

**GUIDELINES FOR AN EFFECTIVE STAFF INDUCTION PROGRAMME AT
A SPECIAL SCHOOL IN GAUTENG: A CASE STUDY**

by

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ABSTRACT

This case study explores the experiences of eight newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed to interpret interview data.

The literature study investigates the phenomenon of staff turnover and includes key literature themes such as adult learning theories of Senge and Vygotski, the life cycle of a teacher, the special school context and problems and needs experienced by beginning teachers.

The key findings of the research were that beginning special education teachers experienced various problems and needs but that, with well planned structured support, these problems could successfully be overcome.

The researcher has developed a set of guidelines, which could be used in developing a staff induction programme, aimed at raising the effectiveness of newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners. This research once again emphasizes the need for a well planned, structured induction programme.

KEY TERMS

Special education; intellectual disability; staff turnover; adult learning; beginner teachers; staff induction guidelines; personal needs; professional needs; beginner teacher needs; beginner teacher problems.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Henrietta and James Harman, for the many years of dedication in being the best parents and for setting the perfect example of how life should be led.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	-	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
HIV	-	Human immunodeficiency virus
ID	-	Intellectual Disability
IEP	-	Individual Education Programmes
IQ	-	Intelligence Quotient
IQMS	-	Integrated Quality Management System
NCSNET	-	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
NCESS	-	National Committee for Support Services

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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

“The most powerful form of learning, the most sophisticated form of staff development, comes not from listening to the good works of others, but from sharing what we know with others.....By reflecting on what we do, by giving it coherence, and by sharing and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning, we learn.” Roland Barth

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Compared to many other occupations, the teaching profession suffers from relatively high annual staff turnover (Achinstein & Athanases 2006:3; Billingsley, Carlson & Klein 2004:333; Xaba 2003:287). Ingersoll and Smith (2003:31) state that a large part of the problem is due to teacher attrition – which is particularly high among teachers in their first few years of service. According to Bartell (2005:3) all beginner teachers experience significant challenges during their induction into the teaching profession. Among the greatest challenges experienced by novice teachers are classroom management, motivation of students, dealing with the individual differences among students, assessing student work, and relations with parents. Some of the key elements confronting beginning teachers are feelings of isolation, disparity between idealistic expectations and classroom reality and lack of support and guidance.

Apart from similar problems experienced by their colleagues in general education new teachers entering special education, are confronted with complex challenges such as individual accommodation and modification for learners, supervision of paraprofessionals, performing or coordinating complex medical procedures and at the same time understanding legal aspects of their service delivery. They find themselves having to work with challenging students in challenging situations (Kennedy & Burnstein 2004:4). According to Claycomb (2000:20), special education teachers are almost twice as likely to leave the teaching profession as general education teachers, and more likely to leave within the first five years of employment. Kozleski, Mainzer and Deshler (2000:1) report that in The United States of America, “four out of every ten special educators entering the field leave special education before their fifth year of teaching”. In the field of special education where the shortage of well-qualified

teachers remains high and the attrition rate exceeds that of general teachers, it brings about its own set of challenges for new teachers (Bartell 2005:4). Teaching in special education is a physically demanding and emotionally draining job (Bartell 2005:14).

In order to address the challenges experienced by novice teachers, support programmes have been developed. Research has proven that there is growing support for induction programmes worldwide and countries such as Scotland, Japan, Switzerland, England, Germany and the United States of America, have mandated induction programmes and include mentoring programmes as a form of support to beginner teachers (Black 2001:46; Feiman-Nemser 2003:25; Rippon & Martin 2003:211). Literature, however, states that, very often, support to beginning teachers is uneven and inadequate (Joiner & Edwards 2008:44; Smith & Ingersoll 2004:681,682). Early adequate support, on the other hand, in the form of mentoring and coaching from veteran colleagues, is of great value for the successful development of new teachers (Feiman-Nemser 2003:1).

It is clear that the shortage of teachers and specifically special education teachers experienced worldwide, needs immediate attention. Whitaker (2001:14) states that “we all need to do whatever we can to provide support to our beginning teachers in order to help them become the best teachers they can be”. Achinstein and Athanases (2006:4) state that “beyond retention, developing the quality of new professionals is paramount”. By doing this the chances of retaining teachers in the field of special education will be increased. In the United States of America, more than 30 states mandate some sort of mentored support for beginner teachers, as policy makers see mentoring as a way to retain teachers. These programmes are applicable to all beginner teachers, and would, therefore, also apply to teachers in special education. The state of Maine has developed the Maine Support Network as a form of support to special education teachers. The support provided includes fall and spring support meetings, a winter retreat, and summer teachers’ academies, providing opportunities for collegial support, forums for problem solving and excellent training opportunities.

In South Africa, teacher shortages have largely been denied and no statistics on special school teacher attrition and retention are available. Therefore, no formal national

instituted induction programmes for beginner teachers exist. Beginner teacher induction remains informal and very much a school-based initiative.

Researchers have found that the early years of teaching form a crucial time in the development of a teacher (Flores & Day 2006:219; Wang, Odell & Schwille 2008:132; Whitaker 2001:1). According to Bartell (2005:5) “the ideas, approaches and practices, learned during these early years, will often be those that the teacher continues to rely upon throughout the teacher’s career”. It is during these first two years that new teachers are shaped and reshaped and their values, beliefs and learning experiences are explored (Flores & Day 2006:219). Yet, very often, this crucial period is characterised by a “sink or swim” or “survival’ approach due to the failure to provide careful support and thoughtful development of teaching expertise over time (Bartell 2005:3,4). According to Black (2001:46), new teachers without mentors often feel they are left to sink or swim, whereas those with mentors often feel they have a lifeboat.

Bartell (2005:4) acknowledges the fact that “the need for well-qualified, highly competent teachers has never been greater”. Research shows that an inspired and informed teacher is the most important school related factor influencing student achievement. It is therefore critical to attend to the matter of how we train and support both new and experienced teachers.

In order to support beginning teachers, preparation programmes have been designed to help teachers understand how to work in a variety of contexts, settings and grade levels. Induction programmes, on the other hand, are needed to introduce teachers into a particular role in a particular setting with a particular group of students and should therefore help teachers understand and be effective in the context in which they work (Bartell 2005:16). It is furthermore important to note that orientation occurs whether an organization plans for it or not. Unfortunately, the result of unplanned orientation is often a confused new employee who is not very productive, will probably make mistakes and is likely to leave the organization within a year (Barbazette 2007:XV). Barbazette (2007:XV) furthermore stresses the importance of a systematic orientation programme, as it builds employee retention.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a serious shortage of qualified special teachers worldwide and soon this will have a major impact on both the availability and quality of special education for children with disabilities (McLeskey, Tyler, Flippin, Saunders 2004). As special education teachers have been consistently in short supply, the United States of America has identified this as a designated shortage teaching area. According to national statistics, the greatest numerical shortages are experienced in schools for children with specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and multiple disabilities (Crutchfield 1997). In South Africa no formal statistics on teacher shortages are available, although in the newspaper article “SA faces critical teacher shortage” the shortage of teachers is confirmed (Marrian 2006). The Mail and Guardian (2007) reported that, according to the South African Teachers’ Union (SAOU), many Gauteng schools are experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers; a fact that was emphatically denied by education authorities. School principals, on the other hand, are experiencing problems in finding suitable teachers. This points to a potential shortage of teachers in South Africa and unless beginner teacher induction receives the necessary attention, the field of special education will soon be plagued by a shortage of qualified teachers.

In the light of the above the research problem is, therefore, formulated as follows:

What are the guidelines for an effective induction programme for beginner teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng, South Africa?

1.3 AIM OF THIS STUDY

Through this study the researcher hopes to shed light on teacher induction in the context of a special school for intellectually disabled children in Gauteng in South Africa, with the ultimate purposes of developing the quality of new special education teachers and reducing attrition early in their careers. The needs and challenges experienced by newly appointed teachers at the school are investigated not only to determine the nature thereof, but in order to establish aspects fundamental in developing a context specific induction programme for newly appointed teachers. With this study the researcher’s focus will be on the needs and concerns of beginner special

education teachers and the kinds of support that could be provided in assisting these beginner teachers with their transition into the school. Through conducting this study, the researcher hopes to assist education authorities and school managers to understand the significance of the induction phenomenon as an integral part of professional development. A better understanding of the induction phenomenon is essential in dealing with the problem of special teacher shortages.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to set guidelines for an effective staff induction programme, which will improve teacher performance and retention, at a school for learners with intellectual disabilities in Gauteng, South Africa.

The findings of this research will assist in compiling a successful induction programme for newly appointed special education teachers within a model of life-long professional development at a school for intellectually disabled learners.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to provide effective, well-planned support programmes as part of professional development for teachers, it is necessary to establish how adults learn. Understanding the ways in which adult learning is optimised will affect the activities planned for an induction programme as part of professional development opportunities. It will furthermore impact the effectiveness of the learning that takes place. According to Trotter (2006:8) “adult development theories provide a framework for understanding how adult learners are different from younger learners”. They also provide insight into devising better professional development programmes, and in this case induction programmes, to meet the needs of teachers at all phases of their careers.

This study will provide an overview on adult learning underpinned by the organisational learning theory of Senge, situativity theory as presented in Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development and drawing on the social constructivist learning theory of Kegan (1998), Mezirow (2000) and Knowles (1984). Literatures on these theories are studied in order to discuss the findings of the research and to shed light on how adults understand personal and professional learning.

According to Senge (1990:3), learning organisations are: “organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together”. For organisations to be successful, they have to be “concerned with a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their own reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future” (Senge 1990:69). It is, therefore, necessary for organisations to discover how to draw on people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels, and to ensure that structures for reflection and engagement are in place. The “team” and “being part of a team” adds to the meaningfulness of the learning experience (Senge 1990:236). In creating true learning organisations, the leader plays an integral role. Senge views leaders as designers, stewards and teachers.

The following principles of adult learning are derived from social constructive development theories (Abdullah 2008; Knowles 1980; Lieb 1991):

- Adult learning is presented as an autonomous and self-directed process. It has the understanding that learners build knowledge structures in their minds rather than have the knowledge implanted by the teacher. The learners are perceived as active participants to the process of learning - a process whereby the learner (in this case the teacher) gains knowledge, skills and attitudes through the interpretation of personal experiences.
- Constructivism has the understanding that adults have accumulated a foundation of *life experiences* and *knowledge* that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. Chalmers and Keown (2006:148) further support this fact by stating that adult learners build new knowledge and understanding from their base of existing knowledge and perceptions.
- Adult learning is *goal-oriented*. Adult learners need to know what goal they want to attain. Therefore, they appreciate an educational programme that is organized and has clearly defined elements. Adults are *relevancy-oriented*.

They must see a reason for learning something. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them.

- Adults are *practical*, focusing on the aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work. They may not be interested in knowledge for its own sake. Instructors must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them in their profession.

As do all learners, adults need to be shown *respect*. Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class. They also need time and opportunities to test new ideas (Phillips 2008:2).

Furthermore, constructive-developmentalists believe that humans grow and change over time and as they grow and change people make meaning. According to them cognitive, moral and social development, unlike physical development, is not a matter of simply waiting for nature to take its course (Berger 2006). Social constructivism, in addition to constructivism, acknowledges the importance of the role of others and of the dialogue with them in exploring, explaining and validating one's own knowledge (van Lakerveld 2005:2).

Another ingredient of constructivist teaching involves the opportunity of students to have social discourse and interaction. In discussing constructivism it would be necessary to make reference to Vygotsky (1978), the famous learning theorist who suggested that cognitive development depends on the student's social interaction with others.

The current focus on induction programmes in Australia, links to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory. According to Vygotsky's situativity approach, the most effective professional development is situated in a particular school, team or community of shared understanding. The situativity theory emphasises learning as being connected to the situation, with the individual cognition and meaning being socially and culturally constructed. Owen (2004:4) states that the situativity theory

involves social interaction and includes learning from observing individuals, sharing ideas through oral and written language, and engaging in practical tasks such as analysing student tasks. Owen (2004:3) states that “in the new view of professional development, teachers are engaged in professional learning every day, all day long”. It depicts the school as the classroom. It is embedded in the assignments and analysis that teachers perform every day as they continually draw understanding about their performance from student performance. Teachers learn together. They solve problems in teams or as a whole faculty because every teacher feels responsible for the success of every student in the school community. Rather than looking only outside of the school for expertise, teachers build it within their own environment, becoming avid seekers of research and best practices that will help themselves and others.

Research confirms that learning can be viewed from three levels, namely organisational, group and individual (Marsick & Watkins, 2001, 2003a). According to Berg and Chyung (2008), all three levels of learning contribute to the success of a learning organisation. Although individual learning forms the first level of a learning organisation, it is not a requirement for collective learning in an organisation, nor the development of organisations (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2005; Roth & Lee 2007; Small & Irvine 2006).

Arising from the above theoretical standpoints, teacher development should be seen in three dimensions: professional knowledge and skills dimension, social dimension and personal dimension. According to Eisenschmidt (2006:2), the processes supporting the development occur simultaneously in three dimensions: developing teaching competences, socialization and developing professional identity. This development takes place in the school setting and is influenced by the processes within an organization.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A literature study on induction programmes, the life cycle of teachers and the challenges and needs experienced by beginner teachers was undertaken in order to understand the most effective way of learning. Furthermore, the researcher focused on

induction programmes, and their formally structured components, as part of continuous professional development. These components include teacher mentoring, peer coaching and study groups. The advantages of these support structures were briefly described. The researcher also touched on the role of the principal in induction as well as the influence of the school culture on induction.

The literature study was undertaken in order to develop guidelines for an induction programme as a form of support to newly appointed teacher at a school for learners with special educational needs. Primary and secondary literature sources consulted, include staff retention statistics, journal articles, books, papers presented at conferences and internet data from world wide websites for education.

A qualitative mode of inquiry has been followed to ascertain how the newly appointed teachers made sense out of the barriers they experienced in their work environment. Using the qualitative approach would allow the researcher to supplement and reorient the understanding of the complexity of teaching at a special school. In order to provide a proper understanding of the research problem the qualitative results would be presented as a case study. Mouton (2006:149) defines a case study as “studies that are usually qualitative in nature and that aim to provide an in-depth description of a small number of cases”. The exploration and description of the case will take place through detailed in-depth data collection methods, involving multiple sources of information that are rich in context (Fouché 2007:272). An intrinsic case study would be used as it was focused on the aim of gaining a better understanding of the individual case, in this instance a school for intellectually disabled learners (Fouché 2007:272).

This study was of a qualitative, phenomenological, exploratory and descriptive nature: The researcher focuses on constructing meaning rather than outcomes, through exploring and describing the phenomenon of induction. The researcher relies on the inductive mode of the scientific method in seeking to discover patterns without preconceived ideas. A holistic approach is furthermore followed with the focus on the case as a unit. As the researcher is seeking to construct meaning in the setting of a special school, the study could be seen as interpretative and contextual (Babbie & Mouton 2007:282,283; Babbie 2007:54,89; Johnson & Christensen 2008:49). This

qualitative research was of a phenomenological nature as the researcher was going to the phenomenon itself “making sense” out of informants’ perceptions. It could furthermore be considered as hermeneutical (understanding and interpreting the experiences of the participants), naturalistic (giving a true reflection of the participant’s situation) and constructivist (with the emphasis on the participant constructing the conceptualizations) (Babbie 2007:293; Babbie & Mouton 2007:30).

1.5.1 Sampling

Convenient, selective sampling was used for this case study. In this study a non-probability sampling technique namely purposeful sampling was used. The researcher purposefully and consciously selected information-rich participants who were able to give information on the phenomenon under study. Eight newly appointed, experienced teachers transferred from other schools, teachers on internal and external promotion, and substitute teachers were selected as “information rich cases” which enabled the researcher to learn more about the focus of the study. Their ages differed from 27 to 63 years and they were representative of diverse, language, race, socio-economic groups as well as qualifications and years of teaching experience. Although all of the participants have been newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually handicapped learners, none of them were first year teachers. The more specific selection criteria included the following:

- The teacher must still be employed at the school.
- The teacher must have had less than 4 years of service at the particular school.
- The teacher must have a formal teaching qualification.

This study was conducted in the context of a Government Public Special School which caters for intellectually disabled learners, ranging from the age of three up to the age of 18 years. The school was established in 1972 with six learners – an initiative of a group of parents who believed that with the right education their children could be educated to live a meaningful and dignified life. Many of the learners at the school have multiple disabilities such as physical disabilities, Autism spectrum disorders and behavioural disorders. The staff complement is 58 staff members of which 26 are teachers, five are therapists, one school nurse, three care givers (unqualified teachers) and 27 class and administrative assistants. Although the school is situated in an affluent area, it is

attended by 292 children from all walks of life. About 96% of all the learners are transported to school by means of a fleet of 18 buses on a daily basis. The school is a multicultural school with good representation from all cultural groups in South Africa.

1.5.2 Data collection

The researcher made use of a phenomenological approach in order to understand the lived experiences of the newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng. The researcher endeavours to reveal how the participants make sense of their everyday world (Babbie 2007:295). During this study in-depth phenomenological semi-structured, individual, personal interviews will be scheduled and conducted after working hours with newly appointed teachers (beginner and experienced) in order to identify the barriers experienced in the workplace as well as identifying the most effective ways of assisting newly appointed teachers. Qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to enter into the inner world of the participants in order to gain an understanding of their perspectives (Johnson & Christensen 2008:207). It allows the researcher to understand the meaning construction processes of the eight newly appointed staff members who participated in the study (Babbie & Mouton 2007:291). An interview guide approach, consisting of fourteen open-ended questions, will be used. The interview schedule will be compiled in advance by the researcher. By producing the schedule beforehand the researcher can consider difficulties that might be encountered during the interviewing process (Greeff 2007:296). It will furthermore assist in generating useful questions with appropriate content in order to collect information rich data. The interviews will be conducted in the preferred language of the participants, recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed. The role taken on by the researcher in this study, will be that of the research instrument, who will facilitate the discussion, pose the research questions and create an atmosphere of trust in which the participants will be encouraged to speak freely about their experiences as newly appointed staff members at a school for intellectually handicapped learners (Johnson & Christensen 2008:207).

1.5.2.1 Data analysis

De Vos (2007:333) describes data analyses as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. The analysis of the interviews will be

ongoing, interactive, and developing throughout the research process. The researcher will ensure that the process of sample generation and analysis take place until saturation is reached (Cohen & Crabtree 2006). The data analysis for this study will involve the verbatim transcription of the recorded interviews. Thereafter the transcribed data from the interviews and field notes will be by means of a software tool for qualitative data analysis, “Hyperresearch” (www.researchware.com). The transcribed interviews will be coded to derive themes and categories which form the basis of the research. Supplementary information which has been gathered by means of informal conversation with the deputy principal, Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) documents and class visit reports, will be dealt with in the same way.

1.5.2.2 Triangulation

According to Golafshani (2003:604), triangulation could be seen as “a step taken by researchers to involve several investigators or peer researchers’ interpretation of the data at different time or location.” This will improve the analysis and understanding of construction of others.

In this research triangulation of the raw data will be done in the following manner:

- Reports generated by observing the participants in the class situation.
- Ongoing discussion with the deputy principal which culminated in in-depth discussions.
- The researcher’s own experiences as a newly appointed principal at the research school.
- Information contained in the completed IQMS documents of the participants.
- Data from a variety of literature sources that specifically deals with the phenomenon of induction.

1.5.3 Ethical considerations

According to Mouton (2006:238,239), “the ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research” and that in the search for truth, the researcher’s conduct must conform to generally accepted norms and values. As this case study is conducted in one of the spheres of human life, the researcher has to ensure

that it is conducted in a morally acceptable way. The researcher has to adhere to a set of ethical principles guiding the researcher in conducting the study. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:103), the researcher has to guard against the “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or reporting research results”. As ethical issues arise from our interaction with other people, or other beings and the environment, the scientist must be aware of his/her obligations and responsibilities in conducting the research. Strydom (2007:69) defines ethics as “a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for, and behavioural expectations of, the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students”. The treatment of the research participants is a basic issue that the researcher has to be aware of. The rights of the participants must be guaranteed and the research must be free of harm. The researcher will obtain consent from the participants, after having informed them of the purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, alternative procedures and limits of confidentiality of the study. The researcher will strictly adhere to the following ethical principles in doing the research, namely: confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, prior informed consent of participants and the principle of full disclosure of information about the research (Strydom 2007:56-69).

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.6.1 Professional development

Proposed Amendments to Section 9101 (34) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 defines professional development as “a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement”. According to literature, professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development could furthermore be defined as the process of increasing the professional capabilities of staff by providing (or providing access to) training and educational opportunities. The activities may include on-the-job training, outside training, or observation of the work of others, individual development, continuing education, and in-service education, as well as curriculum writing, peer collaboration, study groups, and peer coaching or mentoring. Throughout the literature, professional development is

also referred to as “staff development,” “professional learning,” “in service training” and “continuing learning”. Professional development includes all formal and informal learning aimed at the improvement of an individual’s own practice. It comprises of two interconnected aspects namely occupational role development and personal development with the ultimate aim of individual and school improvement (Bubb & Early 2007:3). According to Bubb and Early (2007:3), professional development must be an on-going process building upon initial teacher training and induction, including development and training opportunities throughout a career.

1.6.2 Novice teacher

According to Sweeny (2008:2), beginning teachers could be defined as those brand new (newly qualified) teachers, who have little or no previous paid experience as a teacher. In the literature study, terms such as new teacher, novice teacher, beginner teacher, neophyte and newly qualified teacher are used interchangeably (Ingersol & Smith 2004:28.29; Boyer 2005; Steyn & Schulze 2005:238; Wong 2003). These concepts differ from author to author. Some authors describe novice teachers as newly qualified teachers or teachers with no or less than two years of service (Heyns 2000:161). Other authors go beyond these categories and include experienced teachers transferred from other schools, teachers on internal and external promotion, and substitute teachers (Dube 2008:11). For the purpose of this study the latter definition will be used.

