Chapter One
The outline

The introduction

1.1   Introduction

There are an estimated 300 000 children in South Africa with special needs (White Paper 6 August 2001). The democratic movement has long recognised the significance of Special Needs Education as a field where policy reform is urgent. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) Support Services Report of 1992, provided guidelines for the first White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education March 1995), on issues regarding non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress of apartheid-related disparities. These issues also pertained to Special Needs Education.

South Africa had either ratified or become a signatory to major international conventions dealing with the rights of children, such as The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the Salamanca Statement of 1994. These documents highlight the need for society to take cognisance of disability within a human rights paradigm, the plight of children in general and children with *"special needs"* in mainstream schooling in particular.

In the Statement, the principle of inclusive education was adopted and then restated at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2002 (UNESCO 2001:30, UNESCO 2002:153). Clearly the objectives of "the education of all disabled children" in the form of an inclusive education approach were framed. The new *Framework of Action* called for ordinary schools to accommodate all children from their neighbourhood regardless of their condition. In 1997, the establishment of a Disability Desk in the office of the then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, and the subsequent release of the *National Integrated Disability Strategy* (1997) suggested that the State was indeed serious about committing itself to addressing disability issues.

In 1995, the first White Paper issued by the national Department of Education called for the establishment of a commission of inquiry into Special Needs Education issues. By 1996 the preliminary work in setting up the Commission was completed. From 1996-1997 the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) undertook its work. By March 1997 their combined report was completed and they commenced with the task of writing up the recommendations into an education policy. In September 2001, four years down the line, the policy surfaced as White Paper 6.

Given the fact that South Africa's policy making during the first tenure of democratic government had found itself in unique circumstances, the Commission's report was completed within a year and according to the set timeframes. The time allocated for the NCSNET and NCESS process was, in terms of policy development anywhere in the world, very limited. Even in countries not undergoing radical social change such as South Africa, policy development of this kind took considerably longer.

The rapid pace of development that had characterised many of the first education policies was not to be followed in the case of Special Needs Education. In fact, unlike other policy processes, the trajectory for this policy went far beyond the expected year it "normally" took for new policies in South Africa to become "White Papers". The process, in fact, took the national Department of Education from 1997, after the Commission's report, till 2001 before a White Paper 6 eventually emerged. This constituted a delay of four years in the policy

development process. Despite the fact that there was considerable political impetus behind Special Needs Education (SNE), a South African Special Needs policy did not "emerge" when expected.

In Chapter Four I carefully describe the Special Needs Education policy trajectory with the goal of explaining this puzzling delay in the emergence of the Special Needs Education policy. Accordingly, the time taken to get from policy initiation to policy formulation will not be under question but rather the delay found in the time it took to reformulate the Commission's report as a white paper.

The consequence of this overall delay was that from 1994, which marked the start of the policy formation process, until 2004, which is the date set in the policy for implementation, the status of this sector remained as it was before 1994. It was clear that unlike other sectors, special needs would not for some time be part of the significant reforms that swept the education sector in South Africa.

1.2   Purpose of this study

I am an educational psychologist by profession and was a researcher in the National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development (NCCRD[1]) within the national Department of Education (nDoE). I have become intimately familiar with policy development related to Special Needs Education.

The "non-emergence" of a Special Needs Education policy, despite the fact that there had been frantic policy activity in the bureaucracy around Special Needs Education since 1994, has always been a source of puzzlement to me.

With this puzzle in mind, the purpose of my study is to explain the reasons for the non-emergence of the Special Needs Education Policy during the period 1997-2001, through the medium of a case study.

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[1] The NCCRD was established within the nDoE to support the linking of programmes and policies. related to curriculum (DoE 2001b:29).

1.3   The explanatory framework – in brief

I am drawn to the subject of *"non-reform"* in education policy through a small but powerful set of writings that include Weiler (undated) on *legitimation*, Hess (1999) on *policy churn* and Jansen (2001a) on *political symbolism*. What is common in these writings is that they offer an explanation of policies that fail to materialise for reasons other than what has been traditionally proffered i.e. lack of resources and capacity.

Given the political commitments mentioned above with regard to Special Needs Education and the internal, external and international pressures placed on government to complete the Special Needs Education policy development process, the following question calls for an answer: *Why did the South African government take so long to get its policy on special needs in place?* It was at this point that my question drew me to the literature on "non-reform".

The observations of Weiler (undated) regarding "non-reform*"* in the German Higher Education system intrigued me and offered a possible framework for understanding Special Needs Education politics and policy-making in Africa. Weiler (ibid.) reflected on the transformation process of the higher education system in Germany in the early nineties. He observed that the expected transformation of the higher education system "did not happen when it was expected but did happen when it was no longer expected" (ibid.). Transformation of the German academic institutions at the time, was expected to occur along the lines of similar institutions in the United States, namely performance-based remuneration systems and performance-based tuition fees in competitive environments. Despite the favourable climate for the transformation of education institutions in Germany, the politicians failed to act and the *status quo* was maintained. Following the re-unification of the two Germanys, integration still happened along traditional lines with no transformation in the newly established universities. These institutions were mirror-images of the existing ones. Weiler's (ibid.) observations were largely informal and based on his experience as a participant in the restructuring of the German higher education institutes. He noted that the *professional elite* undermined policy implementation, due to their interest in maintaining the

status quo (ibid.). Thus Weiler's research indicates that there are interesting ideas regarding the politics of policy-making and more specifically around issues of *"non-reform"* that need further examination.

Unlike Weiler, Hess (1999) undertook a specific empirical study on the politics of urban school reform in education. He noted that "policy churn" was a key factor in the delay of change.Hess (ibid.) believed that this phenomenon was caused because of the successive waves of reform which had, over time, become little more than symbolic gestures rather than substantive actions.

My empirical study will be undertaken to investigate whether Hess's reasons for political inertia or *non-reform* in education are valid in the South African policy-making process for Special Needs Education. Hess and Jansen's are two of the very few empirical studies in which resources and capacity are not the prime explanatory variables for non-implementation. They interrogate *political symbolism* in the contexts of education policy.

1.4   The Special Needs Education policy context

The new South African government launched a range of initiatives to transform this education system. Discussion documents, regulations, green papers, white papers, acts and bills, were developed at a phenomenal speed. In education there was a zealous attempt to produce as many documents and policies as possible, since the belief was held that new policies would bring about desired changes. Priorities were set and systematically each sector of the education system was targeted for change. The change most prominent on the agenda was "schooling". This bout of policy development took most of the energies of the officials who had produced the policies. It also left the education system fairly exhausted.

White Paper 6, which is the basis of my study, surfaced amidst this myriad of policies. However it did so long after other important policies had been developed. Several questions arose regarding the factors which were responsible for its delay, namely: *What particularities were embedded in this policy process that prevented it from keeping abreast with the other policies*? *Why in this multiple policy context was the case for Special Needs*

Education not able to emerge sufficiently and prominently? Why had its development been surpassed by policies in other equally important sectors? Did the Special Needs Education proponents make claims to equivalent policy? Was it delayed because of the complexities embedded in the new paradigm shift that embraced moving away from an exclusive education to an inclusive education approach?

In the following paragraph I briefly examine some of the key proposals from the White Paper 6.

1.5   Key proposals in the White Paper 6

When I examined the proposals envisaged in this White Paper[2] (and conscious of what the capacity of the directorate responsible for inclusive education, in the national Department), I realised that a Herculean task lay ahead of them. Understanding the mechanisms of State department functions and knowing the capacity of the Directorate: Inclusive Education, my analysis of the proposals as stipulated in White Paper 6, brought me to the conclusion that these intentions were ambitious to the point of being unachievable. Their scope and expectation simply went far beyond the present capabilities of such a small directorate. *Could they ever give expression in a meaningful way to a task of such huge proportions?* It was apparent that inclusive education as embodied in this document implied large-scale education reform and not a piece-meal approach. Be that as it may, it was either in the content of this policy, the context in which it was situated, and/or the policy development process that I believed I would find the reasons for the unexpected delay in policy emergence.

