing the inclusive education and training system
8 Conclusion

1 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

According to the Education White Paper, it was decided to accept the policy of inclusive education in South Africa for the following 10 reasons:

- It is a human right.
- It makes good educational sense.
- It makes good social sense.
- It promotes the right to learn and live together.
- It promotes acceptance of diversity.
- It builds respect for one another.
- It supports a uniform and responsive education and training system.
- It supports the removal of all elementary discrimination.
- It supports positive interaction and learning from one another.
- It helps to build a rehabilitative and supportive society.

Before discussing in detail the application of inclusive education as spelt out in the White Paper, we shall first look at the following case study:

Case study

Harmony Primary school is situated in a suburban area of a large city in South Africa. It is well equipped and has enough classrooms and sports facilities. The teachers regularly get together in a large sociable staffroom which would be able to accommodate about 50 learners. The teacher-learner ratio is approximately 1:40.

Many learners do not live in the neighbourhood but come from surrounding suburbs and ''townships'', and some have to travel quite far to reach the school. Mrs Barnes's grade 6 class comprises 44 learners — 20 boys and 24 girls. They are a mixture of races and represent different language groups. The teaching and learning medium is English, but more than 40% of the learners are being taught in their second or even third language. Learners who experience first and second language problems are sent to a remedial teacher for extra classes. However, the language teacher complains that she sees no improvement in these learners' work. She does not have the opportunity to speak to the remedial teacher about the learners' progress.

Because the school is committed to inclusive education, and Mrs Barnes had once taken a short in-service training course, two learners who required hearing aids and one with albinism were admitted to her grade 4 class. Furthermore, a learner in a wheelchair was admitted to a grade 5 class on the ground floor. He was supposed to be in her class, but since her classroom is on the first floor she had to pay regular visits to the grade 5 class to inform the teacher of her progress with the curriculum and to check the learner's work. She had already requested that her class be moved to the ground floor but according to the teacher responsible for doing the classroom allocations, there was no available classroom large enough to accommodate all her learners. In Mrs Barnes's class there was also a boy who had once had a tonic-clonic epileptic seizure. Fortunately, she had known how to assist the learner during the seizure and to calm the other learners. Mrs Barnes's class is situated on the north side of the school building, which means that the sun shines strongly into her classroom, especially during the winter months. The learner with albinism has already complained that there is too much light in the classroom.

Mrs Barnes is a motivated teacher who tries to make her classroom as attractive as possible by using bright posters. She has access to overhead projectors and computers. However, her main problem is group work, because some learners do not want to work with the learner who had the epileptic seizure and the two learners with hearing impairments. Their noisy rejection of these learners gives rise to loud arguments in class, which means that a lot of time is wasted before she can get everyone working again. She therefore regularly ''lapses'' into direct teaching in which she does most of the talking. Another problem is that she does not always know how to punish the learners who disrupt the class.

Mrs Barnes does not seem to receive any support from other members of staff. She is reluctant to ask for assistance because she is afraid that the school principal will think that she is a poor teacher. She has not yet made contact with the support team in the district. Although the principal promised that he would make appointments for her with the nearest school for learners with visual and auditory disabilities to enable her to visit the schools, this has not yet materialised.

Adapted from Donald, Lazarus and Lolwane (1997:109–110)

According to Education White Paper 6, inclusive education should pose the following challenges for teachers:

- Support inclusion.
- Advocate and raise awareness.
- Embrace diversity.
- Change perceptions and attitudes.
- Address the needs of ***all*** learners.
- Accept people who are facing challenges.
- Accept people who are different.
- Stop discrimination.

Although the scenario outlined in the case study may be somewhat exaggerated, such conditions are by no means unheard of. Inclusive education does not feature at all in this school.

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (a centre situated in Bristol in the United Kingdom to promote inclusive education in England) discusses disability on the basis of a social model in their documents. This is also the point of departure in South Africa. The Centre uses the following definitions for inclusive education, which have been adapted to make provision for South African concepts (http:www//inclusion.uwe.ac.uk):

- Inclusion in education involves the processes of increasing the participation of learners in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.
- Inclusion involves restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of learners in their local community.
- Inclusion is concerned with the learning and participation of all learners vulnerable to exclusionary pressures, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as ''experiencing barriers to learning and development''.
- Inclusion is concerned with improving schools for staff as well as for learners.
- A concern with overcoming barriers to the access and participation of particular learners may reveal gaps in the attempts of a school to respond to diversity more generally.
- All learners have the right to education in their local community.
- Diversity is not viewed as a problem to be overcome, but as a rich resource to support the learning of all.

- Inclusion is concerned with fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities.
- Inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.

According to Education White Paper 6, inclusive education and training are implemented through the following:

- Acknowledging that all learners and young people are able to learn and that all learners and young people need support.
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases.
- Acknowledging that learning is broader than formal schooling and also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal settings and structures.
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.

The core aspect of all the definitions is that we should accept all learners in our local schools as they are — be they ordinary or disabled learners or learners who manifest serious behavioural problems, or learners who underachieve because of environmental lags. Hence we do not try only to change learners' behaviour but also to change and improve their circumstances and opportunities. This concept is also emphasised in White Paper 6.

The Education White Paper emphasises that education for all learners is our constitutional responsibility. The Constitution of South Africa states clearly that every person has the right to basic education and training for which the state must continually make provision and which it must make accessible to everyone. This fundamental right to basic education and training further commits the state to equality and nondiscrimination which is of particular importance to learners who experience barriers to learning.

Transformation in the education system is vital for the following reasons:

- In South Africa, learners who experience barriers to learning run the greatest risk of being excluded from the education system.
- It is estimated that 70% of learners with disabilities, of whom the majority are black disabled learners in rural areas, are currently outside the formal education system (National Integrated Disability Strategy 1999).
- Where learners who experience barriers to learning are in fact accommodated in ordinary schools, access to the curriculum is often limited by a number of factors such as inaccessibility of buildings, inadequate provision of aids and rigid teaching and learning practices.
- It would seem that learners who experience barriers to learning suffer a greater degree of exclusion in the early childhood development phase (ECD), in adult basic education and training (ABET), further education and training (FET), and in higher education and training (HET).
- The absence of a cohesive integrated policy and plan for special education has contributed mainly to the exclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning from the education and training system. As you know, all the special schools fell under their own departments of education. This meant that there was little cooperation between special schools and ordinary schools. Furthermore, the

placement of learners in a special school or their return to an ordinary school was accompanied by administrative red tape. Many learners were excluded from the system as a result.

The Education White Paper emphasises the following:

- Inclusive education promotes equal participation of and nondiscrimination against all learners in the learning process, irrespective of their abilities, within a single, seamless education and training system and a continuum of learning contexts and resources according to need.
- The key to the successful implementation of a South African inclusive education and training model is the launch of a national advocacy and information programme in support of the inclusion model, focusing on the roles, responsibilities and rights of all learning institutions, parents and communities.
- The White Paper on Special Education arises out of the need for changes to be made to the system of providing education and training so that it is responsive and sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs.
- The policy framework outlined in the White Paper aims to accommodate the full range of diverse learning needs within all bands of the education and training system.
- To successfully pursue this agenda, we must all recognise that learning difficulties are located and experienced within all bands of education and training (general, further and higher education), and across the curriculum.

To build up an inclusive education and training system, the following objectives should be realised:

- The central objective of the White Paper on Special Education is to extend the policy foundations, frameworks and programmes of existing policy to all bands of education and training so that the education and training system recognises and addresses barriers to learning and accommodates the diverse range of learning needs.
- Transformation and change will therefore focus on the full range of education and training services: national and provincial departments of education, higher education institutions, special and ordinary education support services, curriculum and assessment, education managers, educators, parents and communities.

The vision and goals outlined in the White Paper on Special Education reflect a 20-year developmental perspective.

The long-term goal of the Education White Paper is as follows:

- Our long-term goal is the development of an inclusive education and training system that will uncover and address barriers to learning and recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

The short-term to medium-term goals are as follows:

- Our short-term to medium-term goals will lay the foundation for the kind of education and training system we wish to build over the next twenty years and will therefore focus on strategic areas of change. Over the next five years every effort will be made

— to build capacity in all education departments
— to strengthen the capacity of all advisory bodies
— to establish district support teams
— to improve the quality of special schools and convert them into resource centres
— to identify, designate and establish full-service schools, adult centres, and further and higher education institutions
— to establish institutional level support teams
— to establish mechanisms at community level for the early identification of severe learning difficulties
— to develop the professional capacity of all educators in curriculum development and assessment
— to ensure quality assurance and quality improvement
— to mobilise public support
— to develop and pre-test the resourcing instruments of programmes

The following information was taken directly from the Education White Paper. However, certain repetitive information was omitted.

2 RUN-OFF TO EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6: SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

2.1 INTRODUCTION BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

In this White Paper, we make it clear that special schools will be strengthened rather than abolished. We will develop investment plans to improve the quality of education across all of them. Learners with severe disabilities will be accommodated in these vastly improved special schools, as part of the inclusive system. In this regard, the process of identifying, assessing and enrolling learners in special schools will be overhauled and replaced by structures that acknowledge the central role played by educators, lecturers and parents. Given the considerable expertise and resources that are invested in special schools, we must also make these available to neighbourhood schools, especially full-service schools and colleges. This can only be achieved by making special schools, in an incremental manner, part of district support services where they can become resources for all our schools.

This White Paper, together with Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development, completes an extraordinary period of seven years of post-apartheid policy development and policy making outlined in Education White Paper 1 on Education and Training that began in the final quarter of 1994. It is a policy that took us more time to complete than any of the five macro-systems policies that it follows upon. This means that is has benefitted the most from our early experience and knowledge of the complex interface of policy and practice.

I hold out great hope that through the measures that we put forward in this White Paper we will also be able to convince the thousands of mothers and fathers of some 280 000 disabled learners — who are younger than 18 years and are not in schools or colleges — that their learners can take their places alongside their peers, in schools,

on the playgrounds, on the streets and in the places of worship to become part of the local community and cultural life, and part of the reconstruction and development of our country. For, it is only when these ones among us are a natural and ordinary part of us that we can truly lay claim to the status of cherishing all our learners equally.

Through this White Paper, the Government is determined to create special needs education as a non-racial and integral component of our education system.

I wish to take this opportunity to invite all our social partners, members of the public and interested organisations to join us in this important and vital task that faces us: of building an inclusive education system. Let us work together to nurture our people with disabilities so that they also experience the full excitement and the joy of learning, and to provide them, and our nation, with a solid foundation for lifelong learning and development. I acknowledge that building an inclusive education and training system will not be easy. What will be required of us all is persistence, commitment, coordination, support, monitoring, follow-up and leadership.

Professor Kader Asmal, MP

Minister of Education

2.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



(This summary — as the name indicates — is a summary of the whole White Paper. The information provided here will be repeated in the sections that follow and discussed in greater depth.)

In this White Paper we outline what an inclusive education and training system is, and how we intend to build it. It provides the framework for establishing such an education and training system, details a funding strategy, and lists the key steps to be taken in establishing an inclusive education and training system in South Africa.

The central findings of the investigations included:

(i) specialised education and support have predominantly been provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within ''special'' schools and classes;
(ii) where provided, specialised education and support were provided on a racial basis, with the best human, physical and material resources reserved for whites;
(iii) most learners with a disability have either fallen outside of the system or been ''mainstreamed by default'';
(iv) the curriculum and education system as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of drop-outs, push-outs, and failures; and
(v) while some attention has been given to the schooling phase with regard to ''special needs and support'', the other levels or bands of education have been seriously neglected.

In the light of these findings, the joint report of the two bodies recommended that the education and training system should promote education for all and foster the

development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.

The principles guiding the broad strategies to achieve this vision included: acceptance of principles and values contained in the Constitution and White Papers on Education and Training: human rights and social justice for all learners; participation and social integration; equal access to a single, inclusive education system; access to the curriculum, equity and redress; community responsiveness; and cost-effectiveness.

The report also suggested that the key strategies required to achieve this vision included the following:

(i) transforming all aspects of the education system
(ii) developing an integrated system of education
(iii) infusing ''special needs and support services'' throughout the system
(iv) pursuing the holistic development of centres of learning to ensure a barrier-free physical environment and a supportive and inclusive psycho-social learning environment, developing a flexible curriculum to ensure access for all learners
(v) promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents, educators and learners
(vi) providing effective development programmes for educators, support personnel, and other relevant human resources
(vii) fostering holistic and integrated support provision through intersectoral collaboration
(viiii) developing a community-based support system which includes a preventative and developmental approach to support
(ix) developing funding strategies that ensure redress for historically disadvantaged communities and institutions, sustainability, and — ultimately — access to education for all learners

Based on the recommendations in the joint report, the Ministry released a Consultative Paper (Department of Education. Consultative Paper no 1. *Special education: building an inclusive education and training system*, 30 August, 1999). The submissions and feedback of social partners and the public were collated and have informed the writing of this White Paper.

In this White Paper, we outline 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 their learning needs. We recognise that our vision of an inclusive education and training system can only be developed over the long term and that the actions we will take in the short term to medium term must provide us with models for later system-wide application. Our short-term to medium-term actions will also provide further clarity on the capital, material and human resource development, and consequently the funding requirements, of building an inclusive education and training system.

The Ministry appreciates that a broad range of learning needs exists among the learner population at any point in time, and that where these are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the learning system. In this regard, different learning needs arise from a range of factors, including physical, mental,

sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances, differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socioeconomic deprivation.

Different learning needs may also arise because of:

- negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences
- an inflexible curriculum
- inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching
- inappropriate and unsafe built environments
- inappropriate communication
- inappropriate and inadequate support services
- inadequate policies and legislation
- the non-recognition and non-involvement of parents
- inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators

In accepting this inclusive approach we acknowledge that the learners who are most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion in South Africa are those who have historically been termed ''learners with special education needs'', that is learners with disabilities and impairments. Their increased vulnerability has arisen because of the historical nature and extent of the educational support provided.

Accordingly, the White Paper outlines the following as key strategies and levers for establishing our inclusive education and training system:

- The qualitative improvement of special schools for the learners that they serve and their phased conversion to resource centres that provide professional support to neighbourhood schools and are integrated into district-based support teams.
- The overhauling of the process of identifying, assessing and enrolling learners in special schools, and its replacement by one that acknowledges the central role played by educators, lecturers and parents.
- The mobilisation of out-of-school disabled learners and youth of school-going age.
- Within mainstream schooling, the designation and phased conversion of approximately 500 out of 20 000 primary schools to full-service schools, beginning with the 30 school districts that are part of the national district development programme. Similarly, within adult basic, further and higher education, the designation and establishment of full-service educational institutions. These full-service education institutions will enable us to develop models for later system-wide application.
- Within mainstream education, the general orientation and introduction of management, governing bodies and professional staff to the inclusion model, and the targeting of early identification of the range of diverse learning needs, with intervention in the Foundation Phase.
- The establishment of district-based support teams to provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions, beginning with the 30 districts that are part of the national district development programme.
- The launch of a national advocacy and information programme in support of the inclusion model, focusing on the roles, responsibilities and rights of all learning institutions, parents and local communities, and highlighting the focal programmes and reporting on their progress

3 WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM?

3.1 CONTENT

In Education White Paper 6 we outline how the policy will:

- systematically move away from using segregation according to categories of disabilities as an organising principle for institutions
- base the provision of education for learners with disabilities on the intensity of support needed to overcome the debilitating impact of those disabilities
- place an emphasis on supporting learners through full-service schools that will have a bias towards particular disabilities depending on need and support
- direct how the initial facilities will be set up and how the additional resources required will be accessed
- indicate how learners with disabilities will be identified, assessed and incorporated into special, full-service and ordinary schools in an incremental manner
- introduce strategies and interventions that will assist educators to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs to ensure that transitory learning difficulties are ameliorated
- give direction for the Education Support System needed
- provide clear signals on how current special schools will serve identified disabled learners on site and also serve as a resource to educators and schools in the area

3.2 INTRODUCTION

3.2.1 Our Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) founded our democratic state and common citizenship on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms (section 1a). These values call upon all of us to take up the responsibility and challenge of building a humane and caring society, not for the few, but for all South Africans. In establishing an education and training system for the 21st century, we carry a special responsibility to implement these values and to ensure that all learners, with and without disabilities, pursue their learning potential to the fullest.

3.2.2 In building our education and training system, our Constitution provides a special challenge to us by requiring that we give effect to the fundamental right of basic education for all South Africans. In section 29(1), it commits us to this fundamental right, namely ''that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education ...''.

3.2.3 This fundamental right to basic education is further developed in the Constitution in section 9(2), which commits the state to the achievement of equality, and sections 9(3), (4) and (5), which commit the state to non-discrimination. These clauses are particularly important for protecting all learners, whether disabled or not.

3.2.4 The Government's obligation to provide basic education to all learners and its commitment to the central principles of the Constitution are also guided by the recognition that a new unified education and training system must be

based on equity, on redressing past imbalances and on a progressive raising of the quality of education and training.

3.2.5 In line with its responsibility to develop policy to guide the transformation programme that is necessary to achieve these goals, the Ministry of Education has prepared this White Paper for the information of all our social partners and the public at large. This policy framework outlines the Ministry'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 who continue to be excluded from the system.

3.2.6 The White Paper outlines how the education and training system must 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.

3.2.7 Particular attention must be paid to achieving these objectives through a realistic and effective implementation process that moves responsibly towards the development of a system that accommodates and respects diversity. This process will require a phasing in of strategies that are directed at departmental, institutional, instructional and curriculum transformation. It will also require the vigorous participation of our social partners and our communities so that social exclusion and negative stereotyping can be eliminated.

3.3 THE WHITE PAPER PROCESS

3.3.1 This White Paper arises out of the need for changes to be made to the provision of education and training so that it is responsive and sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs. Education White Paper 1 on Education and Training (1995) acknowledged the importance of providing an effective response to the unsatisfactory educational experiences of learners with special educational needs, including those within the mainstream whose educational needs have been inadequately accommodated.

3.3.2 In order to address this concern within its commitment to an integrated and comprehensive approach to all areas of education, the Ministry appointed a National Committee on Special Needs in Education and Training and a National Committee on Education Support Services in October 1996. A joint report on the findings of these two bodies was presented to the Minister in November 1997, and the final report was published in February 1998. The Ministry released a Consultative Paper (Department of Education. Consultative Paper no 1. *Special education: building an inclusive education and training system*. 30 August 1999) which was largely based on the recommendations made to the Minister in this report.

3.3.3 The Consultative Paper advocates inclusion on the basis of the principle that learning disabilities arise from the education system rather than the learner. Notwithstanding this approach, it used terms such as ''learners with special education needs'' and ''learners with mild to severe learning difficulties'' which are part of the language of the approach that sees learning disabilities as arising from within the learner. There should be consistency between the inclusive approach that is embraced, namely that barriers to learning exist

primarily within the learning system, and the language in use in our policy papers. Accordingly, the White Paper adopts the use of the terminology ''barriers to learning and development''. It will retain the internationally acceptable terms of ''disability'' and ''impairments'' when referring specifically to those learners whose barriers to learning and development are rooted in organic/medical causes.

4 WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

4.1 In this White Paper inclusive education and training:

- acknowledges that all learners and young people can learn and that all learners and young people need support
- accepts and respects the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different needs, which are equally valued and are an ordinary part of our human experience
- enables education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners
- acknowledges and respects differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status
- is broader than formal schooling and acknowledges that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures
- is about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners
- is about maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning
- is about empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning

4.2 It is clear that some learners may require more intensive and specialised forms of support to be able to develop to their full potential. An inclusive education and training system is organised so that it can provide various levels and kinds of support to learners and educators.

4.3 Believing in and supporting a policy of inclusive education are not enough to ensure that such a system will work in practice. Accordingly, we will evaluate carefully what resources we already have within the system and how these existing resources and capacities can be strengthened and transformed so that they can contribute to the building of an inclusive system. We will also decide on where the immediate priorities lie and put mechanisms in place to address these first.

4.4 In this White Paper we also distinguish between mainstreaming and inclusion as described below:

''Mainstreaming'' or ''Integration''	Inclusion
Mainstreaming is about getting learners to ''fit into'' a particular kind of system or integrating them into this existing system.	Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences between all learners and building on the similarities.
Mainstreaming is about giving some learners extra support so that they can ''fit into'' or be integrated into the ''normal'' classroom routine. Learners are assessed by specialists who diagnose and prescribe technical interventions, such as the placement of learners in programmes.	Inclusion is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus is on teaching and learning factors, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners.
Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes that need to take place in learners so that they can ''fit in''. Here the focus is on the learner.	Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on the adaptation of and support systems available in the classroom.

5 BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM: THE FIRST STEPS

5.1 The Ministry accepts that a broad range of learning needs exists among the learner population at any point in time, and that, where these are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the learning system. In this regard, different learning needs arise from a range of factors, including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances, differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socioeconomic deprivation. Different learning needs also arise because of:

- negative attitudes and the stereotyping of differences
- an inflexible curriculum
- inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching
- inappropriate communication
- inaccessible and unsafe built environments
- inappropriate and inadequate support services
- inadequate policies and legislation
- the non-involvement of parents
- inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators

In accepting this approach, it is essential to acknowledge that the learners who are most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion in South Africa are those who have historically been termed ''learners with special education needs'', that is learners with disabilities and impairments. Their increased vulnerability has arisen because of the historical nature and extent of the educational support provided.

5.2 As will be obvious from a reading of the factors contributing to the diverse range of learning needs, it is possible to identify barriers to learning operative within the learner or the education and training system. These may also arise during the learning process and be temporary, and can be addressed through a variety of mechanisms and processes. Interventions or strategies at different levels, such as the classroom, the school, the district, the provincial and national departments and systems, will be essential to prevent them from causing learning to be ineffective. Interventions or strategies will also be essential to avoid barriers to learning from contributing to the exclusion of learners from the curriculum and/or from the education and training system.

Human resource development for classroom educators

Classroom educators will be our primary resource for achieving our goal of an inclusive education and training system. This means that educators will need to improve their skills and knowledge, and develop new ones. Staff development at the school and district level will be critical to putting in place successful integrated educational practices. Ongoing assessment of educators' needs through our developmental appraisal, followed by structured programmes to meet these needs, will make a critical contribution to inclusion.

1. In mainstream education, priorities will include multi-level classroom instruction so that educators can prepare main lessons with variations that are responsive to individual learner needs, co-operative learning, curriculum enrichment; and dealing with learners with behavioural problems.
2. In special schools/resource centres, priorities will include orientation to new roles within district support services of support to neighbourhood schools, and new approaches that focus on problem solving and the development of learners' strengths and competencies rather than focusing on their shortcomings only.
3. In full-service schools, priorities will include orientation to and training in new roles focusing on multi-level classroom instruction, co-operative learning, problem solving and the development of learners' strengths and competencies rather than focusing on their shortcomings only.
4. Education support personnel within district support services will be orientated to and trained in their new roles of providing support to all teachers and other educators. Training will focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus will be on teaching and learning factors, and emphasis will be placed on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners, on overcoming barriers in the system and on support systems available in the classroom.
5. Management and governance development programmes will be revised to incorporate orientation to and training in the management and governance implications of each of the categories of institutions within the inclusive education and training system, namely special, full-service and mainstream. Training will focus on how to identify and address barriers to learning.