1.6.3 Intellectual disability

Intellectual disability is among the disorders first diagnosed in infancy, childhood or adolescence and affects education. Intellectual impairment manifests before age 18 and is characterised by an intelligence quotient (IQ) of 70 or below. Landsberg (2005:381) defines mental retardation as a substantial limitation in present functioning which is characterised by significantly sub-average intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the applicable adaptable skills areas such as communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure and work.

1.6.4 Induction programme

Induction could be seen as the process of preparing, supporting and retaining new teachers (Wong 2003:43). It includes all the activities and processes necessary to successfully induct a novice teacher into the profession in order to develop a skilled professional (Sweeny 2008:2). In the United States of America, induction is referred to as orientation. Although various definitions exist on the concept of induction, an element central to all these definitions is that induction programmes are aimed at assisting a new employee in becoming a fully productive member of the organisation's workforce. In this study the terms; induction programmes, orientation programmes and support programmes are used inter-changeably.

1.6.5 Mentoring

The basic concept of mentoring is the pairing of an experienced teacher with a beginning teacher in order to provide the beginning teacher with support and encouragement. The experienced teacher acts as role model, and through coaching helps the newly appointed teacher develop his or her competencies, self-esteem and sense of professionalism (Rebore 2007:161). Diaz-Maggioli (2004:48) defines mentoring as a process of mutual growth, during which mentor and mentee engage in cycles of active learning that result in enhancement of practice and empowerment of those involved. Although a literature review reveals numerous expressions such as coaches, tutors and facilitators associated with mentoring, the common thread that binds the definitions of mentoring is the acceptance that mentoring is a form of learning involving a minimum of two people in such a relationship.

1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study on staff induction as a component of professional development for teachers. It includes the problem statement (section 1.2) and the aim of the study (section 1.3). A brief outline of the research design is given and the key concepts that will be used in the study are explained.

Chapter 2 presents a literature study in which a discussion on staff induction leads the reader to a better understanding of the problem statement and previous work done in

the field of staff induction. The benefits of an effective staff induction programme are pointed out, types of suitable staff induction models are mentioned and various staff induction strategies, that have implications for employers and teachers, are discussed.

Chapter 3 gives a complete explanation of the qualitative research design. The sample population and participants are discussed, as well as the procedure of the research. The chapter concludes with the data collection strategies, ethical procedures and data analysis.

Chapter 4 gives an exposition of the findings, based on the interviews using a qualitative research methodology.

Chapter 5 comprises a summary of the findings and conclusions. The limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations are made for principals, colleagues, novices and future researchers.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as an orientation to this study. Nationally generated data points to a serious shortage of special education teachers and the ensuing possibility of a threat to providing a quality education to learners with special educational needs. There are many reasons for attaching significance to the problem. One of these reasons is the lack of well designed staff induction programmes, resulting in the failure to provide the necessary support to newly appointed staff members.

The aim of the research was to investigate the following research question: What are the guidelines for an effective induction programme for beginner teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng, South Africa? A qualitative study, with a descriptive, explorative, subjective and contextual research design was chosen, using a phenomenological approach to data collection. An inductive approach was found to be the most appropriate as it enabled an in-depth investigation into the matter.

In the next chapter the focus will be on teaching in the context of special education and the problems and needs experienced by beginning teachers on entry into their new schools. A literature review will be conducted in order to investigate previous research conducted on the topic being addressed by the researcher.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Concerns about teacher turnover and attrition are widely reported as a global phenomenon (Xaba 2003; Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu & Peske 2001; Flores & Day 2006; Billingsley, Carlson & Klein 2004; Feiman-Nemser 2003). This phenomenon poses a challenge to the education system as it has an impact on teacher shortages, costs in training and recruitment of teachers, disruption of programmes and continuity, and in the end on learner performance (Xaba 2003:287). Teachers leaving the profession within the first five years of their careers pose an even greater challenge to the quality of education provided (Whitaker 2001:1; Billingsley et al. 2004:333).

Many reasons could be given for high teacher turnover. Amongst these are poor working conditions, ageing teaching workforce and the possible retirement thereof, low salaries and demands for even more complex teaching abilities. Furthermore, inadequate induction programmes, poor working conditions and a growing salary gap between teachers and other graduates could be seen as reasons for high turnover especially among teachers leaving within the first five years of being in the profession (Borsuk, 2001:1; Chaika 2000:1; Billingsley et al. 2004:333). In sub-Saharan countries, the growing HIV/AIDS crisis in the teaching profession is a further cause for concern. Premature teacher deaths and early retirement, due to HIV/AIDS, are additional reasons for the high teacher turnover (Santiago 2001).

To ensure quality education delivery for the future, education authorities need to acknowledge the fact that South Africa, like most other countries in the world, is experiencing a problem with teacher retention and attrition. Teacher turnover and retention strategies need to be investigated in order to address the emerging phenomenon of teacher turnover in South Africa, as globally, “the need for well-qualified, highly competent teachers has never been greater” (Bartell 2005:4).

Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu and Peske (2001:3) confirm that although “states and districts can assume responsibility for increasing pay, reducing or altering entry requirements, or creating career ladders, such initiatives will ultimately make little difference if a teacher is dissatisfied with teaching.” They identify the school, rather than the district, as the key factor influencing new teachers’ experiences, therefore induction efforts should be centered at schools. The benefits of school-based support efforts are not limited to novice teacher induction as they provide renewal for experienced teachers and form the foundation for school-wide improvement (Johnson et al. 2001:4).

The support could be in the form of preparation programmes and induction programmes. Preparation programmes are designed to help teachers understand how to work in a variety of contexts, settings and grade levels; whereas induction programmes on the other hand are needed to introduce teachers into a particular role in a particular setting, with a particular group of students, and should therefore help teachers understand and be effective in the context in which they work (Bartell 2005:4).

In designing these support programmes, it is necessary to remember that people crave connection and therefore they want more than just a job (Wong 2004:42). They want to belong to a group and want to make a difference through making contributions. Wong (2004:42) is of the opinion that belonging, as a basic need, is the key to keeping skilled teachers. New teachers want to be part of a team and part of a culture, therefore the induction process should provide the relationship and support teachers need in order to become part of a team. Support programmes should be built on sustained professional development within a learning community in which new and veteran teachers are treated with respect. These learning organizations should, furthermore, value the contributions of the novice teachers. If learning organisations such as these could be established, the teachers working in these collaborative cultures will be more likely to develop and demonstrate positive attitudes towards teaching (Flores & Day 2006:230; Wong 2004:41). It is through structured, sustained, intensive professional development programmes that good teachers are kept (Wong 2004:43). Structured support in the form of letting new teachers observe others, or to be observed by others, and to be part

of networks or study groups, where all teachers learn and share together, is critical in retaining special education teachers (Whitaker 2001:9, 15).

In order to develop structured induction programmes which meet these particular needs, an understanding of the context of special education is paramount. According to Billingsley et al. (2004:333) “careful attention to the working conditions and the induction of early career special teachers is needed to build a committed and qualified teaching force”.

In the following section the researcher will focus on the context of special education in South Africa, with specific reference to working conditions in a special school. In gaining knowledge of the unique nature of special education this may lead to a better understanding of the complex nature of the field of special education and the influence this may have on beginning teachers’ induction to teaching in a special school.

2.2 BACKGROUND ON SPECIAL EDUCATION IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.2.1 Special education and legislation

In South Africa, the Van Wyk Report of 1967 was a landmark in the education of children with intellectual disability (ID) (Molteno 2006:iii). According to the report, children with an intelligence quotient (IQ) below 50 were entitled to state-supported training if they were able to benefit from it. Initially, provision was only made for white children, but later on the recommendations included other racial groups. Classification of ID children as ‘educable’, ‘trainable’ and ‘ineducable/untrainable’ came into common usage after the publication of the report. This brought about stigmatisation and many of the so-called ‘untrainable’ persons were excluded from education department funding (Molteno 2006:iii).

In 1994 the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education was published, following a world conference held in Spain in June that year

(Molteno 2006:iii). Following this statement the Department of Education White Paper number one, on Education and Training, was released in South Africa in 1995 (Consultative Paper No 1 on Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, First Steps 1999). This document acknowledged the importance of providing a proposal to the unsatisfactory educational experiences of learners with special education needs in South Africa. In a combined effort from the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Support Services (NCESS), a public discussion document was launched in August 1997 to bring out submissions on the preliminary findings (Laauwen 2004:2). These recommendations culminated in an education policy in September 2001; Educational White Paper 6 (Laauwen 2004:2). The need for a programme to address learning difficulties within an inclusive education system was identified.

The Constitution of South Africa Act (108 of 1996) states in Section 29 (1) that everyone has the right to a basic education. In Section 9 (2) the state commits to the achievement of equality and in Section 9 (4 and 5) to non-discrimination. These sections guarantee the protection of all learners, including those who are disabled, emphasizing the right to education of every individual, as reflected in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The need for regular schools with an orientation towards inclusion was established. The belief is that it will make valuable contributions to an inclusive society. This led to the implementation of inclusive education in most countries.

One of the guiding documents for the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa is Education White Paper 6 (Department of National Education 2001). Molteno (2006:iii) states that although South Africa has followed in policy, the practical implementation has been slow, as for example, many children with intellectual disabilities (ID) in South Africa do not attend school and those within the severe and profound (special care) category of ID are excluded from Department of Education funding. The conclusion could therefore be made that the implementation of inclusive education in the South African context has been poorly planned and resourced.

2.2.2 Working conditions in special education

Teaching at a special school requires “highly individualized and goal-directed instruction” (Olivier & Williams 2005:1). Olivier and Williams (2005:1) furthermore point out that the teachers of learners with special educational needs have to be mentally and emotionally prepared in order to provide adequate support to the learners, as the handicapped learners require much more than ordinary educational teaching and assistance. Special education teachers “spend more time each day working physically or mentally than in any other activity” (Kazimi 2007:87).

Olivier and Williams (2005:7-11) identify the following categories contributing to the challenging nature of special education:

- *Different levels of intellectual ability* – Apart from the different levels of ability in one class, some intellectually handicapped learners are multi-handicapped. The disabilities experienced could range from physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, visual deficiencies, blindness, to Autism spectrum disabilities and behavioural disabilities. The teacher of an intellectually handicapped child cannot simply follow a fixed and prescribed curriculum, because he/she constantly has to adapt to the specific and unique special needs of the individual child. Therefore people who work with special children have to spend more time on planning suitable activities for their learners.
- *Different languages*: Effective communication is hampered by the fact that often the learners are not fluent in the language of instruction, which may also not be their mother tongue. Furthermore, many of the learners are non-verbal and alternative methods of communication such as sign language and alternative and augmentative communication have to be used.
- *Discipline*: The tendency of intellectually handicapped learners to be restless, moody and sensitive, makes the maintenance of good discipline a challenge. Kazimi (2007:87) also supports this fact by stating that dealing with different behavioural problems produces mental tension for teachers.
- *Role overload*: Very often the special education teacher has to assume the roles of class assistant, nurse, social worker and therapist.

- *Stigma attached to special education:* Very often special education teachers feel that colleagues from mainstream schools look down on them due to the low academic status of the school.

The fact that special education causes a lot of stress is acknowledged by Kazimi (2007:87). Special education teachers very often feel drained and experience emotions of guilt, anger and irritation. This could have an impact on the teachers' health and family life. Kazimi (2007:91) furthermore elaborates by indicating that parental pressure and parental disinterest are important stress factors in the teaching of special education learners. Parental involvement remains a challenge in special schools. Some parents are over protective and others stand impartial and depend on the school to take on some of their responsibilities as primary teachers of the children.

In an audio recording of the meeting: "Briefing by the department of education on access to education for children with special needs" (Newhoudt-Druchen 2008:3,4) the following issues, regarding special education in South African schools, were raised:

- *Inadequate and/or shortages of assistive devices:* In meeting the specialized educational needs of the learners, it often requires assistive device. Schools do not always have the resources to deal with the needs of the learners. Kazimi (2007:91) also supports this view and explains how the lack of resources creates stress for the special education teacher.
- *Limited access to special education:* Access to special education schools is very limited and most special schools have long waiting lists. Apart from the fact that special schools are far outnumbered by mainstream schools, it often happens that the quality of learning and teaching at these schools is not always of an acceptable standard to parents (they do not always have a choice between schools). The fact that some special school teachers lack adequate training contributes to their inability, for example, to use sign language or read Braille. This has an impact on the quality of teaching and learning at special schools.
- In comparison to main stream schools there are not that many special schools and this brings about transporting challenges to parents as well as schools.

- *Scarcity of para-professionals* such as therapists, medical staff, psychologists and social workers often brings about that, although schools have been allocated substantive posts for these categories of staff, the posts remain vacant. The inequality in salary structures of the various categories of professional staff (education and health) makes it difficult to find suitable candidates to fill these posts. Special schools do not always have their full complement of staff and access to the support services is needed – a fact which could be confirmed by all special school principals.

Apart from the problems mentioned above, the socio-economic climate of the country is also mentioned as a challenging factor for special schools and the parents of learners with special educational needs. Olivier and Williams (2005:10) indicate that special schools rely heavily on money raised from the community within which the school is located. This is the case due to the fact that special education is very expensive. In order to meet the educational needs of the learners, the school very often has to rely on fundraising methods to supplement funds. In South Africa, funding for special educational needs has, since 1994, taken a back seat to education reforms. As there are no national funding norms for special education in South Africa it has led to wide disparities in funding and inequality (South Africa: Organisation and control of education system 2009).

Furthermore, there is a perceived inability of education authorities to acknowledge the different special school contexts and their unique features. Very often a general approach to teaching is followed and systems, curriculum programmes, legislation and forms are devised, based on a “one-size fits all” or “blanket” model. Therefore special education schools constantly have to adapt systems and forms to suit the specialized needs of the particular school context. In South Africa there is no specific national curriculum for special schools (intellectually disabled). One curriculum has been designed for all South African learners and therefore the national curriculum statements have to be implemented by all schools. The 2001 Education White Paper 6 on inclusive education was designed to address the needs of all learners in one undivided education system. Within the guidelines of White Paper 6, all schools are permitted to offer the same curriculum to learners, while simultaneously ensuring variations in mode of

delivery and assessment processes in order to accommodate all learners (Education around the world, 2009). Special schools are left to “feel their way” in designing a “custom made” curriculum, focusing on what they believe is important in educating learners with special needs. All of the above mentioned issues contribute to the complex nature of special education.

To further ensure a better understanding of special education and in particular the teaching of the intellectually disabled, a review of literature on the classification of intellectual disabilities is instrumental. It will ensure an in-depth understanding of the special education context and further provide useful information on the concept of intellectual disability.

2.2.3 Classification of intellectual disabilities

The diagnostic criteria for intellectual disability used by the World Health Organisation and the American Association on Mental Retardation include three requirements, all of which must be met (Cole 2007:2).

1. Significant impairment in intellectual functioning as indicated by a scale score of 75 or lower on an internationally recognized and professionally administered IQ test.
2. Significant limitations in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. The skills referred to include: communication, self-care, self-direction, and social/interpersonal skills. Limitations in adaptive behaviour affect both daily life and the ability to respond to life changes and environmental demands. Significant limitations in adaptive behaviour are established through the use of standardised measures that have been norm-referenced on the general population including people with disabilities. Examples of these standardised measures are Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales and the AAMR Adaptive Behaviour Scales.
3. Intellectual disability must be evident during the developmental period, which is from conception to 18 years of age.

The above criteria are recognized internationally by professional organizations such as the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disability and the American Psychological Association. With the necessary understanding of special education and in particular intellectual impairment, a literature review on problems experienced by beginning teachers in general, and especially of teachers in special education, will ensure the necessary understanding of the needs of beginning teachers.

2.3 PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY BEGINNER TEACHERS

Literature documents the extent to which beginning teachers struggle in their early classroom years (Billingsley et al 2004:334; Olivier & Williams 2005:1; Feiman-Nemser 2003:2; Joiner & Edwards 2008:44). Researchers' reviews of perceived problems among beginning teachers show remarkable consistency, both across time and differently structured education systems. It furthermore is a known fact that when veteran teachers take up a teaching post in another district, school or classroom, they deal with the same frustrations as new teachers. The transition to a new teaching assignment can leave teachers to feel overwhelmed and discouraged as they are very often left to "figure it out" for themselves. The "reality shock" experienced by the teachers may in the end lead to the teacher leaving the profession (Flores & Day 2006:219; Steyn & Schulze 2005:239).

The first three years in the classroom have been identified as some of the most stressful times in the teaching career of a teacher (Martin, Chiodo & Chang 2001:55). Apart from the unknown, including learners, staff, policies and procedures, norms and traditions, beginning teachers frequently complain about insufficient knowledge and skills (Steyn & Schulze 2005:239; Whitaker 2001:2). Among the greatest challenges experienced by novice teachers are classroom management, motivation of students, dealing with the individual differences among students, assessing student work, and relations with parents. Some of the key elements confronting beginning teachers are feelings of isolation, disparity between idealistic expectations and classroom reality and lack of support and guidance (Steyn & Schulze 2005:239). The particular problems experienced by beginning teachers vary from problems with classroom management, discipline, curriculum and assessment to concerns about meeting student needs (Steyn

& Schulze 2005:240). In the following paragraphs the factors related to the challenges faced by beginning teachers are mentioned (Hough, Erbes, O'Rode, and Terman, (2004:5).

2.3.1 Difficult work assignments and work load

Very often novice teachers are confronted with more responsibilities, the least desirable subjects, the most time-consuming assignments and extra-curricular duties compared to their more experienced colleagues (Whitaker 2001:3; Steyn & Schulze 2004:240). They end up having to absorb the work that the experienced teachers do not want. This leads to negative emotions such as “fear, anxiety, stress and feelings of inadequacy” (Heyns 2000:160).

2.3.2 Inadequate resources

Novice teachers often report on the poor working conditions in schools, such as the lack of resources such as textbooks and teaching materials. The lack of resources has been found to have a major impact on beginner teachers in schools (Steyn 2004:87).

2.3.3 Reality shock

Reality shock refers to the distress experienced by the novice teacher due to inadequate pre-service preparation. They find themselves in a new environment and have to deal with unknown learners, staff, policies, procedures an unknown curriculum and the new traditions in the classroom and school (Whitaker 2001:2). Many teachers do not receive the intrinsic rewards of teaching that they expected early on in their careers. This leads to dissatisfaction and in the end disillusionment, burnout and finally attrition (Billingsley et al. 2004:333).

2.3.4 Teaching practices

Studies report that novice teachers experience significant problems with classroom management, curriculum planning and learner discipline (Flores & Day 2006:227). Apart from finding teaching demanding, novice teachers also find it difficult to apply the skills and knowledge that they learnt in the university setting to the specific context of the classroom and school (Whitaker 2001:2; Flores & Day 2006:226). They express

feelings of inadequacy and complain that pre-service preparation had not prepared them for the actual teaching situation. They need assistance with lesson preparation, teaching methods and assessment, pacing lessons, keeping up with paper work, classroom administration and time for preparing lessons (Steyn & Schulze 2005:239). Novices also experience problems with dealing with slow learners, students of different cultures and backgrounds, and determining the learning levels of students (Whitaker 2001:4).

2.3.5 Expectations

Novices often experience feelings of disillusionment as they are confronted with a gap between the reality of teaching practice and their ideals. Unclear and confusing expectations from principals, colleagues, parents and learners bring about feelings of inadequacy (Steyn & Schulze 2005:239). This loss of the teacher's sense of efficacy has a serious influence on the teacher's well-being and learner achievement (Whitaker 2001:3). Novices highlight the mismatch between their initial beliefs and images about teaching and the actual roles they are expected to perform (Flores & Day 2006:226). Novice teachers enter the teaching profession with a strong service attitude, dedicated to helping students. When these expectations are not met, they experience a sense of failure, which leads to disillusionment (Whitaker 2001:3).

2.3.6 Isolation

New teachers may experience geographic, social and/or professional isolation. The feelings of isolation are brought about by the fact that teachers spend most of the day with learners and have little contact with other adults (Wong 2003:47). Very often close-knit social structures, formed by staff members, bring about social isolation for the newcomer. The novice teacher may find him/herself excluded from these social structures (Steyn & Schulze 2005:239). They experience a lack of support from their colleagues and are afraid to ask for help for fear of appearing incompetent. This lack of support leads to a sense of emotional, social and professional isolation (Whitaker 2001:3).

The field of special education, where shortage of well-qualified teachers remains high and the attrition rate exceeds that of general teachers, brings its own set of challenges for new teachers. Teaching in special education is a physically demanding and

emotionally draining work (Bartell 2005:14). According to Crutchfield (1997:13,14) beginning special education teachers encounter many of the same problems that their general education colleagues do. However, they often experience certain additional needs and concerns specific to special education teachers (Whitaker 2001:5; Griffin, Winn, Otis-Wilborn & Kilgore 2003:12). Apart from the discipline concerns, inadequate and insufficient materials, and parent difficulties, they also have to spend a great deal of time completing required reports, including evaluations and transition plans for students moving out of special education; they must face individual education programmes (IEP) requirements and perhaps have to supervise paraprofessionals. The overwhelmingly varied, individualized and specialised student needs is another source of stress for special education teachers as many children with disabilities have social and emotional needs that go beyond their educational difficulties. Teaching these children can be highly demanding, both physically and mentally. Other frequently mentioned sources of stress are lack of support by administrators, and isolation. If administrators do not understand the roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher, they may fail to recognise the significance of the teacher's challenges and accomplishments. All of the above is frustrating to many special education teachers and creates stress amongst the special education force.

In overcoming the problems faced by newly appointed teachers, it is necessary to establish the particular needs of newly appointed teachers, and methods of assistance available to assist them with the transition process into the new school. Literature focuses on the following aspects forming part of induction programmes: orientation, mentoring programmes, study groups (learning circles), periodic meetings, colleague-to-colleague workshops and peer coaching. Data reveals that induction supports, activities or practices rarely exist in isolation and that the impact of receiving several different types of support had significantly positive effects on teacher retention (Ingersoll & Smith 2004:35). As the value of school-based support programmes (also referred to as induction programmes) outweighs that of recruitment incentives, it is an aspect that should not be neglected (Johnson et al. 2001). An understanding of the needs of newly appointed teachers will assist in designing support programmes addressing the specific needs of the teachers.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING BEGINNER TEACHERS' NEEDS

Knowledge about the needs and experiences of beginning general education teachers has been widely researched for decades and a substantial literature base has been established. On the other hand, the experiences and induction support for beginning special education teachers has only recently received attention (Billingsley et al. 2004:334). According to Heyns (2000:161-162) the many needs experienced by beginning teachers could be categorised as personal and instructional or professional needs.