I have for ease of discussion grouped, in summary, the key proposals in the White Paper 6 (DoE 2001a: 42-47) into three categories namely: time-frame and goals, strategic areas targeted for change and funding.

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[2] Department of Education 2001 Education White Paper Six: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (pp 42-47).

1.5.1   Time frames and goals

- The White Paper 6 sets its implementation agenda over a 20-year period.

- It envisages the development of an inclusive education and training system that identifies and addresses barriers to learning.

- It recognises and accommodates the diverse range of learning needs with a view to building an open, lifelong and high quality education and training system for the 21st Century.

- The system envisaged includes the establishment of a range of new and different institutions, which includes Special Schools/Resource Centres, designated full service and other schools, public adult learning centres and higher education institutions.

It is important to note that the proposed time-frames (DoE 2001a:42-43) signified a departure from the earlier debates that the inclusive education approach would be revolutionary. The White Paper 6 distinctly represented a gradualist approach. The former approach had left the schooling system unsettled as they had thought that change would need to happen overnight.

The short- to medium-term goals of the proposal focussed on immediately addressing the weaknesses and deficiencies of the current education system and on expanding access to education. It was further envisaged that the Ministry of Education would concentrate on the revision of all policies, legislation and structures that were necessary to facilitate the transformation process. This would include a public awareness and advocacy campaign, the development of the appropriate and necessary capacities and competencies at all levels of the system, including the rationalisation and efficient utilisation of limited resources. The same period would witness the development of "the district and learning institutional-based support systems" and the establishment of "evaluation and monitoring measures" (DoE 2001a:45). The second category, namely, strategic areas of change, would target areas at all levels of the education system.

1.5.2   Strategic areas targeted for change

The strategic areas targeted for change included the national and provincial departments, the special and mainstream schooling sector, the Further Education and Training Colleges sector, and finally the Higher Education institutions. The proposals in White Paper 6 state clearly that from 2001-2008, the Ministry would target the Department of Education and the nine provincial departments in order to develop capacity. This would be done through the establishment of an effective management system, policy, strategic planning and monitoring capacity in the Department of Education. In summary, the proposals in White Paper 6 (paragraph 4.3.1.1- 4.3.3.2) stated that:

- The development of an inclusive education and training system would be supported by senior departmental leadership.

- The Minister of Education together with the nine Members of the Provincial Executive Councils responsible for Education according to the principles of co-operative governance, were to determine national policy, norms and standards for establishment of the inclusive education and training system.

- The advisory bodies and provincial advisory bodies' capacity were to be capacitated by strengthening membership.

- The district support teams[3] would be established to strengthen the education support services but initially only for a portion of the system. The Ministry intended to "establish district support teams: first, in the thirty districts that form part of the District Development Programme and, then on the basis of lessons learnt, consider expanding these to the remaining school districts" (DoE 2001a:43).

The broad sweeping statements of intended change, when broken down and analysed further, do not hold significant implications in practice as the envisaged and immediate changes are

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[3] Education and Training System (pp 42-47)

limited to a small part of the education system i.e., 30 sites in the key nodal areas. The question is: *What happens to the rest of the system while change is taking place in only a part?*

The White Paper 6 proposals included a national audit[4] on Special Schools (paragraph 4.3.4.1:47), which was supposed to indicate how these schools would be assisted in improving their quality and at the same time be converted to Resource Centres[5] (paragraph 4.3.4.2:47). This would necessitate the upgrading and training of staff for their new roles as part of district support teams under the District Development Programme (paragraph 4.3.5.1:48).

However, as the norms and standards for funding and post-provisioning had not been established, it was envisaged that:

> *…conditions of service and the post-provisioning model for educators shall be reviewed to accommodate the approaches put forward in this White Paper – district support teams, Special Schools/Resource Centres and Full Service educational institutions – while retaining, as far as is possible the services of specialist personnel (ibid: paragraph 4.3.4.4:47).*

Many debates in the policy formulation of Special Needs Education had centred on the role of the "specialist" and yet the future of their role in the system was left pending. Realism emerged in the above-mentioned proposal as the need for "specialism" was finally recognised. The effect of this, however, might be that educators would still want to abdicate the role of educating special needs learners to the "specialist".

This is something that South Africa could ill afford. The solutions to most learners'

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[4] In collaboration with the provincial departments the quantitative and qualitative audit of 380 public special schools and independent special schools was conducted and a report issued in 2002. I am unaware as to whether this draft document, titled the National Audit of Special Education Provision in South Africa 2002, has been released publicly.

[5] The responsibilities for special schools as resource centres are twofold. First, the new resource centres shall provide an improved educational service to their targeted learner population. Second, they shall be integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to designated full service and other neighbourhood schools.

problems, according to the White Paper 6 proposals, were located plainly within the teaching and learning provided at schools, and should be recognised as such.

Of all the proposals, the notion of Full Service Schools[6] when in surfaced in the White Paper 6, remained the most baffling and unexpected. The policy makers involved in other policy development processes such as the NCSNET and NCESS were not aware of the Full Service Schools proposal, which had somehow crept into the White Paper. If one analyses what is intended for these schools then it appears that they are just another version of Special Schools except for them not labelling according to a specific disability. Nevertheless, should they materialise, they will certainly increase the access of special needs learners' support within the immediate environment.

The notion of Full Service Schools seemed to have been a compromise between the inclusive approach in education and the recognition of specialists to provide support to learners with specific barriers. This blend of two opposing standpoints suggested an "indigenisation" of two types of provisioning models. More learners would stand to benefit from the broadening of education support services in the immediate future and in geographic areas where special needs provisioning had not previously been addressed.

Other areas targeted by the White Paper 6 for restructuring included Further Education and Training (FET) institutions namely, the FET Colleges. It was envisaged that these dedicated special colleges would mirror the Full Service Schools concept which apply in the General Education and Training institutions.

It was expected that Higher Education institutions would change their strategies, steps and

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[6] Beginning in the thirty districts that form part of the District Development Programme 30 primary schools will be identified and designated for conversion to Full Service Schools with the purpose of expanding provision and access to education to disabled learners within neighbourhood schools. It is envisaged that at least one primary school per district will be designated a Full Service School. Full Service Schools will be provided with the necessary physical, material and human resources, and the professional development of staff so that they will be able to accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

time frames and over time reflect an increasing enrolment and accommodation[7] of learners with special needs. It was further envisaged that each institute would proceed with the establishment of "institutional level support teams[8]", which were expected to be found at each site or institution in the education system. The White Paper 6 called for the early identification[9] of severe learning difficulties and stated that:

> *In collaboration with the provincial Departments of Education the Ministry shall investigate measures to raise the capacity of primary schools for the early identification and support of learners who experience barriers to learning and require learning support (ibid: paragraph 4.3.7.1:49).*

The White Paper 6 embraced the development of the professional capacity of all educators in curriculum development and assessment[10] within revised norms and standards[11].

This would be done by using the 80-hours[12] professional development, and promoting quality

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[7] All higher education institutions will be required to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for all physically disabled learners. At this level of education provision, it will only be fiscally possible to provide relatively expensive equipment, particularly for blind and deaf students, only at some of the higher education institutions. Such facilities will have to be rationalised on a regional basis.

[8] The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services that support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate, institutions should strengthen these teams by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these institutional –level support teams.

[9] The proposal states that in collaboration with the provincial departments of education and the Ministries of Health and Welfare, the Ministry will investigate how learners who experience severe barriers to learning during the pre-school years will be identified and addressed. Mechanisms and measures to be investigated, are to include the role of community-based clinics and early admission of such learners to special schools/resource centres, full service and other schools.