5.3 This approach to addressing barriers and exclusion is consistent with a learner-centred approach to learning and teaching. It recognises that developing learners' strengths and empowering and enabling them to participate actively and critically in the learning process involve identifying and overcoming the cause of learning difficulties. The approach is also consistent with a systemic and developmental approach to understanding problems and planning action. It is consistent with new international approaches that focus on providing quality education for all learners.

What are curriculum and institutional barriers to learning and how do we remove these?

One of the most significant barriers to learning for learners in special and ''ordinary'' schools is the curriculum. In this case, barriers to learning arise from different aspects in the curriculum, such as:

- the content (ie what is taught)
- the language or medium of instruction
- how the classroom or lecture is organised and managed
- the methods and processes used in teaching
- the pace of teaching and the time available to complete the curriculum
- the learning materials and equipment that are used
- how learning is assessed

What can be done to overcome these barriers and who will assist institutions in doing so?

The most important way of addressing barriers arising from the curriculum is to make sure that the process of learning and teaching is flexible enough to accommodate different learning needs and styles. The curriculum must therefore be made more flexible across all bands of education so that it is accessible to all learners, irrespective of their learning needs. One of the tasks of the district support team will be to assist educators in institutions in creating greater flexibility in their teaching methods and in the assessment of learning. They will also provide illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments.

5.4 Embracing this approach as the basis for establishing an inclusive education and training system does not mean that we should then proceed to declare it to be policy and hope that its implementation will proceed smoothly within all provincial systems and all education and training institutions. Rather, the successful implementation of this policy will rely on a substantive understanding of the real experiences and capabilities of our provincial systems and education and training institutions, the setting of achievable policy objectives and priorities over time and regular reporting on these. Successful policy implementation will also rely on the identification of key levers for policy change and innovation within our provincial systems and our education and training institutions.

5.5 It is this approach that lies at the heart of this White Paper: a determination to establish an inclusive education and training system as our response to the call to action to establish a caring and humane society, and a recognition that within an education and training system that is engaging in multiple and simultaneous policy priorities we need to identify key levers for change and put in place successful South African models of inclusion.

5.6 Against this background, we identify within this White Paper the following six key strategies and levers for establishing our inclusive education and training system:

5.6.1 The qualitative improvement of special schools and settings for the learners that they serve and their conversion to resource centres that are integrated into district-based support teams.

The place and role of special schools in an inclusive education system

As stated earlier, special schools currently provide, in a racially segregated manner, education services of varying quality.

1. While special schools provide critical education services to learners who require intense levels of support, they also accommodate learners who require much less support and should ideally be in mainstream schools.
2. When implementing our policy on inclusion we will pay particular attention to raising the overall quality of education services that special schools provide.
3. We will also ensure that learners who require intense levels of support receive these services since mainstream schools will be unable to provide them.
4. In addition to these roles, special schools will have a very important role to play in an inclusive system. The new roles for these schools will include providing particular expertise and support, especially professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction, as part of the district support team to neighbourhood schools, especially ''full-service'' schools. This role also includes providing appropriate and quality educational provision for those learners who are already in these settings or who may require accommodation in settings requiring secure care or specialised programmes with high levels of support.
5. Improved quality of special schools will also include the provision of comprehensive education programmes that provide life-skills and programme-to-work linkages. Here is an example of how a special school can operate as a resource in its district.

> A special school has specialised skills available among its staff and has developed learning materials to specifically assist learners with visual impairments. There may also be facilities for Braille available at the school. The professional staff at this school, as part of their role in the district support team, could run a training workshop in their district for other educators on how to provide additional support in the class-room to visually-impaired learners. The special school could produce learning materials in Braille and make them available through a lending system to other schools in the district. The school could also set up a ''help line'' for educators or parents to telephone in with queries.

6. But what will be done to help special schools take on this additional role? The White Paper explains that, to assist special schools in functioning as resource centres in the district support system, there will be a qualitative upgrading of their services.
7. We will focus especially on the training of their staff for their new roles. This process of upgrading will take place once we have completed our audit of the programmes, services and facilities in all 378 special and independent special schools.

5.6.2 The mobilisation of the approximately 280 000 disabled learners and young people outside of the school system.

5.6.3 Within mainstream schooling, the designation and conversion of approximately 500 out of 20 000 primary schools to full-service schools, beginning with the 30 school districts that are part of the national District Development Programme. Similarly, within adult basic, further and higher education, the designation and establishment of full-service educational institutions. The eventual number of full-service institutions (beyond the target of 500) will be governed by our needs and the available resources.

What are full-service schools and colleges and how do we intend establishing them?

Full-service schools and colleges are schools and colleges that will be equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs among all our learners.

1. It will be impossible in the medium term to convert all 28 000 schools and colleges to provide the full range of learning needs. Notwithstanding this, it will be important to pursue our policy goal of inclusion through the development of models of inclusion that can later be considered for system-wide application.
2. Full-service schools and colleges will be assisted to develop their capacity to provide for the full range of learning needs and to address barriers to learning.
3. Special attention will be paid to developing flexibility in teaching practices and styles through training, capacity building and the provision of support to learners and educators in these schools.

But how will this be done?

4. The Ministry, in collaboration with the provincial departments of education, will designate and then convert a number of primary schools throughout the country into what are called ''full-service'' schools.
5. These are schools that will be equipped and supported to provide for a greater range of learning needs.
6. The programmes that are developed in the ''full-service'' schools will be carefully monitored and evaluated. The lessons learnt from this process will be used to guide the extension of this model to other primary schools, as well as other high schools and colleges.

What kind of support will these schools receive?

7. The support they will receive will include physical and material resources, as well as professional development for staff.
8. They will also receive special attention from the district support teams so that they can become beacons of our evolving inclusive education system.

Which schools will become ''full-service'' schools?

9. Initially, we will select at least one primary school in a selection of 30 school districts. Based on lessons learnt from this sample, 500 primary schools will later be selected for conversion into ''full-service'' schools. When identifying the 500 schools, particular attention will be paid to the mobilisation of community and parent participation so that all social partners and role players can become part of the process of developing these schools.

5.6.4 Within mainstream education, the general orientation and introduction of management, governing bodies and professional staff to the inclusion model, and the targeting of early identification of disabilities and intervention in the Foundation Phase.

5.6.5 The establishment of district-based support teams to provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions, beginning with 30 district schools.

5.6.6 Finally, we will prioritise the implementation of a national advocacy and information programme in support of the inclusion model focusing on the roles, responsibilities and rights of all learning institutions, educators, parents and local communities and highlighting the focal programmes and reporting on their progress.

5.7 HIV/AIDS AND OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

5.7.1 The development of an inclusive education and training system must take into account the incidence and the impact of the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

5.7.2 For planning purposes, the Ministry will need to ascertain, in particular, the consequences for the curriculum, the expected enrolment and drop-out rates and the funding implications in both the short and long term.

5.7.3 The Ministry will attempt to gather this information from an internally commissioned study, as well as from other research being conducted in this area.

In the next chapter we elaborate on these six strategies and levers for change that constitute the core of our policy framework for establishing an inclusive education and training system.

6 THE FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The central objective of this White Paper is to extend the policy foundations, frameworks and programmes of existing policy for all bands of education and training so that our education and training system will recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

6.1.2 The most significant conceptual change from current policy is that the development of education and training must be premised on the understanding that:

- All learners, youth and adults have the potential to learn within all bands of education and they all require support.
- Many learners experience barriers to learning or drop out primarily because of the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs typically through inaccessible physical plants, curricula, assessment, learning materials and instructional methodologies. The approach advocated in this White Paper is fundamentally different from traditional ones that assume that barriers to learning reside primarily within the learner and accordingly, learner support should take the form of specialist, typically medical interventions.
- Establishing an inclusive education and training system will require changes to mainstream education so that learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early and appropriate support provided. It will also require changes to special schools and specialised settings so that learners who experience mild to moderate disabilities can be adequately accommodated within mainstream education through appropriate support from district-based support teams including special schools and specialised settings. This will require that the quality of provision of special schools and specialised settings be upgraded so that they can provide a high-quality service for learners with severe and multiple disabilities.

6.1.3 We are persuaded that the inclusion of learners with disabilities that stern from impaired intellectual development will require curriculum adaptation rather than major structural adjustments or sophisticated equipment. Accordingly, their accommodation within an inclusive education and training framework would be more easily facilitated than the inclusion of those learners who require intensive support through medical interventions, structural adjustments to the built environment and/or assistive devices with minimal curriculum adaptation. Given the serious human resource constraints in the country and the demands for justice, there is an onus on the Government to ensure that all human resources are developed to their fullest potential. In the long run, such a policy will also lead to a reduction in the Government's fiscal burden as the inclusive education and training system increases the number of productive citizens relative to those who are dependent on the state for social security grants.

6.1.4 The central features of the inclusive education and training system put forward in this White Paper are:

- Criteria for the revision of existing and legislation for all bands of education and training, and frameworks for governance and organisation.
- A strengthened district-based education support service.
- The expansion of access and provision.
- Support for curriculum development and assessment, institutional development and quality improvement and assurance.
- A national information, advocacy and mobilisation campaign.
- A revised funding strategy.

6.1.5 It is also essential to acknowledge that many of the barriers to learning that we are drawing attention to in this White Paper are being tackled within many other national and provincial programmes of the Departments of Education, Health, Welfare, and Public Works in particular.

6.1.6 To illustrate, in the case of the Department of Education, the COLTS Programme previously, and now the Tirisano Programme, the District Development Programme, Curriculum 2005, the Language-in-Education Policy, Systemic Evaluation (of the attainment of Grade 3 learners), the HIV/AIDS Life Skills Programme and the joint programmes with the Business Trust on school efficiency and quality improvement, are examples of programmes that are already seeking to uncover and remove barriers to learning experienced in mainstream education.

6.1.7 The Department of Public Works is implementing a job creation project to provide ramp access for learners on wheelchairs to schools.

6.1.8 The Department of Health is implementing an Integrated Nutrition Strategy including the Primary Schools Nutrition Project to provide learners from poor families with a nutritious meal. The Department also provides free health care for learners younger than six years, while the Technical Guidelines on Immunisation in South Africa (1995) provide for learners younger than five years to be prioritised for nutritional intervention.

6.1.9 The Department of Social Development prioritises the provision of social development services to learners under five years. The Department also provides a child support grant for needy learners younger than seven years.

6.1.10 All of these programmes will be enhanced by policies and programmes being advocated in this White Paper.

6.1.11 Accordingly, in this White Paper, the Ministry puts forward a framework for transformation and change which aims to ensure increased and improved access to the education and training system for those learners who experience the most severe forms of learning difficulties and are most vulnerable to exclusion.

6.1.12 This will, of necessity, require that we focus our attention on those learners in special schools and settings and those in remedial or special classes in ordinary schools and settings.

6.1.13 However, while we must focus our efforts on improving the capacity of the education and training system to accommodate learners who experience the various forms of learning difficulties, our focus will require the transformation and change of the entire education and training system for us to be able to accomplish these objectives and to enable mainstream education

and training to recognise and address the causes and effects of learning difficulties in ''ordinary'' classes and lecture halls.

6.1.14 Transformation and change must therefore focus on the full range of education and training services: the organisations — national and provincial departments of education, further and higher education institutions, schools (both special and ordinary), education support services, curriculum and assessment, education managers and educators, and parents and communities.

6.2 THE FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

6.2.1 Education and training policies, legislation, advisory bodies and governance and organisational arrangements

6.2.1.1 In revising policies, legislation and frameworks, the Ministry will give particular, but not exclusive, attention to those that relate to the school and college systems. Policies, legislation and frameworks for the school and college systems must provide the basis for overcoming the causes and effects of barriers to learning. Specifically admission policies will be revised so that learners who can be accommodated outside of special schools and specialised settings can be accommodated within designated full-service or other schools and settings. Age grade norms will be revised to accommodate those learners requiring a departure from these norms as a result of their particular learning needs. Simultaneously, the Ministry will collaborate with the Ministries of Health and Social Development to design and implement early identification, assessment and education programmes for learners with disabilities in the age group 0–9 years. Boarding facilities and transport policies and practices will be reviewed on the understanding that the neighbourhood or full-service school should be promoted as the first choice.

6.2.1.2 In respect of reform schools and schools of industry, the Ministry will collaborate with the Ministry of Social Development and the provincial departments of education to ensure that learners and youth awaiting trial in these schools are provided with a supportive and effective learning and teaching environment, and that appropriate assessment practices and clear criteria and guidelines for their placement are established.

6.2.1.3 In higher education institutions access for disabled learners and other learners who experience barriers to learning and development can be achieved through properly co-ordinated learner support services, and the cost-effective provision of such support services can be made possible through regional collaboration. Institutional planning is now a critical part of national planning for higher education, and higher education institutions will be required to plan the provision of programmes for learners with disabilities and impairments through regional collaboration. This is now a requirement of the National Plan for Higher Education.

6.2.1.4 An aspect of the development of learning settings that the Ministry will give urgent attention to is the creation of barrier-free physical environments. The manner in which the physical environment, such as buildings and grounds, is developed and organised contributes to the level of independence and equality that learners with disability enjoy. The physical environment of most ordinary schools and learning settings is not barrier-free and even

where this is the case, accessibility has not been planned. Accordingly, space and cost norms for buildings, including grounds, will focus on the design and construction of new buildings, as well as the renovation of existing buildings. These actions will be undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works and provincial departments of public works.

6.2.1.5 In beginning to implement the policy proposals put forward in this White Paper, it will be essential to match the capacity of Government with the roles proposed for it. Professional development programmes will focus on the development of effective leadership in policy, administration and programme implementation, the establishment of management information systems, and the development of competencies necessary for addressing severe learning difficulties within the branches and sections of the national and provincial departments of education.

6.2.1.6 The National Norms and Standards of School Funding will apply to the new Inclusive Education and Training System and its application will be customised to ensure equity and redress.

6.2.2 Strengthening education support services

6.2.2.1 The Ministry believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service.

6.2.2.2 This strengthened education support service will have, at its centre, new district-based support teams that will comprise staff from provincial district, regional and head offices and from special schools. The primary function of these district support teams will be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, they will build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs.

6.2.2.3 At the institutional level, in general, further and higher education, we will require institutions to establish institutional-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where applicable, these teams should be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these institutional-level support teams.

6.2.2.4 The Ministry will also investigate how, within the principles of the post-provisioning model, designated posts can be created in all district support teams. Staff appointed to these posts can, as members of the district support team, develop and co-ordinate school-based support for all educators.

6.2.2.5 The Ministry recognises that the success of our approach to addressing barriers to learning and the provision of the full range of diverse learning needs rests with our education managers and educator cadre. Accordingly, and in collaboration with our provincial departments of education, the Ministry will, through the district support teams, provide access for educators to appropriate pre-service and in-service education and training and professional support services. The Ministry will also ensure that the norms and standards for the education of educators, trainers and other

development practitioners will include competencies in addressing barriers to learning and provide for the development of specialised competencies such as life skills, counseling and learning support.

6.2.2.6 Special schools and settings will be converted to resource centres and integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbourhood schools. This new role will be performed by special schools and settings in addition to the services that they provide to their existing learner base. In order to ensure that special schools and settings are well prepared for their new role, we will conduct an audit of their current capacities and the quality of their provision, raise the quality of their provision, upgrade them to resource centres and train their staff to assume these new roles as part of the district support team.

6.2.2.7 In revising and aligning our education support service, we will focus our efforts on establishing a co-ordinated education support service along a continuum from national through to provincial departments of education, through to schools, colleges, adult and early childhood learning centres, and higher education, which is sensitive to and accommodates diversity, with appropriate capacities, policies and support services.

6.2.3 Expanding provision and access

6.2.3.1 A central feature of our programme to build an inclusive education and training system is the enrolment of the approximately 280 000 disabled learners and youth of compulsory school-going age who are not accommodated in our school system.

6.2.3.2 The Ministry will put in place a public education programme to inform and educate the parents of these learners and youth, and will collaborate with the Department of Social Development to develop a programme to support their special welfare needs, including the provision of devices such as wheelchairs and hearing aids.

6.2.3.3 To accommodate these learners and youth of school-going age, we will, in collaboration with the provincial departments of education, designate and then convert, as a first step, primary schools to full-service schools, beginning in those school districts that form part of the national schools district development programme. Eventually, we expect to have a full-service school in each of our school districts, taking into account the location of the special schools/resource centres. These full-service schools will be provided with the necessary physical and material resources and the staff and professional development that are essential to accommodate the full range of learning needs. In this manner, we will expand provision and access to disabled learners within neighbourhood schools alongside their non-disabled peers.

6.2.3.4 Together with the provincial departments of education, the Ministry will monitor the successes and impact of these pilot schools closely to inform the expansion of the model to other primary and high schools.

6.2.3.5 With the collaboration of the provincial departments of education and school governing bodies, full-service schools will be made available to adult learners as part of public and adult learning programmes.

6.2.4 Further education and training

6.2.4.1 The Ministry will link the provision of education to learners with disabilities

stemming from impaired intellectual development and who do not require intensive support to the general restructuring of the further education and training sector currently being undertaken.

6.2.4.2 It is likely that a similar model to that proposed for general education will be developed for technical colleges, namely that there will be dedicated special colleges which will mirror the full-service schools in the general education sector.

6.2.5 Higher education

6.2.5.1 The National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry of Education, February 2001) commits our higher education institutions to increasing the access of learners with special education needs. The Ministry, therefore, expects institutions to indicate in their institutional plans the strategies and steps, with the relevant time frames, they intend taking to increase enrolment of these learners.

6.2.5.2 The Ministry will also make recommendations to higher education institutions regarding minimum levels of provision for learners with special needs. However, all higher education institutions will be required to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for physically disabled learners.

6.2.5.3 It will not be possible to provide relatively expensive equipment and other resources, particularly for blind and deaf students, at all higher education institutions. Such facilities will therefore have to be organised on a regional basis.

6.2.6 Curriculum, assessment and quality assurance

6.2.6.1 Central to the accommodation of diversity in our schools, colleges, and adult and early childhood learning centres and higher education institutions is a flexible curriculum and assessment policy that is accessible to all learners, irrespective of the nature of their learning needs. This is so since curricula create the most significant barrier to learning and exclusion for many learners, whether they are in special schools or settings, or ''ordinary'' schools and settings. These barriers to learning arise from within the various interlocking parts of the curriculum, such as the content of learning programmes, the language and medium of learning and teaching, the management and organisation of classrooms, teaching style and pace, time frames for completion of curricula, the materials and equipment that are available, and assessment methods and techniques. Barriers to learning and exclusion of this kind also arise from the physical and psycho-social environment within which learning occurs.

6.2.6.2 Accordingly, new curriculum and assessment initiatives will be required to focus on the inclusion of the full range of diverse learning needs. A key responsibility of the district support teams will be to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support to public adult learning centres, schools and further education institutions in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments.

6.2.6.3 As described earlier, the prevailing situation in special schools and settings and in remedial classes and programmes is inappropriate, and in general fails to provide a cost-effective and comprehensive learning experience for participating learners. In taking the first steps in building an inclusive education and training system, we will review, improve and expand

participation in special schools/resource centres and full-service institutions. The Ministry believes that these programmes should provide a comprehensive education, and should provide life skills and programme-to-work linkages. As described earlier, these programmes will also be required to provide their services to neighbourhood schools. Attention will also be given to those programmes and settings that accommodate learners requiring secure care, specialised programmes and/or high levels of support to ensure that these are provided in an appropriate and cost-effective manner, and that they provide for the psycho-social needs of these learners.

6.2.6.4 Institutional development will therefore focus on assisting educational institutions to recognise and address the diverse range of learning needs among learners. While we provide a framework for educational practices that are consistent with the establishment of an inclusive education and training system in this White Paper, we will focus on and prioritise special schools/resource centres and full-service schools and colleges that provide education services to learners most profoundly affected by learning barriers and exclusion.

6.2.6.5 The Ministry fully appreciates the importance of assessment and interviews during the early phases of life. It is during the pre-schooling years that hearing and vision-testing programmes should reveal early organic impairments that are barriers to learning. Community-based clinics are in the best position to conduct an initial assessment and plan a suitable course of action in conjunction with parents and personnel from various social services such as education. In order to ensure the continuity of such services throughout learning, the Ministry recognises that it is essential that links be established between community-based clinics and other service providers and the education and training system. Once learners have entered the formal education system, school-based support teams should be involved centrally in identifying ''at risk'' learners and addressing barriers to learning. To achieve this important objective, the Ministry shall work closely with the Ministries of Social Development and Health, and the provincial departments of education. With respect to the school system, early identification of barriers to learning will focus on learners in the Foundation Phase (Grades R–3) who may require support, for example through the tailoring of the curriculum, assessment and instruction.

6.2.6.6 Together with the Department of Public Works, we will make a special effort to develop sites of learning that provide physical access to most learners — in terms of buildings and grounds, beginning with designated full-service institutions.

6.2.6.7 Materials and equipment, in particular devices such as hearing aids and wheelchairs, will be made progressively accessible and available to those learners who cannot gain access to learning because of a lack of appropriate resources. In this respect, our primary focus shall be on the designated full-service institutions.

6.2.6.8 Assessment processes will address barriers to learning and current policies and practices will be reviewed and revised to ensure that the needs of all learners are acknowledged and addressed.

6.2.6.9 Existing quality assurance mechanisms at all levels of education and training, and at all sites of learning, will facilitate the development of quality education for all learners, including those who are disabled.

6.2.7 Information, advocacy and mobilisation

6.2.7.1 Public awareness and acceptance of inclusion will be essential for the establishment of an inclusive society and the inclusive education and training system put forward in this White Paper. Uncovering negative stereotypes, advocating unconditional acceptance and winning support for the policies put forward in this White Paper will be essential to the establishment of the inclusive education and training system.

6.2.7.2 Accordingly, the Ministry will launch an information and advocacy campaign to communicate the policy proposals contained in this White Paper, including the rights, responsibilities and obligations attached to these. The Ministry will also continue its discussions with national actors and role-players to win their support for the policy of inclusion and to review rights, responsibilities and obligations attached to these. One of the central thrusts of the advocacy campaign will be to target parents, since they are regarded as an important form of support.

6.2.7.3 Special attention will be given to the mobilisation of community support for the designation of full-service institutions and the conversion of special schools to resource centres.

6.2.7.4 As part of its information, advocacy and mobilisation campaign, and subject to the expansion of provision and access described in this White Paper, the Ministry will target the recruitment of those learners of compulsory school-going age who are not yet accommodated in our schools. Similarly, the Ministry will target the recruitment of learners to the designated public adult learning centres, and further and higher education institutions as these are established.