2.4.1 Personal needs

Personal needs relate to the cultivation of the novice's positive self-esteem, confidence and development of feelings of effectiveness. According to Hargreaves and Fullen (2000:53), emotional support is one of the strongest needs of both new and experienced teachers. Very often new teachers enter the profession with excitement and high expectations about their new career. They want to be accepted by their colleagues and to feel that they are a valuable member of the team (Wong 2004:42). As beginning teachers face challenges in their new school they may begin to question their competence. By providing the much needed emotional support, it will help teachers assimilate into the new school culture and gain confidence in their skills. By providing emotional support and encouragement to insecure teachers this could help them move from personal concerns to addressing the instructional needs of the students. Only when the basic needs of beginning teachers are met, will they be ready to move on to higher needs (Joiner & Edwards 2008:44). According to Joiner & Edwards (2008:44), if beginner teachers are left to survive their first year of teaching, they will create the same environment for incoming teachers. This in the end will create a continuous circle of "sink or swim" which will allow for attrition rates to continue rising.

2.4.2 Professional needs

According to the Alabama Teacher Induction and Mentoring Manual (2004:2), "professional needs of new teachers focus on developing an understanding of school and district policies, procedures, and priorities". These could include formal policies and procedures such as the understanding of the student code of conduct, the evaluation

system, as well as less formal policies such as procedures on how to order supplies and operate the copy machine. Without this type of support, new teachers will lack the knowledge and tools to operate effectively within the school and district.

Instructional needs form part of the professional needs of beginning teachers. Instructional needs may involve the processes of explaining, coaching, and guiding new teachers in classroom organisation and management, lesson planning, student assessment, and curriculum content and methodology. Through addressing instructional needs, novice teachers are assisted in the improvement of their teaching skills which, in turn, promotes greater student achievement.

These personal and professional needs can be met through various mechanisms, and may include formal orientation to the school, workshops, mentoring, informal contact, and sustained professional development opportunities. Some induction programmes specifically address these needs during a one-year period, while others view induction as a multi-year programme with assistance tapering off as proficiency and confidence grows. Most induction programmes are at least two years in length, and some may include a third year if needed.

The nature of support to beginning teachers could therefore be categorized into instructional related support and psychological support. Psychological support relates to the development of a teacher's positive self-esteem, confidence and development of feelings of effectiveness; whereas instructional support refers to supporting novices with the knowledge, skills and strategies necessary for success (Shun-wing 2009:2, 3).

In order to plan for successful structured support which will ensure that teachers' needs are met, an understanding of the career cycle of teachers is imperative. Although the suggested career cycle is influenced by various factors, it will provide essential information needed to create a better understanding of teachers' support needs at the various stages in their career.

2.5 TEACHER CAREER CYCLE

Joeger's (2004) model represents the professional career development of teachers as a non-linear process that occurs within the context and interaction with elements of the personal and organisational environments of a teacher. Personal factors that may have an influence on the career stages include: marriage, birth of a child, life crises such as illness, death, financial loss, or legal problems. Organisational factors having an impact upon career development include: student assessment national policies, levels of public trust in education and the teachers, activities of professional teacher organisations.

Steyn and Schulze (2005:236,237) indicate that individual teachers proceed through eight life-long career stages as identified by Fessler and Christiansen. A model developed by Joerger (2004) suggests that teachers move through these stages in varying ways. They may spend more or less time in a stage depending on personal and or organisational influences. The eight identified stages are (Steyn & Schulze 2005:236,237; Joerger 2004):

- Pre-service: This stage involves educational experience occurring before the teachers initiate their first teaching job.
- Induction: This stage involves the time and activities that occur for the first 1-6 years that lead to complete socialization and acceptance as competent teachers into the profession. During the induction phase the focus of the teachers moves from less attention to self, to more focus upon the needs of the learner and how they can effectively use the subject matter to assist the learner in meeting their goals and capacity.
- Competency building: This stage focuses on the teacher continuing to acquire, experiment with and further refine effective teaching strategies. Teachers in this stage strive to improve their teaching skills. They seek out new methods and eagerly attend workshops and conferences.
- Enthusiasm and growth: Teachers in this phase are enthusiastic about their growth and progress as professionals. Having mastered the required skills, they now seek new ways in which to enrich their teaching. Teachers enjoy the teaching experience and value the impact they have upon student learning. Teachers in this stage are often more involved in their profession.

- Career frustration: This stage could be viewed as the stage of dissatisfaction and disillusionment. During this phase the teacher may experience signs of fatigue and burnout.
- Stability and stagnation: During this stage teachers do only what is expected of them, without any motivation for quality or growth.
- Career wind-down: This phase could be described as “the period of disengagement” when teachers prepare to leave the profession. For some teachers this period may be pleasant, others may experience frustration and discontent with colleagues, learners and parents. This phase could be characterized by gradual withdrawal and rechanneling of energy outside the school.
- Career exit: The career exit stage represents the period of time when the teacher leaves the teaching profession and could be referred to as the time of job retirement.

McCormick and Barnett (2006:2) emphasize that individuals do not necessarily proceed through the identified stages in a linear manner. Due to considerable inter-individual variation in the timing of the stages, teachers can miss stages, revert to “earlier” stages or remain at a single stage during a career. According to McCormick and Barnett (2006:14) stabilisation is likely to be the most positive of the career stages, therefore it would be desirable for teachers to move to this growth phase as quickly as possible and to continue to grow for as long as possible, preferably maintaining this until retirement. They continue by suggesting the possibility that school environments may make some contribution to teachers’ career stage. Therefore, schools and school systems should deliberately engender work environments which nurture teachers’ sense that they are in control of what happens. Environments such as these are likely to be more effective for schools and the teachers who work in them.

Support to newly appointed teachers is of the utmost importance in order to assist them to overcome problems. One of the most successful forms of support is that provided in the form of induction programmes, specially developed for this purpose. A literature study was conducted to provide a better understanding of the nature and purpose of such induction programmes.

2.6 INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

The National Education Association states that an effective induction process is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that supports collaboration and inquiry (Creating A Teacher Induction Program, InSites 2001). The Association further indicates that the induction process enhances teaching skills and promotes professional development.

2.6.1 Evolution of induction programmes

Teacher induction programmes became known in the early 1980's. These teacher support programmes initially concentrated on getting teachers familiar with the “nuts and bolts” of their first teaching assignment (Creating A Teacher Induction Program, InSites 2001). Over the years teacher induction programmes have evolved and have become a critical component of most districts' continuous professional development programmes. Traditionally induction programmes targeted only new teachers, whereas the current leading induction programmes are aimed at addressing both the needs of new teachers and the needs of veteran teachers who have changed grade levels or disciplines, or moved to a new school, district or state and taken up a promotional post (Stansbury & Zimmerman 2000).

Worldwide beginning teacher support programmes, also referred to as teacher induction programmes, have been mandated for schools and districts to meet the challenge of staff turnover and to take advantage of the opportunity it presents. Researchers confirm that such support programmes can improve teacher retention rates by enhancing new teacher satisfaction. More importantly, a well-designed and implemented induction programme can improve practice, helping new teachers apply the theoretical knowledge acquired in their teacher preparation programmes to the complexity of real life teaching.

In order to assist beginning teachers, induction should be conducted at schools and should be context specific. This will enable neophyte teachers to adjust to the specific school culture. Such an induction programme should comprise of developmental growth opportunities aimed at addressing the needs of beginning teachers. According to Johnson et al. (2001:1-5) the success of school-based induction programmes is

determined by how well teachers work together, as well as the role of the principal in establishing norms and facilitating interaction among teachers at various experience levels. Literature supports the benefits of support programmes for both new teachers and veteran teachers in schools (Jones 2002:523; Johnson et al 2001:4).

As modern approaches towards induction programmes are addressing the needs of both beginning teachers and veteran teachers who have moved to new grades, schools, districts or post levels, it is necessary to have an understanding of the various stages in the career cycle of a teacher. Having a better understanding of the stages in the career cycle of teachers will assist in developing effective support programmes for teachers. Knowledge of these stages may assist administrators and experienced teachers in better assisting new teachers as they proceed through their natural development (Martin, Chiodo & Chang 2001: 55).

For induction programmes to be successful, they need to form an integrated part of the education system, rather than a separate entity, “This means that induction programmes should be integral to all aspects of the planning cycle, including the system’s strategic plan, the school’s action plan, and the teachers’ professional growth plans” (Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, 2002:14). Induction programmes should also be sensitive to the emerging needs of the beginner teacher and should furthermore “be tailored to address the true needs of the teachers within and individual school division” (Cherubini, 2007; Joiner & Edwards 2008:45).

2.6.2 Objectives of induction

Many recent studies have focused on the objectives of induction. Darling-Hammond (2003:11) believes that the value and importance of induction programmes should not be underestimated, as they aim at raising retention rates of new teachers by improving attitudes, feelings of efficacy, and instructional skills.

Steyn (2004:84) on the other hand, summarises the following objectives of a staff induction programme. These objectives particularly pertain to teacher induction:

- Orientation: Integrating beginner teachers into the profession.

- Psychological support: Enhancing the personal and professional welfare of beginner teachers.
- Teaching skills: Acquiring and developing the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for the classroom situation.
- Philosophy of education: Developing reflective practice skills and a commitment to continuous professional development.
- Fear and insecurity: Reducing feelings of fear, anxiety, insecurity and stress due to the reality shock.
- Staff turnover: Reducing the turnover which follows when beginner teachers fail to cope and have negative feelings towards the profession.
- Realistic teacher expectations: Assisting teachers in creating realistic expectations of the profession.
- Job satisfaction and a positive attitude towards the school: Creating a supportive school situation which may contribute to teachers' job satisfaction and their motivation.

Wong (2002:52) argues that, although induction programmes differ from school district to school district, they still share certain characteristics. They help new teachers establish effective classroom management procedures, routines, and instructional practices. They develop within the teacher a sensitivity and an understanding of the community as well as their passion for lifelong learning and professional growth. Successful programmes also promote unity and teamwork among the entire learning community (Wong 2002:52).

Bush and Middlewood (2005:142) identifies the main purposes of induction as that of socialisation, enabling the new person to become a contributing member of the organisation and cultivating within the new teacher an appreciation of the core values and beliefs of the institution. For Rebores (2007:156,157) on the other hand, the ultimate purpose of an induction program is to promote quality education for children.

A literature study on the objectives of an induction programme reveals various opinions on this subject. Initially the indicated objectives of an induction programme all seem to be different. However, as the study progressed, it became evident that all these

objectives share common components. In the light of the above, the main objectives of induction are to integrate new members of staff into the school organisation by providing personal and professional support with the ultimate aim of improving learner performance and reduce staff turnover.

Literature confirms that induction programmes do have a positive impact on teacher retention (Davis & Field-Waite 2006). It has also been confirmed that successful induction programmes share certain common features. Knowledge of these key elements could assist in designing a successful induction programme.

2.6.3 Key elements of successful induction programmes

In the publication titled "Successful new employee orientation" Barbazette (2007:1) identifies the following key elements of a successful orientation programme (induction programme): It is well planned, its content is appropriate, clear, and complete; its materials and the roles of its participants are well designed; appropriate activities are used to involve the new employee; the new employee's critical first day is carefully designed; the programme is evaluated and feedback is received from its participants, including the new employee. Induction should be seen as an ongoing process. It should involve a significant element of being self-directed and be viewed as a two-way process (Bush & Middlewood 2005:146). Therefore it is important to note that induction should not be regarded as a "one-time" task but rather an ongoing programme which meets the concerns of newly appointed teachers (Rebore 2007:157). "An effective induction programme is based upon exemplary teaching practices, an understanding of adult and student learning, and a professional environment that supports collaboration and inquiry."

The importance of the involvement of leaders and managers in the induction process is highlighted throughout the literature. According to Bush and Middlewood (2005:145) it is evident that, unless leaders and managers show their belief in the importance of induction, it may be ineffective. It is also important to note that the whole staff should be responsible for inducting a new teacher and that the sole responsibility does not lie with the induction tutor (Bubb & Early 2007:121). Joiner and Edwards (2008:45-48)

identify the following aspects which must be considered when devising an induction programme:

- Tailored induction programme: They emphasise the importance of addressing the “true needs of the teachers within an individual school division” and warn against a “one-size fits all” approach. In order to devise an induction programme that will provide a solution to the attrition rate, an initial evaluation needs to be conducted to determine the reasons for teachers leaving the profession or a particular school.
- Climate and culture: The climate and culture of the school must support the induction activities of mentoring and collaboration.
- Financial and human resource cost: School managers must realise that planning, adapting and implementing a high quality induction programme is a costly exercise, they should therefore carefully consider the needs of their teachers, as well as the best way to spend the money they have to provide quality induction support and activities.

Wong (2004:42) argues that a successful induction programme includes a mentoring component and must be aligned to the district’s vision, mission and structures.

According to Wong (2004:51), successful induction programmes:

- Have networks that create learning communities
- Treat every colleague as a potential valuable contributor
- Turn ownership of learning over to the learners in study groups
- Create learning communities where everyone, new teachers as well as veteran teachers, gain knowledge
- Demonstrate that quality teaching becomes not just an individual responsibility, but a group responsibility as well.

Induction must, furthermore, build on efforts of initial teacher education (Hargreaves & Fullan 2000:55). The most successful teacher induction programmes to be reported on, include opportunities for “experts and neophytes to learn together in a supportive environment promoting time for collaboration, reflection and a gradual acculturation into the profession of teaching” (Howe 2006:295). Collectively, researchers affirm the

benefits of new teachers' support programmes such as mentoring programmes, in-service training and reduced teaching assignments for beginning teachers (Howe 2006; Glassford & Salinitri, 2007; Feiman-Nemser 2003). Regardless of the type of induction support, it should be flexible and address the needs of teachers and the specific context in which they work (Feiman-Nemser 2003:2).

2.6.4 Types of induction programmes

Seyfarth (1996:114) distinguishes between three categories of induction programmes. They are orientation programmes, those aimed at performance improvement and induction programmes for certification. These three programmes will be discussed briefly and where possible the views of other researchers will be included.

2.6.4.1 Orientation programmes

Orientation programmes are aimed at introducing the new teacher to the school and the community. They help new employees to become better acquainted with the community they are going to work in, by providing them with information about the community and the school district (Skinner 2001). Orientation programmes are aimed at providing new teachers with essential information. These programmes are of short duration and the emphasis is on information dissemination. According to Steyn and Schulze (2005:241), the information provided may include a tour of the school, the vision and mission of the school, policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities of the teacher, resources and school activities as well as record keeping. During orientation, the new staff member may be introduced to staff members and have his/her timetable and tasks explained.

2.6.4.2 Performance improvement programmes

Performance improvement programmes aim at improving the instructional effectiveness of beginning teachers. Workshops arranged cover discipline and classroom management procedures, performance assessment procedures, orientation to district curriculum, conversations with subject-area specialists and assistance in preparing a professional development plan. Mentoring programmes are included in this category and this type of programme often continues over a semester or a full year.

2.6.4.3 Induction for certification

This type of programme operates under state mandate and is primarily evaluative in nature, but evaluation is combined with limited assistance. Beginning teachers are required to demonstrate the mastery of specified teaching competencies in order to receive a permanent teaching certificate. An assessment and assistance team is assigned to work with one or more beginning teachers.

2.6.5 Staff induction and the school culture and climate

According to Joiner and Edwards (2008:47), there is a significant correlation between the success of an induction programme and the climate and culture of a school. Perceptions of school culture impact upon the ways in which new teachers learn and develop over time (Flores & Day 2006:229). Lick (2000:45) describes the school culture as the personality of the school. Although school culture is not always visible to outsiders, it remains a strong power that is always present. The school culture sets values and establishes rules for how people think and behave and for what they assume to be important. Apart from being newcomers to the practice of teaching, novices are also newcomers to the culture of the new organisation. According to Feiman-Nemser (2003:5,6), working conditions and school culture influence the character, quality and outcome of a new teacher's early experience on the job. A strong professional culture promotes teacher learning across all experience levels and is essential in helping novice teachers become effective teachers (Feiman-Nemser 2007:3). As job satisfaction has a direct influence on teacher retention, it is therefore necessary for the school culture to support the learning needs of new teachers. In the light of the above discussions, it is evident that if the learning needs of the new professionals are met, it will result in them reaching their full potential, creating job satisfaction; not only will they stay in the profession, but it will also improve student learning.

According to the White Paper prepared by the teacher and principal quality workgroup of the Milwaukee Partnership Academy (2008:1), school-based support is based on the values and beliefs that induction is a function of school climate. Climate refers to the morale or attitude of the organisation (Joiner & Edwards 2008:47). It draws on the resources of the school's administrator, the school's learning team, and the entire staff of the school as having responsibility for welcoming and supporting new teachers and

making their entry into teaching as smooth as possible. Although a new teacher's understanding of the dynamics and influences of a school's culture is essential, it is equally important to cultivate peer relationships between novice and experienced teachers (Gimbert & Fultz 2009). A collegial environment promotes collaborative interaction with coaches, mentors, and grade-level teachers (Glazer & Hannafin 2006). In providing a culture of learning and development, it allows for the continued growth of novice teachers and lowers teacher attrition (Abdallah 2009). Culture and climate do not only determine the success of induction programmes, they also influence the depth at which new teachers implement curriculum models and utilise best instructional practices (Joiner & Edwards 2008:47,48). If the climate and the culture of the school do not support the induction activities, the new teachers will not be successfully socialized into the school organisation (Joiner & Edwards 2008:47).

It is therefore important to acknowledge the influence that the school culture and climate can have on the induction process of the newcomers to the profession. The school's culture and climate are therefore key elements in determining the success of an induction programme.

2.6.6 School principal and induction

Literature emphasises that an effective principal is prerequisite to school improvement. According to Colley (2002:22), principals have three major roles in supporting and retaining novice teachers - that of an instructional leader, culture builder, and mentor coordinator. Each of the four themes will be dealt with in greater detail below:

2.6.6.1 Cultivating relationships

The principal has the responsibility of cultivating a positive relationship with the teaching staff (Johnson & Birkeland 2003). In doing so, it is necessary that the principal be readily available, supporting and empowering teachers (Angelle 2006; Renwick 2007; Richards 2004; Ruder 2005). The support rendered by the principal could take on many forms, such as direct classroom observation, class visits, formal and informal reviews and acknowledgement of the successes of the new teacher (Angelle 2006). In assigning a manageable teaching load and encouraging novices to ask questions, the principal is displaying concern for the novice teacher's needs and valuable relationships

of trust are established (Melton 2007; Menchaca 2003; Walsdorf & Lynn 2002; Bodycott, Walker, & Lee Chi Kin 2001). This could build the confidence of the novice teachers and assist them in progressing through the stages as identified by Mauer and Zimmerman (2000). According to Mauer and Zimmerman (2000), novice teachers progress through an array of emotions, beginning with anticipation and moving through four phases known as survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection. By displaying empathy and supporting the novice teachers, the principals assist teachers in progressing through these phases and simultaneously keep a focus on student success. According to Melton (2007), the engagement in dialogue is necessary for teacher growth. This provides the principal an opportunity to encourage, reinforce, and praise novice teachers (Protheroe, 2006; Spinella, 2003). Principals must, furthermore, assist novice teachers in the understanding of and integration into the environment in which they work. By doing so, the novice teachers become aware of the dynamics of the school culture and identify their ability to function as members of a community (Walsdorf & Lynn 2002).

2.6.6.2 Principal expectations

According to Brock and Grady (2007), novice teachers must know what is expected of them in terms of classroom management, student discipline, documentation of student progress, and the implementation of curriculum and instructional strategies. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the novices know what is expected of them, by informing them of their roles and responsibilities (Melton, 2007). This should be done in a meaningful, clear and informative way to avoid any misinterpretation or misconception (McCann, Johannessen, & Ricca, 2005). When novice teachers have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, and work in a school environment that repeats those expectations continuously, they are more likely to increase their loyalty and take ownership in their specific school (Angelle, 2006; Melton, 2007). If novice teachers are not able to fully understand the roles and responsibilities that their principals expect them to fulfill, it may lead to increased frustration. That frustration can easily lead to dissatisfaction and, ultimately, teacher turnover (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Combined with role definition, ‘highly effective’ principals should provide adequate resources to assist novice teachers’ success in the classroom (Brendle-Corum & Haynes, 2004; McCann, Johannessen & Ricca 2005; Quinn & Andrews, 2004). Novice teachers need access to the resources which facilitate their success in teaching. Effective leaders ensure that novice teachers have equitable access to the resources needed for them to bring purposeful instruction to students. Resources include understanding curriculum standards, having adequate supplies and materials, having easy access to data, and understanding the procedures and policies of the school (Brendle-Corum & Haynes 2004; Quinn & Andrews, 2004).

2.6.6.3 Principal and teacher perceptions

In building new relationships with novice teachers, principals must recognise the importance of perception. By showing a positive attitude and a sense of perceived success for the teacher it will assist in building important professional relationships with the beginning teachers. According to Cheng & Cheung (2004), an effective principal provides services that assist new teachers to develop and sustain skills for successful classroom instruction. According to Melton (2007), encouragement and empowerment has a positive effect on teacher self-image and perception of his/her abilities. It is important to acknowledge that new teachers can enter school systems with preconceived perceptions, negative or positive, which have been shaped by their previous experiences either as a student or parent of a student. Novice teachers must be encouraged to abandon negative or influenced perceptions, which they have built up over the years whilst successful principals on the other hand should recognize these perceptions and provide effective leadership for novice teachers (Melton 2007).