[10] The Ministry will require that all curriculum development, assessment and instructional development programmes make special efforts to address the following: the learning and teaching requirements of the diverse range of learning needs; barriers to learning that arise from language and the medium of learning and instruction; teaching styles; pace; time-frames for the completion of curricula; learning support materials and equipment and assessment methods and techniques.

[11] The norms and standards for teacher education will be revised where appropriate, to include the development of competencies to recognise and address barriers to learning and to accommodate the diverse range of learning needs.

[12] The 80 hours annual in-service education and training requirements of educators by the Government will be structured in such a manner that they include the requirement to complete courses relating to policies and programmes put forward in the White Paper.

assurance[13] in the system.

The above-mentioned restructuring in the institutions would be supported by the DBST[14] via the mechanisms of mobilising public support[15], broadening its collaboration with communities[16], the DPOs[17] and parents[18].

HIV/AIDS programmes and a few other "add-ons"[19] would also be included to the range of activities proposed by White Paper 6.

1.5.3   Funding

The White Paper 6 proposed that for the short- to medium-term, i.e., 2001-2008, a three-pronged approach to funding would be introduced. It stated that the chief sources of funding

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[13] The Ministry shall require that all quality assurance bodies created for the education sector develop their programmes of quality assurance, taking into account the current and future access and provision of educational services for learners with disabilities, including how special schools/resource centres, full service and other educational institutions can uncover and address barriers to learning.

[14] District support teams and institution-level support teams will be required to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learner support materials and equipment, assessment instruments and professional support for educators at special schools/resource centres and full service and other educational institutions.

[15] In collaboration with the provincial departments of education, the Ministry will launch an information and advocacy campaign to communicate the policy proposals contained in this White Paper, including the rights, responsibilities and obligations attached to these.

[16] It is proposed that the Ministry will also continue its discussions with all national community-based organisations, NGOs, organisations of the disabled, health professionals and other members of the public who will play a central role in supporting the building of the inclusive education and training system.

[17] Disabled People and Parent Organisations or DPOs are advocacy organisations established and controlled by people with disabilities or their parents.

[18] At the educational institutional level, partnerships shall be established with parents so that they can, armed with information, counselling and skills, participate more effectively in the planning and implementation of inclusion activities, and so that they can play a more active role in the learning and teaching of their own children, despite limitations due to disabilities or chronic illnesses.

[19] The Ministry will in the interim develop and implement appropriate and timely programmes, including the strengthening of the information systems, establishing a system to identify orphans including the co-ordination of the support and care programmes for such learners. The Ministry will also put in place referral procedures for teachers, and develop teaching guidelines on how to support orphans and other children in distress.

for the envisaged restructuring included new conditional grants from the national government, funding from the line budgets of provincial education departments, and donor funds.

White Paper 6 also stated that the Ministry of Education would further investigate the magnitude of such expenditure needs. It would also provide guidance on how this would be phased in over the eight-year period (ibid:51).

This particular proposal directed me to include an examination and analysis of the provincial budgets as they pertain to Special Needs Education and other White Paper 6 activities.

The ultimate aim of the White Paper 6 and its proposals was to create a society that was willing, ready and able to respond to the major challenges in Special Needs Education. The proposals implied that the senior officials in the national Department of Education would lead such change. This by implication meant that the envisaged changes were to be introduced via a "top-down approach". This approach is contrary to research findings in other African settings where change is often more successfully implemented and accepted if it is done, at least in part, from the "bottom-up". As implementation was not yet official at the time of this study it remains to be seen which approach to implementation would eventually surface.

It was widely acknowledged that the South African education system was in dismal shape and that bold changes had to be made. However, from the proposals it was clear that the policy position was intent on supporting systemic change. The question this evokes is: *Was this broad approach to inclusive education feasible?*

1.6   Research design and methods

I intend to take the Special Needs Education policy, represented by White Paper 6, as the basis for my case study. I will set out to investigate the reasons for the delay in the emergence and development of the Special Needs education policy within the South African transitional context using the construct of "non-reform" as initial device for explaining policy delay.

Data sources for the study include draft and final official policy documents, research documents, and semi-structured interviews with government officials and stakeholders, both in and outside the government. I interviewed senior officials and commissioners from the NCSNET and NCESS, who were associated with the policy formulation.

I also interviewed people who are known to be potential proponents and opponents of the various issues related to policy-making for Special Needs Education and inclusive education in South Africa.

1.7   Key terms and concepts

Certain key terms and concepts used in this study are clarified in the following paragraphs. I have drawn extensively on a list taken from the *Quality Education for All*[20] document (Department of Education 1997: iv-viii).

Barriers to Learning and Development is a phrase that was coined during the NCSNET and NCESS process to broaden the scope of needs from the disabled few, to other learners, whose *special needs* often arise as a result of impediments to learning and development. These barriers have been identified and may lie within the curriculum, the centre of learning, the system of education, and the broader social context.

In this study I will use the term *barriers to learning and development* interchangeably with *special needs* unless otherwise indicated. *Special Needs* refers to needs or priorities that the individual person or the system may have. The implication that the term *barriers* carries, is that in order to provide sustained effective learning the education system "must be able to accommodate a diverse range of needs amongst the learner population" (ibid.).

This broadening of the term from *special needs* to *barriers* means that the problems should

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[20] Quality Education for All: Overcoming barriers to learning and development. Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). 28 November 1997.

not only be sought within the learner or the centre of learning, but within the education system as a whole or the wider society.

The key barriers found in the system include: socio-economic conditions, attitudes, inflexible curriculum, language skills and communication, inaccessible and unsafe building environments, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services, lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy, lack of parental recognition and involvement, disability and the lack of human resource development strategies. Basically the term *barriers* views *special needs* from an ecosystemic approach: that is a point of view that is consistent with a significant body of literature on classroom and learning problems (ibid.).

Learners with Disabilities refers to a particular group of learners with physical, sensory, intellectual or multiple impairments. Some learners with disabilities may require specialised equipment or teaching and support, in order to access the curriculum and participate effectively in the learning process (ibid.).

During the time of the policy formulation process it was not "politically correct" to refer to specific groups of learners as disabled. However, this term resurfaced in the current documentation produced by the national Department of Education.

I also looked for the definition of *conditional grants* and *earmarked funding*, as these terms are mentioned in several readings connected to budgeting. I have placed this understanding within the South African context and funding procedures of government. *Conditional grants* are the provisions in the budget that allow for a percentage of the general education and training budgets (of the national and provincial governments) to be allocated to a specific programme. Thus, linking funding to implementation is implied and it is not an unusual strategy in scenarios of change and transformation. *Earmarked funding* is slightly different to conditional grants. Such funding is a specific allocation of the education budget set aside for the purposes of funding programmes and is designed to be used to prevent learning breakdown, overcoming barriers to learning and accommodating the diversity of learners and system needs. Such funding is accessed through business plans for the envisaged programmes.

Curriculum can be defined as "everything that influences the learners, from the educators and their work programmes, right down to the environment in which teaching and learning takes place" (ibid.). *Curriculum 2005* was the mechanism by which Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) was introduced into the South African schooling system. It is a design for education that is learner-centred and oriented towards results or outcomes. It is based on the belief that all individuals can learn. In Outcomes-Based Education the curriculum is designed to promote attitudes, values and skills which are needed by the learner and the society. In this way the learner is equipped with what he/she should know to be able to participate actively in society. It also includes a realisation that learners differ and that assistance may be needed to enable a learner to reach his/her full potential (ibid.).