6.2.8 HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases

6.2.8.1 The Ministry will, on an ongoing basis, analyse the effects of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on the education system, and develop and implement appropriate and timely programmes.

6.2.8.2 These programmes will include special measures, such as strengthening our information systems, establishing a system to identify orphans, co-ordinate support and care programmes for such learners, put in place referral procedures for educators, and develop guidelines on how to support orphans and other learners in distress.

6.2.8.3 In this regard, the Ministry will work closely with provincial departments of education and the Departments of Social Development, Health and the Public Service Administration.

6.3 FUNDING STRATEGY (SUMMARY)

6.3.1 The funding strategy outlined in this White Paper needs to be adequately resourced to ensure successful implementation.

6.3.2 The budgets of the provincial education departments will need to be reviewed and reformulated to meet some of the needs of the proposed inclusive education and training system.

6.3.3 The audit of programmes offered by existing special schools will help inform the development of a spectrum of programme costs varying from cheapest to most expensive.

6.3.4 In respect of staffing, the objective of the post-provisioning strategy is to

allocate posts in accordance with the actual educational support needs of the learners concerned and not, as is the case currently, on the basis of category of disability. The revised resourcing model will create a dedicated pool of posts for the educational support system.

6.3.5 Teaching posts will be allocated to all schools in terms of the existing post-distribution model. In filing these posts, school management is obliged to ensure that the learners who 'generated' the posts are adequately catered for through appropriate and effective educational programmes.

6.3.6 A pool of posts for the district support teams and special schools/resource centres to provide support to schools will be created in terms of a formula related to the differing levels of programme costs. These posts will be top-sliced from the total pool of posts in a province before the post-distribution model is applied to schools.

6.3.7 These posts, together with those traditionally allocated to provincial education support services, will thus form a pool of specialists with appropriate expertise and experience. Posts will therefore be utilised for the deployment of resource persons that can provide direct interventionist programmes to learners in a range of settings and/or serve as 'consultant-mentors' to school management teams classroom educators and school governing bodies.

6.4 THE TIME FRAME

6.4.1 A realistic time frame of 20 years is proposed for the implementation of the inclusive education and training system. This implementation plan can be broken down as follows:

- **Immediate to short-term steps (2001–2003). The necessary steps include:**

  (a) Implementing a national advocacy and education programme on inclusive education.
  (b) Planning and implementing a targeted outreach programme, beginning in Government's rural and urban development nodes, to mobilise disabled out-of-school learners and youth.
  (c) Completing the audit of special schools and implementing a programme to improve efficiency and quality.
  (d) Designating, planning and implementing the conversion of 30 special schools to special schools/resource centres in 30 designated school districts.
  (e) Designating, planning and implementing the conversion of thirty primary schools to full service schools in the same thirty districts as (d) above.
  (f) Designating, planning and implementing the district support teams in the same 30 districts as (d) above.
  (g) Within all other public education institutions, on a progressive basis, the general orientation and introduction of management, governing bodies and professional staff to the inclusion model.
  (h) Within primary schooling, on a progressive basis the establishment of systems and procedures for the early identification and addressing of barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase (Grades R–3).

- **Medium-term steps (2004–2008). The major steps will include:**

  (i) Transforming further education and training and higher education institutions to recognise and address the diverse range of learning needs of learners, specially disabled learners.
  (j) Expanding the targeted community outreach programme in (b) from the base of Government's rural and urban development nodes to mobilise disabled out-of-school learners and youth in line with available resources.
  (k) Expanding the number of special schools/resource centres, full-service schools and district support teams in (d), (e) and (f) in line with lessons learnt and available resources.

- **Long-term steps (2009–2021)**:

  (l) Expanding provision to reach the target of 380 special schools/ resource centres, 500 full-service schools and colleges and district support teams and the 280 000 out-of-school learners and youth.

6.4.2 In order to develop a feasible implementation plan for the envisaged 20-year period, a number of research tasks will need to be undertaken. Such research will inform the development of the implementation plan, particularly in respect of the financial, human resource and institutional constraints identified earlier. Research will include the following:

- costing of an ideal district support team
- costing the conversion of special schools to special schools/resource centres
- costing of an ideal full-service school
- costing of a ''full service'' technical college
- determining the minimum levels of provision for learners who experience barriers to learning in all higher education institutions
- devising a personnel plan
- costing non-personnel expenditure requirements

7 ESTABLISHING THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

7.1 OUR LONG-TERM GOAL

7.1.1 Our long-term goal is the development of an inclusive education and training system that will uncover and address barriers to learning, and recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

7.1.2 This long-term goal is part of our programme to build an open, lifelong and high-quality education and training system for the 21st century.

7.1.3 The inclusive education and training system will include a range of different institutions, including special schools/resource centres and designated full-service and other schools, public adult learning centres and further and higher education and training institutions.

7.1.4 The vision and goals outlined in this White Paper reflect a 20-year developmental perspective.

7.2 OUR SHORT-TERM GOALS

7.2.1 Our short-term to medium-term goals will focus immediately on addressing the weaknesses and deficiencies of our current system and on expanding access and provision to those of compulsory school-going age who are not accommodated within the education and training system. In this manner, we will begin to lay the foundations for the kind of education and training system we wish to build over the next 20 years.

7.2.2 Below, we outline the strategic changes that will be introduced over the next eight years in more detail. These focus on the revision of all policies, legislation and structures that are necessary to facilitate the transformation process. This period will also include a public awareness and advocacy campaign, the development of appropriate and necessary capacities and competencies at all levels of the system and the rationalisation and the efficient combination of limited resources. It will also include the development of those mechanisms within the system that are central to increasing access, accommodating diversity and addressing barriers to learning. This period will also see the development of the district and learning institutional-based support system and the establishment of evaluation and monitoring measures.

7.3 STRATEGIC AREAS OF CHANGE

7.3.1 Building capacity in all education departments

7.3.1.1 The Department of Education and the nine provincial departments of education will play a critical role, particularly over the next eight years, in laying the foundations of the inclusive education and training system. This will require the establishment of an effective management, policy, planning and monitoring capacity in the Department of Education, under senior departmental leadership, to guide and support the development of the inclusive education and training system.

7.3.1.2 Since the provincial departments of education will play a key role in building institutional capacity and in managing the introduction of the inclusive education and training system, the Department of Education will assist provincial education departments in developing effective management systems and capacity in respect of strategic planning, management information systems, financial management and curriculum development and assessment.

7.3.1.3 As provided for in the Constitution, the Minister of Education will, on the principles of co-operative governance, determine national policy, norms and standards for establishing the inclusive education and training system, and will, together with the nine Members of the Provincial Executive Councils responsible for education, oversee the laying of the foundations of the inclusive education and training system.

7.3.2 Strengthening the capacities of all advisory bodies

7.3.2.1 All advisory bodies will play a critical role in providing advice to the Minister of Education on the goals, priorities and targets for the establishment of the inclusive education and training system.

7.3.2.2 Accordingly, the Ministry will review, and where appropriate, strengthen

the memberships of these advisory bodies so that they can provide appropriate and timely advice on these matters.

7.3.2.3 The memberships of provincial advisory bodies will similarly be reviewed and where appropriate, strengthened.

7.3.3 Establishing district support teams

7.3.3.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, we will strengthen the education support service that will have at its centre the new district-based support teams. These teams will comprise staff from provincial district, regional and head offices and from special schools. Their primary function will be to evaluate and, through supporting teaching, build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and further and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs.

7.3.3.2 District support teams will, firstly, be established in the 30 districts that form part of the District Development Programme and, on the basis of lessons learnt, expanding these to the remaining school districts may be considered.

7.3.4 Auditing and improving the quality of and converting special schools to resource centres

7.3.4.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, we will complete a quantitative and qualitative audit of education provision of all 380 public special schools and independent special schools with a view to improving the quality of their services.

7.3.4.2 Also, based on the outcomes of these audits, special schools will be converted to resource centres that will have two primary responsibilities. Firstly, the new resource centres will provide an improved educational service to their targeted learner populations. Secondly, they will be integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to designated full-service and other neighbourhood schools.

7.3.4.3 The conversion of special schools to resource centres will necessitate their upgrading and the training of their staff for their new roles as part of district support teams.

7.3.4.4 Conditions of service and the post-provisioning model for educators will be reviewed to accommodate the approaches put forward in this White Paper — district support teams, special schools/resource centres and full-service educational institutions — while retaining the services of specialist personnel as far as is possible.

7.3.5 Identifying, designating and establishing full-service schools, public adult learning centres, and further higher education institutions

7.3.5.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, and beginning in the 30 districts that form part of the District Development Programme, we will identify and designate primary schools for conversion to full-service schools so that we can expand provision and access to disabled learners

within neighbourhood schools. Based on lessons learnt, at least one primary school per district will be designated as a full-service school. Full-service schools will be provided with the necessary physical, material and human resources and professional development of staff so that they can accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

7.3.5.2 In the further education and training sector, the Ministry will link the provision of education to learners with disabilities stemming from impaired intellectual development and who do not require intensive support, to the general restructuring of the further education and training sector currently being undertaken by the Ministry. It is likely that a similar model to that proposed for general education will be developed for colleges, namely that there will be dedicated special colleges that will mirror the full-service schools in the general education sector.

7.3.5.3 In the higher education sector, and as part of the National Plan for Higher Education, the Ministry will require all higher education institutions to indicate in their institutional plans the strategies and steps, with related time frames, they intend taking to increase enrolment of learners with special education needs. The Ministry will undertake investigations and make recommendations to higher educational institutions regarding minimum levels of provision for learners with special needs. However, all higher education institutions will be required to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for all physically disabled learners. At the level of education provision, it will be fiscally possible to provide relatively expensive equipment, particularly for blind and deaf students, at only some of the higher education institutions. Such facilities will have to be rationalised on a regional basis.

7.3.6 Establishing institutional-level support teams

7.3.6.1 At the institutional level, we will assist general and further education and training institutions in establishing institutional-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services that will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, institutions should strengthen these teams with expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these institutional level support teams.

7.3.7 Assisting in establishing mechanisms at community level for the early identification of severe learning difficulties

7.3.7.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education and the Ministries of Health and Welfare, the Ministry will investigate how learners who experience severe barriers to learning during the pre-school years can be identified and supported. Mechanisms and measures to be investigated will include the role of community-based clinics and early admission of such learners to special schools/resource centres and full-service and other schools.

7.3.7.2 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, the Ministry will investigate measures to raise capacity in primary schools for the early

identification and support of learners who experience barriers to learning and require learning support.

7.3.8 Developing the professional capacity of all educators in curriculum development and assessment

7.3.8.1 We will require that all curriculum development, assessment and instructional development programmes make special efforts to address the learning and teaching requirements of the diverse range of learning needs and that they address barriers to learning that arise from language and the medium of learning and instruction; teaching style and pace; time frames for the completion of curricula; learning support materials and equipment; and assessment methods and techniques.

7.3.8.2 District support teams and institutional-level support teams will be required to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learner support materials and equipment, assessment instruments and professional support for educators at special schools/resource centres and full-service and other educational institutions.

7.3.8.3 The norms and standards for teacher education will be revised where appropriate to include the development of competencies to recognise and address barriers to learning and to accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

7.3.8.4 The 80 hours annual in-service education and training requirement of the Government in respect of educators, will be structured in such a manner that they include the requirement to complete courses relating to policies and programmes put forward in this White Paper.

7.3.9 Promoting quality assurance and quality improvement

7.3.9.1 The Ministry will require that all quality assurance bodies created for the education sector develop their programmes of quality assurance, taking into account the current and future access to and provision of educational services for learners with disabilities, including how special schools/resource centres, full-service and other educational institutions can uncover and address barriers to learning.

7.3.10 Mobilising public support

7.3.10.1 In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, the Ministry will launch an information and advocacy campaign to communicate the policy proposals contained in this White Paper, including the rights, responsibilities and obligations attached to these.

7.3.10.2 The Ministry will also continue its discussions with all national community-based organisations, NGOs, organisations of the disabled, health professionals and other members of the public who will play a central role in supporting the building of the inclusive education and training system.

7.3.10.3 At the institutional education level, partnerships will be established with parents so that, armed with information, counseling and skills, they can participate more effectively in the planning and implementation of inclusion activities, and so that they can play a more active role in the

learning and teaching of their own learners, despite limitations due to disabilities or chronic illnesses.

7.3.11 HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases

7.3.11.1 The Ministry will, on an ongoing basis, analyse the effects of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on the education and training system.

7.3.11.2 The Ministry will develop and implement appropriate and timely programmes, including strengthening our information system, establishing a system to identify orphans, co-ordinate support and care programmes for such learners, put in place referral procedures for educators, and develop teaching guidelines on how to support orphans and other learners in distress.

7.3.11.3 In this regard, the Ministry will work closely with provincial departments of education and the Departments of Social Development, Health and the Public Service Administration.

7.3.12 Developing an appropriate funding strategy

7.3.12.1 The funding strategy that is proposed in this White Paper is a realistic one that takes into account the country's fiscal capacity. The important features of this strategy are its emphasis on cost-effectiveness and exploiting the economies of scale that result from expanding access and provision within an inclusive education and training system.

7.3.12.2 For the short to medium term (that is, the first eight years) a three-pronged approach to funding is proposed, with new conditional grants from the national government, funding from the line budgets of provincial education departments and donor funds constituting the chief sources of funding.

7.3.12.3 Further investigations will be undertaken by the Ministry regarding the magnitude of these expenditures and how they can be phased in over the eight-year period.

8 CONCLUSION

The National Department of Education has already started implementing the objectives of the Education White Paper. During February and March 2002, a few hundred delegates from all the education sectors, parents' associations and nongovernmental organisations met to formulate guidelines on the implementation of the objectives of the White Paper. There were, inter alia, groups who worked on the following:

- the early childhood development phase
- the foundation phase
- the intermediate phase
- the senior phase
- the further education and training phase
- higher education
- special schools
- full-service schools
- ordinary schools

- social awareness and advocacy
- evaluating barriers to learning and financing

The guidelines of some of the groups were processed by the Department of Education and will now be sent to the stakeholders for comment. Unfortunately this is a slow process which will still take up the whole of this year, and possibly even longer. Of importance for you, is that the special schools are not going to be closed down — they are going to be upgraded to resource centres. This means that their resources must also be available for full-service and ordinary schools that have learners with disabilities. There will also be closer liaison between the district support team and the school support team.

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Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System

APPENDIX O

PRINGLE'S EMOTIONAL NEEDS MODEL

SATISFYING EMOTIONAL NEEDS

A deviant is created not by what they do, but by how we react to it. In itself no act is either deviant or normal: it takes on that character only in relation to other persons and their responses.

Mangham and Overington (Brown & Chazan 1989:90)

1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers, parents and peers are in effect all very significant role players within the life world of the learner (Charlton & George 1993:17; Morse et al 1980:ix). While learners' behaviour may be deemed to be the product of a whole range of variables, the influence these role players have in shaping these behaviour patterns is of particular interest. Apart from their parents, the teachers with whom the learners spends many hours of the day are among the most important significant other role players within the life-world of the learner. Pringle (1988:51) maintains that ''the child's progress will come to be powerfully affected by his teacher's attitudes, values and beliefs; some of these will be overt and deliberate; others may be implicit and incidental; still others may well be unconscious but just as powerful in influencing his learning. Many a child has had new doors opened by, and chosen his life's work because of, an inspired teacher.'' Lane (1994:12) similarly supports the view that teachers through their attitudes can greatly influence behaviour and the learning that takes place within the school environment.

2 UNMET EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Tompkins and Tompkins-McGill (1993:15) noted that practice in education has swung heavily towards behaviour modification techniques during the past two decades and the focus has mainly been on factors concerning overt behaviour. No light was shed on the possible impact of covert factors, such as the unmet emotional needs of learners, which impact on their behaviour. The result of the focus on overt behaviour is that ... ''*teachers and students have struggled merely to survive in schools, understanding of environmental influences and* ***emotions*** *has often been lost*'' (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:15). In similar vein Osher and Hanley (Illback & Nelson 1996:11) comment as follows on schools: ''... *schools are sorting station(s)*, wherein learners and youth first ... come to think of themselves as consistently inadequate or dumb, and especially as bad or troublesome. Schools label students, parcel out credentials and access to academic and vocational training, and sustain an environment in which students define themselves''. It is within this context that Rizzo and Zabel's (1988:227) proposal of administering ''*emotional first aid*'' to

learners needs to be seen. It is directed at offering learners emotional support and reassurance to get them back on track.

It will only be possible for a learner to experience an inward sense of emotional well-being, as the outcome of emotional needs being met, if the learner feels secure within himself, is freed from deep feelings of fear and guilt, and is free to weigh up alternatives and to choose the one he or she favours (Raths 1972:3). In particular learners need to experience a sense of self-respect and of belonging, as well as the satisfaction of seeing assignments successfully competed. As a consequence they experience a broadening of their skills and a sense of enhanced competence. The world begins to make sense to them and they feel confident that social conditions are not of an anarchic nature.They also feel reasonably secure about their financial position (Raths 1972:3). The situation described may be correlated with the concept of the *emotional bank account* suggested by Covey (1992 a:189). The emotional bank account is used metaphorically to describe the trust built up in relationships. Nowhere is this more relevant than in the case of the teacher — learner relationships that is built up within the classroom. When the balance in the account is high, the learner will be able to experience a sense of emotional well-being.

Pringle (1980:33) stipulates that ''*the essential driving force of the will to learn has its roots in the quality of relationships available to the child right from the beginning of life*''. For the purposes of this study ''*relationships within the context of unmet emotional needs of the learner must be met*'' will imply the learner's involvement in relationships with significant other role players — the teacher/learner, parent/child and peer/learner relationship being cases in point. According to Tompkins and Tompkins-McGill (1993:16,17), the ... ''*teacher/child relationship is a kind of center of gravity, around which the resources and interactions of a healthy education system revolve, like the planets around the sun. it is the teacher's relationship with the child that comprises the core of the system, orders its elements and holds them all together*''.

It is argued that teachers can make a difference in a learner's life — especially if the teacher lets the learner experience a feeling of ''*my teacher cares about me — my teacher likes me — my teacher thinks I am a worthy individual and my teacher wants to help me*'' (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:69). Within such a context the balance in the metaphorical bank account will be high.

The teacher/learner relationship can develop into a therapeutic relationship and, as emphasised by Tompkins et al (1993:177),

''*... the effects of therapeutic relationships are powerful and numerous*''. The therapeutic outcomes emanating from the teacher/learner relationship, for the learner exhibiting behaviour problems, are the following:

- greater inner freedom that enables the learner to learn and develop normally
- emotional growth that fosters more appropriate behavioural responses
- increased respect for the teacher as an adult role model, which results in the desire to identify with the admirable qualities of the teacher
- a more positive self-image, as the learner feels good about himself and feels accepted by significant other role players, and
- greater receptiveness to academic, social and other developmental processes, triggered by a feeling of emotional well-being

The teacher/learner relationship can act as a ''turning point'' in terms of an increased sense of self-esteem, enhanced creative accomplishment, greater individuality and more effective living. A meaningful relationship of this kind at school can have long-lasting effects for the learner, as it lays the foundation for the

learner's future relations and ''*may make the difference between a teaching failure and a teaching success*'' (Tompkins et al 1993:177,178).

Pringle (1980:21) maintains that ... ''*the capacity to respond to and benefit from, education inevitably depends on the level of a child's intellectual, language and emotional maturity*''. Therefore if a learner's emotional needs remain unmet, apart from exhibiting behaviour problems, the learner will not be able to actualise his potential to the fullest.

According to the latest NCSNET document (1997:11) on Education Policy, it is stipulated that ''*the main objective of any education in a democratic society is to provide quality education for all learners so that they will be able to* ***reach their full potential and will be able to meaningfully contribute to and participate in that society throughout their lives''.***

From the preceding discussion it is clear that schools and specifically teachers will have to pay serious attention to the quality of teacher/learner relationships in terms of satisfying the unmet emotional needs of learners. If unmet emotional needs are not satisfied in the classroom and at school, the objectives, as introduced by the NCSNET document, will not be realised. The statistics relating to learners exhibiting behaviour problems, the crime rate and violence, widespread corruption in communities and in the country in general, can be expected to increase even further. As stated by Pringle (1980:81), ''*... the consequences can be disastrous both for the individual and the society*''.

The different needs of learners have been described by authors and according to Pringle (1980:34) long lists of psychosocial needs can be drawn up. The literature study clearly revealed that many different types of *needs* have been identified by researchers — these ''needs'' were, however, not categorised as psychosocial needs. Maslow, well-known for his needs theory which focused on self-actualisation as the ultimate goal in life, identifies the following needs: physiological, safety, affiliation and love, self-esteem and self-actualisation or self-realisation needs (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:439). Although some of these needs relate to the needs identified by Pringle, Maslow did not specifically focus on the needs of learners, as did Pringle and the other researchers referred to in this section. Maslow's needs are structured in a hierarchy, implying that if the lower needs in the hierarchy are not met, needs at a higher level cannot be met (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 1997:439). Pringle (1980:34) contends, however, that although the relative importance of meeting specific emotional needs changes during the different developmental phases and the level of their fulfilment differs to a greater or lesser extent, emotional needs have to be met, from the cradle through into adulthood. In a subtle, complex way, all human needs are interrelated and interdependent. If one of the basic emotional needs is not met or is inadequately met, the child's development may be distorted or slowed down. Maslow (Moore 1997:444) maintains that if a person does not realise his or her full potential, the following causative factors could have been partly responsible: a lack of self-knowledge and self-insight; barriers to the realisation of the person's full potential; running away from talent and responsibility (termed the ''Jonah'' complex); or a superiority complex which causes the person to make no attempt to fulfil his or her potential; and seemingly opposing needs, not integrated within the individual. Pringle (1980:33, 82) contends that apart from not actualising his or her potential, when the learner's emotional needs are unmet, these unmet needs are exhibited in the behaviour of learners. Anger, hate, a lack of caring, vandalism, violence and delinquency are examples of behaviour problems associated with unmet emotional needs.

The following specific issues referred to by Maslow are of relevance to this study (Moore 1997:439–452):

- The therapist (or teacher) should imitate an older brother who respects his younger brother and who wants to be of assistance to the younger brother. The therapist must create circumstances in which the younger brother can grow and flourish and in which the learner's needs for security, love and self-respect can be met. The therapist (or teacher) must have a basic confidence in the learner's goodness so that he can discover and respect the learner's true potential. The therapist must assist the learner to find ways to meet his emotional needs within his environment.
- The ultimate goal of assisting the learner, is the realisation of the learner's true potential.
- Learners feel safe in a structured environment where there are set boundaries and limits and where fixed patterns and routines apply. The environment must be predictable and known to the learner if the learner is to feel safe. Learners who do not feel secure within themselves will be inclined to be followers instead of leaders and will be more prone to be influenced by others.
- When the physiological and safety needs of the learner are met, the learner experiences a feeling of wanting to belong somewhere and to give and receive love.
- Unmet needs for love are at the root of psychopathology and for the purposes of this study are seen as being at the root of behaviour problems.
- If the need for self-esteem has been met, the learner will feel good about himself and if this need has not been met, the learner will feel inferior, weak and helpless. It is psychologically dangerous to rely on the opinions of significant other role players in the environment — the learner's self-esteem should be founded on his actual worth and not be dependent on external factors outside his control.
- The learner will only be able to actualise his full potential when he/she is able to make use of all his/her abilities, talents and potential. Different learners will, however, actualise their own unique potential in unique ways, for example the one learner will be good at art, the other at music and yet another at sport. The teacher can assist a learner to discover his or her highest potential.