2.6.6.4 Teacher development opportunities

An effective principal will provide comprehensive teacher development opportunities which will promote novice teacher success (Ganser 2002; Johnson & Kardos 2005). The teacher development opportunities could include a strong instructional development programme which addresses classroom management skills, curriculum implementation strategies, lesson planning, modeling of skilled teaching and creation of higher order teaching strategies, as well as a mentoring programme (Black 2004; DePaul 2005; Johnson & Kardos 2002). In providing development opportunities,

principals must acknowledge the individual training needs of novices, the importance of allocating time for them to meet and discuss their development and the importance of providing novice teachers with resources for their personal and professional growth (McCann et al. 2005; Melton 2007; Quinn & Andrews 2004). Principals also have the responsibility of monitoring teacher performance, in order to increase teacher effectiveness. Effective principals furthermore create an environment which is conducive to learning by providing a combination of support structures. These support structures may include mentoring programmes, peer support groups and study groups or learning circles.

2.7 COMPONENTS OF AN INDUCTION PROGRAMME

One of the goals of teacher induction is to provide, through meaningful support programmes, ongoing assistance to those teachers entering the profession, making their transition into the teaching profession less negative and less traumatic. Mentoring programmes have been identified as one of the supports having the greatest impact on teacher retention, provided it is carefully planned and executed.

2.7.1 Mentoring and staff induction

Davis and Waite (2002:7) furthermore point out that mentoring programmes provide both professional and emotional support and have a positive influence on new teachers and returning teachers to the school. Mentoring programmes provide instructional and interpersonal support and foster professional development of teachers. Mentoring also constitutes an important dimension in the preparation and ongoing development of teachers, and can be regarded as a significant part of the socialisation process for teachers learning a new role (Bush & Middlewood 2005:157). During the past decade the impact of mentoring and collaboration on the professional development of teachers has expanded (Feiman-Nemser 2001:17-30). Research has proven that mentor programmes have positive effects on teacher retention and help new teachers to successfully move through the very challenging first year of teaching (Carr, Herman & Harris 2005:17; Kajs, Willman, Alanzis, Maier, Brott & Gomez 2002:57). Not only does mentoring ensure retention of the best staff, it also offers veteran teachers

professional replenishment and produces teacher leaders (Moir & Bloom 2003:59). Mentoring relationships can be very rewarding, both professionally and personally, for the beginner teacher and the mentor. Special education teachers in particular can benefit from mentors in order to assist them to deal with the unique needs of students and their disabilities, as well as the complex legal processes that accompany their educational programmes (Nickson & Kritsonis 2006). Novice teachers' successes could be increased by matching experienced mentors with novice teachers in an environment where they can work together, in the same grade level or subject area, in a shared planning period (Johnson & Kardos 2005). It is however, important that mentors recognise the fact that mentoring is a process of building on the mentees' strengths, enabling them to act, rather than imposing ideas and information from the outside (Trubowitz 2004:62).

2.7.1.1 The role of mentoring in induction

Throughout literature it is evident that new teachers are in need of assistance and guidance by a more experienced colleague which may play a crucial role in helping these teachers succeed (Bartell 2005:71). The roles of mentors cannot be rigidly specified because mentoring involves highly personal interactions, conducted in different schools under different circumstances (Hudson 2004:2). One of the new roles in mentoring includes mid-career teachers to support the professional development process of peer teachers (Musanti 2004:13). The effectiveness of these mentors may lie in the fact that they have been carefully selected, prepared for their responsibilities, supported in their work, and evaluated on a regular basis (Bartell 2005:71). Mentors should be proficient in collaboration and communication skills, respect teacher differences and ways of work, and model appropriate classroom management and curriculum implementation (Menchaca 2003). Bartell (2005:71) also states that these mentors may be successful in such mentoring positions because they are able to listen, give advice, encourage, demonstrate practices, and brainstorm with novice teachers on a wide variety of issues. In addition to Bartell's findings, research highlights the following three main roles of a mentor:

- To transmit formal knowledge and skills;
- To initiate the mentee into the rules, values and ethics of the discipline (profession);

- To persevere in enhancing the confidence of the mentee through encouragement and praise.

According to Hargreaves and Fullen (2000:53), mentorship involves much more than just guiding novices through learning standards and skills, they also have to provide continuous emotional support.

It could therefore be argued that a strong teacher mentoring programme will assist in adequately preparing newly appointed professionals. It furthermore ensures that, through a process of collaborative learning, the novices are supported in gaining knowledge on daily classroom teaching and teaching practices, necessary to effectively execute their professional roles and responsibilities.

2.7.1.2 Choosing a mentor

In her article “Beginning teacher and mentor relationships” Ganser (2002:51) points out that teachers who are good at teaching children may not be necessarily qualified to teach teachers. This is a very important factor to be considered in choosing a mentor. According to Whitaker (2000) the quality of the professional and personal match between mentors and novice teachers will greatly impact on the success of the mentoring experience. Therefore the matching of mentors with novice teachers could be regarded as the most crucial aspect of the mentoring process (Whitaker 2000).

2.7.1.3 Essential qualities of a mentor

According to the Mentoring and Leadership Resource Network, a successful mentor should be the type of teacher who “creates a positive climate for learning, holds high expectations for students, and has the ability to reflect on and articulate the reasons for their instructional decisions, both short term and long term”. They should have the ability to plan and carry out well-developed lessons, have excellent organisational and classroom management skills, and implement the district policy on discipline. They should furthermore be capable of carrying out demonstration lessons and provide constructive feedback. Literature on mentor qualities furthermore highlights the following as important qualities needed to be an effective mentor: A mentor must at all times be committed to the mentoring process and should role-model behaviours such as

good communication skills and approachability. A successful mentor should possess good recognisable interpersonal skills, as relationship is the key to mentoring success. Therefore, mentors should have quality communication skills, relationship building skills and collegiality (Moir & Bloom 2003:59). They bring to the mentoring relationship the “gift of time, mutual trust and personal attributes such as a positive, caring attitude and a sense of confidentiality”. Although these qualities are daunting, they may, however, serve as a guide in selecting mentor teachers.

2.7.1.4 Problems faced by mentoring programmes

Planning, adapting and implementing a high quality induction programme can be overwhelming. In planning and implementing a mentoring programme, the management of a school could be faced with numerous problems. These could include interpersonal dynamics, time constraints, lack of resources and negotiating the workload of mentors and cost effectiveness thereof (Joiner & Edwards 2008:48). Personality and philosophical differences can also limit the learning opportunities for the novice. Another potential problem is the possibility of assigning a beginning teacher with a poor role model. The identified problems above will have an impact on the effectiveness of the mentoring programme which in the end will impact on the individual, the organisation, and the profession.

2.7.2 Study groups or critical development teams

According to Lick (2000:43) study groups can be regarded as “a mechanism to integrate individual and institutional development through personal and group relationships, creating conditions where members can gain understanding and learn together”. These study groups or critical development teams are small groups of school personnel, who meet on a regular basis in order to explore teaching and learning issues (Diaz-Maggioli 2004:117).

2.7.2.1 Benefits of study groups

Study groups help teachers grow professionally through collaborative activities. Members arrive at solutions to problems collectively. Diaz-Maggioli (2004:120) states that “the proactive, collegial nature of teams promotes peer-to-peer support” which, in the end, leads to the enhancement of both the school climate and school culture.

Teachers in these study groups take ownership of their own learning and development. They construct their own practical theories, which they share with colleagues and administrators.

2.7.3 Peer coaching

In peer coaching, teachers receive support, feedback, and assistance from fellow teachers (Heider 2005). Diaz-Maggioli (2004:77) defines peer coaching as a professional development method which has been proven to increase collegiality and improve teaching. During peer coaching, teachers share their expertise and provide one another with feedback, support and assistance for the purpose of refining present skills, learning new skills and/or solving classroom-related problems. Peer coaching also includes activities such as in-class training by a supportive peer. Confidentiality is an important characteristic of peer coaching. This helps to enhance trust and self-esteem, which allow participants to focus on the task at hand while withholding unnecessary judgement. The cycles of peer coaching - needs assessment, preparation for observation, observation, and reflection - can be repeated indefinitely. Administrative support of peer coaching is critical to its success. Support should be provided in terms of time, planning for the programme, initial training and for support groups.

2.7.3.1 Benefits of peer coaching

In peer coaching everyone's needs are attended to. This leads to the empowerment of all participants. The participants have the freedom to choose their own field of focus, based on their current needs and level of expertise (Diaz-Maggioli 2004:79). Research has identified many benefits of peer coaching for teachers. Among them is a reduced sense of isolation, an ability to implement new teaching strategies effectively, a positive school climate, and a revitalised faculty (Kapustin & Murphy 2008).

2.8 SUMMARY

The literature review provided in this chapter, aims to complement the rationale established in the previous chapter. An overview of special education and teaching in a special school context has been briefly discussed. Thereafter, problems faced by beginning teachers in general, and special education teachers in particular, have been

discussed briefly. Furthermore, induction programmes and strategies for teacher support have been highlighted with specific reference to mentorship programmes. Discussions in this chapter assert that well-structured programmes assist with teachers' introduction to the teaching profession and ensure teacher retention. The next chapter deals with the research design and methodology.

3 CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Worldwide the trend in education is to provide first-year teachers with in-service training by letting them become part of support programmes. This is especially true of the United States of America, where it has been proven that on-the-job nurturing and support by mentors can accelerate success and effectiveness among beginning teachers, also preventing some of them from leaving the profession (Kajs, Willman, Alaniz, Maier, Brott & Gomez 2001). Because of the important influence that staff induction has on the quality of teaching and learning and learner progress, education authorities need to examine the elements of a successful staff induction programme.

Knowledge about the needs and experiences of beginning general education teachers has been widely researched for decades, and a considerable literature base has been established. However, the experiences and induction support for beginning special education teachers has only recently received attention (Billingsley, Carlson & Klein 2004:334). In the previous chapter a literature review was undertaken, identifying the problems experienced by novice teachers in general; their particular needs, and the support structures that are available to beginning teachers. The researcher, furthermore, focused on adult learning theories supporting the professional development of teachers. Chapter three now continues from this theoretical base in outlining the research design which will be undertaken to answer the research question.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIM

As little research has been done locally on the subject of induction support for special education teachers, the researcher was inspired to research the phenomenon of induction at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng, South Africa. The study, furthermore, emanates from the researcher's own experience as a newly appointed principal at the research school and the need for support experienced during the time of transition into the new school. This experience has led the researcher to the opinion that support strategies should form an integral part of a staff induction

programme. Such a staff induction programme would provide the newly appointed teachers with the personal and professional security needed to enable them to become contributing members of staff. This should result in employment that is fulfilling; resulting in staff retention.

In section 1.2 the research problem was formulated as:

What are the guidelines for an effective induction programme for beginner teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng?

In order to identify the problems newly appointed teachers experience and ways in which to assist them, the following aim (section 1.3) is derived from the research problem:

The aim of this study is to set guidelines for an effective staff induction programme, which will improve teacher performance and retention, at a school for learners with intellectual disabilities in Gauteng, South Africa.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2006:55) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. A research design focuses on the end product and includes the following elements:

- What kind of study is being planned?
- What kind of result is aimed at?
- Research problem/question.
- What kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately?

As the research question lends itself towards a qualitative research design approach, this approach will be expanded on prior to the detailed research design.

3.3.1 Qualitative research strategy

The type of data required to answer the research question, in this study, demanded a qualitative approach, due to the fact that the researcher aimed to reach a deeper understanding of how the participants of this study experienced and interpreted their

beginning years at a special school for severely intellectually disabled learners. The researcher will be allowed the freedom to participate in the world of the individuals in order to learn from them. The researcher entered the “life world” of the participants through interaction with them. The collaborative nature of the design created an opportunity for multiple voices, in this case the eight newly appointed teachers, to be heard.

In order to obtain an extensive description of the problems experienced by newly appointed teachers and how these could be overcome, a case study was conducted. In this study an in-depth analysis of the single entity namely a school for intellectually disabled learners, was undertaken (McMillan 2004:271). Therefore the study was a within-site study. A case study ensures high construct validity and in-depth insights (Mouton 2006:150). In this instance the case study was restricted to qualitative research, as the researcher tried to create an understanding of the case study through the retelling of the essential information as supplied by the participants. The researcher wanted to discover the needs and concerns of beginner teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners, and to suggest guidelines for an induction programme in order to overcome, or develop coping strategies for these particular barriers.

3.3.2 Research design for this study

The research project was focused on the induction of beginner teachers as part of continuous professional development. This study was conducted in the context of a government public special school which caters for intellectually disabled learners, ranging from the age of three up to the age of 18 years. The school was established in 1972 with six learners – an initiative of a group of parents who believed that, with the right education, their children could be educated to live a meaningful and dignified life. Many of the learners at the school have multiple disabilities such as physical disabilities, Autism spectrum disorders and behavioral disorders. The staff complement is 58 staff members of which 26 are teachers, four are therapists, one school nurse, one social worker, three care givers (unqualified teachers) and 27 class and administrative assistants. Although the school is situated in an affluent area, it is attended by 288 children from all walks of life. About 98% of all the learners are transported to school by means of a fleet of 18 buses on a daily basis. The school is multicultural, with good

representation from all cultural groups in South Africa the languages of learning and teaching are Afrikaans and English. The main focus of the curriculum offered at the school is functional literacy, functional numeracy and life skills, with major emphasis on activities of daily living.

The researcher purposefully selected eight teachers as “information rich cases” which enabled the researcher to learn more about the focus of the study. The more specific selection criteria included the following:

- The teacher must be in full or part time employment at the school.
- The teacher must have had less than 3 years of service at the particular school.
- The teacher must have a formal teaching qualification.

The participants were identified and contacted in order to explain the research project to them, obtain consent and arrange the interviews.

The chosen method of data collection was semi-structured individual interviews, conducted with newly appointed beginner teachers as well as more experienced newly appointed teachers. The participants were interviewed after school hours, in the privacy of their own classrooms. Each interview lasted for 40 minutes and was tape recorded in preparation for analysis. The interview schedule (Appendix A – Interview Schedule) consisted of 15 open-ended questions, with the first question being: “Tell me about your experience as a newly appointed staff member at your current school”. The participants were encouraged to speak about their own experiences as newly appointed staff members. Occasional questions were asked for clarification. When the participant had finished speaking and had not volunteered the information that was required, questions from the interview schedule were asked.

Secondary data sources used to gain a better understanding of the participants’ needs, included:

- Reports generated by the principal and the head of department in observing the participants in the classroom situation. The classroom visit criteria were generated from the Intergrated Quality Management Systems documents (Appendix D). Through observing the participants in practice, the researcher was able to gain information on classroom management skills, preparation and

planning activities, learner discipline methods employed by the participant, the use of teaching methods and assessment practices.

- Ongoing informal discussions with the deputy principal who has 23 years of experience at the research school.
- Information contained in the personal growth plans of completed Intergrated Quality Management System documents of the participants. The identified areas of improvement gave direction with regard to the professional development needs of the participants.
- Data from a variety of literature sources that specifically deals with the phenomenon of induction.
- Field notes kept by the researcher of his/her observations of the participants during the interviews. The field notes kept on the participants' reactions and body language gave an indication of the participants' true feelings and supported the data collected during the interviews.

As the researcher wished to establish the truth from the point of view of the participants, the following ethical measures were strictly adhered to:

3.4 ETHICAL MEASURES

According to Mouton (2006:238,239) “the ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research” and that in the search for truth, the researcher’s conduct must conform to generally accepted norms and values. As this case study is conducted in one of the spheres of human life, the researcher had to ensure that it is conducted in a morally acceptable way. As ethical issues arise from our interaction with other people, or other beings and the environment, the scientist must be aware of his/her obligations and responsibilities in conducting the research. A number of these “specific rules or conventions” having an impact on this research will be discussed briefly below.

3.4.1 Ethical measures employed in the case study

Strydom (2007:69) defines ethics as “a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for, and behavioural expectations of, the most correct conduct towards

experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students”. The following principles guided the researcher in doing research, namely (Strydom 2007:67,68):

- Consideration of the possible consequences for the research participants.
- The protection of the participants from unwarranted physical or mental discomfort, distress, harm, danger or deprivation.
- To ensure that, as far as the discussion or evaluation of services or cases is concerned, that it only be done for professional purposes and only with people directly and professionally involved.
- The confidentiality of all information obtained about and from participants.
- The importance of the acknowledgement of the contributions made by others.

A brief discussion of ethical measures applied follows in the next section of this chapter.

3.4.1.1 Informed consent

In obtaining informed consent information on the goal of the research, the procedures which would be followed during the investigation as well as the possible advantages and disadvantages of the research were explained to the participants. Accurate and complete information was therefore essential in obtaining voluntary consent from the participants. The intention of the research, the nature of the research, the involvement of the participants in the research and their rights were explained to the participants and general questions were answered about the research. Letters were drawn up to inform the participants (teachers in this study) about the details of the research. The information contained in these letters was verbally explained to the participants and they were given the opportunity to ask questions in terms of time, activities and the disclosure of confidential information. Thereafter the participants’ signatures along with that of the researcher were taken as evidence of informed consent (Appendix E).

3.4.1.2 Avoidance of harm

As the participants participating in the research could be harmed on an emotional level, the ethical responsibility rests with the researcher to protect them from possible harm. Although emotional harm to subjects is more difficult to predict and determine than physical discomfort, it often has far-reaching consequences (Strydom 2007:58). The

researcher took particular care in informing the respondents beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation. The participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation if they so wished. A letter of consent (Appendix A), including all of the above information was drawn up and verbally explained to the participants and signed by them.

3.4.1.3 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

According to Strydom (2007:61), privacy refers to “the element of personal privacy”, while confidentiality implies the handling of information in a confidential manner while anonymity ensures the privacy of the subjects. To ensure the anonymity of the participants, the name of the school and the participants’ names were kept confidential. The confidentiality of each participant was maintained through the use of letters of the alphabet (A-H) instead of their real names. In this case the privacy of subjects could be affected by the use of an audio recording device (Strydom 2007:61). The participants, in this investigation, were informed that all interviews would be recorded by means of an electronic recording device. The fact that all interviews were going to be recorded was included in the consent letters, which were signed at the initial stages of the research (Appendix A). Furthermore, the participants were informed that, as the right to privacy remains an individual’s right, they could decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent their attitudes, beliefs and behavior would be revealed.

3.4.1.4 Access to results

The researcher has the ethical responsibility of ensuring that the whole research project unfolds in an ethically correct manner. The researcher should therefore ensure that the analysis of data and the results of the study are reported on correctly. The onus therefore rests upon the competent researcher to remain objective and to refrain from making value judgments. Member checking took place when the transcribed interviews were given to the participants to verify that the information was a true reflection of what transpired during the interviews.

3.4.2 Reliability, trustworthiness and validity

According to Swart and Engelbrecht (2006:88), “the achievement of reliability involves ascertaining whether the results are consistent with the data and that the same results be

obtained should the study be replicated”. Reliability was insured by conducting the same interview with eight participants.

Validity on the other hand, questions how research findings correlate with reality. In qualitative research credibility criteria involves establishing that the results are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research. As the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena through the eyes of the participants, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results (Trochim 2006). The participants were therefore, given access to the findings of the research in order to verify the authenticity thereof.

The researcher was aware of the fact that the way in which the participants responded to him/her could not entirely be free from the perception of the researcher as the school principal or supervisor with whom they had been working for three years and less. The researcher tried to minimise the effect of lack of familiarity by assuring the participants of the anonymity of their identities, with the hope that the relationship of trust, which has been established, would ensure that the participants share accurate and reliable information with the researcher.

3.4.2.1 Triangulation

In order to ensure trustworthiness of this study, the method of triangulation was applied. According to (Perone & Tucker 2003:2) this approach “involves using more than one research method or data collection technique” in order to reach a more complete, holistic and contextual understanding of the phenomenon. Through triangulation, subjectivity can be minimized and validity enhanced. In this research, triangulation of the raw data was done by comparing the raw data collected with information contained in the class visit reports and completed IQMS documents of the participants. The informal discussions with the deputy principal on the raw data collected provided a means of comparing and verifying the research findings.

3.4.2.2 Literature control

The findings of this study were compared with the results of other research studies previously undertaken around this topic. This was done in order to determine

differences, similarities, gaps and unique contributions. The reliability of the research is increased when literature verifies the findings (Olivier & Williams 2005:5).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008:201), data collection methods refer to the techniques for physically obtaining data to be analysed in a research study. In this qualitative, phenomenological study, the main method used for data collection was that of interviewing. The data collection took place over a period of eight weeks.

3.5.1 The population and sampling

Johnson and Christensen (2008:222,223) define sampling as the process of drawing a sample from a population. The sample refers to a set of elements (individuals, groups or objects) taken from a larger population according to certain rules. In this case study convenient, selective sampling was used, as the individuals were selected to provide the information on the phenomenon under study, namely staff induction (Johnson & Christensen 2008:243). For the purpose of this study it was decided to choose participants from the population of newly appointed teachers (appointed in the past 3 years) at the research school. As the population of teachers complying with the selection criteria was relatively small, it was decided to include the entire population in the sample.

3.5.2 Description of the participants

The eight participants were diverse in their trained teaching areas and their individual backgrounds. Table 3.1 gives a brief overview of the participants selected for the study. As the collection of potentially sensitive information such as the age of participants, was found difficult, the researcher made use of a short and easy feedback form (prompt card) to collect such data (Appendix B).

Table 3.1: The aggregated profiles of newly appointed teachers used in the study

Newly appointed teachers	Post level	Gender	Age	Highest professional qualification	Years of experience in general education	Years of experience in special education	Years of experience at the current school
A	1	F	63	Transvaal Higher Educational diploma	38	0	Relief teacher
B	2	M	40	Higher Educational Diploma	8	18	3
C	1	F	34	Bachelor degree in Primary Education	10	2	2
D	1	F	57	Bachelor of Arts and a post graduate diploma in education	31	2	2
E	1	F	38	Masters in Educational Psychology	9	11	3
F	1	F	27	Bachelor in Education	2	1	1
G	1	F	42	Bachelor in Arts and a post graduate diploma in education	3 (College) 4 (Pre Primary experience)	1	1
H	2	F	42	Bachelor in Arts and a post graduate diploma in education	5	15	2

The newly appointed teachers under study were requested to complete the prompt cards, which were compiled in the form of a questionnaire. In order for the researcher to compile a profile of the eight purposefully selected participants, the information from the prompt cards was used (Dube 2008:68).