The construct *inclusion* holds similar importance. The term "inclusive learning environment" within the South African context has been defined as:

> *An environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional devel-opment of all learners irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language. This environment is free from dis-crimination and harassment. It intentionally tries to facilitate an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect. It is an environment, which respects learners and values them as partners in teaching and learning. It respects the rights of all learners and enables them to participate fully in a democratic society (ibid.).*

1.8   Limitations of the study

I limited my study to the examination of the policy development process and did not investigate the phases after adoption, namely, implementation and institutionalisation. White Paper 6, which is the national policy for the inclusive education approach, was published in 2001. Very little data is currently available on its implementation. The considerable time lapse between the NCSNET and NCESS may have impacted on the reliability of the data provided by the officials that were part of the process.

Although various sources of evidence were sought, most of the data collected was based on the perceptions of policy makers and policy implementers. It was not possible to interview all the actors involved in the policy development process. I drew extensively on the research

conducted by Jansen (2001a) on seven South African policies to provide the theoretical framework for the South African scenario. It was through this investigation that I was led to the studies of Hess (1999), Fullan (1992) and McLaughlin (1998), which provided research justification and comparative contexts for purposes of this inquiry.

This study represents my perspective on a single case study of the policy-making process for Special Needs Education in South Africa. The conclusions drawn should be tested across other case studies in Africa and beyond.

1.9   Organisation of the study

This study is organised into nine chapters.

Chapter One, *The Outline*, introduces the purpose and significance of the study and provides an overview of the analytic framework, research methods and organisation. Chapter Two, *The Background*, includes a review of the literature that anchors this research and describes the conceptual framework that governed the study. Chapter Three, *The Technique*, describes the design, the methodology and methods deployed in this study. Chapter Four, *The Composition*, elaborates on the development trajectory for Special Needs Education policy within the transitional context of South Africa. In Chapter Five, *Adding variety*, the key role players are introduced together with a detailed description of their involvement, position and contributions to the policy development process. Chapter Six, *Adding colours*, reports on the particular trajectory taken by the Special Needs Education policy. Chapter Seven, *Adding depth,* reports on the views and perspectives of the key stakeholders to add to the understanding of the reasons for the late emergence of the policy. Chapter Eight, *Adding detail*, undertakes an analysis of the provincial budgets for Special Needs Education related activities with a view to establish funding commitments to this policy at executive level. Chapter Nine, *The finishing touches*, summarises the study and presents the new knowledge established by this study. It further indicates productive lines of enquiry that could follow on this research.

1.10   Chapter summary

I have described the background to this study, its context and the rationale for this inquiry. The study is set within the transitional context of South Africa as this pertains to the development of Special Needs Education policy. In this study, I examine and interpret data related to the delay in the development of this policy and explain those findings as they relate to issues of "non-reform".

I further intend to interpret the role of key stakeholders in the different stages of the Special Education Needs policy development process, based on in-depth interviews.
I examine further the financial information from the provincial budgets, over the next funding cycle, with a view to establish the funding commitment of the State towards the proposed activities for the Special Needs Education policy.

The findings of this study should shed new light on stakeholder politics and dynamics, as found in policy development processes in transitional contexts, specifically with regard to Special Needs Education.

As there appears to have been very little research on the initial phases of the policy-making process, this study could well be the beginning of a broader research programme on the politics of policy-making in Special Needs Education.

The next chapter reviews the knowledge base on policy change, which provides an appropriate conceptual framework for this study.

Chapter Two

The background

The literature review and description of the conceptual framework

> *A policy is sometimes the outcome of a political compromise among policy makers, none of whom had in mind quite the problem to which the argued policy is the solution. ...and sometime policies, are not decided upon, nevertheless they 'happen'* (Lindblom 1968).

2.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a critical review of the pertinent literature that anchors this research and to describe the conceptual framework that emerged from this literature. My case study, White Paper 6, is a policy document that is designed to transform the education system so that it will reflect an "inclusive" approach to education provision and facilitate access of all learners to a common curriculum.

Education White Paper 6, *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System,* was issued by the national Department of Education in 2001. This policy document was published four years after the combined and final report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) was submitted in 1997. *What were the reasons for the delay?*

The literature review is organised into six sections. Section one provides *the conceptualisation of a policy* by engaging that part of literature that explains the various roles of policy. This helped to analyse and define the Special Needs Education policy and its political context within the transformation agenda after 1994. Section two explores *the relationship between policy and change*; it scrutinises policy intentions and the conditions under which the Special Needs Education policy was formulated, and how the outcomes surfaced whether or not they matched the initial intentions. Sections three and four provide an outline of the *factors that influence or cause policy delays* and draw from international and local research which elucidate the concepts of "non-reform" and "political symbolism". This elaboration advances the construct of "non-reform" in transitional societies. Section five describes *the policy-making process as part of the conceptual framework* in a traditional policy process. An additional example is included of a more complex process as described by a case study of policy development in Namibia. Using these examples I aim to clarify the various steps in the policy-making process, which will in turn inform the design of this study. In Section six, I examine *the use of tools* that can be applied to analysing policy in this context.

The last section presents the conceptual framework that has been extracted from this literature.

2.2   The conceptualisation of policy

> *...public policy is the dynamic and value-laden process through which a political system handles a public problem. It includes a government's expressed intentions and official enactment as well as its consistent patterns of activity and inactivity* (Fowler 2000:9).

According to Longest (1998:4), public policies can be defined as "authoritive decisions that are made in legislative, executive or judicial branches of government" and are intended to direct or influence the actions, behaviours or decisions of others. Longest (ibid.) cautions that the mere existence of laws does not ensure that there are sufficient funds to implement them. The laws themselves serve as "powerful building blocks towards system reform".

Smith et al. (2004:2) define policy as nothing else "but a rule (sometimes tacit and informal but more often formal, written and official) that regulates how a polity must conduct itself." Another perspective on policy development comes from theorists such as Lowi (1964:677), who believe that different types of policy each generate a distinctive political arena. Fowler (2000:239) shares this understanding. He believes that the "different forms that policies take" will increase the understanding of "how likely this policy will be able to work, how various stakeholders would react and what problems are likely to arise". Each kind of policy, *distributive* or *regulatory*, "introduces its own aspects to be taken into consideration during an examination of education policies" (ibid.). Fowler (2000:242) also states "that types of policies reduce or expand the alternatives available to those regulated, such as laws, rules, regulations and guidelines".

De Clerq (1997:128) argues that regulatory policies are formalised rules, expressed in general terms and applied to large groups of people, whereas redistributive policies are more likely to be used in education (1997:128). De Clerq (ibid.) maintains that most of the new education polices in South Africa are symbolic, substantive and redistributive. Redistributive policies can be sub divided into two categories i.e. those that shift economic resources and those that shift power (Fowler 2000:242).

Peterson (1986) argues that *redistributive* policies are complex and eventually implemented only if those "who direct the programmes, are highly skilled". He believed that in the USA the regulatory polices of the 1960s and 1970s were easier to implement.

Smith et al. (2004:8-9) differentiate between *instrumental* policies and *symbolic* policies. The former are policies whose effects "are consonant with the original intentions and the ideals behind them". Whereas the latter may have no effect at all, because they "function primarily as a symbol, without any substantive instrument that logically could be expected to lead to policy goals". Sometime policies "start out instrumental and later become symbolic because the government agency failed to provide the means to the ends …policy effects may be unintentionally deleterious when the policy produces unanticipated effects or costs contrary to the policy goals" (ibid:9-10).

2.3   The relationship between policy and change and theories of change

> *'Change' is a powerful symbol, for people disconcerted
> with existing conditions, not a declaration of
> improvement in well-being for the diverse sectors of
> society* (Edelman 2001:19).

The literature on change theories invoke the notions of "theory of action" and "theory in use" to describe the relationship between policy and change.