In the following paragraphs the emotional needs of learners or learners, as described by D'Evelyn (1957:6–41), Howells (1971:100–124), Mitchell (1979:99–121), Pringle (1985:35–58), Raths (1972:40–60), and Thompson and Poppen (1972:3–22), will be discussed. Apart from the fact that these needs will be structured in terms of ***Pringle's four main categories of needs***, namely *the need for love and security, praise and recognition, responsibility, and the need for new experiences,* these needs must be met within the eight stages of emotional development as described by Erikson (see ch 2, sect 2.3.2 in this regard). The different stages of emotional development emerge as the child solves the emotional *crises* experienced during each stage. The child solves these crises while he or she is in interaction with the environment. Pringle (1985:81) and Maslow (Moore 1997:441) maintain that if one need remains unmet, the development of the child/learner will be harmed.

As the satisfying of the emotional needs of learners is central to this study, these emotional needs are summarised in tabular form and then briefly discussed with specific reference to the classroom situation, in terms of *implementation characteristics,* as well as the *outcomes* (whether they are positive or negative) for the learner.

2.1 THE NEED FOR LOVE AND SECURITY

For the purposes of this study, the following needs as identified by researchers will be included in this section on the need for love and security:

- the need for belonging
- the need to be free from feelings of fear
- the need to be free from intense feelings of guilt

2.1.1 The need for love and affection

This need can be met only via the child's meaningful, stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationships with primarily the mother and then the father or any other permanent substitute(s) for the parent(s). Parents, however, also need to experience a meaningful, stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationship with each other. The initial relationship with the mother and subsequently the father paves the way for the child's involvement with a gradually widening circle of significant other role players. These relationships provide the child with opportunities to realise who he or she is and whether he or she is worthwhile or not. These initial relationships with the parents form the basis of all subsequent relationships, such as the relationships with the extended family, friends, colleagues and, when the child has matured, his or her own family. The end results of these initial relationships are the healthy development of the personality, an ability to respond meaningfully to affection shown to the child, and the possibility of becoming a loving, caring parent himself or herself. The more love learners receive, the more love they will be able to give and receive themselves. Clearly implied is a cyclic process of positive reinforcement.

The parental love for the child must be unconditional and for the child's own sake. Factors such as gender, appearance, abilities or personality are irrelevant — love is bestowed on the child without any expectations or demands of gratitude. The child must never be made to feel guilty about the constraints he or she has imposed upon the parents' freedom of movement, their time spent with him or her, or the use of their finances. This unconditional love needs to be experienced by the child through all the interactions that take place between the parents and the child — be it via the physical care taken of the child, responding to his or her first smile, protecting the child from harm or initially introducing the child into the social world. This even applies in cases where punishment is dispensed for going beyond the limits of acceptable behaviour. When the child is not loved unconditionally, the child experiences the parents' love conditionally. The teacher and parents need to separate the deeds of the child from the child as a person, by indicating to the child that his behaviour is not acceptable, although he as a person is still acceptable. A typical response might be: ''*What you are doing makes it difficult for me to talk with you, even though I have high expectations of what you can do and become*''. Moore, (1997:441) claims that ''*modern first world societies take care of many physiological needs but people seem to be less caring about one another*'', with the result that loneliness and isolation occur.

The parents' attitude towards the child impacts forcefully on the child's self-image. Approval and acceptance by others appears to be a requirement if the child is to accept himself or herself. The reciprocal love relationship between the parent(s) and the child has the following spin-offs for the child, which are vital to his or her development:

- accelerated progress, stimulated by the mother's loving encouragement, anticipatory interest and delight in his or her behaviour

- rewards for his or her efforts, to stimulate him or her to continue to achieve the physical milestones sooner than other learners who do not have the privilege of being involved in a similar meaningful and loving relationship with their parent(s)
- the opportunity to learn through mutually rewarding relationships first with the mother and then with significant other role players, so that self-control and moral values are acquired
- the recognition and establishment of a personal identity
- the experience of unique love and devotion, tailor-made to suit the child's unique needs, which are acknowledged as being different from those of any other child

Because of the special quality of the parent/child relationship, such love is difficult to replace and it will cause the child to be emotionally vulnerable, when deprived of this love. Newson (Pringle 1985:37) describes the situation as follows ... ***''a developing personality needs more than that: it needs to know that to someone it matters more than other learners; that someone will go to unreasonable lengths ... for its sake''***.

Raths (1972:51) summarises the urgency and necessity of this need for love and affection to be met when he asserts that ... ''*emotional security, affection, intimacy, someone in whom to confide are wonderful possessions! To be deprived of them, to feel unloved, to have no one to like intensely are terribly severe deprivations*''. Similarly, Thompson and Poppen's (1972:9) make the highly significant statement that ''*perhaps the best way to assist young people in meeting their need to give and receive love is to try to function as models who are able to give unconditional love to others*''.

Raths (1972:51,52) and Pringle (1985:81–88) refer to the following manifestations by a child/learner of a lack of love and affection in the family home. The child will:

- wish that his parents liked him as much as they did when he was younger
- frequently express a need to sit next to his teacher or to be physically close to the teacher or parent, he may say that the teacher/parent no longer loves him, or ask whether the teacher/parent likes/loves some other learner/child more than him, thereby suggesting that the teacher/parent hates him
- demand demonstrations of love and affection, frequently wanting to hold his teacher's/parent's hand or to snuggle up next to people
- get involved in playing truant, or lying on a frequent basis
- exhibit delinquent behaviour
- show an unusual display of affection towards animals, dolls or toys
- have violent crushes on learners of the same/opposite sex
- frequently offer to baby-sit younger learners
- not want to venture into the unknown, or let go of an adult's hand
- be very sensitive to the views of others and easily feel hurt
- cry easily and frequently become ill
- experience feelings of being unwanted and rejected
- want to be kissed, fondled and hugged frequently
- feel insecure and depressed
- like to watch love-stories on television or at the movies
- exhibit behavioural aberrations which may require counselling by a psychologist
- feel that they are being blamed for so-called difficult behaviour and failure to make adequate progress
- feel that he or she has been labelled as uncooperative, disruptive, lazy or backward
- experience feelings of anger, hate and a lack of concern for others

In contrast to the unloved child, one who experiences too much love and affection may be too scared to venture into the unknown. A close tie develops between the child and the parent, and the parent experiences difficulty in letting go of the child. The child is metaphorically ''*wrapped up in cotton wool*'' and therefore experiences problems in becoming independent, as the child feels fearful of facing the uncertainties of an unknown and possibly threatening world outside the family home.

If ''bad care'' has been taken of learners during the early childhood phase, Rutter (Pringle, 1985:84) claims that one can expect ''bad effects'' to show up later on in life. The quality, intensity and stability of the mother/child relationship is deemed to be very important in fulfilling the child's need for love and security (Pringle, 1985:84). A factor that may well determine the outcomes of the mother's relationship with the child is the atmosphere in the home surrounding the marital relationship. Intellectual, sexual or temperamental incompatibility, giving rise to marital conflict, has without doubt the potential to impact on the mother's relationship with the child. According to Pringle (1985:86), even if the child is not made part of the parents' marital discord, the child will tend to become emotionally disturbed or antisocial. Parents involved in constant bickering and conflict could be regarded as inadequate role models for their learners. The long-lasting effect of the emotional turmoil and tension that the child experiences in the home are reflected in his or her inability to render unselfish loving care in a future parental relationship with his or her learners and the vicious circle is perpetuated. When they in turn become parents these learners will tend to have unrealistic expectations of their learners. Child battering frequently occurs in the case of a socially isolated parent, with unmet needs for love and security from the marriage partner (Pringle 1985:86).

When a learner is preoccupied with interpersonal stress and conflict that seem to be insoluble, it will interfere with the learner's learning and school performance. It may also harm his relationships with adults and the teacher acting *in loco parentis*. In cases where the father is absent from the home for long periods or permanently, Rutter (Pringle 1985:87) has found that there is evidence to suggest that boys are at risk of becoming delinquents and girls in search of a father figure, of getting involved with older men. Rutter (Pringle, 1985:87) also contends that if the father died during early childhood, a delayed response can be picked up during the adolescent period, when the learner shows signs of emotional disturbance, especially when the deceased parent is of the same sex as the learner and the learner is thus deprived of a role model.

In terms of the findings of two long-term studies, West (Pringle 1985:87) concludes that there is a correlation between the home background of the child, his scholastic performance and his antisocial behaviour. Pringle (1985:88) argues, however, that ''*major harm is done by teachers who undermine a child's confidence by constant disapproval and by irony; and who kill his joy in learning by dreary teaching, a permanent preoccupation with marks and rigid streaming, and by being interested in him only as a learner rather than as an individual*''. While it is noted that learners in secondary school are especially affected by the teaching style of the teacher, in reality both the home and the school environment could be considered to be contributory factors to antisocial behaviour exhibited by learners. Pringle (1985:88) holds the view that in ***practice teachers are focusing more on the learning content of subjects than on the learners themselves.***

2.2 THE NEED FOR SECURITY (INCLUDING THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY)

The child derives feelings of security from stable relationships within the family. Stable and dependable relationships in this regard relate to mother/child, father/child, child/siblings and child/close relative relationships; the latter typically include the child's relationship with the grandparents. Other factors that give the child a sense of security are a familiar place, a known routine where everyday events take place in exactly the same manner and sequence, the availability of a familiar object or cherished possession, such as a favourite teddy bear or blanket which provides reassurance, and something that they can take to bed with them or that they will not have to part with in a stressful situation. As previously stated, however, a stable marital relationship is of the utmost importance to the child's security. Determinants that can impinge on the security of the child are at times of such a nature that adults may consider them to be irrelevant. Typical determinants are unpredicatable events such as a glass falling on to the floor or the water overflowing from the bath. Preschoolers may be afraid to go to the toilet, fearing that they may fall through the seat into the toilet. Irrational fears often are a fundamental cause of insecurity and consequential anxiety in learners, as may be seen from the preceding discussion in relation to rational-emotive-emotive behaviour theory.

Once the child knows what is expected from him or her, growing up becomes a little less difficult. Parents who clearly define acceptable and reasonable standards of behaviour do away with uncertainty as regards what is deemed acceptable behaviour by their learners. Reasonableness and predictability are key issues in defining limits and conveying these limits to learners. If young learners regress and seem disobedient, it could be because they need to test the limits to which they may go or because they have forgotten the rules. Consistent discipline, whether it tends to be strict or lenient, will have an impact on learners' feelings of security or insecurity.

Personal continuity is provided by family stability, in the sense that the child is aware of his past, and has an idea of his future destiny. Photographs, recording events that took place during the child's early childhood and that parents and grandparents remind them of, as well as speculation on future possible trends in their lives, assist the child to acquire a coherent self-image and a sense of identity. They are also deemed important in terms of the development of the child's personality. By hearing parents and teachers say, ''*when you were younger*'' or ''*when you are older*'', the child is able to create a mental picture of himself now and in the future within the larger family system (Pringle 1985:38). Human relationships enable the child to develop a personal identity. These factors provide continuity and predictability in the child's life-world and consequently foster a sense of security. The importance of such security needs to be seen within the context of the contemporary world where change and a need to constantly adjust to changing situations have become the norm, rather than the exception to the rule. Maslow (Moore 1997:441) concurs that learners feel safe within a structure with set limits and boundaries. The need for safety can be met by a *measured freedom* instead of an *unbounded freedom.*

Obsessive-compulsive neurotic behaviour patterns are, according to Maslow (Moore 1997:441), the result of a need to feel secure. The person is continuously busy trying to arrange his world in such a limited and precise way that there is no place for insecurities or surprises. When a crisis situation is experienced, a person in need of security will follow and easily identify with a leader figure, because he or she feels in need of protection.

With regard to what governs a person's feelings of security, Pringle (1985:37) postulates that ''*if the whole framework of his life is secure, it provides him with the needed reassurance to venture out, knowing that he can again return to its comforting safety*''. People's feelings of self-worth can be stimulated by allowing them to express themselves, to enjoy their individuality and to acknowledge their sense of self-determination (Pringle 1985:38).

The teacher acts *in loco parentis* during the many hours of the day that the child/learner is at school or as a result of parents being physically or mentally absent. The teacher's role in meeting learners' needs for love and security, within the learner/teacher relationship, cannot be overemphasised. Pringle (1985:39) cites the research of Rosenshine (1971) who found that devoted teachers are especially geared to be sources of enthusiasm and warmth and that these characteristics in turn can create a climate of caring and availability for the whole class in the sense that learners are involved with each other, with the teacher and with learning.

A child can be disciplined by means of reasoning and deliberation, which makes for a more relaxed understanding of parental standards and expectations (Pringle 1985:38). Disapproval implies a withdrawal of love, which is experienced by the child, long before he can actually talk or understand what the adult is saying. Speech may not even be necessary, as non-verbal communication serves as an indication of adults' feelings. Conditions of insecurity that have their origins in adult disapproval engender feelings of anxiety within the child. The disapproval of the other significant other role players in his life world will at a later stage also make him feel anxious. The loving relationship nurtured by the mother after birth provides the most effective and basic motivation for the learner to act in accordance with the expectations of the significant other role players. The more stable the warm, loving relationship between the parent(s) and the learner, the fewer disciplinary problems will be experienced. However, when a parent acts inconsistently or exhibits erratic behaviour, the child will not know what to expect and the behaviour of the parent will cause feelings of insecurity within the child. If the parent or the teacher acts as a consistent role model for the child, he will come to understand what is expected of him.

As the child gains insight into his behaviour, instead of blindly obeying a parent or teacher because of a fear of physical punishment or as a result of emotional blackmailing in withholding affection, the basis for moral insight is laid. Inner-directed behaviour creates feelings of guilt and shame, when he displeases either his parents or himself. A conscience gradually develops and the child is capable of increasingly behaving in a more mature, self-directed, independent, and responsible manner. A child learns to care if parents set the example of caring and concern.

Pringle (1985:41) draws attention to the following factors that are conducive to the development of internal controls:

- expectations consistent and relevant to the child's age and level of understanding
- punishments consistent and logically related to the unacceptable behaviour
- an open and democratic family environment, where disagreement regarding behaviour is frankly discussed and the reasons for any disagreement are clarified in a logical manner

Outer-directed behaviour is in a sense *ad hoc* behaviour, where ''*love-orientated methods*'' of discipline do not apply, as no stable, loving and meaningful parent/child or teacher/child relationship exists. It is also possible that there may be no consistent and appropriate pattern of parental expectations. Continuous adaptation

to the expectations of a particular person or situation, at a particular moment in time, is expected of the child. Behaviour can be regulated and conformity ensured, by means of autocratic discipline originating from an external source, namely an adult telling the child how to behave (Pringle 1985:41). In contrast, *''love orientated methods''* focus on a temporary withdrawal of affection, as a means of indicating disapproval and use the warm and loving relationship that exists between the mother/father or teacher and the child as a means of controlling behaviour. From early childhood, a child can detect when the mother is displeased with him or her and hence becomes anxious.

If significant role players within a child's life world are sufficiently important to the child, he or she will try to please these people, and avoid incurring their disapproval. An attempt will therefore be made by the learner to adapt to the expectations of the adult role players in his or her life-world, so as to retain their approval and affection. In an attempt to avoid anxiety-producing situations stemming from disturbed relationships with the adults concerned, the child actively desists from displaying behaviour patterns that would endanger his relationship with the adults involved. Parents and teachers can assist learners to understand what is expected of them, by providing a caring environment, as opposed to environments that are characterised by a temporary loss of basic affection and concern (Pringle 1985:40). Inconsistent, erratic parental guidance prepares the child for the loss of the warm and stable relationship with the significant other role player, as it sends mixed messages to the child and conveys disapproval and withdrawal of love.

A caring parent or teacher can teach learners how to care (Pringle 1985:40). The response that the child elicits serves as an indication of whether a person cares about him or her or not. Learners come to understand what is expected of them by viewing the consistent behaviour of adults as role models. The child will certainly be influenced by how readily he or she is able to understand what is expected, and role models can undoubtedly help to convey these expectations through their own behaviour patterns. Parents and teachers are the role models with which the child has the closest contact and hence their norms and values will be significant in shaping the child's behaviour.

Raths (1972:46, 47) warns that parents and teachers should be careful when dealing with financial matters in front of learners, as this can have a negative emotional impact on the child if dealt with incorrrectly. Parents discussing finances in the presence of learners and especially the manner in which they do so can cause the child to feel insecure and uncertain about the future. This insecurity impacts on the child in question in social and classroom situations, with possible negative consequences. A child's sense of financial insecurity could be aggravated, for example, if a teacher instructs the class to buy items that the child knows his or her parents cannot afford, or if the child is unable to make a contribution to a collection for charity or learners compare the contents of their lunch boxes or the amount they have to spend at the tuckshop.

Troubled learners who are feeling insecure about the future because of their family's economic situation will reflect these feelings in the following ways:

- Verbalising their concerns about finances. Typical expressions may include *''... Maybe Daddy will be laid off''*, *''... almost every time I want something, my parents say they can never tell what might happen''* or *''... lots of times Daddy has promised to get us things and then something happens. Will it always be like this, that something will happen?''*
- Lying awake at night, worrying about the financial position of the family, while

the parents are fast asleep, not knowing or realising what impact their financial problems have had on the child.

Raths (1972:47) comments that ''*... they little know that some of the things they say may have tremendous impact upon the emotional stability of their learners*''. He goes on to point out that if a child experiences economic insecurity, these feelings of insecurity will intrude upon his or her other relationships. In essence a general feeling of insecurity could affect the general emotional stability of the child. Feelings of economic insecurity may be experienced by learners from wealthy families, as well as from poor families.

2.3 THE NEED TO BELONG

The learners/learners who experience a need to belong have not got as many friends as they would like to have or are unable to befriend the learners they wish to make friends with. They want to belong to a peer group and associate with friends. Raths (1972:40–43) identifies the following manifestations of the need to belong:

- The child/learner will verbalise the need. Typical statements are '' *I wish somebody would ask me to go to the movies or someone's house*'', ''*Why are the kids always too busy to go places with me?*'' or ''*No one ever calls me on the phone.*''
- The child may begin to think that he or she is different from other learners. This may be verbalised as. '' *I wish the other kids didn't think that I am different*''.
- Learners who are experiencing a need to belong may say things that sound like ''*sour grapes*''. Some examples are: ''*I don't want to belong anyway*'', ''*I don't care*'' or ''*I don't like those kids anyway!*''
- Such learners tend to remain on the fringe of any group activity taking place in the classroom or on the playground.
- A child who feels rejected tends to remain an observer, not taking part in activities or games.
- These learners often come to school on their own, get on to the bus last or first, linger behind other learners when walking back home and even sometimes cross the street just to get away from other learners.
- Such learners may daydream in the classroom.
- They often put a lot of effort into their schoolwork in an effort to prove themselves.
- A child who needs to belong may act aggressively when trying to force his or her way into a specific group and be accepted as a member of the group. When finally invited to join the group the child may decline the invitation.

Teachers are all too often oblivious of learners' need to feel that they belong and are important within the classroom situation (Raths 1972:40–43). They may respond inappropriately to learners who are experiencing a need to belong, by not listening to the learners concerned. In many an instance teachers may not observe the nonverbal behaviour of the learners and therefore fail to see that they are expressing an unfulfilled need to become part of a group. Teachers are frequently either too busy or too unobservant to the take note of the needs of the learner, who tends to isolate himself or herself. Teachers may assume that the child is a member of the group, as there are learners all around him or her and fail to notice that there is little interaction between the learner and the group members per se. In the mean time, the learner is trying to say something to the teacher, which is very difficult for him or her to say, namely: ''*I need help*'', ''*I need a friend*'', ''*I need to feel that I too belong to the group*'' or ''*Please help me. I am in trouble*'' (Raths 1972:40–43). Teachers could quite easily replicate in the classroom the pattern that may exist at home by sending the

learner to the cloakroom, corridor, or principal's office, just to get the learner out of the way, as the learner is following the teacher around. The message the learner gets is ''*I don't blame the kids for not liking you*'' (Raths 1972:40–43).

According to Raths (1972:41,42), the lonely learner who is experiencing a need to belong experiences the following feelings:

- loneliness, a sense of having been deserted and wanting desperately to belong
- a sense that they have no-one in whom to confide their intimate concerns or even their secret ambitions
- a feeling that they are being left out
- insecurity and depression
- inferiority, as they are never praised for their achievements and they tend to reject any praise that comes their way, as they do not believe that it is genuine
- wanting to be accepted unconditionally
- a desire to know that there is some place, somewhere, where they will feel welcome
- wanting to be able to relax and talk to other learners
- wanting to be accepted without always having to make a special effort to be like the others or to make a good impression
- wanting to feel in control of a situation instead of experiencing a sense of helplessness
- a decreased sense of personal worth
- feeing different, because they are not accepted by their peers
- feeling that they are not needed or wanted

This learner may feel like ''crying'' deep down inside and yet his teachers or parents may be quite unaware of this.

2.4 THE NEED FOR NEW EXPERIENCES

It is argued that just as the body needs food to maintain it, the child needs new experiences in order for mental growth to take place (Pringle 1985:41). Each life-phase has tasks that are appropriate to that specific life-phase and that need to be accomplished so that the child can progress to more complicated tasks during the next life-phase. No learning takes place if the child is not exposed to new, stimulating situations. If the child is stimulated too much, withdrawal and fear will be present and the young child will exhibit uncontrollable excitement, tenseness, exhaustion and disturbed sleep. Good mothering can serve as a filter or barrier to over-stimulation. In the classroom, over-stimulation will manifest itself in confusion, mistakes, tenseness and frustration. Parents who expect too much of their learners in terms of scholastic performance and/or performance on the sports field, without paying attention to their learners or showing some kind of affection in return, are likely to produce learners who will eventually choose a lifestyle that differs radically from that of their parents.