The eight participants selected for the study all had an education related qualification and were from various age groups. One male and seven females participated in the study. Six post level one teachers participated in the study. None of them was a first year teacher. One of the participants is a beginner teacher in her fourth year of teaching. All the other participants can be classified as beginner teachers at the research school as all of them have had three years and less experience at the research school. Five of the newly appointed teachers did not have any special education experience prior to them starting at the school, whereas three had extensive special education experience.

Two post level two teachers participated in the study. Both participants, on entry, took up promotion posts at the school. One participant did not have any prior experience at a special school, whereas the other post level two, participant has had extensive experience in special education.

3.5.3 The researcher as instrument

In qualitative research the researcher is central to conducting the research (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:368). According to Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003:124), “the researcher is the key person in obtaining data from respondents”. The researcher creates, through facilitative interaction, a context in which the respondent shares rich data regarding personal experiences and life world. During the data collection period, the researcher has the responsibility of setting the respondent at ease in order to create, through listening, an atmosphere of trust. This ensures the free flow of communication. The interview schedule consisted of three sections. Section A, consisted of questions for establishing the problems experienced by the newly appointed staff members. The questions in section B aimed at establishing the ways of overcoming problems experienced by newly appointed staff members. Section C focused on the value of an induction programme and aspects of importance to be included in an induction programme. The main advantage of the interview schedule was that it guided the

collection of data; and at the same time it forced the researcher to think about and plan for possible difficulties that might arise during the interviewing process (Greeff 2007:296,297). The interview schedule was made available to all the participants before the scheduled interviews took place. This allowed the participants to gather more detailed information and also provided the participants with the opportunity to play a stronger role in determining how the interview would proceed.

All interviews were conducted by prior appointment. The questions were conducted in the preferred language of the participant, to eliminate possible language barriers. The interviews were tape-recorded to ensure that accurate data was collected, stored and transcribed later (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2004:172). In transcribing the interviews, all interviews were translated into the medium of English. In doing so the researcher strove to maintain the content as well as context of the interviews without adding or subtracting from the true meaning thereof.

Data collected during an interview largely depends on the skills of the researcher as interviewer (Greeff 2007:287). Greeff (2007:296) indicates that the most fundamental skill which should be developed by the researcher is the ability to analyse an interview while participating in it. The researcher must have an awareness of the relationship as well as the content factors in an interview.

Throughout the study, the researcher was aware of the fact that, in acting as a research instrument, she can pose a possible threat to the true value of the data collected, as this could have an impact on the credibility and trustworthiness of the study conducted. The researcher is also instrumental in translating and interpreting the data collected, therefore the researcher had a clear awareness and consideration of her own preconceived ideas, limitations and potentialities in order not to influence the observations made.

In order for the researcher to arrive at conclusions and recommendations, self-confidence is one of the fundamentals (Strydom 2007:249). Therefore the researcher ensured that she was competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation, by studying publications on the composition of the research population,

the sampling procedure, the methodology to be used, processing of the data and the writing of the research report. Throughout the study the researcher was aware of her ethical responsibilities.

3.5.4 Data collection instruments and methods

During this study, in-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted with eight individual participants. Greeff (2003:287) perceives interviewing as the predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research. For the purpose of this study, an interview schedule was developed (Appendix C) as an instrument for obtaining data from the participants, who in this case were beginner teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners. The interview schedule included open-ended questions.

The researcher designed the interview instruments (Appendix C) to be used in face-to-face (personal) interviews with the beginner teachers. Emphasis was primarily placed on the beginner teachers' perception and views on their beginning years at a school for intellectually impaired learners. The interviews were conducted in the language preference of the participants.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis can be seen as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collective data (De Vos 2007:333). In this study the qualitative data analysis involved breaking the data up into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships in order to understand the various elements of the raw data collected. This happened when the researcher looked for relationships between the concepts, constructs or variables, coding them and categorizing the patterns found (Byrne 2001). An inductive approach for qualitative data analysis was used to analyse the collected data as according to Thomas (2003:1), the purposes for using an inductive approach are:

- to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format;
- to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data;

- to develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the raw data.

The general inductive approach provided a convenient and efficient way of analysing the qualitative data collected for the purpose of this study.

For the purpose of analyzing the collected data for this particular study, a demonstration model of a software tool for qualitative data analysis, “Hyperresearch”, was downloaded from the internet (<http://www.researchware.com>). The demonstration version of the programme proved to be fully operational and allowed the researcher to analyse up to seven case studies at any one time. This programme allowed the researcher to scrutinise the data line by line in order to uncover concepts and to systematically develop categories.

All pre-recorded interviews were typed in a Word document and imported into the Hyperresearch programme. The programme allows for the input of 75 code names, in this case the six main categories and subcategories of problems experienced by beginner teachers at a special school. The tool allows for the input of 50 code instances (data that fits the code name) under each case study. As more code instances are needed for any case study, a report is automatically compiled by the programme (after 50 code instances have been entered) and exported back into Word. The programme allows the option of compiling reports either by case or code name. A report can consist of the following information, namely the code name (the problems experienced and ways in overcoming the specific problems), code type, code reference (a number indicating where the code name has been taken from), source name, code frequency (how many times the code appears in the report), source material (the actual text), master case list, master code list and others. Numerous reports could be compiled in this way and merged into a single report in Word, which would ensure the compilation of the final write-up.

The following attributes made this programme an invaluable tool in analysing the data collected:

- It allows for the viewing of the code references (the numbers allocated according to where the code instances were taken from) of one case at a time.

- Each code reference consists of a code name, the source file name (either interviews or field notes), the source type (for example, text, graphic, audio or video), and a case name.
- The codes menu offers a variety of editing commands that can be used, including renaming of code instances, deleting or duplication of code instances.
- The code map makes it easy to see that some topics fit into more than one category.

Coding of the data began as soon as the interviews had been transcribed. Once the data had been coded and summarised, the researcher could look for relationships among the categories and patterns. At this point the researcher interpreted the findings inductively, synthesised the information, and drew inferences. The researcher reported on what had been found and what it meant (McMillan 2004:269). Finally, the researcher made recommendations for employers, principals, teachers and future research.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a detailed description of the research design in order to identify and study the problems experienced by newly appointed teachers at a special school for intellectually disabled learners. The world of eight newly appointed teachers was explored within an interpretative framework. With the qualitative research design, ethical measures were discussed that guided the collection of the data. Purposeful sampling of eight teachers was done in the population of newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners. The data gathering method employed was that of a case study, using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The qualitative data was analysed by means of a software tool that was downloaded from the internet.

4 CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Through this study, the researcher has developed a picture of the typical challenges experienced by beginner teachers, during their early years of teaching at a special school for intellectually disabled learners. The focus of the analysis of the raw data, collected during this research project, is to gain insight into the professional world of beginning teachers, from their perspective. In this study specifically, the intention is to describe the experiences of the eight newly appointed teachers and to give meaning to their experience, due to the fact that qualitative case study work is aimed at understanding the reality which those being studied, make of their world. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the results in understandable concepts in order to help the reader make sense of the information found in the field (in this case the induction of newly appointed teachers at a special school). Although these findings are based on research in the context of a school for intellectually disabled learners, they may have implications for other special schools in South Africa as well.

The findings of this study on the induction of newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners, unfold in different sections in chapter four. The raw data collected through the semi-structured interviews is analysed in a narrative format and reports only on what the researcher deems significant within the aims of the study, as cited in paragraph 1.3. The results are furthermore analysed according to the literature on challenges experienced by beginning teachers. The literature refers to two main categories of novice teachers' needs, namely personal needs and professional needs.

4.2 PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

Although this study does not aim to focus on the findings of the biographical-data questionnaire, the relevance thereof gives meaning to the main findings. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire on their biographical data (Appendix B). Also refer to Table 3.1 for an analysis of the eight participants.

The information contained in table 3.1 serves as a reference to assist the reader with information on the participants. In order to meet the needs of confidentiality and to provide privacy, the participants were coded by means of the letters of the alphabet from a to h. The findings revealed by the biographical data in table 3.1 show that the participants were from different age groups, sexes, racial groups, different educational backgrounds and were representative of post level one and two teachers. In all cases the teachers also had varying levels of teaching experience, both in and out of special education.

4.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

A qualitative inquiry method was used and the results of the study were analysed by means of an electronic qualitative data analysis programme “Hyperresearch”. The raw data collected from the personal interviews, conducted with the newly appointed teachers, was analysed according to themes. The supporting class visit and work control reports, as well as the participants’ Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) documents, further assisted the researcher with the analysis process. The data collected provided valuable insight into the complexity of the phenomenon under study and underpinned the researcher’s conclusion relating to inter-relatedness of the needs and challenges experienced by newly appointed teachers.

The following themes were identified from the raw data:

- Beginning teachers’ impressions of teaching
- Classroom related problems
- School related problems
- Support received
- Introducing an effective induction programme
 - The importance of an induction programme
 - Aspects of an induction programme
 - Guidelines for an induction programme

By addressing the above, the researcher hopes to shed light on the importance of the phenomenon under study and the impact that it has on beginning teachers at the

research school. The findings furthermore reveal the way in which newly appointed teachers view their beginning years at the school, provide some input on the problems experienced by the novices as well as indicate the support these novices have received in order to overcome these problems.

The following section discusses the themes which emerged in response to the questions contained in the first section of the interview schedule, dealing with problems experienced by newly appointed members of staff.

4.3.1 Beginning teachers' impression of teaching

According to the data all participants found their start at the school to be challenging. The following extracts from the interviews are indicative of the early experiences of the newly appointed staff members at the school. *“Teaching at a special school can either be a chamber of horrors or a treasure trove.”* *“My first year at the school was challenging.....I did not know where I was going”*. One of the participants also indicated that: *“...it is only now, after eight months at the school, that I feel my aeroplane has landed”*. This data supports the fact that all beginner teachers experience significant challenges during their induction into the teaching profession (Bartell 2005:3).

Some participants in this study reported feelings of confusion, disillusionment and fear, discouragement and a deep feeling of concern. One of the participants admitted to considering resignation. All these feelings emerged from the feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

4.3.1.1 Feelings of isolation

All participants indicated feelings of isolation and expressed the need for collaboration opportunities. The isolation may stem from the fact that, at the school, every class follows a different scholastic programme geared towards meeting the individualised and specialised needs of the particular learners in that particular class. No two class structures are the same. The varied needs of the learners also make it difficult to do collaborative planning. As has been remarked by one of the participants, *“Here we are all on our own islands.....you on yours and me on mine”*.

Furthermore, being a class teacher at a special school for the intellectually disabled, fully occupies the teacher's time and leaves very little time for interaction with other colleagues and para-professionals. Very often, as has been mentioned by some of the participants, *"everybody is so busy with their own teaching loads and responsibilities"* that time to assist each other, is lacking. One of the participants remarked: *At the end of the day, I felt that there was not enough contact"*.

As many of the staff members at the research school found themselves in the exit phase of their career, the newly appointed staff found it difficult to cope with the perceived resistance to change of some of the other members of staff. *"People are sitting on a cushion or they are in a comfort zone. They don't want new rules and they don't want to change because change makes people jittery."*

One of the participants referred to the fact that colleagues in mainstream schools have the perception that teaching in a special school is easy and that there is not a lot of *"pressure, because there is not a lot of marking to do and there are no tests and examinations"*. Discriminatory remarks, like these, bring about isolation from colleagues at mainstream schools. The general feeling of the participants, therefore, was that although discriminatory remarks are made, teaching at a special school does not have a lot of marking and the setting of tests, but it has its own set of challenges. Very often *"the same child, who was found to be problematic at a mainstream school, has to be accommodated and taught in a special school"*. Teachers at a special school have to find ways of teaching and assessing that very same learner, who was found to be problematic in the mainstream set-up.

It was furthermore evident that some of the newly appointed staff members found the structures at the school hostile and not easily accessible. *"Some people carry the reigns in certain projects.....I want to say like a one man show. If you want to put a certain input towards something , you are kind of reluctant, because there is an ethos amongst the staff in the school environment, where, teacher X has done it for so many years and this is how it should be done."* Newly appointed teachers may find themselves excluded from social structures and therefore they experience social isolation (Steyn & Schulze 2005:239).

Staff dynamics therefore also plays an important role in making the entry of new teachers to the school problematic. The expectations of the staff members vary, depending on the phase of the career cycle in which the teacher finds him or herself. Very often the newly appointed teachers find themselves in the induction and competency building career stages, irrespective of their age, where they are actively involved and eagerly seek out methods of teaching and their effectiveness, whereas other members of staff may find themselves in the later stages of the career cycle (Steyn & Schulze 2005:236,237). The vast differences in the expectations of the various staff members at the various stages of their career could bring about tension for the newcomer to the school. This could also increase their feelings of isolation. A typical quote from one of the participants explains this statement well. *“Everybody just wants to shoot you down and break you down.... because you see many of our older teachers are actually on these islands.”*

When a person experiences a period of isolation or perceived isolation in his/her career, the natural reaction is normally a feeling of doubt in his/her own abilities. This could lead to a lack of confidence and uncertainty in the mind of the newcomer to the school.

4.3.1.2 Feelings of uncertainty

Most of the participants experienced feelings concerning uncertainty. One of the participants expressed his uncertainty through the following remark: *“I always wondered if I was on the right track. I knew I had to start somewhere but nobody could guide me”*. It became clear that the uncertainties experienced by newly appointed teachers led to feelings of insecurity, inadequacy and lack of confidence. A typical response of one of the participants was: *“Some days I was despondent. Some days it felt as if I wasn’t the teacher I am supposed to be”*. One of the post level two participants admitted that, for the first year, his/her *“role was more re-active than pro-active”*. The high levels of uncertainty were experienced due to the numerous problems encountered by the novices. The lack of experience with regard to special education and specifically working with learners with intellectual disabilities could be perceived as the main contributing factors to the feelings of uncertainty. Furthermore, being confronted with no information on the learners and their particular needs, as well as working with an unknown curriculum, added to the feelings of uncertainty. The reported lack of

orientation with regard to administrative systems, school policies and procedures aggravated the whole situation. A participant remarked: *“I didn’t know where anything was....I didn’t know where the duplicating room was....I didn’t know where the toilets were. It was a big problem. I also didn’t know whom to ask for cleaning materials”*.

The uncertainty experienced by the novice teachers could furthermore be increased by classroom related problems and school related problems. The following problems emerged from the data collected during the interviews: lack of classroom management skills, language problems, curriculum and assessment concerns, unrealistic expectations and meeting learners’ needs, dealing with parents, understanding school policies and procedures and inadequate resources. These problems were categorised under the following themes namely classroom related and school related problems. In the following section each of these categories of problems experienced by the novices, will be dealt with in more detail.

4.3.2 Classroom related problems

4.3.2.1 Lack of classroom management skills

The participants indicated that they were faced with the challenges of developing and implementing effective instructional methods. One participant remarked: *“As far as the actual teaching was concerned I didn’t know what to do...”* and another participant stated: *“I did not know how to structure my day around the learners”*. The fact that very few learners can work independently and that most of the learners require individual help, makes classroom management even more complex and challenging.

Very often the newly appointed teachers lacked classroom management strategies for dealing with learners with severe academic barriers to learning and found it difficult to deal with disruptive and inappropriate behavioural patterns of learners. One participant remarked that it was difficult to deal with the problematic behaviour of some of the learners while having to attend to the act of teaching the learners. Another participant constantly felt confronted by *“emotional problems”* of the learners. Bartell (2005:14) aptly indicates that special education is physically demanding and emotionally draining. Very often the disruptive, difficult behaviour of one learner can have an emotional impact on the rest of the class. A participants remarked that, often *“...when*

you have dealt with an emotional or behavioural problem of a learner, apart from the fact that you could not attend to the other learners in the class, you find that the incident has had a lasting effect on, and may have upset the other learners in the class". This then necessitates that time is spent on settling the other learners in the class. A lot of valuable teaching time is spent on dealing with the emotional complexities in the class.

Participants furthermore admitted to having difficulty with learner discipline. They did not know how to discipline learners, as very often, learners do not understand the consequences of their actions. In disciplining learners with behavioural problems, using incorrect disciplinary measures could aggravate the situation. The participants reported a need for information on appropriate disciplinary measures, as one of the participants remarked: *"I needed to know what forms of discipline and control strategies were acceptable and in place in the various phases of the school"*.

Most of the participants found the varying competency levels of the learners problematic. They found it difficult to manage differentiated activities in the class and perceived the classroom situation as *"dynamic and complex"*. They found it difficult to plan their day and mentioned that the *"unpredictability"* of the classroom situation creates a lot of emotional stress. One participant mentioned: *"You can never be prepared"*. The structuring of homework is also mentioned to be very challenging as every learner in the class is on his/her own level. One participant expressed the need for help with regard to structuring of homework activities: *"How do you structure homework activities.....how do you do it?"*

At the research school various activities are planned, whereby learners are given the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge outside the classroom situation; such as vocational training activities, therapy sessions and a gardening project. Managing these varied activities and tasks, leads to teachers feeling overwhelmed. The feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability are reflected in the following comments. *"When you are in a situation where you do not know what to expect, you are placed in a vulnerable situation."* Another participant further remarked, *"I must say I didn't know what to do in the beginning. I had been given a timetable and had been told that certain children*

had to go to a certain place at a certain time. That had been completely foreign to me.”

Very often, the problems experienced concerning classroom management skills, can further be complicated by language problems experienced by learners.

4.3.2.2 Language problems of learners

Language is also perceived as a problem newly appointed teachers have to contend with, as some of the learners cannot converse in the language of learning and teaching and very often non-verbal learners are included in the various classroom situations. In certain classes, various language groups are combined and the fact that many of the *“learners cannot speak or understand English at all”* was found to be problematic. Finding the *“most suitable way of communicating with non-verbal learners”* furthermore adds to the complexity of the school context. Beginner teachers at first found *“it was extremely difficult to accept that there are learners in the class, who cannot speak at all”*. One participant indicated that: *“A teacher can easily get frustrated by the fact that a learner cannot talk and that could lead to the teacher providing too much assistance, and in doing so, denying the learners the opportunity to do things for themselves”*.

The language problems experienced by learners also prevent the effective delivery of the curriculum as well as the assessment of the learner achievements.

4.3.2.3 Curriculum and assessment concerns

All participants mentioned having difficulty with adapting the curriculum to suit the varied needs of the learners they teach. *“Learner abilities and the pacing of activities”* were also indicated as problem areas. Not *“knowing what to do”* and not *“always knowing what to teach the learners and how to plan lessons which are on the level of the learners”* made the start to the school difficult. Experiencing problems with curriculum adaptation and designing of lessons, selecting the appropriate activities and worksheets have been identified as key stressors to the new teachers. Teachers admitted to losing confidence and having a fear that they were doing something with the learners which they were not supposed to be doing. The concern was expressed of *“what to do*

or not to do” with the learners and *“what is safe, what is not safe, what is acceptable for parents and what is not”*. Statements like these further support the feelings of uncertainty and loss of confidence. Assessment was found to be another problematic area. One of the teachers remarked: *“The learners must receive report cards and I do not know how the assessment is supposed to be done”*.

There was a general consensus that the participants needed someone to give them clear instructions and directions on how preparation and planning as well as assessment should be done. The assessment of learner achievements should also be viewed from a perspective based on realistic expectations and not unrealistic or unachievable standards.

4.3.2.4 Unrealistic expectations of meeting learners’ needs

Most participants acknowledged having had unrealistic expectations of teaching at a school for the intellectually disabled. This problem refers to the belief of the teachers that they can make a difference in the lives of the special children they teach. They do not receive the intrinsic rewards of teaching which they expected (Billingsley 2004:333). As one of the respondents remarked: *“I wanted to fall in and move.... I wanted to conquer. I wanted the learners to learn and move forward.”* The participants indicated that they started off with *“unrealistic expectations of the learners’ abilities”*. Another participant remarked: *“Yes, I walked in with the activities that I wanted to do with the learners, but when I started working with the learners I realised that it was not at all possible”*. They experienced difficulty in *“adapting the curriculum and in planning lessons”*, which were on the level of the learners they teach. They experienced problems with dealing with slow learners and determining the learning levels of students (Whitaker 2001:4). The participants admitted to experiencing feelings of disillusionment. One of the participants remarked: *“After two years at the school, it still remains a challenge to accurately determine the ability levels of the learners”*.

All participants referred to the overwhelming needs of the learners and that, apart from the educational difficulties, they also experience physical, social, behavioural and emotional needs. One of the participants stated: *“My biggest concern was whether I*

was reaching every child optimally. It is very difficult because.....ehh.....you are constantly confronted with many emotional problems and you have to deal with those problems on a daily basis.” Often this had an enormous impact on teaching time. For the participants with extensive mainstream experience, this creates stress as they have to adapt to the situation where the *“curriculum is no longer the focus, but the learner is the focus”*. The participants struggled with determining the ability levels of the learners and were not always sure of what to teach the learners. One participant stated: *“I didn’t know if I was wasting my time or banging my head against a brick wall, trying to teach them to write.”* They did not always know whether to persevere in teaching the learners certain skills and concepts.

Throughout the interviews, it became evident that the teachers were constantly reflecting on ways in which to meet the learners’ needs. All participants confirmed that the most significant problem experienced by them was the lack of information on the learners they taught. They felt that, without the necessary knowledge and understanding of the learners, it was impossible to meet the *“varied and specialised needs”* of the learners. *“Understanding the learners’ strengths and weaknesses and developing the strengths of the learners”* was felt to be *“the most problematic.”* They felt that they received very little information on the learners whom they had to teach: *“As a new teacher I had very little information on the learners in my class.”* They expressed the need for information on the particular *“classified difficulties”* and needs of the learners. They furthermore felt that it was a *“tremendous responsibility to look after the special children”* and how to treat them, as many of the learners are on chronic medication and suffer from ill health.

Apart from the classroom related problems discussed above, a number of school related problems contributed to making the start of the newly appointed teachers to the school difficult.