Argyris and Schön (1974) classified theories of action into two sub-theories, namely "theory in use" and "espoused theory". "Theory of action" grew from earlier research into the relationships between individuals and organisations.

"Theories in use" are theories that are implicit in what we do as practitioners and are those on which we call to speak of our actions to others. "Theories in use" govern actual behaviour and tend to be tacit structures. "Espoused theory" is what we use to convey "what we do" or "what we would like others to think we do".

As Argyris and Shön (1974:6-7) state:

> *When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances, the
> answer he usually gives is his espoused theory… to which he gives allegiance, and
> which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, the theory that actually
> governs his actions is his theory in use (ibid.).*

The model used by Argyris and Schön (1974:30) is composed of three elements i.e. governing variables, action strategies and consequences. Where the consequences of the strategy used, are what the person intended, then, "theory in use" is confirmed. This is because there is a "match" between intention and outcome. If, however, there is a "mismatch" between intention and outcome, the consequences may be unintended (ibid.). See Table 2.1: 23. The "theory of action" tends to local context such as the conditions under which the model will work (Fullan 2001a:187).

Theory of Action

- *Intended policy outcomes*

- *Local conditions under which policy will work (Fullan)*

- *The relationship between individuals and organisations (Argyris)*

- *Is the introduction of the policy with a view to having it implemented (Fullan)*

Theory in Use/Practice (Argyris and Schön)

- *Implicit to what we do as practitioners*

- *Match- the consequence of the strategy is what is intended*

- *Mismatch-the consequences of the strategy is not what is intended*

Espoused Theory/Policy (Argyris and Schön)

- *What we to use to convey* what we do (actions) or how we would like others to think of our actions.

Table 2.1: The notions of theory of action, theory in use and espoused theory

Fullan (2001a:180) recounts cases where models of change or intervention have given consideration to both the "theory of learning" and the "theory of action", resulting in higher scores of success than those only focusing on a single aspect. Fullan (2001a:187-188) elaborates by stating that "innovations are more successful if they have a strong instructional focus combined with strategies to obtain support at the school, community and district levels".

2.4   Factors that influence policy or cause policy delay

What makes policy fail?

Several postulations why policies do not get off the ground or are subject to "implementation slippage" (Garn 1999:15) are to be found in the literature. I present several of these in Figure 2.1: 27. These reasons demonstrate a clear break from the traditional view that policy implementation fails simply because there are no resources (McLaughlin 1998:70).

Some authors provide a multi-causal model for implementation failure. Garn (1999:439) states that the "the realisation of intention" is both constrained and enabled by the "organisational context, linkages between multiple sites, phases of the policy process, the mobilisation of resources and a multifaceted conceptualisation of power".

It is also clear that political perspectives manifest themselves in education change reforms, such as policy-making. This phenomenon will be considered in depth in this study, as there was a need to establish whether the policy development process for the Special Needs Education policy, had been subject to similar "political crafting". Wohlstetter (1991:279) found that:

> *...success of educational reforms was tied directly to the political agenda and self-interests of their legislative sponsors or champions.*

However, I became more intrigued by my readings and growing understanding of issues related to "non-reform" and was led to the phenomenon of "political symbolism". I explored them to deepen my understanding on issues related to policy reform.

In the following sections I will firstly discuss very broadly the international experiences of "*non-reform*" within the education context. Thereafter I describe "political symbolism" as it pertains to South African policy making within the explanatory framework of "non-reform".

2.5   "Non-reform" as an explanatory device for policy failure: international experience

Ball (1990:10) holds that "in investigating the political aspects of policy-making, one will deliberate the forms of governance of education, the politics of education and the changing role and nature of influential groups and constituencies in the policy process inside the educational state". I will be guided by what Ball (ibid.) describes as the *political influence* in policy-making. He suggests that multiple approaches may be needed to address the different facets of a given problem, such as technical problems of resource allocation, moral or religious issues, and political problems arising from the demands on teachers' time and autonomy, or a combination of all of these factors.

Levin and Young (2000:191) examined the official Canadian discourse around educational reforms and found that the official rhetoric was "primarily symbolic and intended to create or support particular definitions and solutions". They assert that the historical context, institutional structure and political culture of each setting also shape policy. They suggest that many scholars, who work within the political theory arena, take the view that politics should be understood to be as much a symbolic activity as a practical one. In fact they suggest that "political talk and action are intended to shape and respond to people's ideas as much as to their practical interests" (ibid.).   Murray Edelman argues that politics is a symbolic activity, where actions are intended to have psychological consequences:

> *Practically every political act that is controversial or regarded as really important is bound to serve in part as a condensation symbol. Because the meaning of the act in these cases depends only part or not at all upon its objective consequences, which the mass public cannot know, the meaning can only come from the psychological needs of the respondents; and it can only be known from their responses (Edelman 1964:7).*

> *The very concept of 'fact'… becomes irrelevant because every meaningful political object and people is an interpretation that reflects and perpetuates an ideology. Taken together, they comprise... a meaning machine; a generator of points of view and therefore perceptions, anxieties, aspirations and strategies (Edelman 1988:10).*

Levin and Young (2000:191) reason that words and other symbolic activities are of critical importance, but not in a straightforward sense. Rather, "words" are designed to achieve emotional and symbolic purposes as much as anything else. They argue further that precision of meaning is not necessarily desirable and that words are intended to be ambiguous to allow a range of people to identify with what has been said. They endorse Edelman's (1964:137) view that:

> *…the most astute and effective use of this language style conceals emotional appeal under the guise of defining issues. Emotion is officially deplored as a means of invoking emotion.*

In later writing, Edelman (1988) argues that "politicians use symbolic responses as a substitute for dealing with real interests; the political spectacle is used to hide policies and actions that do have material advantages for some groups as opposed to others" (ibid:46).

Similar views on the politics in policy-making have been expressed by a number of other theorists. Smith et al. (2004:2) take the set of ideas provided by Edelman, that explain detachment and distortion, and expand on the notion of the "political spectacle". They (ibid.) argue that in America, politics has become detached from the democratic foundations, to such an extent that it distorts public policy "especially education policies".

Hess (2000:31) undertook an empirical study on the politics of urban school reform to investigate why such widely endorsed reform efforts proved to be so ephemeral. He also questioned why so much experimentation produced so little significant change and found his answers within the symbolic understandings and uses of reform. Hess found in his research that "organisations with weak accountability mechanisms, opaque technical cores, and a visible public role, encouraged politically motivated change (ibid.).

Hess (2000:52-126) further states that school boards and administrators support a "churning cycle" of largely symbolic activity which is characterised by the following:

- *Many activities* in schools have no bearing on reform. That is to say that reform has a low profile on the school agenda, despite the fact that the popular press conveys the impression that reform dominates the day-to day agenda.

- *School systems* operate very differently from state or national governments. Board members and administrators hammer out a great deal of reform informally, and reform proposals rarely emerge until the systems' leadership is able to enact them.

- *Reform agendas are elastic* i.e., studies of political agendas have shown that the number of issues that attract national attention at one time are limited.

- *Increased public attention* to one reform calls more attention to all reforms. Such attention follows activity. Politically it means that reform initiatives are more likely to attract notice, without which they are irrelevant.

- *Policy selection* also has a political explanation as the amount of visibility and controversy it unfolds, determines its selection and this in turn is related to the area in which the reform is intended.

- *Reformers focus on changing structures* as these structural changes are seen as seductive and energising and policy makers are "seen to be doing something".

- *Troubled systems facing multiple complex and competing demands, seek ambiguous reforms that will quell conflict, restore confidence and re-establish legitimacy.* Under these conditions, structural adjustments can be symbolically potent.

- Successfully implementing policies with "low level central office support" was difficult and was not popular amongst administrators, because of concerns with turf and turf control.