The child who has not been sufficiently stimulated will experience boredom, aimlessness and apathy, his attention will wander and his performance at school will deteriorate, as he is being insufficiently challenged. This child has got nothing to keep him or her busy, nor anywhere to go where he or she can be kept occupied, with little or no opportunity to experiment or safely explore new fields. The desire for adventure that develops within the more intelligent learner can lead to vandalism and related types of delinquency. The young child who does not receive sufficient stimulation can suffer from impaired development, including impaired

intellectual growth (Pringle 1985:90). Intellectual growth can be stimulated by parents or teachers when the child is older who discuss issues, concepts and ideas with the child, instead of merely leaving the child to watch television or do some meaningless activity. The negative impact of an unstimulating environment is evident in the limited language skills of these learners. Language serves as a means of sharing ideas and information with other people, as well as a way of controlling the child's thinking and behaviour. New experiences provide the child with opportunities to learn, and in the process enjoy a sense of achievement. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the ''cloud nine'' experience of learners who have achieve what others have believed to be impossible. The admiration of peers, parents and teachers, when a learner excels or experiences success, spurs the child on to seek new fields of exploration. A child who is discouraged from exploring and conquering the world is inclined to be passive, frustrated or irritated, experiencing little joy or satisfaction. In a mundane and unstimulating context, little real learning takes place.

The child's readiness to accept challenging and diverse tasks is dependent on his or her inborn capacity, mental mindset and the encouragement he or she receives. Intellectual growth can be impaired by the emotional and cultural climate that exists within the home or classroom, and is also influenced by parental involvement and aspirations. The child's progress in the early childhood phase is dependent on the teacher's implicit, incidental, unconscious, deliberate or overt attitudes, values and beliefs. If the teacher is enthusiastic, receptive to new ideas, and has broad and varied interests, these are likely to rub off on the child.

Play, Pringle (1985:46) argues, offers learners an opportunity to meet their need for new experiences by enabling them to get to know the world they live in and in presenting them with a means of expressing their emotions and learning how to deal with complex and conflicting feelings. Through play learners can establish a synthesis between their inner world and the external world, as well as between rational and irrational processes. The child's unique store of prior ideas, images, feelings and wishes gives him or her fresh understanding of the inner world and the external world. Language in particular enables the child to learn to reason, to think and to understand his or her life-world. Learners need language for establishing relationships with adults or peers. Learners use language not only to express themselves, but to come to terms with life as well. Their scholastic performance is strongly influenced by their ability to express themselves, both verbally and in written assignments and examinations.

The teacher's role is described by Pringle (1985:51–53) as that of a *bridge builder.* The teacher should be all the following things:

- *The bridge between emotion and learning*. This implies a need for the teacher to adopt teaching methods that will minimise the weaknesses of each learner and focus instead on their strengths or on developing a curriculum which captures the interest of learners by taking into consideration their stage of development.
- *The bridge between the parental home and the broader community*. Teachers can involve parents, learners, the community and themselves in activities, or they may get parents to understand the purpose of the new teaching methods, so that parental interest is stimulated.
- *The bridge between education and the other professions involved in the development and well-being of learners*. The teacher must attempt to get everybody involved with the education of learners to work together on a multidisciplinary basis.
- *The bridge between the child and the world he or she needs to explore*. Teachers need to be constantly aware that education is not only for today, but also for tomorrow —

if the teacher is flexible in his or her thinking, he or she will succeed in making learners receptive to new knowledge.

2.5 THE NEED TO BE FREE FROM INTENSE FEELINGS OF GUILT

Feelings of guilt arise when learners themselves or their parents or teachers expect too much and are disappointed in consequence. When a learner experiences feelings of guilt, this may trigger feelings of inadequacy and not belonging.

According to Raths (1972:53, 54), the need to be free from intense feelings of guilt manifests itself in the following feelings and behaviour patterns:

- Learners may express feelings of guilt regarding relationships with people or as a result of their own actions.
- Learners may regret their behaviour, such as having stolen from, or lied to someone.
- They may blame themselves for real or imaginary shortcomings.
- They may be extremely obedient.
- Learners who feel guilty may sit in a corner, worrying about small mistakes.
- They may feel fearful, experiences anxiety, or be indecisive.
- These learners may be the shy learners in the class, hyperconscientious, self-conscious, and very forgetful, wanting to be reassured that their work is acceptable.

General unconstructive comments by adult role players may include the following (Raths 1972:55): *''No one ever did that in class before!''*, *''You're a very naughty child!''*, or *''I never expected that from you!''* Raths (1972:54) adds that adult role players keep on reminding learners of the mistakes they have made, as if they themselves had never made mistakes, and this intensifies the feelings of guilt that arise. Another problem is that adult role players often do not allow learners to express their feelings about certain situations or events and as a result the adult may draw completely wrong conclusions about the child's motives.

2.6 THE NEED TO BE FREE FROM FEELINGS OF FEAR

It is more difficult to teach a fearful learner with anxieties than a learner who is calm, relaxed and stable. Learners and especially younger learners express their fears verbally to teachers. They may for instance tell the teacher that they are scared that their mother may die if she goes to hospital for an operation. Learners fear insects, animals and even other learners or the dark, and thunder or lightning. Learners also experience a fear of academic failure, of *getting bad marks,* or having to take their school report home at the end of the term. Younger learners are particularly fearful of *spooks, ghosts, bad men and the devil.* The child who is suffering feelings of fear is a nervous child. In effect such learners want to be freed from feelings of fear, experiences of nausea, an inability to sleep, enuresis, fatigue, dizziness, and involuntary excretion. They are often reluctant to participate in active sports or visit the school doctor or nurse. Change is not seen as a challenge, but a loss of the familiar and therefore anxiety-provoking.

Adult role players increase the child's feelings of fear by saying things like the following: *''The police will take care of you''*, *''If you do that, you will never go to heaven''*, *''You'll end up in reform school''*, *''I'll put you in the closet if you're not good''*, *''Don't go near the dog, he will bite you!''* or *''You'd be sorry if I die''*. Many such utterances are made without any regard for the harm they could do to learners's emotional well-

being. If a child is already experiencing intense feelings of fear, such remarks could be devastating and could well be the proverbial *''last straw that broke the camels back''*.

2.7 THE NEED FOR PRAISE AND RECOGNITION

For the purposes of this study, the following needs as identified by researchers will be included in this section on the need for praise and recognition, namely the need for a positive self-concept, self-actualisation, for sharing, and for self-respect. These needs, together with the need for praise and recognition, will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The child needs a strong incentive in order to deal with the difficulties, conflicts and setbacks that he or she will experience in the course of emotional, social and intellectual learning on the route to adulthood. Without doubt, the best encouragement to learners to progress or excel in their endeavours is the excitement and emotions expressed by their parents or teachers when they are informed of the child's achievements. He knows that these adults love him and he also loves them, and hence he would like to please them. He is spurred on to persevere until the very end by the encouragement and reasonable expectations expressed by his parents and teachers. If the people he looks up to expect too much from him, he will experience a sense of anxiety that may translate into discouragement and consequently diminished effort. When they expect too little from him, he will adopt too low a standard of achievement and performance. When learners experience anxiety because they feel that they are failures, they tend to avoid painful situations, rather than analyse the reasons for their failure and do something constructive to rectify the situation.

Praise and recognition are usually linked to achievements. As a rule very little praise and recognition are expressed for the efforts learners make to achieve well-defined objectives. Learners who are inclined to be rather slow or who are experiencing learning difficulties therefore very seldom receive praise or recognition, even though they have to put a lot of effort into completing their assignments or studying for an examination. Pringle (1985:98) cautions adult role players about giving praise and recognition too easily, in case the child becomes accustomed to praise and is no longer encouraged by it. A strong drive for success will develop in a child if parents regard achievement as a condition for their love — an almost insatiable need for praise and recognition will then spell out the child's need for love. The danger, however, is that the child may not be able to meet the parents' expectations or a situation could arise where the demand to excel exceeds the learner's ability to cope with the stress that emanates from the situation. The consequences could be quite dramatic and could take the parents by surprise. When the need for praise and recognition is not satisfied on a long-term basis, the child will be affected in terms of his or her self-respect and will be less confident about tackling new adventures and tasks, or establishing new relationships.

The child's self-concept is shaped by the views expressed, both directly and indirectly, by significant role players in his or her life-world, especially those he or she has come to respect and look up to. Learners' academic performance is determined by their attitude towards themselves, which in turn is influenced by the way they experience themselves within their relationships with others. Teachers are among the most important role players in the life world of the learner, as they have the opportunity to meet the learner's need for praise and recognition in the classroom. By praising the learner for his or her achievements, they in effect shape his or her attitude towards learning. Teachers should bear in mind that each learner

has unrealised potential for development and that they should not be misled by the opinions of others on the learner's potential, but should rather continue to believe in the learner's potential. Pringle (1985:54) makes the important point that ''... *child's self-concept is developed through the views others hold of him. Even bright learners may think of themselves as failures if their ability remains unrecognised; the number of such misfits, as I have called them, is by no means negligible — thousands of them pass through our schools each year*''.

With the above in mind, it is important that teachers should give serious consideration to determining how learners can be helped to achieve and experience success during their school careers (Pringle 1985:99). Continuous underachievement snowballs and leads to further disappointments until the learner believes that he cannot succeed and becomes discouraged. An important factor that maintains the status quo, in terms of continued disappointment, is the fact that ... ''*the teacher's understandable disappointment with poor progress only serves to lead to further discouragement in the learner*'' (Pringle 1985:99). In the classroom the teacher has the opportunity to recognise the efforts that learners make, instead of merely focusing on their achievements. The child with emotional problems ''*has no chance of shining and always finds himself near the bottom. Such constant failure inevitably damages self-esteem and motivation*''(Pringle 1985:101).

The following case study, presented by Pringle (1985:101), serves to illustrate the impact that a teacher has in helping learners to realise their full potential. Two groups of learners were initially assessed as having the same level of ability. The teachers, however, were led to believe that the one group of learners had the potential to do better at school and as a result they expected more of these learners. Although matched for ability at the outset, the learners that the teachers believed had the ability to excel were in fact found to be doing better than the others. This proved that the expectations of teachers could be correlated with the performance of learners. By implication if a learner is labelled by the teacher as being slow or bright, this will eventually become a self-fulfilling prophecy. ''*Self-confidence and motivation are fostered or extinguished by the way teachers think about and treat their charges*'' (Pringle 1985:102). Without doubt, this realisation places an awesome responsibility on the shoulders of already overburdened teachers and lecturers at our academic institutions.

Effective learning is dependent on learners' attitude towards learning and expectations of themselves. These tend to be reinforced by recognition and encouragement from teachers, parents, and peers. Pringle (1985:54) predicts that if a learner's need for praise and recognition is fulfilled, this acts like ''*immunisation against a mental illness for an indefinite period of time. Such an individual should be able to surmount crises and periods of great stress without suffering too much*''.

As Maslow (Moore 1997:442) has demonstrated, self-esteem may be correlated with the need to evaluate oneself in a positive sense. The need for self-esteem succeeds the need to be loved. Maslow (Moore 1997:442) analyses the need for self-esteem in the following two subcategories:

- needs based on the person's achievements, which relate to a sense of efficiency, capability, achievement, confidence, personal strength and independence
- needs related to the esteem of other people

Typical factors are social standing, feeling important, and being treated in a dignified manner and with appreciation. It is important to everybody to experience recognition and feel valued. According to Maslow (Moore 1997:442), the spinoffs

stemming from good self-esteem are that the person is satisfied, feels confident and acts competently, feels needed, and experiences meaningfulness in their lives. This accentuates the fact that genuine self-esteem is based more on actual experiences than on the opinions and judgments of others. These authors maintain that when a person relies too much on the judgment of others, rather than on their own ability, achievements and adequacy, the person can end up in what Hjelle and Ziegler (Moore 1997:442) term ''*psychological jeopardy*''.

Thompson and Poppen (1972:9) warn that when a learner feels useless, unwanted, unchallenged and unneeded, these are danger signs and the possible result may be escapism or withdrawal via drug taking activities. Holland (Thompson & Poppen 1972:9) further emphasise that ''*... the need to escape via drugs or any other mechanism is obviated if we have someone who cares enough about us to set limits, and if we feel worthy and useful to others through our ability to make a positive contribution to society*''. Adults should be aware of the need to positively reinforce the self-esteem of learners during their early childhood years. Parents and teachers should refrain from careless statements, often made in anger and frustration, and from treating learners without the necessary dignity and respect. Criticism or negative comparisons uttered in front of their peers can be particularly damaging to learners. A case in point is where a teacher says to a learner ''*I cannot understand why you cannot get this right. Your brother who was also a learner in my class never battled with his assignments*''. Thompson and Poppen (1972:10) refer to the habit of degrading a learner as *''ego-puncturing''.*

Teachers can have a lifelong impact on learners when they set limits, maintain certain standards of excellence and have high expectations of the learners' performance and excellence (Thompson & Poppen 1972:11). Significant role players should reward learners continuously for successes achieved. Focusing on the strengths of learners, instead of focusing on their weaknesses, will strengthen their egos. Thompson and Poppen (1972:14) cite the case of a teacher who used to phone a child's parents three times per week to bring to their attention how well their child had been doing that week. Teachers should give parents regular positive feedback concerning the learner, in order to positively reinforce the learner's self-esteem, as well as to inspire and serve as a role model for parents to follow. Teachers should implement *personalised learning* by being able not only to address their learners by their first names but also to associate learners with their special areas of interest (Thompson & Poppen 1972:13). Learners will get the message that the teacher cares about them enough to want to listen to them and react to their preferences.

A need for achievement is clearly reflected when a learner expresses the wish to have ''*done it better*'' or offers all sorts of excuses for not completing an assignment as well as he should have. Typical statements are ''*I would have done it right, if I did not have to go to the toilet*'' or ''*the teacher is always picking on me*'' (Raths 1972:43). Their experience is that other learners or people are superior to themselves and they wish that they could be as good as the others are. These learners have a need for praise and would feel so much better if the teacher would tell them that they also have the ability to pass. They are inclined to focus too much on small achievements and cry out for recognition of anything that they do accomplish. The learners concerned are genuinely dissatisfied with their own achievements and tend to comment that they could do better, just like ... and then name someone they view as a role model. They are constantly complaining about the teacher and their schoolwork, and are inclined to blame circumstances for their failures.

The need for achievement also manifests itself in the behaviour of learners who shy away from activities where they will have to perform in accordance with certain expectations or where their ability will be put to the test. In effect they cannot cope

with competitive situations, are inclined to copy the homework of other learners, like to play with younger learners, reveal a lack of ambition, and appear to be unmotivated and lazy. Other learners, who also experience a need for achievement, may be determined to study hard and do well, often trying to do things beyond their abilities and refusing to give up. They tend to become aggressive towards other people or objects. These learners may be inclined to destroy the work of other learners or may even attempt to bluff their way out of a situation. Their need for achievement is negatively reinforced when the teacher remarks that his or her work is not of the same standard as that of the other learners. Typical negative remarks include statements such as ''*Why do I always have to help you with your work*?'' or ''*I am sure you can do better than that*''. Similar remarks that will serve as negative reinforcement are being told not to ''*give up so easily*'', when the learner is in fact seeking to be praised or acknowledged. Emotional insecurity is aggravated when the teacher admonishes such a learner in the presence of other learners

Factors that contribute to a learner's yearning for achievement are the fact that significant other role players very seldom grant the learner an opportunity to show what he or she is able to accomplish, nor do they note that the goals that are set for the learner are frequently far too high. Related factors are that these learners often do not receive sufficient assistance from the teacher to be able to master an assignment successfully or the fact that parents are keeping the learner occupied with a lot of responsibilities in the home, so that there is little time for homework or assignments. The learner may find that the need for achievement is intensified by demands made within the home, the classroom and on the playground. Repeated failures may lead to depression.

2.8 THE NEED FOR A POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE LIFE-WORLD

''*Unfortunately, most learners's negative feelings about themselves are formed from adult's evaluations*'' (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:545). This introductory statement is quite a serious accusation, but unfortunately it is one that has serious implications for so many learners. Of further concern is Thompson and Rudolph's (1996:545) contention that ''*once formed, a negative sel-concept is difficult to reverse*''. It is not difficult to understand that when a learner feels confused and bewildered by the environment and events that he or she cannot make sense of, the learner gives way to self-doubt and feels unable to cope. In effect our self-concept stems largely from our evaluation of ourselves and our abilities to deal with our life-world. As the introductory statement illustrates, this evaluation is impacted on by feedback from others. Peers, parents and teachers play a significant role in the life world of the learner. Functionally the learner's self-concept consists of a set of personal beliefs, values, understandings, assumptions and attitudes, in relation to his or her life-world, that directs his or her behaviour.

Knowing ''things'' gives the learner self-confidence. A lack of knowledge reduces a child's faith in himself or herself. Sometimes learners do not know what questions to ask and at other times they ask questions, but they do not get any answers to their questions. This results in their feeling frustrated, confused and bewildered by the fact that their questions are not answered. The questions which teachers, parents and other adults often tend to shy away from are those that relate to sex, race relations, politics and religion. Learners may come to suspect that the information is being kept from them, which causes feelings of insecurity and rejection. They become discouraged and start to believe that adults are stupid and that school is boring. The

child feels confused by the differences in what adults say and what they actually do. They may come to feel that they are living in an adult world from which they are barred, as they do not have the answers to their questions. Learners feel good about themselves when they have eventually discovered the answers to their questions. Finding answers to life's questions could be seen as paving the way to adulthood.

Feelings of insecurity result in learners wishing that somebody would help them to make up their minds when they are faced with choices. They often experience confusion in regard to personal beliefs and values, a confusion aggravated by the diverse perceptions that others hold and which are conveyed to them. In consequence their life becomes a constant search for truth and meaning. It may be seen as a journey of exploration, one where teachers and parents can play a meaningful role in shaping the learner's understanding of the issues concerned. Gaining such an understanding shapes the learner's self-concept and provides him or her with an understanding of the lifeworld. An insecure child will easily accept the opinions of others and is influenced by peer group members to abide by their norms and values, although these may not be in line with those of the child's family or society. Learners can become aggressive in their search for information and express this by asking numerous ''why'' questions. All too frequently adults are inclined to attempt to circumvent the questions posed by telling the child they will only be able to understand these issues later on, when they are older.

2.9 THE NEED FOR SELF-ACTUALISATION

Self-actualisation is the highest need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This need will, however, never be completely satisfied, because as soon as a person has achieved a certain level of accomplishment, he will seek new challenges. Maslow (Moore, 1997:442) maintains that the basic needs and the meta-needs (the need for growth, justice and meaningfulness, beauty, order, simplicity, perfection) need to be met, before the need for self-actualisation can be realised and maximal growth ensured. ''*Self-actualisation is the process of becoming all one is capable of being, making full use of all one's abilities, talents and potential*'' (Moore 1997:443). The way self-actualisation is brought about differs from person to person. One person may find self-actualisation through artistic achievement, another through good parenting or involvement in charity work.

Parents, teachers, and other significant role players in learners' life world need to assist them in developing their potential abilities. If learners do not succeed in achieving self-actualisation through their own constructive efforts, behavioural problems may be exhibited. Typical examples of such behaviours are drug taking, smoking, and drinking. Adlerian psychologists (Thompson & Poppen 1972:19) maintain that people have the following goals in mind when misbehaving:

- *Attention getting behaviour.* There may be disruptive behaviour in the classroom or a tendency to remain dependent on others instead of acting independently.
- *Power struggle.* Takes place between a learner and his or her parents or the teacher and the learner. Teachers and parents who find it difficult to set limits and to make decisions will find themselves constantly tied up in a power struggle with a child or learner.
- *Revenge-seeking.* Behaviour that takes place when a person has been hurt and wants to get back at someone.
- *Displaying inadequacy.* Behaviour that occurs when a learner wants to avoid something while the underlying message is in fact a cry for help or a plea that demands should not be made on the person. Such a person needs to be encouraged to tackle the activity and to be reassured about his ability to succeed.

2.10 THE NEED FOR SHARING AND SELF-RESPECT

There is a lot of pressure on learners to conform to adults' expectations and more often than not they have little say in the ground rules that are established as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in particular situations. Frustration stems from not being consulted and merely being told what to do. It is therefore not surprising that learners develop a need for sharing or, to put more bluntly, a need to be shown some consideration when decisions are made that have an impact on them and their lives. There is a tendency at schools to give learners very little say in the way they are treated. It is contended that if learners are not allowed to share or express an opinion their need for sharing is accentuated, as this impacts on their self-respect and feelings of self-worth. Charlton and David (1993:87) stress that underachievers more often than not have a low self-concept which results in a lack of motivation. It may be argued that the concept of self resides within the inner human spirit and a positive self-concept can only stem from the development of an inner self-respect.

D'Evelyn (1957:23) asserts that treating learners as people who warrant respect and consideration plays a crucial role in assuring them that they are accepted and have a place to fill within the classroom.

According to Raths (1972:55,56), the need for sharing and self-respect is manifested in the following ways:

- The child feels that everybody is trying to interfere and attempting to run his life.
- Such learners do not feel that they are respected for themselves.
- They would like other people to have faith in their judgment and opinion when decisions are to be taken.
- They don't like others to do their planning for them — they want to do it on their own.
- Learners would like other people to cooperate with them.
- A child who is conscious of a need for sharing resents other learners for interfering in his or her activities and hates having to conform to their ways of doing things most of the time, and would prefer to have a share in taking decisions.
- Learners dislike it when adults ''talk over their heads' and they cannot understand what is being said.
- Such learners prefer to withdraw into their shell and let others take their place.
- A child with a need for sharing may cry easily and act in an apathetic manner.
- He or she may be rebellious and disobedient towards parents, brothers, sisters, and grandparents.
- Other typical behaviour on the part of such learners is pretending to be experts on a topic and interrupting when not invited to share in the conversation, in order to impose their leadership on the people present.
- Learners with a need for sharing and self-respect may feel that they seldom get the opportunity to make decisions or suggestions or that they are often criticised and belittled in front of the group.
- Such learners may feel that they are being ignored and not seen as worthwhile.

Many of the above manifestations have been described in negative terms. Rephrasing them in a positive context will suggest ways of actualising a learner's needs for sharing and self-respect. It may be argued that our concept of self, and consequently self-respect, is significantly shaped by what Covey (1992b:58) defines as our ''social mirror'', which reflects the perceptions, actions and behaviour of people around us. This has specific relevance in the actualisation of learners' need for self-respect, particularly in instances where they have an external locus of control.

2.11 THE NEED FOR RESPONSIBILITY

A young child can be allowed to take responsibility for certain routine daily tasks such as eating, dressing, and getting ready for school. Because he is constantly modelling himself on his parents, he would like to be as responsible as they are. Although the child may battle with some of the tasks, he or she is likely to clamour for greater independence. As learners get older their parents gradually allow them greater freedom in matters like choosing their own clothes and eventually their own career. Learners can only learn how to act responsibly by being granted responsibility. Like any other skill, responsibility needs to be practised, together with the necessary adult guidance. Self-esteem is enhanced when learners/learners are given responsibilities that they can successfully deal with.