4.3.3 School related problems

4.3.3.1 Dealing with parents

Dealing with parents, was also indicated as being problematic. Three of the participants felt that they would have appreciated some help with regard to dealing with parents.

The fact that, in some cases, the school has to take on the responsibilities of parents, also led to role overload. The participants admitted to not always being sure of parent expectations and how to address problems with parents. It was felt that: *“Many of the parents do not understand their children in terms of their ability, their level and in terms of their disability. “They have their set expectations or focus for their child and when the teacher has to present a certain aspect to the parent, it becomes a challenging issue because there is non-acceptance.....there is misunderstanding and sometimes parents don’t understand their child and the specific problems with their child.”* Communication with parents was perceived as challenging and, in some instances, the newly appointed teachers *“needed to liaise with colleagues in terms of responding to parents”*. The possibility that some of the parents could display prejudice towards the ability and qualifications of one of the participants, from a different racial background, led to increased levels of uncertainty, as the participant remarked: *“I was not sure of how the parents were going to react towards me”*.

It is evident that the novices needed help with regard to communication with parents. They mentioned that they found dealing with parents challenging as they did not know what the expectations of the parents were. This perceived lack of guidance could be addressed through establishing proper system related policies which deal with parent communication.

4.3.3.2 Understanding school policies and procedures

All participants expressed a need for system related information related to the school, such as the *“layout of the buildings”, “administrative procedures”, “requisitioning of stock items, stationery and cleaning materials”* as well as *“policies on extra and co-curricular duties”*. Another participant stated: *“I did not know where the toilets were and where the learners may or may not play”*. They stressed the fact that the lack of guidance in the above-mentioned areas, made their start to the school difficult. Many participants indicated that they were not clear on the roles and responsibilities of the class assistants and therefore did not know how to involve them in the class activities. As one of the participants remarked: *“I did not know what the roles of the class assistants were, therefore, I did not know what she had to do and what I had to do”*.

It became evident that the lack of general orientation with regard to school policies and procedures was found to be problematic for the newly appointed staff members and that it contributed to making the beginning teachers' start at the school difficult.

4.3.3.3 Inadequate resources

Although the school is a well-resourced school, the need for more class-assistants was expressed. One of the participants remarked: *"I find it difficult to divide my attention between the various ability groups in my class. I know that I should do more practical work, but for that I would need an additional class assistant. This will help me in serving the heterogeneous community I serve"*. This problem could furthermore be supported by the researcher's experience as a newly appointed principal, in the difficulty experienced in recruiting para-professionals such as therapists. Most of the learners at the research school would benefit from therapy, but due to a shortage of therapists, access to therapy for the learners is limited. At the research school, the post establishment for therapists makes provision for five therapists of which only four posts have been filled. The school has been unsuccessful in filling the fifth post for three consecutive years. Possible reasons for this could be the scarcity of qualified therapists or the poor salary structures for therapists working in the Department of Education, in comparison with that of therapists working in private practices. The school also experiences the need for a social worker, due to the fact that many of the learners are experiencing social problems. A social worker could also be invaluable in providing the necessary support to the families of learners with disabilities. The shortage of paraprofessionals is supported by Newhoudt-Druchen (2008:4). Karr and Gillespie (2006:8) further confirm that special schools do not always have their full complement of staff and that access to support services is limited. They give the following as reasons for the shortages:

- Growing demand—more children needing a wider range of services than ever before
- Lack of trained professionals to fill available positions
- Not enough funded positions to serve students in need
- Inadequately trained personnel provide substandard services

Shortages of related services personnel impacted on the newly appointed teachers and could be seen as a contributing factor in making their start at the school difficult. This situation contributes to feelings of a lack of support from the school.

4.3.3.4 Lack of support

All participants indicated that they needed much more assistance than they actually received and that the management team was not as supportive as they would have expected them to be. *“When I came to the school I found that there was a gap between management and classroom issues.....where I felt at HOD and Deputy Principal (DP) level there should be more involvement. An HOD and DP should be more aware of what is happening in the classroom. The HOD is not directly involved. So I found that problematic.”* It was furthermore felt that *“HOD’s need to be very proactive in teaching new teachers how to work with learners with behavioural problems, hyperactivity, the specialised education programme....parent liason....”* The lack of support may lead to a sense of emotional, social and professional isolation (Whitaker 2001:3). The general consensus, reached by all participants, was that the school was not doing enough in an effort to provide beginner teachers with support. Most of the learning that took place was self directed and took place by chance. The participants also made mention of the fact, that school district organised training sessions and workshops, rarely had any value for the special education teacher and, very often, was only aimed at mainstream schools.

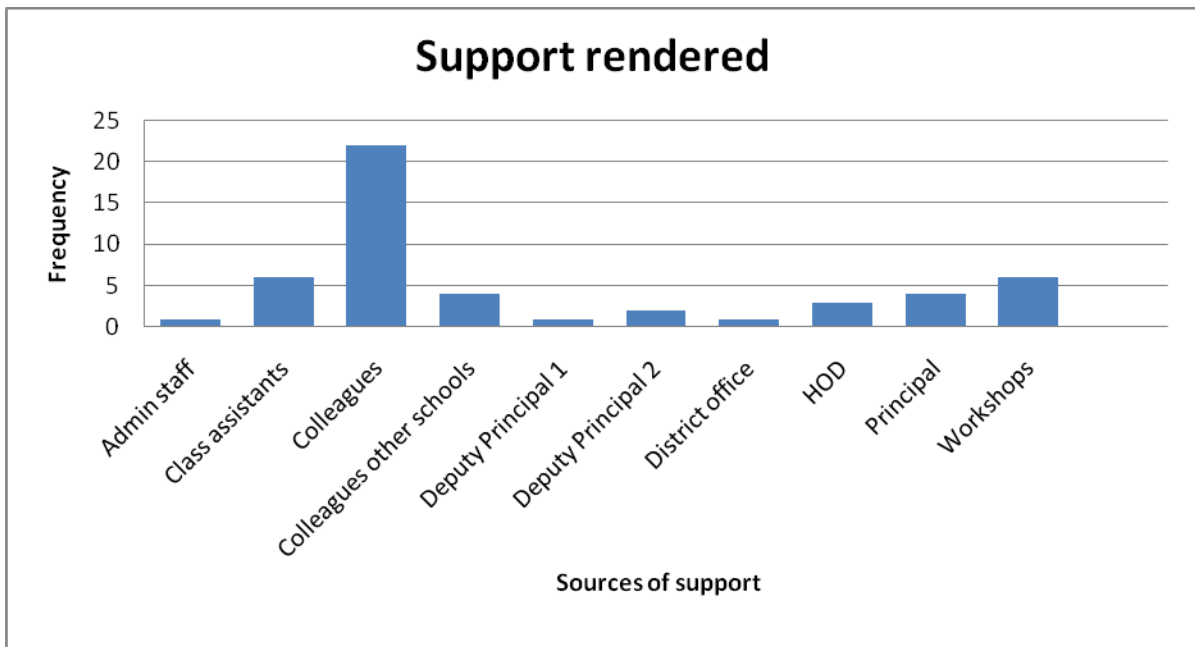
4.3.4 Support received

Figure 4.1 provides a summary of the relative frequency of support received by the newly appointed teachers. Although the findings are represented in a bar graph format, this graph only depicts the number of times the participants mentioned the various sources of support.

As the data was of a qualitative nature, the graph does not represent this data in a statistically correct format. It merely provides an indication of the outcome of the data gathered and confirms some of the conclusions the researcher arrived at when analysing this particular data. Looking at the data collected in Figure 4.1, it is evident that the

school was not organised to help and support newly appointed teachers to adjust to the new working environment. The culture and structures of the school were not geared towards meeting the needs of newly appointed teachers. Although informal and formal support was rendered, it was found to be uneven and inconsistent.

Figure 4.1: Frequency of support received by beginner teachers



4.3.4.1 Informal support

The participants reported that they received informal support from colleagues, more often than any other forms of support. One participant had the following to say: *“There were many teachers who have asked if I was ok and if I needed help. The teacher next door to me assisted me without me having had to ask for help.”* All participants felt that the most valuable contributions made towards assisting them, were from their colleagues and class assistants. They found their colleagues and class assistants as the most supportive and helpful.

The following remark from one of the participants supports the above statement: *“The people who did the most for me were the teachers in my immediate environment, and my class assistant. She shared ideas collected from previous experience in other teachers’ classes with me”*. The teaching staff and class assistants were perceived as

“very helpful and friendly” and created the impression that they “really care”. One participant remarked: “*Teachers are very obliging. They were very willing to help and orientate me towards school routines and towards the learners’ needs.*” The participants did, however, indicate a lack of support from school management team members and expressed the need for more involvement of management team members in the induction of staff members. The fact that “*the HOD’s were not directly involved*” was found to be “*problematic*”. The following remark was made by a participant: “*I expected more from my HOD..... I really expected more guidance from them.*”

All participants indicated that the main strategy employed to find solutions to their problems, was to seek help from their colleagues. This point refers to the beliefs of social constructive development theories, that adult learning is an autonomous and self-directed process, whereby the “learners” are perceived as active participants to the process of learning (Abdullah 2008; Knowles 1980; Lieb 1991). The participants indicated that they were more comfortable in discussing their problems with other beginner teachers, than with more experienced teachers at the school, due to a fear of being regarded as incompetent. This finding is consistent with the statement of Barry Sweeny (2008) that novice teachers are more likely to turn to their equally inexperienced peers for help, rather than seeking help from experienced teachers. One participant, however, indicated that the personality types of the teachers determine the method employed to seek the necessary help in solving problems. She remarked that: “*A part of me is an extrovert and another part an introvert.....I am not a person that easily will ask for assistance. Then you get other teachers like teacher X who is a question orientated person who will easily ask questions.... so it depends on your personality.*”

4.3.4.2 Formal support

The formal support they received was very limited and centred around workshops and meetings. These were found not to be as useful as the informal help received from colleagues. Very often these workshops are not relevant to the teachers and therefore the learning that took place was not as effective as it was intended to be.

In providing support that is aimed at meeting the needs of the newly appointed teachers, could assist in making the introduction of the beginner teacher to the context of a special school, less problematic. The following section deals with the importance of introducing an induction programme in assisting the introduction of the newcomer to the context of a special school.

4.3.5 Introducing an effective induction programme

4.3.5.1 The importance of an induction programme

All participants indicated the importance of a staff induction programme in introducing new staff members to their new school environment and context. They were of the opinion that an induction programme is invaluable in gaining the “*knowledge to effectively teach the very special learners*”. The general feeling was that they would have been far more effective if they were to have received structured help. One of the participants remarked that, “*An induction programme will assist in sharing important information with the new teachers as, very often, the novices are not aware of what to ask*”. “*Although they realise that something is lacking, they do not always know what or whom to ask.*” One of the participants remarked that “*...an induction programme would have helped in ordering my thoughts and would have helped in directing my teaching*”. Being part of an induction programme, would have gone a long way towards improving the newly appointed teachers’ effectiveness and their understanding of school policies, procedures and channels of communication established at the school.

Through this study the need for an effective context specific induction programme for these beginner teachers, has become clear. The development of such an induction programme is supported by Vygotsky’s situativity theory which emphasises that the most effective professional development is situated in a particular school, where there is shared understanding. It furthermore sees the school as the classroom and involves social interaction, includes learning from observing individuals, sharing ideas and engaging in practical tasks (Owen 2004:4).

The need for an effective context specific induction programme also links to the social constructive theories which support the principle that adult learning should be

relevancy-orientated (Lieb 1991). The novices need to see the reason for learning something and the learning that takes place must be applicable to their needs or work.

In order for such an induction programme to effectively address the needs of beginner teachers, the following analysis of the specific needs of beginning teachers will focus on the areas of importance and possible structure required by such an induction programme.

4.3.5.2 *Synthesis of findings: Needs experienced by the newly appointed teachers*

Through the analysis of the problems experienced by the newly appointed teachers (Section 4.3.1) and the support they received (Section 4.3.2) during the early years at the school, the researcher was able to identify the needs experienced by the participants. The “Hyperresearch” analysis tool allowed the researcher to highlight the needs experienced by beginner teachers at a special school for intellectually disabled learners. In analysing the data, the following categories of needs emerged from the raw data. In order to assist in structuring the guidelines for an effective induction programme for beginner teachers, the researcher categorised the various needs (as defined in Chapter 2) into the following three main categories:

- Professional needs
- Personal needs
- Organisational or administrative needs

Figure 4.2: Teacher needs

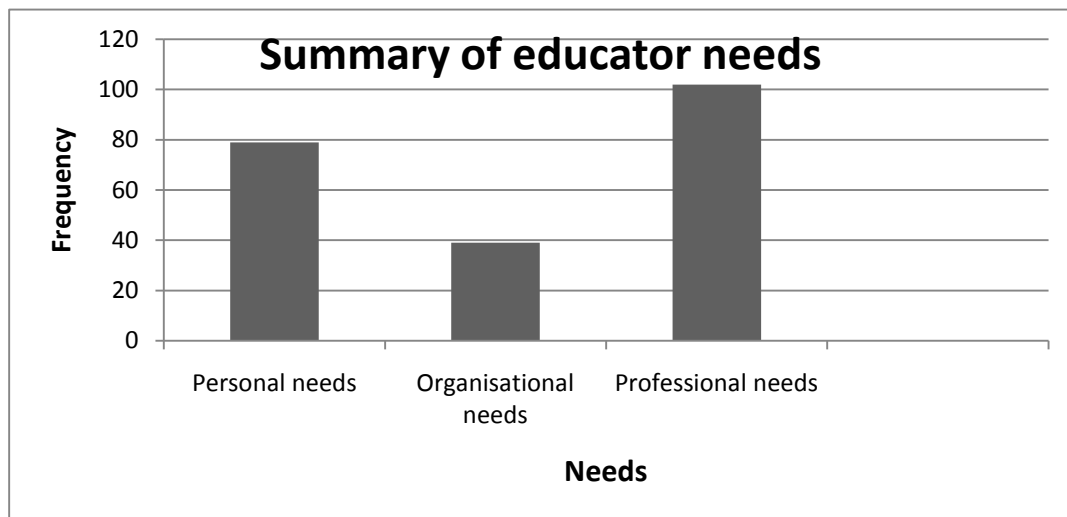


Figure 4.2 once again is an indication of the relative frequency of the participants' responses relating to needs. The data, therefore, is only indicative and is not compiled by any recognised statistical process.

a. Professional needs

An analysis of the needs experienced by the participants revealed very high professional needs. This could be attributed to the many special education system related problems and instructional needs of the novices. Among the needs mentioned are; classroom management skills (section 4.3.1.3), curriculum development and adaptation skills, understanding learners' needs (section 4.3.1.6) and information on the classified difficulties related to the learners' specific disabilities (section 4.3.1.6), dealing with learner behaviour (section 4.3.1.3) and school-parent relationships (section 4.3.1.7).

These findings are supported by the Integrated Quality Management System and in particular the Personal Growth Plans (PGP) of the participants where the following areas for development were identified: Particular attention needs to be paid to the development of a balance between goals set and learner needs and to see an improvement in record keeping.

b. Personal needs

The participants also experienced high levels of personal needs. These needs emerged from the feelings of isolation (section 4.3.1.1) they experienced on entry into the new school. Furthermore, their identified feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy contributed to the high levels of personal needs experienced by the participants. It also became evident that, due to the many problems experienced by the newly appointed teachers, their feelings of uncertainty increased. As the beginner teachers were confronted with challenges at their new school, they began questioning their own competence. This fact was supported by remarks from the participants, such as: "*I did not know where I was going,*" and "*I did not know if I was on the right track,*" and "*Some days I was despondent. Some days it felt as if I wasn't the teacher I am supposed to be.*"

By receiving support from colleagues and seeking answers to their problems, the participants gradually gained confidence in their skills and abilities. As mentioned by Joiner and Edwards (2008:44), it is only when the basic needs of beginning teachers are met, that they will be ready to move on to higher needs. It became clear that these basic needs require attention to ensure that the teachers have the ability to focus on higher level professional needs. It is therefore important to provide the necessary support to the newly appointed staff members. By providing the emotional support needed, it will help beginning teachers to gain confidence and will accelerate their assimilation into the new school.

c. Organisational or administrative needs

Although the participants displayed organisational needs, these were not as significant as the professional and personal needs experienced by them. These needs were mainly related to system related issues pertaining to the school's policies and procedures, such as administrative systems, stock and stationery requisitioning and extra and co-curricular activities.

The findings revealed that the needs experienced by the participants, are related to the problems experienced by the newly appointed teachers. Table 4.1 displays the needs and the related problems experienced by the participants. As previously mentioned, in analysing the data, the problems were categorized according to three categories of needs emerging from the study, namely professional, personal and organizational needs. The researcher came to the conclusion that the problems experienced by the newly appointed teachers and the needs experienced by them, are inter-related.

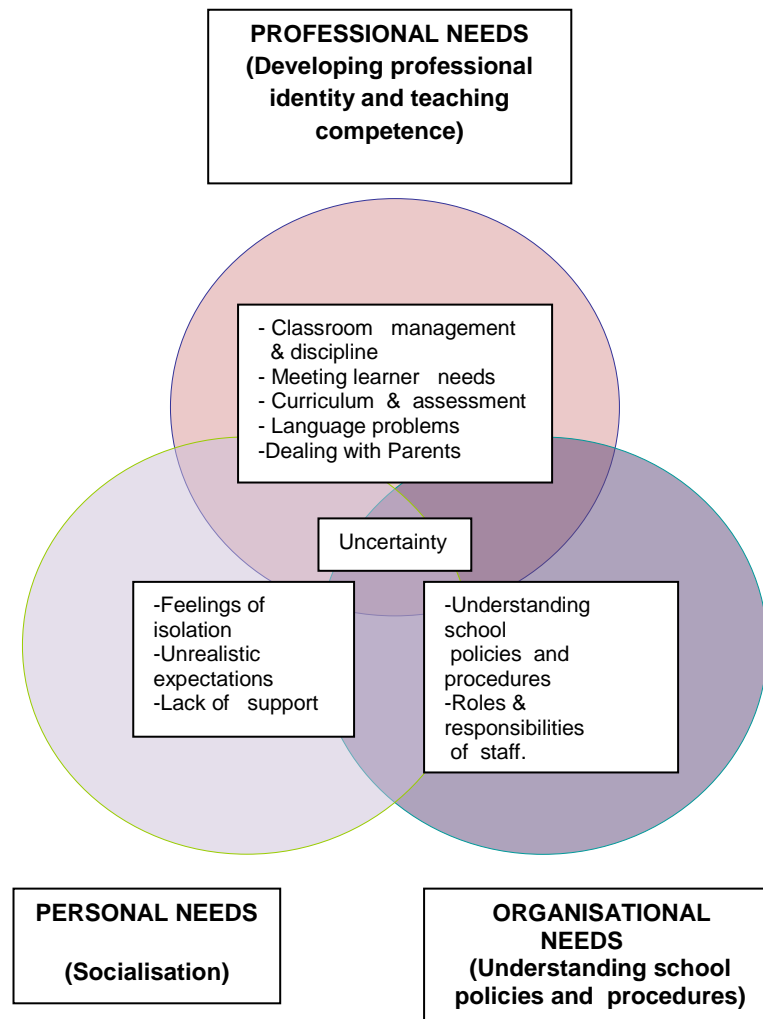
Based on the data collected and the findings of the research, the researcher would like to propose a model (figure 4.3), which shows the interrelatedness of the dimensions as indicated in table 4.1. The model links the three main categories of novices' needs (personal, professional and organisational needs) in such a way as to show that all needs are interrelated. The overlapping circles indicate that the needs experienced by the newly appointed teachers should not be viewed in isolation from each other. In fact, the model suggests that needs are generally interdependent and are normally all related to a general level of uncertainty experienced by the novice teacher. The model

furthermore attempts to group the problems experienced by the beginning teachers in such a way as to reveal the main areas of overlap of the various categories of needs.

Table 4.1: Needs Analysis of Participants

Professional needs: Developing professional identity and teaching competency	Personal needs: Socialisation	Organisational/ administrative needs: Understanding school policies and procedures
Classroom management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to manage differentiated classroom activities • Needs help with classroom organization- seating of learners. • Structuring of homework activities • General classroom administration 	Uncertainty Reported feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and loss of confidence	Policies and procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of school and district policies • Policies on learner progression and class placement as well as phase plans, timetables, completion of registers and class structures
Curriculum and Assessment problems Problems relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to do preparation and planning • Selecting appropriate teaching methods • Designing of differentiated activities. • Pacing of activities • Assessment strategies 	Inadequate support Perceived lack of support for and understanding of the needs of novices. Needs are not met.	General school organisation information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation with regard to school organizational plan, buildings, administrative procedures such as photocopying, requesting stock and stationery
Learner needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor understanding of the intellectual abilities of the learners • Poor understanding of learner behaviour patterns • Lack of orientation with regard to learner disabilities and their support needs • Lack of information on medical needs of learners 	Isolation Feelings of isolation which stem from the fact that teacher needs are not met.	Roles and responsibilities of staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on roles and responsibilities of staff members
Unrealistic expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrealistic expectations with regard to learner abilities and achievements 		
Dealing with parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing problems with parent expectations and communication with parents 		
Discipline problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having difficulty in dealing with learner discipline • Knowledge on school code of conduct 		
Language problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language problems relating to the fact that learners cannot speak the language of learning and teaching • Problems associated with the fact that learners are non-verbal 		

Figure 4.3: Model of Inter-relatedness of problems encountered by beginner teachers.



If the identified three categories of needs are not satisfied, the dissatisfaction caused will manifest itself to a lesser or greater degree of uncertainty experienced by the novice teacher. For this reason, uncertainty is shown as central to the model and is found at the intersection of all three circles.

4.3.5.3 Aspects of importance for an induction programme

As this study is focussed on developing a set of guidelines, which need to be considered when developing an induction programme for beginner teachers at a special school, the above analysis can be used to categorise the main components which need to be

included in such an induction programme. Figure 4.4 shows the results of the analysis of these components as determined during the interview process.