Figure 2.1: Factors associated with "non-reform" (adapted from Hess 2002)

- *Local context matters*. If school reform is largely a political response to political pressures, the rate of reform activity can be expected to vary systematically as environmental pressures vary across districts.

- *Faster growing districts* pay more attention to school reform, while more reform is actually proposed in the troubled districts.

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-   The tendency to pursue *symbolic reforms* is largely the product of institutional pressures, and that these pressures cannot be combated solely *by sage advice* (ibid:20).

The above-mentioned reasons (see Figure 2.1:27) articulated mainly by Hess on why policies are not successful implemented, led me to question *how much time should be given to a reform before we demand results?*

Lewis Solmon (2003) highlighted the gestation period of a policy in a revealing article titled *Education Policy Lag Time*. In the next section, a summarised version is presented as the content was most relevant to my study on "non-reform" and policy delay. I have also included a diagrammatic representation of the various elements of his conceptual framework.

Education policy lag time

Solmon suggested (2003:3) that in the light of new understandings around lag, that "policy makers should not demand definitive proof of a policy's effectiveness". One should rather seek intermediate outcomes that may be *predictive* of the ultimate conclusion, before such a conclusion is reached.   This in my opinion would allow a policy sufficient time to incubate given the various elements of lag it is subjected to during the policymaking path. Solmon presents an understanding of the policymaking process, rather than merely considering outcomes at the end of a process.

 "Lag" must refer to the difference between plan and outcome or expectation and result. Each of the following descriptions describe a time span for an event, without referring to difference between expected versus result (see Figure 2.2:29):

Recognition lag: time taken to identify a problem and begin to conceive a solution.

Policy-selection lag: time taken to select a desired programme to fix a problem from competing solutions to a problem.

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Legislation lag: time taken to debate and pass during the proposed legislative route or policymaking process.

Regulation lag: time taken to inform districts how the policy should be implemented.

Appropriation lag: time taken to acquire funding, especially if it is provided for by a different agency.

Litigation lag: time afforded to some groups or sectors that find the educational reform controversial and make efforts to invalidate the reform. This time also includes the delay when schools or districts are afraid to implement policy lest they be challenged.
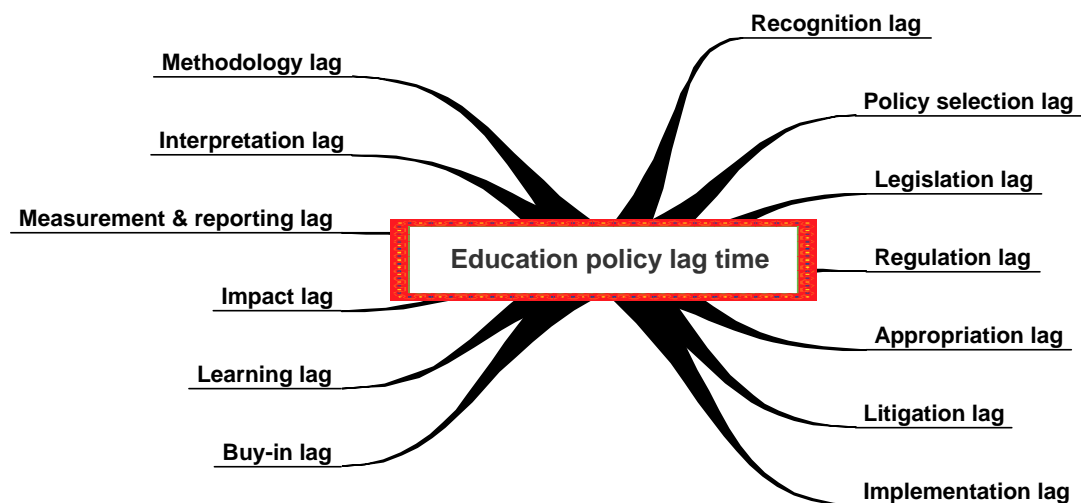

Figure 2.2: Education policy lag time (adapted from Solmon 2003)

- *Implementation lag*: the time its takes districts and schools to attempt what the policy requires, but failing.

- *Buy-in lag*: includes educators' resistance to change and the time it takes them to try and figure out how to continue business as usual.

- *Learning lag*: the time it takes educators to learn a new approach.

- *Impact lag*: the time it takes to put a new policy in place.

- *Measurement and reporting lag*: the time it takes to measure outcomes or achievements and to report on them.

- *Interpretation lag*: the time it takes people on both sides of the reform to evaluate it.

- *Methodology lag*: whenever the results of a study of a policy's impact disagree with an advocate's view, he/she will criticise the methodology (Solmon 2003:1-3).

This understanding of delay, was applied in my own analysis of the delay associated with the Special Needs in Education policy (see Chapter 7).

2.6   The South African Context

> *The rhetorical emphasis upon change has itself become a*
> *major barrier to change because it reassures a large part*
> *of the public that their discontents are being heard and*
> *remedied, while such is not the case* (Edelman 2001:19).

In South Africa debates around education policy-making abound. Jansen (2001a:271) found in seven major education policies developed by the new South African democratic government between 1994 and 2001, that policies failed for many reasons. Besides the traditional reasons such as lack of resources, the legacy of inequality and the dearth of capacity to translate official vision into reality that were normally cited, Jansen found that "political symbolism" was often an overriding factor (ibid:285). He poses an alternative view of "non-reform" in South African education policies within the realms of "political symbolism" (ibid:271). His theoretical stance, challenges the conventional view that what government claims through its policies, is what government intends and that policy moves intentionally towards realisation. It additionally challenges the common-sense belief that policies, as official documents, are mere "technical ideal statements" made by government.

The conventional way of looking at "non-reform" omits the elements of politics and power as competing interests associated with public policy-making. "Political symbolism" as a theoretical explanation of the lack of change in education seemed "more coherent,

contextualised, resonant and plausible than the conventional views of 'non-reform' (ibid:271)".

Between 1994 and 1999 there was considerable political investment in changing apartheid schooling and government. Jansen asserts that government "could not focus on all the details of implementation" with the result that an important component of the policy was neglected (2001a:272).

Jansen (ibid.) describes "political symbolism" as policy craft. He provides several examples in the South African policy-making context during the terms of office of the Ministers of Education (Prof. S Bengu 1994–1999 and thereafter Prof. K Asmal), where the notion of "political symbolism" is illustrated.

In the next section an outline of the Jansen's theory of "political symbolism" (see Figure 2.3:31) within the framework of "non-reform" is provided.
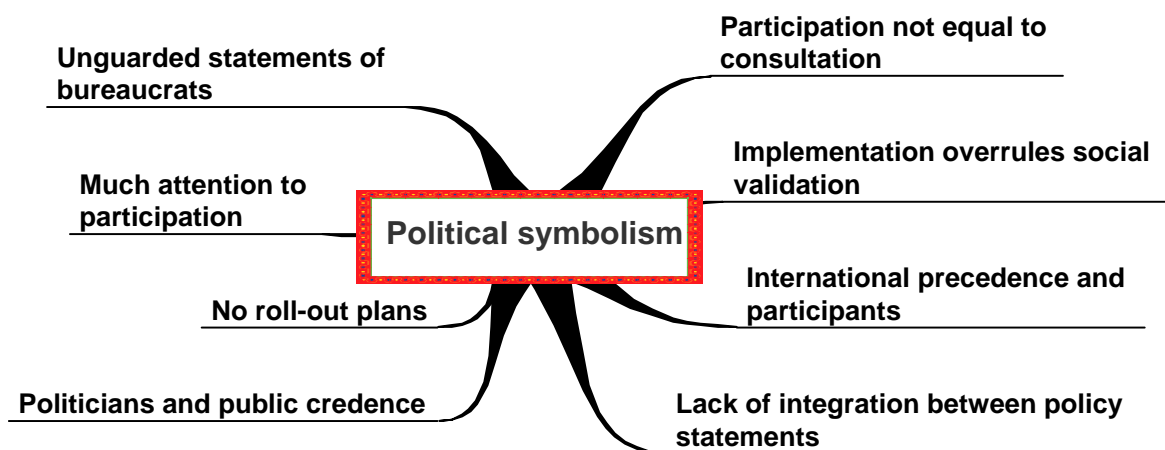

Figure 2.3: Elements of "political symbolism" (taken from Jansen 2001a)

Jansen (2001a:271-288) maintains that signs of "political symbolism" are to be found in the:

Unguarded statements of senior bureaucrats and politicians.