Pringle (1985:56,57) maintains that the family, school and society may be at fault by not providing sufficient training and guidance on how to act responsibly and independently. A child who grows up without having had opportunities to take responsibility will not be able to develop a sense of responsibility for himself or for the significant other role players in his lifeworld. This, together with the fact that learners may not have learnt to plan ahead and may lack training in self-control, could lead to impulsive and irresponsible behaviour. Being given the opportunity to make their own decisions conveys to learners that they are able to cope with responsibility. If learners are not given the opportunity to take responsibility for themselves, they will not realise that any choices they make have certain consequences. When they are older they will need to be able to make responsible choices regarding their sexual and social life. In many instances little guidance or meaningful direction is given to learners, both in the home and at school. Pringle (1985:104) argues that this stems from the fact that ''*there is now a lack of certainty, of moral imperatives, of ready answers and traditional beliefs*''. The failure of society and parents to deal constructively with these issues is one of the reasons why learners may find it difficult to take responsibility for their own lives.

Learners are growing up without a knowledge of their own feelings and motives. Not many learners are given the opportunity to make their own decisions, after weighing up the pros and cons, and then take responsibility for the results.

Teachers and parents must keep in mind that it is necessary to distinguish between disapproving of the child's behaviour and disapproving of the child himself or herself. Pringle (1985:55) admonishes adults to remember that learners model their behaviour on that of their adult role models and adults therefore have a responsibility to share their values, concerns and ambitions with these learners in a constructive manner. Learners must be given responsibility, under adult guidance, so that they can learn to act responsibly.

A learner-centred teaching style will provide learners with opportunities for involvement and cooperation, so that they can plan their activities in accordance with their interests and levels of ability. Further, the curriculum must relate to real-life situations, in order to prepare learners to interact more effectively in their social relationships and to interpret themselves in relation to others. Hemming (Pringle 1985:58) suggests that *''[t]o combine an appropriate curriculum with an appropriate school community opens up for the adolescent a rich developmental experience with which he can identify because he recognises what it offers as the means to his personal fulfilment*''.

D'Evelyn (1957:19–20,29,36) describes the emotional needs of learners during the different life phases, namely early childhood, the intermediate pre-adolescent phase and adolescence. The needs experienced during these phases are summarised as follows:

Early childhood	• Dependency needs — if the adult does not meet these needs the child will not excel on a cognitive and emotional level. • Partnerships in education between the different significant other role players (the teacher and the parents) are needed, as the child will look to all these significant people for strength, approval and guidance. If a conflict does exist on this level, it will impact on the cognitive and emotional development of the child.
The intermediate preadolescent phase	• Learners in this age group, like younger learners, need to feel accepted by the significant other role players, namely the teacher and the parents as well as to be supported by them while they are striving to achieve independence and self-control. • In this life phase there is a need to identify with peers. The teacher's awareness, in the classroom, of this reality and the strategies that he implements to meet this need are considered to be important. • The primary school learner has a need to feel good about himself. Scholastic challenges give the child the opportunity to perform and develop a feeling of self-confidence. • The need to be creative, to use his abilities and to be productive is important. The teacher must curb excessive competitiveness.
Adolescence	• Adolescents need to feel good about themselves and to experience success in terms of their abilities and interests. • They need to gain increased confidence in and to understand themselves and the significant other role players. • Adolescents must feel that they are respected and valued by peers. • They need to feel safe and secure. • It is important that adolescents be given opportunities to act responsibly. • Another perceived need is to be understood, to be respected, to experience the concern of and to be trusted by significant other role players. • Adolescents need to be conscious of a partnership between the school and the home.

3 CONCLUSION

Although emotional needs are important causative factors of behavioural problems, meeting these needs is not generally incorporated into classroom management models. In the NCSNET document (1997:14), *emotional well-being* is merely one of the subfactors included under the heading of socioeconomic barriers.

Pringle (1985:159) suggests that parents and teachers, in their role as substitute parents, pay attention to the following ''child care commandments'':

1. Give continuous, consistent, loving care — it's as essential for the mind's health as food is for the body.
2. Give generously of your time and understanding — playing with and reading to your child matters more than a tidy, smoothly running home (or for the purposes of the study, classroom).
3. Provide new experiences and expose your child to language from birth onwards — they enrich the growing mind.
4. Encourage him or her to play, both independently and with other learners — exploring, imitating, constructing, pretending and creating.
5. Give more praise for effort than for achievement.
6. Keep on giving the child responsibility — like all skills, it needs to be practised.
7. Remember that every child is unique — so methods suitable for handling one may not be right for another.
8. Show disapproval in a way that fits your child's temperament, age and understanding.
9. Never threaten to stop loving him or give him away; you may reject a child's behaviour but never suggest that you might reject him.
10. Don't expect gratitude; your child did not ask to be born — the choice was yours.

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(Please note that all other sources, apart from the above sources, can be traced in the doctorate of Dr. FH Weeks.)

APPENDIX P

COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHERS

THE COUNSELLING RELATIONSHIP, ASSESSMENT AND OBSERVATION

1 INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of the educator, we refer to Gillis's definition (Gillis 1994:4): ''Counselling is a facilitative process in which the counsellor, working within the framework of a special helping relationship, uses specific skills to assist young people to help themselves more effectively.''

We shall now discuss each facet of this definition in detail.

- **What is a ''facilitative process''?**

This concept refers to the complex interpersonal interaction which takes place between two individuals and ''which in itself promotes growth and change'' (Gillis 1994:4). In other words, it is not sufficient to provide assistance, advice, information or your personal opinion; you have to accompany the learners as they go through this process and experience their growing pains with them.

We can say, therefore, that facilitation is a process of supportive ''drawing out'' or development of the person's potential, that is a process by which people are helped to look after their own interests and take their own decisions and deal with matters of this kind themselves (Donald 1997:211).

- **What is a ''special helping relationship''?**

The atmosphere within which the facilitative process takes place should be conducive to the learner's personal growth. There must be a warm, receptive and empathic bond between the participants. The participants in this situation are you, the learning area specialist, and the learners in your class.

The warm atmosphere encourages the learners to express themselves openly. They have to learn to trust you but you must invite their trust. Never repeat what they tell you in the staff room! This warm atmosphere will help to guide them to responsible adulthood.

- **Which helping skills do you require?**

According to Gillis (1994:4) you should be able to communicate well and you should have the specialised skills required to alter feelings, thinking and behaviour. In section 5.1 these skills are discussed in greater detail.

- **What does it mean to help people to help themselves?**

Ask yourself: ''Can I learn on behalf of someone else?'' or ''Can I grow on behalf of someone else?'' The answer is obviously ''No''. These are things that people have to do for themselves. This is why it is important for learners to learn to solve their own problems. This does not mean that you have no interest in your learners; you care enough about them to help them when they need your help. But you can't prescribe how they should grow up. Allow them to experience different situations and grow up in their own way.

2 THE CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS OF THE COUNSELLOR

Petrick (1986:7) sees counselling as a form of interviewing in which the educator and the learner converse in such a way that the learner is guided towards new insights. This definition incorporates the three aspects of counselling: it is a relationship, it is directed and it is a process. The important role of the counsellor in this dynamic process is emphasised in the definition. The characteristics and skills that the counsellor bings to the counselling relationship will largely determine how successful the counselling process is.

2.1 INBORN QUALITIES

Every counsellor should possess the following inborn qualities:

- a vocation for counselling
- a love for learners
- concern for learners
- an interest in learners
- a sympathetic attitude towards learners
- empathy with learners
- patience with learners
- a friendly attitude towards learners
- thoughtfulness towards learners
- integrity
- honesty
- sincerity
- reasonable behaviour
- rapport with learners
- a rational approach
- humility when dealing with learners
- a sense of humour
- candour
- broad interests
- a sense of responsibility

This is not an exhaustive list, but it does give you an idea of some of the inherent characteristics that counsellors require to enable them to establish sound counselling relations. We shall briefly discuss these characteristics or qualities (adapted from Petrick 1986:106-114).

2.1.1 A vocation for counselling

A person can be said to have a ''calling'' if he or she feels a strong need to be of service to others. A learner who has been exposed to the harsh realities of life may have need of a counsellor.

2.1.2 A love for learners

A counsellor should have a warm and sincere interest in his or her learners. Only then can he or she become involved with the learners; in other words the counsellor and the learners should share each other's joys and sorrows. Counsellors who get involved with learners do so because they want the best for those learners. Their own interests should never be a primary consideration.

2.1.3 Concern for learners

Concern for learners implies taking their needs to heart. The counsellor turns his or her attention to the learner, making every effort to understand the learner's needs and desires and to give the necessary support and assistance.

2.1.4 An interest in learners

There is a selfless willingness on the part of the counsellor to devote time to the learner because the counsellor is interested in the learner. A verbal expression of interest is not sufficient; the counsellor has to be prepared to spend time with the learner.

2.1.5 A sympathetic attitude towards learners

This means that you are prepared to share the learner's aspirations, confusion and needs and to identify with these feelings.

2.1.6 Empathy with learners

Empathy with learners implies more than showing sympathy. It means putting yourself in the learner's place and evaluating the learner's experience of his or her problems.

2.1.7 Patience with learners

Patience with learners implies that the counsellor must have the ability to take things calmly, remain cheerful despite failures, to consolidate, endure setbacks and be tolerant. Hasty and impatient behaviour can send a message to learners that the educator or counsellor has no time for them.

2.1.8 A friendly attitude towards learners

A friendly attitude towards learners means that the counsellor requires the ability to be a true friend to every learner, that is to be friendly, affectionate, good natured, helpful and cheerful. It is easier to approach and speak to someone who radiates friendliness.

2.1.9 Thoughtfulness towards learners

Thoughtfulness towards learners means taking the uniqueness of each and every learner with whom you associate into account.

2.1.10 Integrity

Integrity means being sincere and answering questions with honesty and a lack of pretense. A learner who knows that your intentions are sincere will be prepared to discuss his or her problems with you. Van Praug (1950) has the following to say: ''It is not the role we play nor the mask we wear, but the men we are who have educational force.''

2.1.11 Honesty

Honesty and integrity are closely related, but honesty also means that you should speak the truth, refrain from distorting facts, and behave in an upright and reliable manner. Honesty requires you to speak the truth at all times, and refrain from telling white lies or from concealing the truth from learners.

2.1.12 Sincerity

Sincerity means behaving in an upright manner, and discussing issues openly and without reserve. You shouldn't be a closed book to the learner. You should open up to the learners, so that your actions reflect your sincere desire to give the learners your best.

2.1.13 Reasonable behaviour

Reasonable behaviour has to do with fairness and justice and with behaving according to what is good and right.

2.1.14 Rapport with the learners

This implies that you know how to associate with the learners, and how to approach them and win their trust. Your skills serve no purpose without these abilities.

2.1.15 A rational approach

If you behave in a rational manner you are well-balanced. You are always the same and do not easily get upset. You go about your duties calmly.

2.1.16 Humility towards the learners

An educator should never behave in a haughty manner. The human dignity of your learners must be respected. Humility towards learners means not expecting more of the learners than they are able to give. Humility is a true virtue and should never be regarded as a weakness.

2.1.17 A sense of humour

A sense of humour involves seeing the pleasant side of life. You see the funny side of things, especially in your own life. You are able to laugh at yourself.

2.1.18 Candour

You are open and receptive and are touched by your learners' needs. The learner should regard you as someone who really understands his or her difficulties.

2.1.19 Broad interests

You are well-informed, well-read and can speak with authority on a wide range of subjects.

2.1.20 Responsibility

Responsibility involves knowing what your values and standards are and living accordingly. It also means accepting the challenge of responding to your learners' needs.

2.2 COUNSELLING SKILLS

A good educator and counsellor requires the following skills:

2.2.1 Listening skills

You should have a sincere interest in and concern for the person you are counselling. You need to take careful note of what the learners say and how they express themselves.

2.2.2 The ability to show respect

Everyone has the right to respect. An educator may find it difficult to show respect to someone with different values. It becomes even more difficult when that person says or does things that you, the educator, do not agree with. However, it remains your duty to accept the person, even if you do not agree with what he or she says or does.

2.2.3 The ability to encourage people

Learners should be encouraged to share their real feelings. They should be allowed to progress at their own pace and tell their story in their own way. This can demand a lot of patience, since most of us would like to solve the learners' problems for them. It is important, however, to encourage them to deal with their problems at their own pace so that they can learn from their situation.

2.2.4 The ability to show understanding

It is impossible to understand exactly what a learner is experiencing, because you are not in his or her situation. You need to make sure that you have understood their story and their situation correctly. This is a slow process, because you can never simply assume that you have got things right without going back to check.

2.2.5 Exploratory skills

This skill enables one to see a situation from different perspectives. One should ask oneself the following question about every person involved in a situation: ''What effect has your behaviour had on ...?'' This could help learners to evaluate their actions from different perspectives. It could also help them to see themselves

through the eyes of other people without the educator being prescriptive or judgmental. In other words, the learners should be able to see that their actions affect other people, and that ''unexpected'' reactions can occur.

2.2.6 The ability to accompany learners in making choices

Learners need to know how to make choices. Preparation is essential, which means that the learner should have the necessary knowledge of the alternative options. You must learn how to support learners so that they can feel secure when required to make choices.

2.2.7 The ability to accompany learners so that they make responsible choices

This means knowing how to guide learners towards accepting work as a life task and helping them to maintain a positive attitude towards work as part of their philosophy of life. Only then will the learner be able to decide on a career and make a meaningful career choice.

2.2.8 The ability to accompany learners as they accept responsibility for their decisions

Your task is to accompany learners in their exploration of their personal potential so that they will eventually arrive at self-knowledge. This self-knowledge should serve as a basis for decision making and for accepting responsibility for the results of these decisions.

2.2.9 Sustained involvement with the learner

Part of your task as an educator is to be involved in helping learners to develop. This does not mean that you can never take a break. Too much involvement can become a burden to both you and the learners. It does mean, however, that your concern should be constant and not sporadic.

2.2.10 Sympathetic understanding of learners' insecurity

You have to learn to help the learners to feel secure, protected and purposeful.

2.2.11 Educational intervention in learners' lives

You should know how and when to intervene in learners' lives, as for example when you have noticed that they have done something wrong. The learners should understand why you oppose or disapprove of certain unacceptable things. Suggest a few alternatives so that the learner can use his or her decision making skills. You should, however, always do this with reference to the pedagogic principles.

2.2.12 The ability to guide the learner towards accepting his or her shortcomings

When you are supporting a learner during the process of self-exploration, he or she must be informed about future prospects, which involves finding out about his or her limitations or shortcomings. It becomes your task to help the learner to accept irreversible shortcomings, which could come as a shock to the learner. You need to help the learner to maintain a positive attitude and to take realistic decisions.

2.2.13 The ability to guide the learner in his or her orientation to reality

This involves learning how to help the learner to find his or her true place and position in the real world. It is the counsellor's task to give the learner certain beacons or anchors to use in orienting himself or herself in the world.

2.2.14 Authentic involvement with the learner's needs

You must learn to extend a hand to learners who are experiencing problems. This involvement implies more than association. It also requires pedagogic closeness. The learner and the counsellor must come to trust each other so that a mutual sense of belonging, attraction, affection and intimacy can flourish. This cannot be achieved unless the learner senses your genuineness and integrity and comes to feel secure.

2.2.15 Mutual trust between the counsellor and the learner

Your involvement helps make the learner aware of your acceptance or concern, the basis for which is your pedagogic affection for the learner. This is only possible if you are accessible to the learner. Make space for the learner, so that the sense of mutual trust grows stronger at every meeting.

2.2.16 Preserving trust

The relationship of trust between you and the learner should be of such a nature that the learner feels free to confide openly in you. If a learner whom you are counselling does share his or her aspirations or problems, you must see that this information remains confidential. When it becomes necessary to disclose confidential information, for example when you refer the learner to someone, you cannot disclose information without the learner's permission.

2.2.17 Creating a secure space for the learner

When you are helping a learner you must create a secure space for him or her. The learner should feel that this is a space in which he or she is welcome and accepted. The learner should also have a sense that you would like to help and that you are accessible to him or her. Without this feeling of security, the learner will not allow you to accompany him or her and will not accept your help.

2.2.18 Encouragement of participation

It is important to be able to inspire the learner and to encourage him or her to participate in activities.

2.2.19 Exposure to and respect for standards in learning and teaching

As an adult you identify with the norms and standards of acceptable behaviour. You should pass on these norms and standards of acceptable behaviour to the learners with whom you come into contact in the course of educative teaching. In your personal life you need to be the kind of person that learners can look up to. It is your responsibility to be an example for learners.

2.2.20 Accepting responsibility for learners

You must be prepared to accept responsibility for the learners and support them by trying to make their situation more bearable. You can acquire these skills through training and practice.

2.3 RESPONSES

Apart from the skills we have briefly discussed, there are other factors that can influence the counselling process, namely the responses to statements or questions during a counselling session. These responses may be regarded as

- evaluative
- interpretive
- supportive
- advisory
- an indication of understanding

We shall discuss these responses in greater detail.

2.3.1 Evaluative

An evaluative response means that you are assessing the situation from your own moral point of view. You could say something like: ''It does not seem as though you did the right thing ... '', which implies that the learner's actions were wrong and you would have acted differently in a similar situation.

2.3.2 Interpretive

When you interpret a situation by saying something like: ''You may have done that because ...'', the implication is that you think you understand the reasons for the learner's behaviour. This is a condescending attitude, the assumption being that you are right and the learner is wrong. It is quite possible, however, that you have interpreted the situation incorrectly. There is no point in supplying reasons for a learner's behaviour, because this will not help to solve the problem — even if you are right (and you may very well be wrong unless you have been working on the problem for a long time).

2.3.3 Supportive

Supportive or reassuring responses can be helpful, if the timing is right. The right time is when a problem has been thoroughly examined, all possible solutions have been investigated and the best one found through mutual agreement. If you express reassurance early on in the discussion, for example by saying, ''I am sure things are not as bad as they seem'', this could create distance between you and the learner, because he or she feels that you simply do not understand the full impact of their problem.

2.3.4 Investigative

Questioning or investigation are techniques that should be used with caution. If you ask learners to explain ''why'' they have done something when they themselves do not know the answer this could make them feel guilty. They may even feel that they need to explain their actions. Make certain that your questions are aimed at investigating and exploring the situation in a meaningful way. All the information should contribute to a solution and better understanding of the problem so that the learner can rise above the present problem. Questions like ''What happened then?'' ''How did they react?'' will prompt learners to explore the situation more deeply.

2.3.5 Advisory

Adults find it the easiest thing in the world to give advice — especially when it concerns learners and young people. But then the person on the receiving end has no

responsibility for trying to solve the problem successfully. They can try the solution you suggested but if it doesn't work it is your fault. If it does work, they can't really take any of the credit. In either case, they don't benefit from the advice. It is only necessary to give advice at the end of the counselling process when you are familiar with all the circumstances and have come to know the personality of the learner.

2.3.6 Understanding

By demonstrating our understanding of a situation, we show the learner that we have been counselling that we understand what he or she has been telling us. We can confirm that we have been listening carefully by reproducing the learner's actions or feelings in our own words, *without altering his or her point of view.* Our words should contain no indications of approval, criticism, judgment or correction. We should simply confirm that we have understood exactly what has been said to us (Gillis 1994:8).

In the next section we provide a few practical hints on how to draw up a school counselling programme.

3 A SHORT-TERM COUNSELLING MODEL

The following model proposed by Gillis (1994:84-93) is merely an example of one possible counselling model that you could use at your school. Although a different model may be in use at your school, you remain the initial contact person, irrespective of what kind of help the learners need.

3.1 PREPARATION PHASE

It is during this stage that the learner makes contact with the counsellor. Learners may be asked to come to your office (when they are in trouble or when you can see that they have a problem), or they may make the appointment themselves. The way you respond to the learners will largely determine the outcome of the whole counselling process.

- Try to understand the learner's problem. It would be advisable to consult the school educator and take a look at the learner's personal file. If no file is available, you could consult the learner profile chart to find out what the learner's home circumstances are and what kind of academic record he or she has.
- Make sure that the interviewing room is well equipped. There should be at least two seats. It is not a good idea to sit behind a desk, but do try to sit opposite the learner. It is important to create a welcoming atmosphere. Are you making the impression of being in a hurry and not particularly interested? Or do you appear calm and relaxed and obviously interested in the learner's problem?

3.2 MEETING AND GETTING ACQUAINTED

Your words, expressions and actions will indicate to the learner that you are willing to help. You are no longer the teacher, but a counsellor. This means that when it comes to solving the problem, you and the learner are equals. You are going to try to solve the problem together and reach an acceptable solution.

- After greeting the learner, ask him or her to sit down. You can expect the learner to be uneasy during a first visit to a counsellor. You need to reassure him or her

that your conversations will remain confidential and that you will not repeat anything that is said without the learner's permission.
- The next step is to explain to the learner what the counselling process involves. The learner should tell you the details of the problem so that you can know what he or she is experiencing. It is vitally important that the learner should try to generate his or her own solution to the problem, because you cannot solve the problem for the learner. Tell the learner, however, that you are prepared to suggest solutions that he or she may not have thought of.

3.3 EXPLORATORY STAGE

There are various things that you must determine during this phase. Remember that information should not merely be interesting. It must help to solve the problem. You need to explore the situation together with the learner. The learner may experience questions as a threat, so it is important that he or she should understand that you need the information to help him or her gain another perspective on the problem.

Look at the following statements and questions. Do you think they would help a learner to see his or her problem from a different perspective?

- I understand you want to see me about something?
- You are probably wondering why I want to speak to you? You are probably wondering why Mr X sent you to me?
- Can you give me an idea of how you see the situation?
- I need to know as much as possible about you and your situation.
- How do you see the other person in the situation?

Once the learner has described the problem, you may find it necessary to ask for a fuller explanation of a particular aspect, to improve your understanding of the situation. This also tells the learner that you are listening carefully and making a sincere effort to find out how the problem is affecting him or her.

The following questions or statements may be appropriate at this stage:

- It seems to me that ...
- Can you explain this to me in more detail?
- How did you feel when ... ?
- What did you think or feel at this stage?
- Why do you think ... did this?

Be wary of suggesting solutions, even if the learner asks for them. As Gillis (1994:88) says: ''This stage focuses on facilitating self-exploration, clarifying feelings, isolating the problem, and, wherever possible, defining it in such a way that goals can be set.''

3.4 ACTION STAGE

There will be many situations that you can't change. History can't change, but it can be rewritten from a different perspective. When particular goals are set, this can help alleviate the problem or help the learner to deal with the current situation more effectively.

It is important to deal with the whole learner. This means that you should help the learner to monitor feelings, ideas and behaviour. All three of these components contribute to the solution of the problem. Collectively, they can help the learner to

see the problem from different angles, and possibly achieve a more permanent solution.

Action includes addressing and setting goals, choosing methods of achieving them, monitoring progress and evaluating results. You as the adult in the supportive relationship would accompany the learner through the process until his or her situation has improved.

Possible questions or statements would include the following:

- Do you think it would be possible to ...?
- How did it affect ... when you ...?
- What were you thinking when ...?
- This is not an easy thing to do.
- Change can be upsetting because ...

3.5 TERMINATION STAGE

This is the stage when the problem has been worked through sufficiently and the learner is able to get on with his or her schoolwork and life. Counselling must end on a high note. This can be achieved by summing up the whole process or, better still, asking the learner to tell you what has changed in his or her life.