Figure 4.4: Topics of importance to be included in an induction programme.

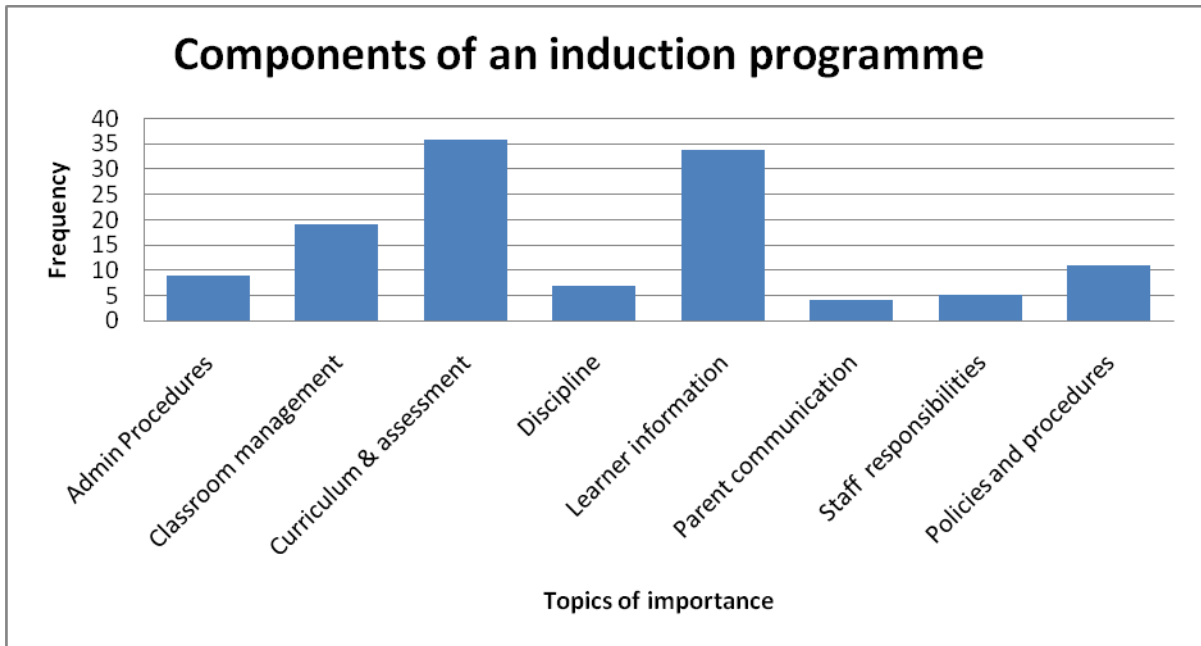


Figure 4.4 gives an indication of the importance of various topics in relation to each other. Again the bar graph is not based on numerical data collected by means of quantitative research, but instead it refers to the frequency at which these topics were mentioned in the interviews. Both curriculum and assessment guidance, as well as familiarisation with learner information, such as medical status, scholastic ability, behavioural patterns, support needs analysis, home background and the summative profile of the learner, were raised as being very important during the interview process. The following is a typical example of feedback received during the interview process: *“As a new teacher I think a new teacher needs two weeks to learn about the classified difficulties of each learner.....meaning their disability type.....and what the things are that go with that kind of disability.”*

Issues with regard to classroom management were also identified as important aspects to be addressed during an induction programme. Furthermore, the following topics were identified by the participants as important aspects to be included in compiling a context specific induction programme for the research school:

- Curriculum and assessment practices
- Learner information
- Classroom management issues
- District and school policies and procedures
- Administrative/organisational procedures
- Discipline matters
- Staff roles and responsibilities
- School-parent relationships

The above-mentioned aspects correspond with the features of a successful induction programme as identified by Smith and Ingersoll (2004:683) and Heyns (2000:162). This is also supported by social constructive development theories which see adult learners as being practical, since they focus on aspects of the learning process which they perceive as being the most useful to them in their work (Abdullah 2008; Knowles 1980; Lieb 1991).

In successfully addressing the above identified aspects of an induction programme it is necessary that the following guidelines for an induction programme are adhered to. The guidelines discussed in the next section of the research, will assist in successfully addressing the identified aspects of an induction programme.

4.3.5.4 *Guidelines for an induction programme*

Analysis of the data provided the researcher with a clear understanding of the participants' experiences, problems and needs as newly appointed staff members at a school for intellectually disabled learners. The deep understanding of the real life experiences of the participants assisted the researcher in formulating guidelines for a context specific staff induction programme, which will increase the effectiveness of beginning teachers at the research school in Gauteng, as well as increase job satisfaction which, in the end, will lead to staff retention. The guidelines have been formulated to address the three categories of teacher needs, namely personal needs, professional needs and organisational needs. These guidelines have been derived

against the theoretical backdrop of adult learning theories discussed in chapter one. The following guidelines should direct the designing of a context specific induction programme for the school:

a. Well planned and flexible induction programme

An induction programme should be well planned, flexible and should take the individual needs of the beginning teachers into consideration. It should furthermore acknowledge that all teachers find themselves in different phases of their career cycle. An understanding of the various stages in the career cycle of a teacher will clarify the expectations of the new teachers and would assist in aligning the induction programme to better address the needs of the beginning teachers.

Joiner and Edwards (2008:45) emphasize the importance of addressing the “true needs of the teachers” and warn against a “one-size fits all” approach. The need was expressed by the participants, to regularly get together for short information sharing sessions on policy matters, and to discuss learners’ medical conditions, disabilities and syndromes. The focus should be on “*short workshops or training sessions more often*”, rather than “*long workshops less often*”. The suggestion was that a “*year round programme*” be established and that the programme is to be repeated annually. The participants felt that the school should draw on the strengths and knowledge of the staff at the school and only when absolutely necessary, service providers from outside the school should be involved. They felt that the strong knowledge and skills base, built up over many years, was one of the strengths of the school. This fact is supported by Vygotski’s situativity theory, which stresses the fact that, rather than looking outside of the school for expertise, teachers build it within their own environment, becoming avid seekers of research and best practices that will help themselves and others (Owen 2004).

A well-planned, flexible induction programme should set clear and achievable goals, should extend over a longer period of time, should make provision for teacher assessment and systemic evaluation, and should allow for constructive feedback. Each of these requirements will be discussed in more detail in the section that follows.

i. Setting of common, clear and achievable goals

An induction programme should set common, clear and achievable goals for the team to work towards and should provide clear direction. This guideline is supported by the need expressed by the participants for clear direction. One of the participants summarised this need in the following quote: *“It would have helped if somebody had given me a file of what had been done before or even had said here are preparation sheets, this is how you must write it down and here are the themes and this is what you must teach the children.”* Other terms used by the participants, indicating the need for a common goal and vision were: *“global project”*, *“sharing of the goal and vision”* and *“a community project”*. One participant stated: *“To me there is no such thing as you are there and I am here. We have to work together to make the thing work.”* In order to make the learning experience meaningful, the teachers must have a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives of the learning experience. One of the participants felt that *“...things should not take place on an island in isolation”*. In short, they need to know the purpose of the learning experience or they must see a reason for learning or doing something. This fact is supported by the constructivist theory which believes that adult learning is relevancy-orientated. Newly appointed teachers will appreciate an organised induction programme with clearly defined goals. According to the social constructive development theories, adult learning should be goal-orientated (Abdullah 2008; Knowles 1980; Lieb 1991). Adult learners need to know what goal they want to attain. Therefore, they appreciate an educational programme that is organized and has clearly defined elements. Adults learning should be relevancy-oriented and adults must see a reason for learning something (Abdullah 2008; Knowles 1980; Lieb 1991). Learning, therefore, has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of any value to adults.

ii. Extending an induction programme

The induction programme should stretch over a longer period of time and should not give too much information too soon, as this could lead to information overload. The participants agreed that, when they started at the school, they were bombarded with a lot of new information. They had a *“new school, new learners, new colleagues and new systems and procedures”* to contend with. They admitted to feeling overwhelmed by all the new information. They mentioned that newly appointed staff should be

allowed time in which “*to find their feet and to orientate themselves*”. The beginning teacher needs time in which to practise new skills and ideas (Phillips 2008:2). As one participant remarked: “*I think you get your answers through the practical application of things. If I tried something and it did not work, I left it and tried something else. In the beginning I learnt a lot from the mistakes I made.*” Another participant stated that to him it was a matter of “trial and error”.

Not only do remarks such as these indicate that the participants should be allowed time in which to adapt to the context of a special school, it furthermore confirms the lack of structured direction. In ensuring an effective induction programme, careful attention should be given to ensuring that the support structures provide structured guidance and that enough time is allowed for the practising of newly gained skills and knowledge

iii. Teacher assessment and systemic evaluation

Teacher assessment should not be the focus of the induction programme, therefore assessment of the beginner teachers should not form part of the initial stages of the induction programme. One of the participants remarked: “*I would not have liked other colleagues to observe me in practice, as I was not confident and did not really know what to do.*” Another participant remarked that she was glad about the support she received and added that she was grateful for the fact that the experienced colleague did not “*check up*” on her. One participant indicated that the appointment of a mentor for the new person could be very helpful. However, “*...it is important not to feel that they are checking to see if you are doing your work*”. For an already insecure teacher, the experience of being evaluated may be devastating; therefore during the first year of teaching, no formal evaluation should take place. Instead of conducting a formal evaluation which entails a class visit and lesson observation conducted by the novice’s superior, it could take on the format of an informal consultative process conducted by the appointed mentor of the novice.

An induction programme should also allow for systemic evaluation in order to ensure continued quality. The importance of the evaluation of the programme is supported by Barbazette (2007:1), who stresses the importance of programme evaluation and feedback from its participants.

iv. Constructive feedback

Allowance should be made for constructive critical feedback and acknowledgement of achievements. The need expressed by the participants for the involvement of the heads of department, deputy principals and principal is supportive of this fact. Most of the participants repeatedly mentioned the need for confirmation and feedback from their superiors and colleagues. One of the participants remarked: *“The biggest frustration possibly was the fact that my supervisor never visited my class to see whether I was on the right track. Nobody ever commented and I always wondered if I was on the right track.”* By acknowledging achievements, positive behaviour and excellence, the novices’ need for emotional support is addressed. This will address the feelings of isolation and uncertainty. A responsive induction programme will allow new teachers to build an understanding of their new context and assist in building skills and knowledge. Van Lakerveld (2005:2) acknowledges the role of others and the dialogue with them in exploring, explaining and validating one’s own knowledge. Vygotsky (1978) furthermore suggests that cognitive development depends on the student’s social interaction with others.

The second guideline for an effective induction programme focuses on the formal and informal support structures which should form part of a successful induction programme. It states that an induction programme should be a team effort, it should treat novices with respect in order to maintain their dignity, it should be well-resourced with time and money, it should include a variety of support activities and it stresses the importance of the role of the principal in the induction process. In the following section of the study, each of these requirements will be dealt with in more detail.

b. Formal and informal support structures

The induction programme must make provision for *“formal and informal”* support structures, which are embedded in a professional culture of teaching and learning, which values the contributions of both the individual and the team. Formal support structures such as a mentoring group, learning circles and peer groups, could provide the opportunity for questions to be asked and answers to be derived at collaboratively, or problems to be solved by the team. The value of the School Based Support Team (SBST) as a formal support structure was highlighted through the following words of

one of the participants: *“Everybody has the opportunity to express their concerns at the SBST. Nobody thinks that you are stupid or that you cannot discipline the learners. We all listen and realize that we have the same problems and together we solve the problems.”* This guideline is supported by the social constructivism’s belief that adults learn through social discourse and interaction. They emphasise the role of others in exploring, explaining and validating one’s own knowledge (Van Lakerveld 2005:2).

Adult learning theories confirm that learning takes place at three levels, namely organisational, group and individual; and that all three levels of learning contribute to the success of a learning organisation (Marsick & Watkins 2001, Berg & Chyung 2008). An induction programme should provide opportunities for new teachers to work collaboratively with other staff members in order to allow for frequent and meaningful interaction with colleagues. Informal discussion forums with colleagues to discuss areas of concern and to plan together will be of great value to new staff members. One participant remarked: *“It is valuable to talk to other teachers and to see that they are experiencing things in the same way as I do.”* This fact is supported by Vygotsky (1978), the learning theorist, who suggested that cognitive development depends on the student’s social interaction with others. Meetings should be organised for sharing of problems and to collectively derive solutions and answers; and not only to disseminate information. This once again is in line with Senge’s organisational theory, where the “team and being part of a team” adds to the meaningfulness of the learning experience (Senge 1990:236). Wong (2004:42) is also of the opinion that belonging, as a basic need, is the key to keeping skilled teachers. New teachers want to be part of a team and part of a culture, therefore the induction process should provide the relationship and support teachers need in order to become part of a team. Vygotsky’s situativity approach furthermore supports this guideline as it states that the most effective development is situated in a particular school, team or community, where there is shared understanding (Owen 2004:3).

i. A team effort

Induction should be a team effort and not be left to an individual or a small group of staff members. Bubb and Early (2007:121) indicate that the whole staff should be responsible for inducting a new staff member and that it is not the sole responsibility of

the induction tutor. All staff members, and in particular experienced teachers, play a key role in supporting new teachers. Many of the participants indicated the need for formal support structures. The need they expressed for assistance from the “team” such as managers, colleagues and paraprofessionals, supports this first guideline. This guideline is based on Senge’s organizational learning theory which states that the “team” and “being part of the team” adds to the meaningfulness of the learning experience (Senge 1990:236).

ii. Treat novices with respect and maintain their dignity

An induction programme should ensure that new teachers are treated with respect and should, furthermore, allow all beginning teachers the opportunity to display their strengths and the wealth of knowledge they bring to the situation. This fact is supported by the constructivist theory that has the understanding that by adulthood, a person has accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge. The need expressed by the participants to make contributions, and to be involved in the various activities offered at the research school, supports this guideline. Phillips (2008:2) states that adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and should be allowed to voice their opinions freely.

iii. Resourced with time and money

The induction programme must be well resourced with time and money, and the working conditions of the newly appointed teachers, must be carefully designed in order to allow them the opportunity to be fully involved in the induction activities. Joiner and Edwards (2008:45-46) mention the implication of financial and human resource cost, and highlight that implementing a high quality induction programme, is a costly exercise. All participants in the study had a concern about time. They mentioned time as a factor in observing others in practice and discussing problems with colleagues and superiors. In order to provide the necessary time for these staff development activities, it may be necessary to appoint a relief teacher, which will allow time for development activities to take place during the school day. This could require additional financial resources which will have to be budgeted for. Another resource implication could be, to appoint more class assistants in order to ensure additional help

in those classes where there are no assistants. The school principal as strategic leader has to ensure that, in doing planning, provision is made for the necessary resources.

iv. Variety of support activities

An induction programme should include various support activities such as a mentoring programme, peer support structures and learning circles. The newly appointed teachers should be afforded the opportunity to observe experienced colleagues in action. As one of the participants remarked: *“It could have helped if a person had guidance from another figure. Somebody, who could invite you to her class to spend some time in her class, and to observe and see how she handled her day. That would have helped me in organising myself.”* The need expressed by the participants to observe other colleagues in practice emphasises the importance of including peer coaching as a form of support in the induction process of newly appointed teachers. The benefits of peer coaching as a form of support in the professional development of beginning teachers point to an increase in self-efficacy, higher motivation levels, and a move from subject-centered instruction to student-centered instruction (Slater & Simmons 2001). A further benefit of peer coaching includes the building of closer relationships with colleagues and the feeling of being part of the team (Heider 2005).

Most of the participants expressed the need for a mentoring system and to observe colleagues in practice. One participant felt that: *“...one should appoint a mentor for the newcomer to the school.....somebody that will always be involved and available to help.”* They indicated that this would have been meaningful in assisting them in gaining knowledge with regard to classroom management, and dealing with learner behaviour and discipline. One participant made the following remark: *“It would have given me the necessary encouragement to order my thoughts and structure my teaching. Instead, I had to fall around and discover things to myself.”* As mentoring forms an important dimension in the ongoing development of teachers, it can be regarded as very valuable in the socialisation process of teachers learning a new role (Bush & Middlewood 2005:157).

The fact that novices indicated that they preferred turning to their equally inexperienced colleagues for help, instead of seeking help from more experienced colleagues, is

consistent with literature (Sweeny 2008). By including peer support activities as a form of support during the induction period of the beginning teacher, it can result in the fostering of best teaching practices.

All of the above-mentioned support structures could be linked with the social constructivist adult learning theory and involve the opportunity for students to have social discourse and interaction. Social constructivism acknowledges the importance of the role of others and of the dialogue with them in exploring, explaining and validating one's own knowledge (van Lakerveld 2005:2).

v. *The role of the principal in the induction programme*

The principal should support the induction process and play a central role in establishing a learning organization, in which a culture of learning and teaching is nurtured. The importance of the involvement of leaders and management, in supporting the induction process, has been stressed by Bush and Middlewood (2005:157). Literature strongly supports the role of the principal in cultivating positive relationships (Johnson & Birkeland 2003; Angelle 2006; Renwick 2007; Richards 2004). The participants in the study were appreciative of the “*open door policy*” maintained by the principal.

4.4 SUMMARY

The findings derived by the researcher in this study are consistent with the literature. This chapter has indicated, as had many studies before, that newly appointed teachers find their beginning years at a new school very challenging, regardless of their qualifications, years and type of previous experience. The analysis furthermore revealed that the participants' responses could be categorised within the themes of personal, professional and organisational needs. These findings affirm other studies' assertion, that new teachers need guidance and support with regard to issues such as classroom management, curriculum interpretation and adaptation, learner information, discipline and parent communication. If these problems are not timeously addressed, it may lead to feelings of disillusionment, inadequacy and eventually it may lead to the

teacher leaving the field of education. The most meaningful support received by the newly appointed teachers was assessed, and it was found that colleagues provided the most support and help whereas it was felt that the school management team should have been more involved in assisting the newly appointed staff members. Lastly, the aspects which should be included in an induction programme for the school were identified and listed. The clear views of the research participants, relating to their experiences as newly appointed staff members, allowed the researcher to deduct guidelines for an induction programme at the research school, against the backdrop of adult learning theories. An induction programme designed according to the guidelines set in section 4.3.5.4 and which includes the topics of importance listed in section 4.3.5.3 should address the needs of newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng, South Africa.

5 CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored and offered insight into the real life experiences of eight newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng, South Africa, in order to create an understanding of the specific needs and problems experienced by the teachers on their entry into the new school. The purpose of this study was to shed light on the process of induction, in order to establish guidelines which should be followed in the process of designing a context specific induction programme for the research school.

5.2 SUMMARY

In the introduction to chapter one (section 1.1), the researcher gives a short overview of the problem of staff turnover in the teaching profession and the effects it may have on the profession. It goes on to indicate that teacher attrition forms a large part of the problem, and that it seems to be particularly high among special education teachers, especially in their first few years of teaching. The many challenges experienced by the novices on entry to the new school, often make it difficult for them to remain in the teaching profession. One of the ways of overcoming the problem is the introduction of induction programmes, which has proven to be most successful in other countries. In this study, guidelines for a staff induction programme was based on adult learning theories, such as Senge's organizational learning theory and Vygotski's situativity theory (section 1.4).

The study aimed (section 1.3) at establishing guidelines for an effective staff induction programme, which will improve teacher performance and retention at a school for learners with intellectual disabilities in Gauteng, South Africa. The study was therefore directed by the research problem (section 1.2): "What are the guidelines for an effective staff induction programme at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng, South Africa?"

In order to solve the research problem, a qualitative research methodology was followed and a case study was conducted with eight newly appointed teachers within their first three years of employment at a school for intellectually disabled learners in Gauteng, South Africa (section 1.5). For the purpose of this study, convenient, selective sampling was used (section 1.5.1). Semi-structured personal interviews were used as the main form of data collection (section 1.5.2). The raw data was analysed by means of “Hyperresearch” a software tool for qualitative data analysis (section 1.5.2.1). Triangulation of the raw data was discussed in section 1.5.2.2 and ethical considerations (section 1.5.3) which should be considered in conducting this research were discussed in section 1.5.3). Important definitions used in this case study were selected and defined in section 1.6 and in the closing section (section 1.7) of the chapter the outline of the chapters was discussed.

In chapter two, the case study, as outlined in chapter one, was supported by a literature study conducted on the problems experienced by novices in general, as well as in the context of special education. It is a well researched fact that newly appointed teachers are confronted with many problems on entry into the new school environment. If newly appointed teachers are not assisted in dealing with these challenges, they may lose their confidence and experience feelings of inadequacy and isolation. This might, in the end, lead to them leaving the teaching profession (section 2.1).

As this case study was conducted in the specific context of a special school, an outline of special education in a South African context was given (section 2.2), with the focus on the working conditions in special education (section 2.2.2). A better understanding of special education and, in particular, education of the intellectually disabled, necessitated a description of the classification of intellectual disabilities (section 2.2.3). The researcher aimed at creating an understanding of the concept of special education, before discussing the six most prevalent problems experienced by novices in general (Section 2.3). Literature has however, not focused much on problems experienced by beginning teachers in special education. Therefore, the researcher only briefly touched on the problems experienced by novices in the context of special education.

The study, furthermore, required an understanding of beginner teachers' needs (Section 2.4). The categories used for describing teachers' needs were taken from Heyns (2000:161,162) namely, personal needs and professional needs. Personal needs (section 2.4.1) refer to the emotional needs experienced by the newly appointed teacher. It includes the cultivation of the novice's positive self-esteem, confidence and development of feelings of effectiveness. Professional needs (section 2.4.2), on the other hand, involve the development of an understanding of district and school policies and procedures, and specifically refer to school administration practices and instructional needs which include processes such as classroom organisation, lesson preparation and planning, student assessment and curriculum content and methodology.