This points to the inability of education policy to connect to the lives of teachers and learners.

Politicians and the public lend credence and support to the production of policy.

This can be offset by the inappropriate views by politicians specifically if they announce "that implementation takes time".

Policy pronouncements usually make reference to issues of implementation.

The fact that so many of the policies developed by the national Department of Education are unaccompanied by roll-out plans raises the question as to whether they were ever intended to be implemented.

Lack of integration between various national policy statements.

Various white papers and other official documents produced by the Department of Education are incoherent, as each policy has its own agenda, actors and focus, for example the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Jansen (ibid.) feels that coherence cannot be generated in a system that is concentrating on "getting out the next set of documents".

International precedence and participants in the development of education policies.

Jansen (ibid:276) recognises the   participation of international experts and the great contributions they have made to the South African policy-making process, for example, the local policy on school funding.

"Political symbolism" in policy making is not restricted to the international participants and process in policy.

South Africa is also an actor within the international arena with regard to the way its

curriculum development and reform of qualification is structured. Yet, a serious review of OBE happened only two years after its introduction into schools. This implies that the "implementation of a set of policies is of less concern than its social validation" (ibid.).

The heavy attention paid to formal participation in the policy process irrespective of its final outcomes.

Jansen (2001a:279) believes that education paid more attention to formal stakeholder participation in the policy development process than any other sector did.

In every process leading to the production of policy, and throughout the 1990s, there was an exceptional preoccupation with inclusiveness and representation in the composition of the working groups. This broad representation granted legitimacy to policy irrespective of the final outcomes.

Participation can also emerge at a point where the policy has already been decided.

An example is the adoption of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) as the preferred policy approach for the post apartheid curriculum and the non-involvement of educators in this decision. Related to this was the belief that participation was construed to be equivalent to consultation (ibid:280).

I found particular significance in the reasons which Jansen's treatment of why the South African State, in his opinion, had over-invested in "political symbolism" in the policy-making process. Besides the political and legal or constitutional factors, it appeared that the macroeconomic environment was decisive in affecting the redistributive policies of the post apartheid state. After the democratic elections, the State had to reduce its expenditure. Securing fiscal discipline meant that there was almost no increase in the education budget with which to enact new policies. Without financial backing the only alternative left to the State was "playing up" the symbolic value of policy. It did so by emphasising the need to address inequalities and with promises of equity, transformation of the system, quality lifelong education and training, and access for all, which exemplifies the typically rhetorical nature of policy-making (ibid:281-285).

Apart from the macroeconomic environment the political environment in the early years of the new democracy also militated against any radical or redistributive thrust in policy-making, because of government's attempts to reconcile white and middle class sections of post-apartheid society with government reform. This, however, changed gradually as the imperatives of reconciliation gave way to a policy environment in which the state at least politically "had more options with regard to radical and redistributive policy choices". It stands to reason that, under these circumstances, the discursive and symbolic value of policy held high currency in the immediate post-apartheid period and that this set limits on policy implementation in the early transition period (ibid:281).

Jansen states that relying on symbols works well within liberation movements, but can be risky if the choice is to run "real governments" with real local and global constraints.

The consequences and explanations of the symbolic approach to education policy that Jansen had identified are particularly pertinent to this study. The establishment and continuance of this type of symbolic political approach has both practical and political consequences, namely, that one should expect little of the grand-scale changes within schools and an increase in more symbolic initiatives in the policy domain. This is because little can be delivered within the domain of practice and the blame for non-delivery will increasingly be shifted to the participants in the education process i.e., the teachers. Jansen cautions that if "political symbolism" is to serve as the framework for education policy, it will effectively rule out transformation of South Africa's education system. He further argues that it will need a "political rethink" of the underlying logic of what governs South Africa's macroeconomic policy, to both reduce expenditure and to transform schools (ibid: 2001:282 - 285).

Further to his theoretical stance on "policy as political symbolism" Jansen (2001a:286) maintains that: "all policies have symbolic value and can be used to project and contest important political values or symbols". Nations consciously or subconsciously invest in "policy with important political symbolism" and "the over investment in 'political symbolism', at the expense of practical considerations, explains largely the lack of change in the South African education system six years after the end of legal apartheid" (ibid: 286).

Jansen (2001a:286) suggests that: "It could be argued that commitment to the practical at the expense of a deeper understanding of policy inertia is itself a preferred theory of change, that is, that social problems can be fixed through technical solutions applied in a thoughtful manner". Jansen (ibid: 286) continues that: "dependency on resources for implementation does not alone ensure the success of an initiative and that there is a lot more involved in policy development and implementation than resources or capacity".

He draws support for this view from Hess's (1997) study, which stated, "that the status quo in urban school systems is largely due to political incentives which produce a surfeit of reform and insufficient attention to implementation" (cited in Jansen 2001a:287). The result is that "successive generations of partially implemented reforms produce instability, waste resources and alienate faculty". Both Hess (1997) and Jansen (2001a) agree that resources are not the sole factor influencing non-implementation, rather that "reform tends to be symbolically attractive" but, due to an unwillingness to impose costs, often has the result that "policy makers work more diligently on appearing to improve schooling than on actually doing so" (ibid:287).

Jansen contends that "words" have a purpose and discourses have "political intent". However, he argues that during the early period of transition in the new South African government i.e., 1994-1999, the primary explanation for "non-change" lay in the symbolic arena. Jansen (2001a:288) is attuned to the fact that material constraints also played a part in the "non-change", as the State had to "play up" the symbolic role of policy rather than its practical consequences.

The new system required an overarching symbolic discourse about transformation and this signified to Jansen that the early policies were not always about changing practice, but rather weighted towards important symbolic considerations.

Jansen (ibid: 289) expresses the view that, despite the symbolic intentions of policy there is no doubt that some "policies leave a trace in practice". It is at the wider system level that education remains steeped in crisis and inequality despite the flurry of policy that occurred in the six years since the first democratic elections.

> *...national and provincial policy makers display a rich tapestry of policy symbols, signalling mass opportunity, but are stitched together with a thin thread (Chisholm and Fuller 1996:693).*

The literature has sensitised me to the fact that since policy-making is such a dynamic and intricate affair, a single-lens approach will not suffice if attention is to be paid to all the nuances of the policy development process.

A multimodal-lens that embraces change, the relationship between policy and change, various types of policy, the policy formation process and the multitude of factors that impact on it, would be needed to approach the analysis of a policy's development if a "rich" analysis is to be made.

2.6.1   The policy-making process as part of the conceptual framework

The framework presented in the following section focuses on the dimensions of the stages of the policy development process.

The traditional policy development process

Traditional models considered the stages of policy development processes as sequential.   It is illustrated as a linear process in Figure 2.4:37.   Although the diagram depicts a certain sequence of events, it is possible that when difficulties are encountered during policy development, that previous stages are revisited.

According to Elmore (1987), though the policy development process can be considered to be a linear process as in Figure 2.4:37, the stages, may also overlap.