The following are a number of statements that you could use:

- Well, things seem to be different.
- You seem to be dealing with the situation differently.
- I am pleased that you managed to ...
- The changes you have mentioned tell me that you are a strong person.

4 RESPONSES TO THE COUNSELLING PROCESS

During the counselling process you will come across some of the following factors: values, references, resistance and reluctance and the counselling contract.

4.1 VALUES

Values are a reflection of personal preferences in that everyone has their own values. People's values are suited to the kind of life they lead. You should not try to impose your values on someone else, but should rather recognise and respect differences. While it is important to acknowledge different values, this does not mean that the counsellor should abandon his or her personal values.

4.2 REFERRALS

You should remember that you are not a trained psychologist. You are not even a trained school counsellor. While this does not make your contribution to the wellbeing of the learners less valuable, it does mean that there are certain cases that you will not be able to handle (see the section ''Educator support team'' later on in this study unit). The team approach enables you to refer difficult cases to trained

professionals. Do not waste time trying to help learners with serious problems. You will be more effective if you concentrate on learners with less serious problems.

4.3 RESISTANCE AND RELUCTANCE

Young people are embarrassed about discussing their most personal thoughts and feelings. If they didn't come to you voluntarily they may build up a resistance to help, since there is a perception that only ''weak people'' go to a ''head doctor''. You need to explain to them that it takes a lot of courage to speak about personal problems. Further, you are not a ''head doctor'' but merely someone who is concerned about their wellbeing and would like to see them living a full life.

Reluctance to cooperate with you could mean slower progress with the counselling process. You will recognise reluctance in the sullen and uncooperative attitude the learner displays. Learners may turn up late for sessions or completely forget to come. The best way of addressing this problem is through the work on hand: explain that you want them to be happy and successful in their own way. You can also meet them half way by telling them that you understand their reluctance, because they probably feel that you are going to tell them what to do. Explain that you wouldn't be able to do that because each person knows himself or herself the best. The learners' unhappiness is an indication that they need someone to encourage them to succeed at the things they have chosen to do. You are willing to give them this support if they will allow you to do so.

4.4 THE COUNSELLING CONTRACT

This is one way of getting learners to do certain things within a certain time span. The task assigned to the learner often takes the form of an awareness exercise and the helper undertakes to cooperate with this process. Let us look at the following example:

> ''If you come back next week and tell me how the most popular person in your class behaves towards the opposite sex, I'll give you the opportunity to talk about this so that we can evaluate this person's actions.''

These contracts are informal. If the learner comes to the following session without having done this task, you would discuss the reason why he or she found it difficult, which often throws a lot of light on the problem and makes it possible to formulate a more suitable contract for the next session.

5 THE PARTICIPATION OF THE LEARNING PROGRAMME EDUCATOR IN THE COUNSELLING MODEL

The counselling model would not exist without your help. A model can only survive if people keep it going and use it regularly. This means that you, in your role as educator, need to play an active part in the counselling programme. How should you do this? You require certain skills and you need to know how to respond to certain situations. Acquiring these skills will give you confidence and show you how to conduct interviews with learners (or just chat to them informally). The result could well be a solution to the problem.

You will always find that the number of problems that require attention far exceeds the time available. Your contribution could be very valuable to the school.

We shall now discuss assessment and observation. These techniques can help counsellors to understand learners better.

5.1 ASSESSMENT

Our discussion of assessment is based chiefly on the work of Denamiel (1993), who asks the following questions:

- What is assessment?
- Why do we do assessments?
- How do we do assessments?
- How should we use this knowledge?

5.1.1 What is assessment?

Assessment in the school context usually has to do with the learner's academic performance. It usually takes the form of a test of some kind and it mainly assesses the learner's cognitive functioning. People often criticise this form of assessment, because it has numerous shortcomings if it is not correctly applied. An exam result could be misleading if a learner has worked steadily throughout the year but done badly in the exam as a result of a sudden physical problem. It is also possible that a learner who has not worked during the year could do well in the exam simply because he or she was lucky enough to spot the exam questions correctly.

Assessment should focus on the whole learner, not only his or her intellectual abilities. Assessment should involve the intellectual, physical, social and emotional facets of learners.

The educator or counsellor gathers, organises, interprets and notes information throughout the assessment process in order to formulate a complete picture. This is an ongoing process and the learners should be encouraged to make their contributions.

5.1.2 Why do we do assessments?

The reason for doing assessments is to gain insight into the learner's needs. The educator is then able to plan more appropriate learning experiences or provide remedial support. Assessment will enable you to

- identify the learner's strengths and weaknesses
- diagnose the reasons for errors
- motivate learners
- compare learners' performance and behaviour with the required norms
- plan corrective measures

5.1.3 How do we do assessments?

The educator could use several appropriate techniques to gather suitable information on a learner. We can deduce this from the assessment techniques set out in table 1. The techniques are listed, followed by the documentation techniques usually used with them. This is followed by an indication of the type of information

obtained. Lastly, a few practical examples of classroom applications of these techniques are given.

TABLE 1

	Assessment technique	Documentation procedure
1	**Observation** • informal • planned	• anecdotal documentation • check lists • comments • collection of examples of the learner's work and regular dating of examples
2	**Conferences** • learner-educator • learner-parent/caregiver-educator • colleagues • group conferences • class discussions • members of the broader community	• anecdotal documentation • cumulative check lists • general/specific remarks related to mutual concern • the educator's diary
3	**Questioning/listening** • verbal or in writing • open or closed • active listening	• merit scales • the learner's written, verbal or pictorial responses, which are documented by the educator as comments • cumulative check lists
4	**Testing** • norm-referenced • individual diagnostic tests • educator-structured • learner-structured • criterion-referenced • open book	• marks • grades • raw scores • merit scales • comments
5	**Negotiating learning**	• self-assessment questionnaire for the learner • merit scales
6	**Peer group learning**	• self-assessment questionnaire for learner • merit scales
7	**Self-assessment by learner**	• individual profiles that are regularly added to by the learner, but are kept for the educator for easy reference
8	**Peer group assessment**	• collect examples of work • written review • note learner comments • question-and-answer situations
9	**Learners' workbooks**	• marks and grades • comments
10	**Exhibits**	• photographs • questionnaires • anecdotal documentation • surveys

	Information obtained	Practical examples for the classroom
1	• learner attitudes, feelings and values • strategies used to complete an assignment • learner grasp of concepts • learner's strengths and weaknesses • learner interaction and relationships	• roles • written work • achievements • experiments • problem solving • reporting • discussion • improvisation • cooperative learning assignments
2	• knowledge and understanding of concepts • learner attitudes, feelings and values • understanding and demonstration of concepts • strategies used to complete assignments • accurate details of learner progress and performance	• individual small/large group situations • individual learning programmes • contracts • analysis of information on a parent/caregiver • review of previous documentation and reports • discussion of concerns with specialists from the community
3	• learner attitudes, feelings and values • learner's strengths and weaknesses • learners understand what is expected of them • communication skills of learner • measurement of learners' ability to organise data, call up information, explain and arrive at conclusions, with inclusion of the creative and analytical thought processes	• interviews, questionnaires, surveys • riddles and oral texts • group or class discussions • conferences • informal discussions • use of questions for revision purposes, to reinforce ideas, clarify understanding and enlarge thinking so that available options are explored
4	• error analysis • mastering and understanding concepts • application of skills • strategies used to complete assignments	• checking that the learner has the necessary prior knowledge before a new concept, topic or unit of work is introduced • determining procedural or conceptual strengths and weaknesses and the rate of progress of each learner • determining what knowledge and skills a learner has acquired after the completion of a topic or unit of work
5	• working habits • organisational and planning skills	• assignments/contracts • work charts/goal setting exercises • individual learner programmes
6	• leadership skills • cooperative learning skills • learner attitudes and values • organisational values	• assignment charts • check lists • peer group instruction • merit scales
7	• how learners feel and think about aspects which concern them or make them feel happy	• log books • think tank • attitude scales • diaries and journals • allow learner to observe their peer group while they are working
8	• learner reflection and feedback • insight into the processes or criteria used	• sociogrammes • review of a class talk that focused on positive aspects and areas that require further development • group activities • peer group instruction
9	• working habits and attitude in respect of work • organisational and planning skills	• marking learner's work – with an emphasis on the positive
10	• level and extent of learner's comprehension • organisational and cooperative work skills	• it is an ongoing process that should include all key learning areas

5.1.4 How should this knowledge be used?

You should realise that assessment in general is an essential part of your accompaniment of the learner, since assessment can be of value in the following ways:

- The learner will gain confidence and become more enthusiastic about the work.
- The learner's working habits will improve.
- The learner will begin to understand new concepts.
- The learner will come to know his or her strengths and weaknesses.
- You will have a better idea of how to plan the teaching programmes.
- You will be able to diagnose the learner's needs.
- You will know how to group learners at the same level, and so be able to help individual learners.
- You will help make the teaching profession more relevant.
- You will be able to take more responsibility for the learner's needs.

We shall now discuss one assessment technique that you could use, namely observation.

6 OBSERVATION

Observation is an exploratory technique that should be part of every educator's role. We can assess the learner as a whole person with the aid of an exploratory programme. As an educator you require a complete knowledge of the learner in order to support him or her. The observation process may be either informal or planned. Formal, planned observation enables us to learn something about a learner who does not want to communicate verbally.

We discuss observation by referring to

- the observer
- the person being observed
- observation guidelines

6.1 THE OBSERVER

Your observations should never be prompted by curiosity but by genuine concern which is founded in pedagogic love. The purpose of observing the learner is to try to understand how the learner sees himself or herself, in other words to try to assess his self-concept. This is made possible by a technique known as ''walk-a-mile-in-my-shoes''. This merely means trying to share the learner's experiences and outlook on life.

Pedagogic observation requires the following of the observer:

- Be careful to avoid prejudices. The observer must forget about any previous perceptions of the learner, which might influence his observation.
- Regard each learner as an individual.
- See each learner as a unique person.
- Observation should not be a sporadic activity but should be sustained over a long period to enable you to form a true picture of the learner you are observing. Accurate observation is important, and you cannot base it on irregular

behavioural manifestations. It is essential to note the frequency of such behavioural manifestations, as well as the factors that cause them.
- Be objective. Avoid subjective involvement.
- Do not draw hasty conclusions. Make certain that you have sufficient, reliable data.

6.2 THE PERSON BEING OBSERVED

The learner should never be seen as an object; he or she is a fellow being capable of asking for help. The learner will reveal his or her character through various favourable or unfavourable manifestations.

Some of the more favourable manifestations include courtesy, honesty, willingness, good scholastic performance, creativity, a sense of duty, diligence, reliability, humanity, politeness, enthusiastic participation in school and other activities, a relaxed attitude, neatness, serenity, good concentration, obedience, energy, realism, social ease, good manners, a strong will, cheerfulness, loyalty, modesty, outstanding sporting achievement, qualities of leadership, openness, punctuality, helpfulness, a positive attitude and interest.

Some of the less favourable manifestations include brutality, dishonesty, lying, stealing, a quick temper, obstinacy, laziness, instability, underachievement, truancy, leaving school early, avoiding homework, excessive tension, rebelliousness, bravado, withdrawal from school and other activities, generalised anxiety, fluctuating attention, restlessness, daydreaming, poor concentration, specific fears, poor appetite, headaches, stomach aches, hay fever, insomnia, disobedience, sexual activity, fatigue, obsession, hysterical outbursts, hyperactivity, bullying, various types of outbursts, exaggeration, a lack of self-confidence, shyness, bad manners, lack of willpower, rejection, lack of interest, forgetfulness, boisterousness, neglect, crudeness, depression, arrogance, cowardliness, disloyalty, laxity, idleness, sadness and absences.

6.3 GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION

The following guidelines give an indication of what one should observe (adapted from the study guide, *Educational guidance practice I*, 1994:7–10).

6.3.1 Communication (conversation)

The way in which the learner communicates is one of the most important sources of information about him or her. Bear the following in mind when you observe the learner's communication style:

- How does the learner send his or her message?
- Is the learner able to verbalise his or her thoughts?
- How does the learner receive messages?
- Does the learner understand the symbols that are used during communication?

When the learner communicates with you, you need to pay attention to the learner's use of language, because this could place him or her in a particular subcultural group. Garbers (1980:18–19) says, for example, that short and simple sentences containing many action verbs, the repeated use of conjunctions such as ''and'', together with categorical statements in which cause and effect are confused, are an indication of a milieu handicap. Be careful about identifying this as a problem and

labelling the learner purely on the basis of his or her use of language. Not all learners who use a restricted register usually associated with a particular group will necessarily come from a pedagogically unsupportive family. This type of error is known as ''semantic stereotyping''.

6.3.2 General scholastic behaviour

The particular school milieu (school climate) which is characteristic of a school has an influence on a learner's scholastic behaviour. The following example should clarify this statement:

A school which has a strong academic tradition could make an underachiever or a poor achiever feel that he or she is being rejected — even if this is not in fact the case. (A scholastic underachiever is usually a learner who should be doing better, according to all indications. A poor achiever is a learner whose scholastic performance is below the average performance of the class.) The educator should bear in mind how learners are likely to find the school milieu.

Apart from the learner's general scholastic behaviour, the way he or she plays or behaves on the playground or sports fields reveals important aspects of that learner's personality.

6.3.3 Responsibility and leadership

The following are some of the questions the educator should try to answer:

- Does the learner structure his or her time?
- Does the learner use his or her free periods productively?
- Does the learner approach his or her problems in a calm and systematic way?
- Can the learner control his or her emotions when he or she becomes tense or anxious?
- Can the learner be given tasks to do when the educator is not present?

If you are doing this type of observation you should give each learner in the class the opportunity to carry out a task or assignment (clean the blackboard, pack away books, arrange debates or serve as the chairman of committees). You should also give each learner the opportunity to act as class leader. This will allow you to obtain useful information on the learner's leadership, self-confidence, self-assurance, tolerance, initiative, charisma and orientation to problemsolving.

6.3.4 Interpersonal relations

You can learn a lot about a learner by observing the nature of his or her interpersonal relations. Bear this in mind while you try to answer the following questions:

- Does the learner show initiative or leadership when among friends?
- Does the learner readily accept the leadership of others?
- Is the learner accepted by the group?
- Who are the learner's friends?
- How well does the learner adapt to new situations or change?
- How does the learner identify with members of his or her own sex?
- How does the learner identify with members of the opposite sex?
- Are there any indications of relationship problems?

6.3.5 Physical and psychological conditions

Monitor all the learners continuously and report the following conditions as soon as you observe them:

- malnutrition
- abuse
- anorexia
- epilepsy
- chronic illness

Problems of a sensitive nature, such as pregnancy, suicidal tendencies or sexual or religious problems should be approached with great tact, but nevertheless treated as urgent. To observe these problems, you need to be able to recognise the symptoms.

6.3.6 Observation of the learner's community involvement

The community sometimes looks down on people who hold different views, do things differently or practice unusual professions. Learners at school may also look down on learners who are ''different'', or whose home circumstances are different from the norm. This may be the reason why learners have no friends or are not elected to a a committee. You should be aware of the group dynamics among learners.

6.3.7 Development of a conscience

The development of a conscience refers to the moral and ethical orientation of the learner. Think of the way learners are guided by their consciences, their views on corruption or bribery and the use of influence to achieve a goal.

6.3.8 Observation of the learner's attitudes, disposition and temperament

The learners' attitude towards themselves, their parents, the school and other people are important here. Try to establish whether the learner is positive, anxious, aggressive, bored, confused, etc. Follow up any queries on changes in the learner's attitude in order to establish the causes. Try to determine by observation whether the learner's perceived attitudes are genuine or whether they are simply a mask.

6.3.9 Self-observation by the learner

As an educator you should encourage self-observation on the part of the learners. This technique may be especially effective when a learner has to implement a study programme. Is the learner able to keep a personal record of how well he or she is able to stick to study times, for example, and how this helps or hinders his or her routine? A learner with behavioural problems could keep a record of how he or she felt before each incident, for example an uncontrollable outburst of temper or destructive behaviour, and of what happened before or afterwards. The learner should be able to discuss his own observations of his behaviour with you as a means of exploring his or her self-concept and experiential world.

6.3.10 Supplementing observation techniques

You should be continuously aware of new fields of observation and keep up to date

with new observation techniques as they are designed. Other valuable techniques that we have not discussed are the following:

- the writing of autobiographies
- creative paragraphs (fantasy style)
- puppet theatre (where the class is asked at critical moments to write down what will happen next)
- spontaneous role playing
- video recordings

Observation should never be watered down to a mere documentation of learner behaviour. Observations should be verified. We do this by comparing our observations with those of others. This protects learners from prejudiced observations.

7 IN CONCLUSION

We have examined the role of the counsellor in creating a meaningful counselling relationship in some detail. We have also looked at the inborn and learnt characteristics of the counsellor which help make the counselling exercise more successful.

We have seen that the assessment of learners is essential and that the whole learner should be taken into account. There are various techniques that we could use to assess learners, but in this section we confine our discussion to observation techniques.

THE INTERVIEW

8 INTRODUCTION

The interview is a technique that is associated with the dynamic counselling process. This technique is used in pedagogic exploration and it usually takes the form of an oral discussion. Although we usually equate the interview with a discussion, it covers a broader field than the concept ''discussion'' would indicate. In this section we shall look at the interview as a type of pedagogic exploration. Our discussion includes the following:

- definition of the interview
- interviewing methods
- types of interviews
- interviewing techniques
- an individual (one on one) interview
- group interviews

9 WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

The pedagogic interview should never be seen as a one-way conversation. It is the actualisation of the appeal to, listen to and respond essences. The interview exists alongside the involvement of the participants in the dialogue. Since existential communication takes place only between people, the pedagogic interview is a preeminently human event (Petrick 1986:27).

We emphasise the following characteristics of the interview (Petrick 1986:27):

- It is an individual matter involving an educator and a learner.
- It is the key element of the clinical basis of a scientific occupational information and counselling programme.
- The interviewer must be a likeable adult so that the learner can immediately feel secure.
- The interview must be conducted in an area that ensures privacy and creates an atmosphere of intimacy so that sufficient information for successful counselling can be obtained.
- A special understanding between the interviewer and the person being interviewed is required.
- The interview must be characterised by pedagogic trust, pedagogic understanding and pedagogic authority.
- The aim of the interview must be to bring the learner closer to adulthood.

To obtain an answer to the question, ''What is an interview?'', we shall examine the definition of Gouws, Louw, Meyer and Plag (1979): ''The interview is a discussion between a therapist, counsellor or other professional person and a patient, client or prospective employee, aimed at gathering information for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, establishing abilities, counselling or research. In keeping with the aim a directive or non-directive approach can be used in the interview.''

Gouws's definition emphasises the following:

- ''a discussion'': This is a dialogue form which involves a two-way process. Both parties are involved in the process to the same degree.
- ''between therapist, counsellor or some other professional and a patient, client, prospective employee'': This gives us an indication of the functions of the parties involved in the interview. There is the counsellor or interviewer who, as a result of his or her training and expertise, is able to ensure that the interview proceeds in an orderly fashion. The client (learner) is the one who asks the interviewer (educational accompanist) for help because he or she is in need, requires support or is looking for information on something.
- ''aimed at'': This is not an undisciplined chat. It is a purposeful discussion.
- ''gathering information for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, establishing abilities, counselling or research'': The particular reasons why the interview is being conducted are emphasised.
- ''direct or non-directive approach'': Different approaches and techniques are used in the interview. The method and technique used should suit the purpose of the interview.

10 INTERVIEWING METHODS

This explanation of what an interview is refers to the different approaches to the interview. We shall examine some of these approaches.

10.1 THE DIRECT (STRUCTURED) APPROACH

In the direct approach the interviewer takes the lead. The interviewer may have a few preconceived questions that he or she expects the learner to answer. The role of the subject of the interview is to answer questions. We usually use this method in a selection interview when the interviewer requires information on the learner or when the learner requires information from the educator. Jacobs (1985:53) refers to this as an interview conducted from an internal frame of reference. In other words, the interview is geared to what the interviewer wants to know. The following is an example of a direct (structured) interview:

Example

Educator: This is the third morning that you have been late for school. What is the problem?
Learner: It's my father, ma'am.
Educator: Can't you ask your father to leave earlier?
Learner: Yes, ma'am.
Educator: How long does it take you to drive to school?
Learner: About 10 minutes, ma'am.
Educator: What route do you take to school?
Learner: We take the N3, ma'am.
Educator: You should ask your father to take another route, or else to leave earlier. The N3 is very busy after seven o'clock.
Learner: Yes, ma'am.
Educator: Speak to your father this afternoon, and see that it does not happen again.
Learner: Yes, ma'am.

In this example the interview was led and guided by the educator's questions. The learner was never taken into account. Look at the next example. The interview could have gone like this if it had been an indirect (unstructured) interview.

10.2 THE INDIRECT (UNSTRUCTURED) INTERVIEW

Example

Educator: This is the third morning you have been late for school. What is the problem?
Learner: It's my father, ma'am.
Educator: What do you mean by ''It's my father''?
Learner: He first has to see to my baby sister and take her to the crèche and then he can take me to school.
Educator: Does he do all this by himself?
Learner: Yes, ma'am, because my mother isn't there.
Educator: Where is your mother?
Learner: She has left home.
Educator: Left home?
Learner: Yes, ma'am, she has left my father.

Can you see how different the outcome and information is that the indirect interview produced? Unlike the interview in the first example, this interview was not based on the educator's preconceived ideas. The indirect approach enabled the educator to discover the ''real'' problem. She will therefore be in a position to offer educational support on the basis of the learner's needs.

Petrick (1986:31) says that the indirect interview differs from the direct interview in this respect that the learner takes the lead. The learner takes the lead and the interviewer plays the part of sympathetic listener. The interviewer gives the learner the opportunity to speak about his or her problems and really ''talk things out'' (Haasbroek 1978:58). The interviewer's role is to sum up the information that the learner provided, evaluate it and interpret it (Nel & Sonnekus 1959:106).

The implication of the free and unstructured interview is that the interviewer and the learner meet each other as equal partners (Van Strien 1966:49). This kind of interview is a balanced encounter. The counsellor, as the interviewer, cannot call the tune in an indirect interview, or even determine the course of the interview. The learner must be able to express his or her deepest feelings spontaneously. The indirect interview can be useful if the learner is prepared to open up and confide in the interviewer spontaneously. However, the value of this type of interview has been questioned since in practice learners seldom initiate this kind of interview of their own free will. Furthermore, this method is based on the unjustified assumption that learners are capable of identifying their own problems, putting them into words and solving them themselves. Other points of criticism are that such interviews take up a great deal of time, that excessive emphasis is placed on the learner's share in the interview, while the educator's role is reduced to that of a sympathetic listener.