The novice's entry into the profession could be made easier by implementing support structures, which are aimed at providing the teacher with the support and guidance needed to adapt to the new working environment. In section 2.6 possible methods of support were viewed and briefly discussed. The literature study highlighted the importance and value of induction programmes in the retention of staff members and therefore, staff induction programmes were discussed in full detail (section 2.6). The various career stages of teachers (section 2.5) were also discussed, to create a better understanding of the support needed, as the novice teacher proceeds through these stages. The discussion on induction programmes included a discussion of the influence of school climate and culture on staff induction (section 2.6.5) and emphasised the role of the principal in the induction process (section 2.6.6). Various components of an induction programme, such as mentoring (section 2.7.1), study groups (section 2.7.2) and peer coaching (section 2.7.3) were touched on briefly and a short overview of their benefits were pointed out. Mentoring was discussed in more detail due to the value which it adds to the induction process. By including a host of support structures, the successful introduction of the novice to the school could be enhanced.

In chapter three, the qualitative research design is described in detail (section 3.3). The chosen method of data collection (section 3.3.2) was semi-structured individual interviews, conducted with eight newly appointed teachers at a school for intellectually disabled learners. Ethical measures were described with specific reference to informed consent (section 3.4.1.1), avoidance of harm (section 3.4.1.2), privacy, confidentiality

and anonymity (section 3.4.1.3). Finally, the researcher's responsibility to refrain from making value judgements was discussed in section 3.4.1.4).

The roles played by reliability and validity in qualitative research, and the achievement thereof, were mentioned in section 3.4.2. As the case study was conducted on a single entity of the population, the findings of this study could not be generalized.

The raw data was analysed using a software tool which made the data analysis very easy, yet very thorough (section 3.6). The literature study undertaken allowed for triangulation between the interviews, the notes taken during the interviews, the class visit and work control reports, the completed IQMS documents and finally the focus group interview conducted with participants and the deputy principal of the school in order to verify the findings of the research.

Data collection (section 3.5) mainly took place by means of semi-structured interviews. The interviews took place over a period of three weeks with eight individuals taken from a larger population (section 3.5.1). The eight participants were diverse in their trained teaching areas and their individual backgrounds (section 3.5.2). Section 3.5.3 deals with the researcher as instrument, as in qualitative research the researcher is central to conducting the research. An interview schedule was developed, and consisted of thirteen open-ended questions (section 3.5.4).

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the results. The profiles of the participants are discussed in section 4.2. Although this does not focus on the biographical data, the researcher is of the meaning that it will give meaning to the main findings. The code descriptors used for analysing the data are explained in table 4.1. The raw data was analysed and captured under the following themes:

- Beginning teachers' impressions of teaching
- Classroom related problems
- School related problems
- Support received
- Introducing an effective induction programme
 - The importance of an induction programme

- Aspects of an induction programme
- Guidelines for an induction programme

In section 4.3.1 the problems faced by the newly appointed teachers were discussed. One of the main findings of this research is that the participants found their start at the school challenging, regardless of their experience or qualifications. All participants have indicated that they would have benefited from being part of an induction programme (section 4.3.5).

The needs experienced by the participants are reflected in section 4.3.5.2. The graph (figure 4.2) displays a very high need for professional guidance and support (section 4.3.5.2 a.), personal needs (4.3.5.2 b.) ranked second highest, and organizational support (section 4.3.5.3 c.), ranked the lowest. The problems experienced by the participants were categorized under the three needs categories. Under the personal needs categories their feelings of isolation (section 4.3.1.1) and uncertainty (section 4.3.1.2) were discussed. Under professional needs (section 4.3.5.2 a.) the problems encountered by the newly appointed, namely lack of classroom management skills (section 4.3.2.1), language problems (section 4.3.2.2), curriculum and assessment concerns (section 4.3.2.3), unrealistic expectations of meeting learner needs (section 4.3.2.4) were discussed. Under the section “school related problems” (section 4.3.3) the issue of dealing with parents (section 4.3.1.1) was discussed.

A discussion in section 4.3.3 led the reader to an understanding of school related problems experienced by the participants. Under this category, problems such as dealing with parents (section 4.3.3.1), understanding school policies and procedures (section 4.3.3.2), inadequate resources (section 4.3.3.3) and the lack of support was discussed (section 4.3.3.4).

The discussion in section 4.3.4 deals with the support that the participants received during their beginning years at the school. Both formal support (section 4.3.4.2) and informal support received (section 4.3.4.1) were discussed. The support received is indicated by figure 4.1. The most support received was that from colleagues. The class assistants’ support was also valued as very helpful. Workshops and training sessions

were experienced as helpful. The least support the teachers received was from the management team and the school district office.

All participants were of the opinion that an induction programme would have been of great value in assisting them in gaining the knowledge to effectively teach the very special learners (section 4.3.5.1). The designated aspects of an induction programme were identified in section 4.3.5.3). The guidelines for an induction programme were discussed in section 4.3.5.4.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a description of newly appointed teachers' perceptions of the problems they have experienced on entry into a special school and the induction support they received. As not much research has been done locally on induction programmes for special schools, this study provides valuable insight into the needs of beginner teachers, as well as guidelines for developing an induction programme for providing the necessary support to newly appointed teachers.

5.3.1 Conclusions from the literature

- Education authorities need to acknowledge the fact that, like in many other countries in the world, the teaching profession in South Africa is plagued by teacher turnover and attrition. This has an impact on the quality of education and learner performance. Therefore, teaching retention strategies need to be investigated (section 2.1).
- Context specific support programmes, which acknowledge the fact that people crave connection and want to be part of a team, is key to retaining skilled teachers (section 2.1).
- Teaching in the context of special education is most challenging, due to the complex nature of special education. Special education teaching has been found to cause a lot of stress and very often teachers experience emotions of guilt, anger and irritation which leave them feeling drained (section 2.2.2).

- When veteran teachers take up new teaching assignments in another district, school or classroom they deal with the same problems as novice teachers (section 2.3).
- This study suggests that teachers entering the field of special education, similar to their colleagues in general education, experience problems and that they too have specific needs (section 2.3).
- An understanding of newly appointed teachers' needs will assist in designing support programmes which address the specific problems they experienced (section 2.4).
- Induction support activities have proven to be significant in assisting the newly appointed teachers and in improving teacher retention (section 2.6).
- For induction programmes to be successful they have to form an integrated part of the education system, rather than a separate entity (Section 2.6.1).
- The integration of multiple forms of support has proven to be more successful in assisting newly appointed teachers to adapt to the context of their new school, class or position.
- A positive school culture plays a significant role in welcoming the newcomers to the practice of teaching (Section 2.6.5).
- The school principal is a key figure in supporting and retaining novice teachers. The principal's role in induction is one of instructional leader, culture builder and mentor co-ordinator (Section 2.6.6).
- Mentoring programmes provide professional and emotional support and help new teachers to successfully move through the very challenging first years of teaching. Through mentoring relationship, the beginning teacher acquires a practical understanding of teaching. Mentoring programmes have proven to have a positive influence on teacher retention (Section 2.7.1).

5.3.2 Conclusions from the empirical research

The above conclusions are also supported by the analysis of the research performed. The following conclusions are made from the empirical research:

- This study suggests that teachers entering the field of special education, similar to their colleagues in general education, experience problems and that they too, have specific needs (section 4.3 & section 4.6).
- Regardless of the experience, qualifications and post level of the participants in the research, all newly appointed teachers in this study experienced a need for support during their first year at the new school (section 4.4 & section 4.5). This research confirms the need for a context specific induction programme.
- The majority of the participants (early career teachers) in this study regarded the school climate as positive and supportive. However, an analysis indicated that they found a number of work factors problematic (section 4.3.1 & section 4.3.2).
- The study highlights typical areas of concern and needs for beginning special teachers, and stresses the importance of context and the need for individualised support. Induction support that is contextualised and customised to the specific needs of teachers will provide the desired emotional support (section 4.3.4).
- Although the participants at the research school had no access to a formal induction programme or formal mentoring programme, it was encouraging to note that they received valuable informal support from colleagues more often than any other forms of support. The support received from colleagues was found to be more consistent and valuable than the support from district officials and school management team members (section 4.4).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study suggest that education authorities and school managers need to seriously consider addressing induction support to newly appointed teachers, in order to increase job satisfaction and commitment if they want to improve the quality of teaching and learning, as well as retain qualified special teachers in the field of special education. It furthermore stresses the importance of context specific induction support. This study proposes recommendations for: guidelines for compiling an induction programme for beginning special education teachers, the principal, the novice teacher and colleagues. These recommendations are expanded on in the following sections and are finally represented in a model.

5.4.1 Recommended guidelines for compiling an induction programme for beginning special education teachers (section 4.3.5.4):

- Induction should be a team effort.
- Formal and informal support structures should form part of the programme.
- The induction programme should ensure that new teachers are treated with dignity and are allowed the opportunity to display their strengths and the knowledge they bring to their new school.
- Common, clear and achievable goals should be set.
- The programme should stretch over a long period of time.
- The induction programme should be well planned, flexible and should consider the needs of the individual teacher.
- The induction programme should be continually evaluated to ensure continued quality.
- The school principal should support the induction process and ensure continued learning in the school organization.
- The induction programme should be appropriately resourced and the newly appointed teachers should be allowed sufficient time to participate in the induction activities.
- Constructive, critical feedback as well as acknowledgement of achievements should be given.
- The induction programme should also be integrated with other support activities such as mentoring programmes, learning circles and peer support groups.

5.4.2 Recommendations to the principal (section 2.6.6)

School leaders play a key role in welcoming and supporting the new teacher. They also act as “visible models of excellent practice as well as persistence, hope and enthusiasm” (Greenlee & deDeugd 2003:67). Therefore it is the responsibility of the school leaders to create a professional culture of teaching and learning at the school, but furthermore to cultivate relationships among teaching staff (section 2.6.6.1). The principal has the responsibility of making the entry of new teachers into teaching and the school as positive as possible (section 2.6.6.1). This implies that the principal has to ensure that the necessary planning is done before the new teacher arrives. Issues such

as the teaching venue, keys, parking space, resources, timetables, roles and responsibilities have to be in place. With regard to the teaching load of the new entrant and those who are going to assist him/her, the principal has to ensure that the workload is fair and that time is allocated for the purpose of development opportunities, such as discussions with colleagues, mentors or simply for the purpose of observing a veteran teacher in practice (section 2.6.6.4). The principal, as strategic leader, has to ensure that the necessary funds are allocated for the purpose of staff development. The principal also has to provide ongoing development opportunities and include an instructional development programme which addresses classroom management skills, curriculum implementation strategies and lesson planning strategies section 2.6.6.4).

The principal furthermore has the responsibility of ensuring that the management team and mentors are equipped to perform their roles as teacher-leaders, as they are key figures in building the capacity of the newly appointed teacher. Not only could they assist in meeting the instructional and professional needs of the novices, they could also assist in minimising the uncertainty experienced by the novices as well as helping them to deal with feelings of isolation and inadequacy.

5.4.3 Recommendations to the novice teacher

- The novice teachers should regard themselves as valuable members of the team (section 1.4).
- They should be proactive in seeking answers to their questions, concerns and problems and should utilize every opportunity to gain knowledge and skills. Social constructive development theories regard adult learning as a self-directed process in which learners are active participants of the learning process. As adult learning is relevancy orientated, the newly appointed teachers must make use of the opportunities to build new knowledge and understanding from their base of existing knowledge and perceptions (section 1.4).
- They should give themselves time in which to find their feet and in which to practise newly gained skills and knowledge (section 4.3.6.5).

5.4.4 Recommendations to colleagues

- Colleagues should treat each teacher with dignity and respect and acknowledge the skills, knowledge and experiences that the new teacher brings to the learning situation. The novices should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and the wealth of knowledge and experience they bring to the learning situation should be acknowledged (section 1.4).
- They should allow the new teacher to ask questions and in answering the questions give clear guidelines, and if necessary, support the information with practical examples. According to Vygotski's Zone of Proximal Development and situativity theory, teachers learn together and adult learning involves social interaction. Through interaction, teachers are engaged in professional learning (section 1.4). This recommendation was supported by the need for clear guidance as expressed by the participant of this study.
- Colleagues should not let the new teacher feel that they are "checking up" on him/her. Some of the participants expressed their appreciation for the fact that they were not evaluated and checked-up on (section 4.3.6.7).
- They should involve the new teachers in activities and make them feel part of the team. Literature confirms that adult learning takes place at three levels, namely organizational, group and individual level. As all three levels of learning contribute to the success of a learning organization, it is important to make the beginning teacher feel part of the team (section 1.4). According to Wong (2004:42), people crave connection and they want to belong to a group, they want to be part of a team. Therefore, the induction process should provide the relationship and support that is needed (section 2.1).

Figure 5.1 provides a model for the successful implementation of an induction programme at a special school in Gauteng. This model represents the recommendations derived at, from the findings of this study.

The model summarises the guidelines as discussed in the preceding sections of chapter 5. Based on these guidelines the principal, as the main role-player in the establishment of an effective induction programme, is guided by the guidelines as well as the recommendations for his/her participation in the induction programme. The novice

teacher as well as his/her colleagues would take the lead from the principal and would focus their efforts based on the principal's inputs as well as the recommendations for their participation in the induction programme.

Once all three main role-players have provided their input, an assessment of the achievement of objectives, is made. If all objectives were met to the satisfaction of all role-players, the outcomes would be successful as indicated in the outcomes block. No further adjustment to the inputs would be required.

If some or all of the objectives were not met to the satisfaction of the role-players, the induction programme would require to be reviewed by all role-players. Such a review will result in improvement of one or more of the inputs of the induction programme. These improvements could focus on the guidelines, but could also incorporate further recommendations to the three main role-players in an induction programme (principal, colleagues and novices).

The model is therefore based on guidelines for an induction programme as well as for all the main role players in the induction process. It reflects the ultimate outcomes of an induction programme and suggests that evaluation should take place and if the outcomes have not been reached, the programme should be reviewed.

5.4.5 Recommendations for further research

- In this study, the guidelines for an induction programme have been formulated and topics of importance established. An in-depth study is required to establish the contents of the induction programme and the actual implementation and management thereof.
- Further research is required to determine the relationship between a newly appointed teacher's teaching qualifications and needs experienced on entry to a new school.
- Research is required to determine the relationship between a newly appointed teacher's needs and his/her previous experience

- Further research on the influence of the school's culture and climate on novices' needs, could provide interesting and valuable results.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

This study shows two main limitations. Firstly, the same data collection instrument was used across the board for all participants, regardless of the post level of the teacher. Therefore no indication was given of the relationship between the problems and needs experienced and the post level of the teacher.

Secondly this study was confined to a single special school. Therefore, the findings presented in this study may not be universal to all special schools and schools for the intellectually disabled.

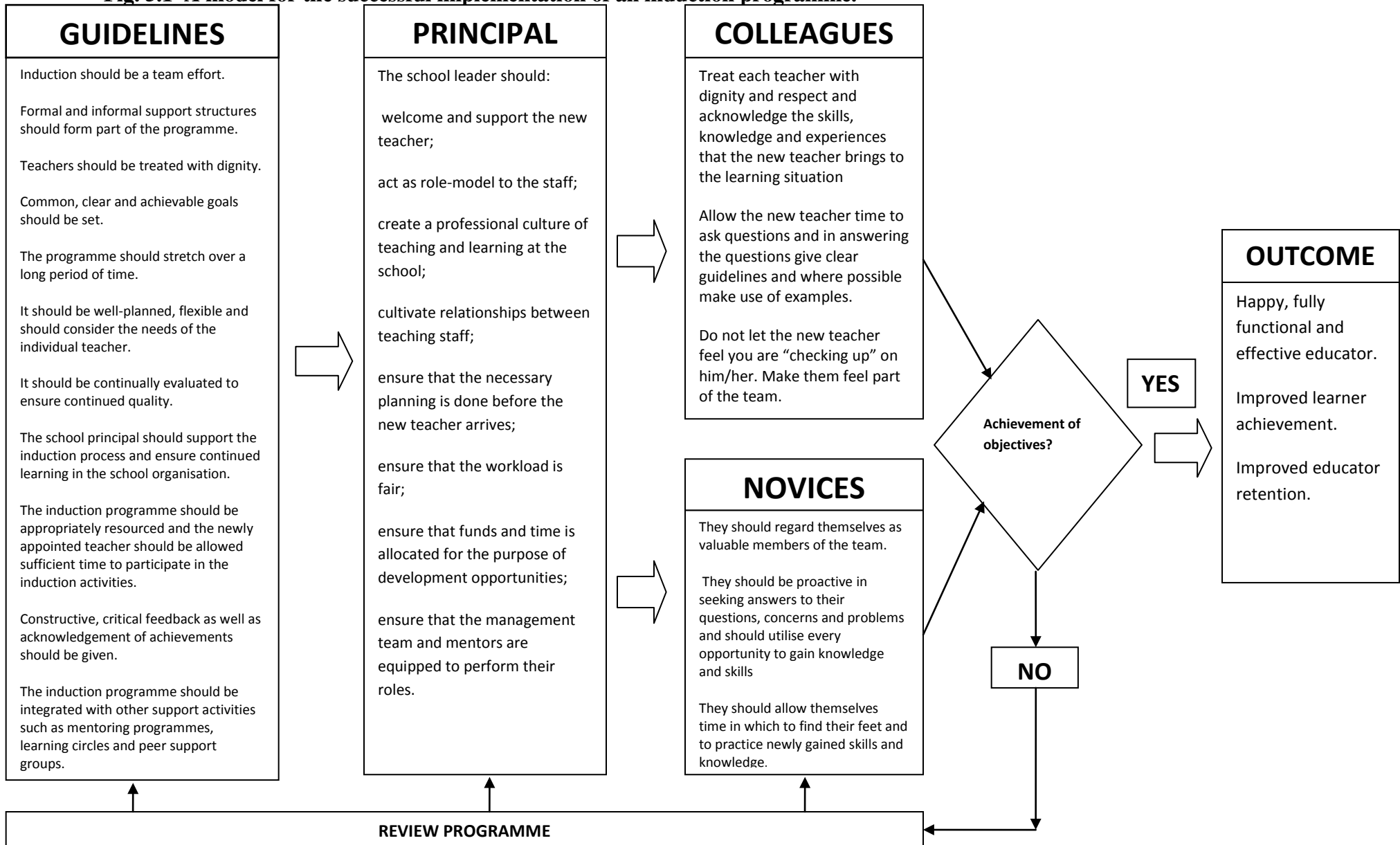
5.6 CONCLUDING REMARK

This study was conducted in the particular environment of a special school for intellectually disabled learners. In South Africa, the field of special education has not been subjected to the same level of academic research, relating to induction programmes for beginner teachers, compared to that of general education. Special education, although it fits into the bigger context of national education, has its own unique features and challenges. These challenges are part and parcel of the everyday life at a special school and are experienced by both veteran and beginning teachers. This study shows that novice teachers, at a special school, face similar problems to those experienced by most newly appointed teachers in general education, but in addition to these, novice teachers in special education, face a set of specific needs which are very much focused on the particular circumstances, encountered at a special school. It is therefore vitally important that novice teachers, at such a school, receive sufficient support to overcome these problems. This study has confirmed that an effective induction programme remains the focus point of such support.

The contributions from the eight newly appointed teachers, through the interpretation and sharing of their experiences, assisted in expanding the understanding of the complexities faced by novices in the special school context. It has given direction with regard to the needs experienced by newly appointed teachers and assisted in setting guidelines for an effective induction programme, at a special school for intellectually disabled learners. An induction support model was devised and suggests that an induction programme, which deviates significantly from the guidelines, as set out in this study, would find it difficult to achieve the required outcomes for a happy, fully functional and effective teacher. Improved learner achievement and improved teacher retention are the ultimate aims of the induction support model.

Therefore, this study has once again confirmed the importance of supporting newly appointed teachers, in order to assist them to become the best teachers they can be and increase the chances of retaining them, as valuable members of the professional team. Describing the needs, perceived to be important by the newly appointed teachers, may inspire educational authorities and principals to reflect on the support available for beginning teachers, before embarking on the journey to assist in preparing, supporting and developing novice teachers. Supporting our newly appointed teachers, is of utmost importance, as research shows that an inspired and informed teacher is the most important school related factor, influencing student achievement. It is therefore critical to attend to the matter of how we train and support both new and experienced teachers.

Fig. 5.1 A model for the successful implementation of an induction programme.



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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM:

I, _____, hereby agree to take part in the research project on “Staff induction at a school for intellectually disabled learners”.

I understand that I will have to be available for two interviews (one individual and one focus group interview) by appointment and that the interviews will be recorded by means of an electronic recording device.

I understand that I:

- will not be asked personal questions and may at any time decide not to answer questions if I so wish
- at any time may ask for access to the dissertation or part thereof
- shall stay anonymous in the study.

(TEACHER)

M.E Kempen (RESEARCHER)

APPENDIX B:

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

PROMPT CARDS

This research project is aimed at investigating the induction of newly appointed educators at a school for intellectually handicapped learners in Gauteng.

Instructions

- Please do not write your name on this paper.
- Please answer every question.
- You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire on your own and in privacy.
- All information collected will be used strictly for the purpose of this study and will not be disclosed for any other purpose.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Highest professional qualification: _____

Years of teaching experience: _____

Years of experience in special education: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

A. Questions for establishing the problems experienced by newly appointed staff members.

1. Describe your experience as a newly appointed staff member at your current school.
2. Which problems did you experience when you started here at this school?
3. What, according to your point of view, are the major concerns of beginner teachers at a school for intellectually impaired learners?
4. According to your experience, which aspects are most critical to your success as a special education teacher?

B. Questions to establish ways of overcoming problems experienced by newly appointed staff members.

1. Which methods did you employ to obtain the information that you needed to do your job?
2. Who or what played an instrumental role in providing you with support in acquiring the necessary teaching competence?
3. When seeking help, how readily were your needs met?
4. What were the most useful contributions made by colleagues?
5. What, according to your opinion, could a beginner/new teacher expect from his/her colleagues?
6. What, according to your opinion, could a beginner/new teacher expect from the management of the school?
7. What do you think your role should be in making optimal use of opportunities and more experienced staff members?

C. Questions to establish what aspects and topics should form part of an induction programme at the school..

1. Which aspects would you have liked to form part of your induction at your school?

2. How necessary is staff induction for newly appointed staff and why?
3. Name a few topics of importance for an induction program at a school for intellectually impaired learners?