10.3 THE COMBINED APPROACH

The combined interviewing method consists of the best elements of the direct and

indirect interviews. It is neither learner-centred nor interviewer-centred. As a professional person, the counsellor does not force the learner in a particular direction, but expresses interest in any opinion or attitude that emerges from what the learner says. However, the counsellor's pedagogic responsibility obliges him or her to steer the learner's development in a different direction if the interview takes the wrong course. The learner is therefore guided to take the initiative and implement his or her own decisions. This means that the object of the combined interview is to influence or steer the counselling procedure, the information elicited and the advice given in a particular direction.

In the combined interview the following three characteristics are emphasised (Petrick 1986:31):

- The educator is interested in the views and attitudes expressed by the learner.
- The educator's responsibility is to guide the learner in a different direction if he or she shows signs of taking the wrong direction.
- The learner is guided to take the initiative and take his or her own decisions.

11 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Each interview has a different purpose. The purpose will therefore determine the kind of interview. One of the following types of interviews could be chosen, depending on the purpose to be achieved:

- an exploratory interview
- a historicity interview
- a counselling interview
- an information-gathering interview

11.1 AN EXPLORATORY INTERVIEW

The key element of an interview is two-way communication, which implies that there must be common ground between the interviewer and the interviewee. Unlike mere reporting, the interview brings matters to light that had previously been hidden. Since the educator's object is to get to know the learner as a person, he or she must experience the learner's world subjectively and the learner's world must become the interviewer's point of reference in interpreting everything he or she experiences together with the learner. The educator enters the learner's world in order to see things through the eyes of the learner. However, he or she remains the adult when evaluating observations from a pedagogic point of view. This generates the phenomenon of ''objectivity-in-subjectivity''.

The quality of the actualisation of the relationship between the educator and the learner determines the success of the exploratory interview. It is very important not to break the trust between the learner and the educator. The exploratory interview is an element of counselling in which the learner and the educator jointly consider, analyse and integrate information. The educator learns through dialogue who the educator is and what the nature and scope of his or her problem is. Dialogue is used as an aid in exploratory interviews. Assignments and examples of the learner's experience are sometimes necessary to bring out lived experiences that have been suppressed. This is especially applicable when one is dealing with very young learners. You need to use various aids in order to understand the learner's experiential world.

11.2 A HISTORICITY INTERVIEW

A historicity discussion is an oral discussion with people who know something about the learner's educational situation. This discussion can even be conducted with the learner himself or herself, in which case we call it an autohistoricity discussion. The concept ''historicity'' refers to the history of international relations that have been established by mankind over the years. The historicity interview is an attempt to understand the learner's experiential world. Its aim is to determine what the learner has become so far and how he or she has done this. The historicity interview gives the educator an idea of the learner's personal development, and of the meaning the learner attaches to the educational content.

11.3 AN INFORMATION-GATHERING INTERVIEW

Another type of interview sets out to gather information. The required information could include the learner's personality structure, educational level and occupation. The information-gathering interview is conducted with the learner or with the learner's parents and/or educators. The interviewer supplies the parents or educators with data which are not facts as such, but information that has been processed in order to support the learner.

11.4 THE COUNSELLING INTERVIEW

The counselling interview involves the parents and/or the learner with problems. The parents of a learner with problems could ask the educator for advice as a last resort, if they feel that they are not getting any further with the learner's education. The parents are worried about their child and are seeking advice from the counsellor.

The counsellor can provide useful advice and related information that would enable the parents to give their child more purposeful guidance. The counsellor is responsible for initiating the counselling discussion and guiding it after he or she has given the parents moral support. The discussion deals with problematic issues, and its object is to improve the educational situation.

The learner's involvement in a counselling interview need not be related to educational problems; it could result from a need for help or support with educational or occupational choices. Counselling focuses on the future. It should help the learners to put the future in perspective so that they can help themselves (Petrick 1986:32 & 33).

Remember that the kind of interview will depend on what you are trying to achieve.

12 INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

We said that the purpose of the interview will determine the type of interview. When we use the interview as an exploratory medium, the object would be to help us understand the experiential world of the learner. We shall look at the use of questioning techniques and reflection techniques which are used in interviews to learn about the experiential world of the learner or to get to understand the learner's parents.

We shall discuss questioning and reflection within the context of the traditional interviewing approach, which is a one-on-one approach. These techniques can also be used in other situations, such as group interviews. The techniques are acceptable for use with younger learners, but may have to be adapted. Instead of using a direct approach with a young learner, the interviewer may decide to use a fantasy technqiue, such as the following: ''Today we are going to chat with Thoko of Betty (fictitious characters). What do you think Thoko or Betty would like to talk about?'' The younger learner will probably project some of his or her feelings onto Thoko or Betty without feeling threatened.

12.1 INTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

With the questioning and reflection techniques the client is seen from an internal frame of reference. ''An internal frame of reference is how the client sees himself/herself, how he/she feels about the situation and an external frame of reference is how the counsellor sees the client, how the counsellor feels about the client's situation'' (Porter 1950:63). It is clear that an internal frame of reference refers to the client and the client's feelings, desires, attitudes et cetera while an external frame of reference indicates how another person (in this case the therapist or counsellor) sees the client. These two frames of reference play an essential role in the interview, as is illustrated in table 2 (Porter 1950:63).

Table 2 shows that therapists who are guided by their own frame of reference tend to interpret it accordingly. Such therapists are likely to steer interviews in such a way that their own needs are met, in other words the therapists decide what will be discussed. Figure 2 is a diagrammatic representation of an interview conducted from within an internal frame of reference.

FIGURE 2

Working from an internal frame of reference

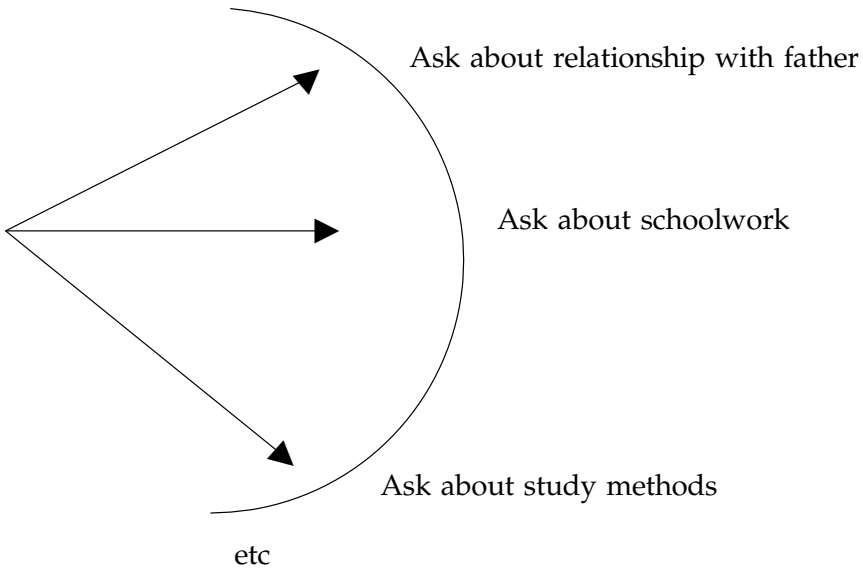


TABLE 1

Internal frame of reference

INTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE	THE CLIENT SPEAKS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:	EXTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE
The therapist bases the interview on his or her internal frame of reference. THERAPIST I The therapist arranges the data in a kind of schematic representation, such as the following: A SYMPTOMS (1) ..... (2) ..... (3) ..... B EGO STRUCTURES (1) ..... (2) ..... (3) ..... C TRAUMAS EXPERIENCED (1) ..... (2) ..... (3) ..... On the basis of this, the therapist makes a diagnosis of how he or she perceives the problem.	External factors as they appear to him or her and/or his or her own behaviour as he or she perceives it and/or personal feelings about himself or herself, objectives, values, etc and during the interview the client reveals much of his or her personality through his or her behaviour	The therapist conducts the interview on the basis of an external frame of reference. THERAPIST 2 The therapist tries to follow and understand what the client is saying from the client's point of view. The therapist then tries to arrange the data in a scheme like the one below. A The client appears to feel as follows about things: (1) ..... (2) ..... (3) ..... B The client appears to have the following behavioural peculiarities: (1) ..... (2) ..... (3) ..... etc

- **Working from an internal frame of reference**

An example of an interview (represented in fig 2) conducted from an internal frame of reference:

Therapist or counsellor = T; learner = L

T: Johnny, do you want to discuss a problem with me?
L: Yes, Sir. My problem is that I cannot concentrate properly.
T: How do you get on with your father?
L: Well, Sir ...
T: Is he very strict?
L: Yes, but not too strict, Sir. We have a good relationship. I find it difficult to concentrate.
T: What's your schoolwork like?

L: Not so good. I think I could do better.
T: What was your mark for maths?
L: Maths is my best subject, Sir. I get about 70 percent.
T: How do you study?
L: I make summaries, Sir. (etc)

In this interview the therapist is working according to his own frame of reference. He chooses the questions and decides what he wants to know.

- **Working from an external frame of reference**

If the therapist were working from an external frame of reference, the interview might proceed as follows:

T: Johnny, do you want to speak to me?
L: Yes, Sir. My problem is that I find it difficult to concentrate.
T: Tell me more about your concentration problem.
L: You see, Sir, our house is not very quiet. Both my parents work and my two brothers play CDs all afternoon. There's so much noise that I can't concentrate on my work.
T: It seems to me that your two brothers don't really study.
L: No, Sir, they don't study at all. When I tell my parents at night that I can't work because of all the noise they don't believe me.
T: Johnny, do you think that your parents don't understand your problem?
L: Yes, Sir. And they don't listen when I speak to them.
T: Do you mean that they don't take sufficient interest in you?
L: That's it, Sir. They do their own thing and don't worry very much about what I do. You see, Sir, they didn't really plan to have me. I sometimes feel that they didn't really want to have me.
T: Almost as if they are rejecting you?
L: That's it, Sir. I feel excluded. (etc)

In this interview the therapist has no preconceived ideas. He tried to remain involved with the boy and become part of the boy's experiential world. The therapist also tried to observe the problem according to the learner's frame of reference, in other words the way in which the learner was involved with his problem gave it a meaning which the therapist shared. Study Jacobs and Vrey (1982:95–106), who discuss the relationship of trust, the therapeutic climate and active listening. The following elements are important in active listening: accurate observation, accurate listening and accurate empathy with the learner's feelings.

Jacobs and Vrey (1982:85–86) have the following to say about this:

Accurate listening. The therapist must listen attentively to what the learner says. This means really hearing what the learner is saying, and not hearing what the therapist wants to hear. Therapists who hear what they want to hear are working from their own frame of reference. The therapist must listen according to an external frame of reference. This will enable the therapist to hear not only what is said but also what is left *unsaid*. The therapist should also note the learner's tone and intonation. Sensitive listening of this kind enables the therapist to hear not only what the person is telling him or her but also what the person is saying to himself or herself.

Accurate listening. This means that the therapist should watch the person carefully and note any signs of sadness, tension or anxiety. The therapist should ask himself or herself the following: ''What can I learn from the client's nonverbal communication?''

Accurate empathy. The therapist should be sensitive to the learner's state of mind and emotional experience. The therapist should not merely define the learner's aggression, anxiety or depression objectively and congnitively, but he or she should show the necessary empathy until the therapist can ''feel'' the learner's emotion — whether it is aggression or sadness. Only when the therapist is prepared to be open to doing so can he or she get onto the learner's wavelength. Accurate observation, listening and empathy with the client (and his or her problems) require an attitude of intentional involvement on the part of the therapist, which will enable him or her to diagnose the client's problems as the client experiences them personally.

Since you have an idea by now of what we mean by an internal frame of reference, we shall proceed to discuss questioning and reflection to help you to observe the learner from an internal frame of reference.

12.2 QUESTIONING

12.2.1 Types of questions

Ask your questions in such a way that they do not disturb the flow of conversation. A constructed (open) question is better suited to an interview than a structured question which does not allow the respondent much latitude.

Example

Unstructured: Where shall we start today?
What would you like to talk about?

Structured: Do you do your homework regularly?

The above examples show that the unstructured question paves the way for further discussion, whereas the structured question could limit responses to ''Yes'' or ''No'' and consequently discourage any further discussion.

12.2.2 Use penetrating (investigative) questions

Use penetrating questions to guide the learner to expand on something he or she has said. We usually start questions of this kind with the words ''How'' or ''Who''. You could use questions of a different kind to get to the bottom of what the learner wants to say.

Example

Learner: I don't like going home in the afternoons.

Educator: Why don't you like going home?

or

Can you explain why you feel like that?

12.2.3 Double-barrelled questions

Do not use double-barrelled questions, which will merely confuse the learners.

Example

Educator: Are you having trouble with your work, or are your friends disturbing you?

12.3 REFLECTION

Reflection implies thinking deeply about what the learner has said. You must make certain that you have properly heard and understood what the learner has said and how he or she feels.

Bearing the personal and intimate nature of the interview in mind, remember that whatever a learner tells you is laden with emotion. Learners often communicate an emotional message without putting it into words.

You show understanding of the learner's feelings when you are able to verbalise them, as the learner is not. By doing so you are indicating the following to the learner:

- You are aware of his or her feelings.
- The learner's feelings are acceptable in the interview.
- You are prepared to deviate from the planned course of the interview to give the learner the opportunity to explore and accept his or her feelings.

Example

Learner: If my sister had bumped the car my father would not have laughed. It's always like this.

Educator: So you think that your father favours your sister and you feel bitter about this.

The interviewer must reflect on what the learner has to say, in other words he or she must be able to sum up or paraphrase the learner's main idea without changing it in any way.

12.3.1 Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase

- you rephrase the main ideas contained in the learner's communication
- you do not change the meaning of the learner's statement, nor do you add anything
- you avoid simply repeating the learner's comments

Paraphrasing

- indicates that you are trying to understand what the learner is saying
- helps to develop the working relationship between you and the learner
- serves to check your understanding of the learner's statement
- helps the learner to formulate his or her thoughts clearly
- gives the interview direction

You can paraphrase

- when the learner feels threatened by a discussion of his or her feelings
- to check and clarify your observations of what the learner is saying
- to show the learner that you understand what he or she has said, and by so doing facilitate further discussion

Here are another few points to remember:

When you sum up

- you systematically integrate the important ideas contained in the learner's comments, and you rephrase them.

By summing up

- you provide a concise, accurate and timely summary of the learners' statements and this helps them to organise their thoughts
- you can help the learner to review what has been said
- you can stimulate a thorough exploration of the themes that are important to the learner
- you can organise the interview

You can sum up

- when the learner's comments are lengthy, disjointed and confusing
- when the learner expresses a number of unrelated ideas
- to give direction and cohesion to the interview
- to move from one phase of the interview to the next
- to wind up the interview

Do the following exercise (from Jacobs et al 1992) to practise your skill in reflection and questioning and in responding to the learner. You have to choose the appropriate response. Try to supply reasons why a specific response is correct, where others would be less effective. The correct responses are given at the end of the exercise.

13 THE CONTINUATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEW

We shall look at the continuation and structure of the individual and group interviews. This discussion has been taken from Mwamwenda (1995:58–61).

13.1 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

13.1.1 To begin the first interview

When the counsellor meets the client for the first time, it is important to put the client at his or her ease. You can achieve this through a warm and enthusiastic greeting and a handshake. This custom is shared by most ethnic groups. A general conversation about local news could follow, as part of the warm-up session to put the client at his or her ease. It also paves the way for a more serious discussion of the problem which has led the client to seek counselling.

Your task during the first visit is to establish a positive relationship with the client. You should be able to look each other in the eyes and carry on a friendly

conversation with ease. You should never dominate the discussion, but should give the client space to air his or her views or else ask questions that allow the client to express opinions. It is your responsibility to tune in to what the client is thinking and feeling and how the client is behaving. Successful counselling depends on the quality of the relationship between the counsellor and the client.

No solution to the problem can be found until the problem has been clearly identified. One way of achieving this is to get to know the client well (the client's background, environment and relationship with himself or herself and anyone else in his or her environment). You could obtain this information by asking questions like the following:

- What is the problem?
- Who has the problem?
- How and where does the problem occur?
- How regularly does the problem occur?
- What is the main reason for this problem?
- How long has this problem been present?
- What is the influence of the problem on the client and the people around him or her?

These questions must be answered honestly and accurately to ensure that the counselling remains on track.

13.1.2 Dealing with the problem

After the initial meeting you could prolong the process by asking the client directly what he or she wanted to achieve by asking for the interview. If you initiated the interview because of previous knowledge of the problem you should explain why you invited the client to your office. You could briefly inquire whether any previous attempts were made to solve the problem and how successful they were. If they were not successful, what were the reasons? As interaction between you and the client proceeds, see that you employ the following: empathy, encouragement, interest, acceptance, care, support, honesty et cetera.

Empathy, verbal and nonverbal, is important for a successful counselling session. Empathy means putting yourself in the place of the client and getting into his or her problem in order to understand the client's position. If a learner is failing a subject you should put yourself in the learner's place. The same applies to problems of any other nature. This will allow the client to see that you understand his or her problem. The client will be more willing to share the problem with you fully.

You should also display verbal empathy by taking an active part in the client's narrative to show your interest. Sum up what the client has said, ask for explanations where necessary and paraphrase to make sure that you understand one another. Ask penetrating questions to obtain more detailed information. Nonverbal behaviour, wher appropriate, is also important. This includes smiling, touching, leaning forward, making eye contact, nodding or making gestures. In most African cultures lack of eye contact is interpreted as respect, but in Western cultures eye contact is important. It is better not to touch a client if there is a chance that this could be misunderstood — especially with someone of the opposite sex. Leaning forward towards a client shows a desire for closeness with the client and an interest in the problem being discussed. Leaning back signals a desire for distance and a lack of interest in what the client is saying. Never yawn during a counselling session, or you will be thought to be bored.

After you have listened to the client and discussed the problem, ask the client's opinion about the matter. Give your opinion on how the client and other people could have contributed to the problem and how the problem might be solved. Some of the things you say during this interaction may be painful, but they are aimed at helping to find a solution to the problem. However, never damage the good relationship that exists between you and your client.

In the following phase the client and the counsellor try to find solutions to the problem and to determine how the solutions could be made to work. It is important that the client should make really determined efforts to find solutions. You should monitor the client throughout and keep on encouraging him or her.

13.1.3 Exploration, identification and goal setting

It is important that the counsellor and the client should set certain objectives which they intend to achieve during the counselling sessions. Goal setting should be accompanied by suggestions on how to achieve the goals. A method should be found to assess progress and to assess the amount of effort that has been put into achieving goals. Goal setting is a difficult, demanding and challenging exercise. Achieving goals demands hard work on the part of the client, and this will also help to solve the problem.

13.2 GROUP INTERVIEWS

Group counselling involves a group of people who cooperate under the leadership of the counsellor in an attempt to solve personal and/or interpersonal problems. It is generally accepted that people are group-oriented and find it pleasant to function in a group context. Group counselling takes advantage of this pleasant natural tendency.

Group counselling makes each client realise that he or she is not the only one with a particular problem. It provides a measure of psychological relief and also helps the person to see that the problem can be solved. When clients interact they gain a better understanding of themselves and other people.

Group counselling takes place against the background of perceptions of real life as seen by various groups, like families, schools, clubs and ethnic and national groups. The group provides the support and feedback which are necessary for effective counselling. Each individual is given the opportunity to demonstrate how he or she behaves and determine what impact this will have on other people. At the same time people learn how to tackle their problems. Groups can play an important part in influencing behaviour in a variety of dimensions, such as growth, the learning of behaviour patterns, taking over styles or values, career development and social adaptability.

Group counselling recognises the influence of other people on individuals. We interact with one another and influence each other in the process. The nature of our interaction with people makes an accurate and objective analysis of our behaviour possible. This is what group counselling tries to achieve. The group could be regarded as a microcosm of society in the sense that the way a person behaves in a group is a reflection of how he or she will behave in society.

Group counselling is not beneficial to all clients. Some clients see individual

counselling as more suited to their needs. The following kinds of people are likely to benefit most from group counselling:

- people who have no particular problem, but would like to enrich their personal development
- abused women
- people who are shy or aggressive when interacting with others
- people who find it difficult to make friends or to keep friends
- people who need to learn to control their tempers
- people who find it difficult to get on with their peer group, or their parents, educators, bosses or other authority figures

Group counselling may not be suitable for the following types of clients:

- people with intimate personal or interpersonal problems
- people who dread social interaction
- people who are not very tolerant and would probably be traumatised by a group
- impulsive people who might disrupt the group
- those who do not feel at ease with other people

Individual counselling is recommended in all these cases and would probably be more effective. Group counselling could follow as the individual starts to show more confidence and control.

Group counselling has the following inherent weaknesses:

- Some clients have personalities and needs that might not be suited to a group context.
- It may be impossible to go into an individual's problems in sufficient depth in a group.
- A client may tend to disclose more than is necessary.
- In some interactions confidentiality may be a problem.
- It is not possible to give sufficient attention to a client's problems.
- Some clients may find it difficult to trust other clients when they want to discuss personal matters.
- There may be pressure to conform, which could well be counterproductive for group counselling.

While individual counselling is the usual method at school and in other situations, it is clear that group counselling can be effective both in the classroom and for the whole school. Many interesting topics arise at schools, including relationships between learners, and between educators and learners, study habits, success or failure at school, career decisions, friends, learners and their parents, learners in the community, and the choice of courses and job opportunities. Learners, educators and school principals can learn through counselling how to adapt to their environments.

14 IN CONCLUSION

In this section we defined interviews and looked at the various kinds of interviews, namely:

- the direct (structured) approach
- the indirect (unstructured) approach
- the combined approach

We discussed the following types of interviews:

- exploratory
- historicity
- counselling
- information-gathering

We discussed questioning and reflection techniques and gave you a few opportunities to practise them.

We concluded by looking at the structure of individual and group interviews.

Enjoy your studies and make a difference, in terms of newly acquired skills, attitudes and knowledge to the life/ves of (a) learner(s)!

Good luck!

Dr FH Weeks

"STOCKTAKING" ACTIVITY — POSTTEST

Since this module focuses on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that you will acquire by "becoming" like the learner, by living empathically with him or her, it is necessary to do a pretest at the beginning of your studies and a posttest after completing them so that you can determine whether you have grown in knowledge and skill and whether your attitudes have changed.

- **KNOWLEDGE**

Use the space below to write down briefly what you know about learners with special educational needs.

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In the table below, fill in (i) the knowledge you think you would require to better understand and accompany a learner who is experiencing barriers to learning and (ii) indicate which parts of this knowledge you still have to acquire, as well as (iii) the ways in which you will acquire this knowledge.

TABLE 1

What knowledge is required?	*What knowledge has still to be acquired?*	*How should this knowledge be acquired?*
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
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- **ATTITUDES**

Write down (a) how you have always felt about these learners and how you have treated them and (b) what factors determined your attitude.

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What do you think the attitude of the ''ideal teacher'' should be?

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- **SKILLS**

Make a list of all the skills you think you already have and give a brief example opposite each one of how you used the particular skill in dealing with a learner, as well as indicating by means of a tick or a cross whether the outcome of the use of this skill was successful.

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What skills do you think an ''expert'' teacher should have?

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