The next section provides an overview of this process, as well as salient observations drawn from various research conducted on the specific phases. I will rely extensively on the conventional view of Fowler as his study provides the outline that is pertinent to the forthcoming analysis.
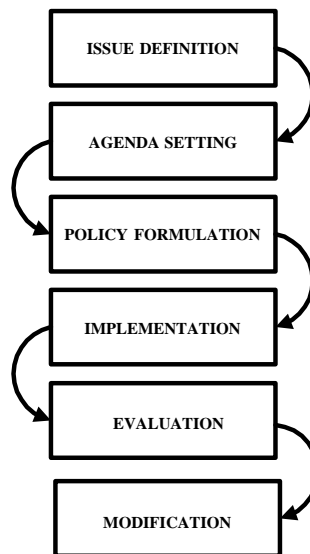
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Figure 2.4: Diagram of the policy development process (adapted from Fowler 2000:15)

Stages of the policy development process

The first stage, *Issue definition*, is the identification of social problems as public policy problems, and depends on political and economic factors. According to Fowler (2000:184) during issue definition, interest in the issue can fade and reviving that interest is hard, because the issue has seemingly become out of date. This phenomenon is known among political scientists as the issue-attention cycle. It occurs in every policy area when issues become the centre of enormous attention on several agendas and then suddenly "lurch out of everyone's thoughts" (Baumgartner & Jones 1993). Fowler claims that even after several years off the agenda, old ideas may resurface in a slightly different form and with a new name and are then placed back on the agenda again. He maintains that advocates of a particular policy change must work hard to keep their ideas on the agenda. This can be done if policy entrepreneurs "*churn out*" new material on the issue, developing novel approaches to it, and even developing new terminology in an attempt to keep the issue fresh and attractive (Fowler 2000:184).

I was most interested when I found that Fowler applied this with regard to inclusion[21] where "communities of operatives" keep an item on the agenda for long periods of time, thereby enhancing the likelihood that it "will eventually lead to official policy" (ibid:184). Fullan states that "the process of initiation can generate meaning or confusion, commitment or alienation, or simply ignorance on the part of the participants and other affected by the change" (2001a:67).

Agenda setting is usually done by powerful politicians who are sometimes influenced by grass-roots organisations. Kingdon (1984:1-3) refers to this as the "pre-decision processes". Agenda setting follows issue identification and authors point out several points that are typical of the stage. The agenda "is a list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time" (ibid.).

Fowler (2000:179) claims that in order for an issue to become an actual policy it must reach the policy agenda. He maintains that this does not automatically or easily occur because there can be several sub-agendas to a main agenda.

I noted that the "failure to act" or "non-decision" is most likely to occur during the problem-definition and agenda setting stages. It is particularly important to identify exactly when and where non-decisions occur. This provides important clues as to how official policies and official policy rhetoric should be interpreted (Fowler 2000:185). Research by Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1992:50) confirm Fowler's conclusions when they state that "if the initial phases have not been aptly attended to that there is a great likelihood that policies will not get adopted".

Policy formulation consists of writing a policy before it is formally adopted. The first developed and written text may be the draft of a proposed statute, but not all policies become law. Rules and regulations may be written after the policy has been adopted.

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[21] Fowler refers to inclusion as a "slightly different form of mainstreaming".

Policy implementation is the process of adopting the education policy at grass roots level. David Hopkins refers to this phase as the "attempted use of the innovation" (2001:6). Ball claims that policies are usually developed close to the top of the political system and put into practice close to grass roots (1994:14). It is most often the educators who carry out the orders from above and therefore one must consider that they are not "robots that mechanically carry out orders but have minds of their own in a context that they understand better than the policy makers" (ibid). Fullan (2001a:69) states that "implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change".

Policy evaluation is the process that takes place after adoption and aims to establish whether policies are working the way they are deigned to. Based on the results of an evaluation the policy may be revised. This in turn, states Friedman (1999:6), could be considered as a further stage namely *policy modification.*

Fowler gives an indication of where political issues on the agenda can be found, namely discussions at professional conferences, in education journals, among well-informed educators, in the mass media, among the general public, and among government officials (2000:185).

Fowler's stage theory is of relevance to this study as it is particularly important to understand what happens during each phase and the ensuing behaviours of the participants. The division into components or parts is thus for analytical purposes in reality reform is not neatly divided in this way, nor can "any set of headings adequately represents the complexities of a reform process" (Levin 2001:3). Thus due consideration will be given to the above when the interviews from the various data sources are analysed within the stage theory approach.

Criticism has been levelled against this linear and "top-down" approach. Wielemans and Berkhout (1999:403) state that policy studies are "increasingly focusing on other more "hidden" dimensions of power. They believe that the policy process is "more contradictory and discontinuous than models such as a clear cut differentiation between phases, functions,

competencies and rights apparently indicate" (ibid:403). According to Swarts (2002:2), in the conventional linear approaches to the policy process, no consideration is given to the reflexive component or the fact that the policy route is not, always a simple linear route. Smith et al. (2004:3) question whether this really takes place outside of "textbooks in the policy sciences"? They question further "whether this is the way things really work"?

2.6.2   An iterative cyclical model of the policy development process

This section draws on experiences taken from an academic visit to Namibia in 2002. During that period I attended presentations on policy development, given by officials from the Namibian Education Department and the Namibian Institute for Education Development (NIED).

The Namibians approached change differently to South Africa after their independence. They concentrated on making "visible changes" to the system so that the electorate could have physical evidence of the results of their independence (Swarts 2002:3). Efforts to bring about "integration" in the schooling system were accorded priority. Other less important issues were left to be resolved as they arose. Namibia could apparently not afford a protracted process of educational policy development, which they appeared to believe that South Africa could (Swarts 2002:4). Namibia used memoranda direct from the Minister of Education's office to effect policy and bring about immediate changes to the system.

The Namibians did not believe that, in doing so, constitutional imperatives were set aside. They also did not immediately write their policies down but were more inclined to develop policy as they implemented it. This is reflected in the model designed by Swarts for all education policies, which is shown in Figure 2.5:42.

Swarts (ibid.) believes that a non-linear approach, which allows for iterations, should be used in policy development. The feedback cycle incorporated into the Namibian model is an expansion of an existing model for policy development by Taylor (Swarts 2002:4) and highlights the myriad factors that influence policy-making in the Namibian context. The policy development process follows an iterative cyclical model.

The development of education policy in Namibia is continuously interrupted by moments of reflection. The Namibian model also allows for collective input of all relevant participants throughout the policy formation cycle, which, as a result, is never fully completed. The result of this is that they can avoid the expensive legislation cycle of the policy development process, which could result in the necessity to repeal acts if not properly constructed. Swarts (ibid.) maintains that "only when it has taken a visual form" is it easier for other people without the deep theoretical knowledge and understanding to engage in discussions.

Although the Namibian model also defines stages in the policy development process, it breaks away from the traditional view that policy formation is a linear process like a "conveyor belt" (Swarts 2002:5). It is viewed instead as a continuously interactive process with important inputs being made throughout the policy formation process.

Swarts's (2002:10) account of the Namibian policy development process includes the following phases:

Articulation is the process of identification of the problem, targeting the action and a mechanism for dealing with the problem.

Aggregation suggests obtaining a mandate and the process of legitimisation. It can also involve compromise and coalitions that are formed.

Allocation implies the allocation of power and resources according to priorities, legislation is passed to provide the necessary legitimacy and ensure allocation of resources.

Interpretation refers to the reflective exercise that provides feedback into the system.

Regulation is the transformation of legislation into administrative action, with the development of regulations.

Interpretation is when the policy and its regulatory and budgetary frames are reviewed with the intention to translate the regulations, directives and circulars into comprehensive operational plans.

Implementation implies that new policies supersede previous policies and the practices that arise from them profoundly influence the new policy and its implementation.

The four elements of consistency, prescriptiveness, authority and power are used to test the strength of policies.
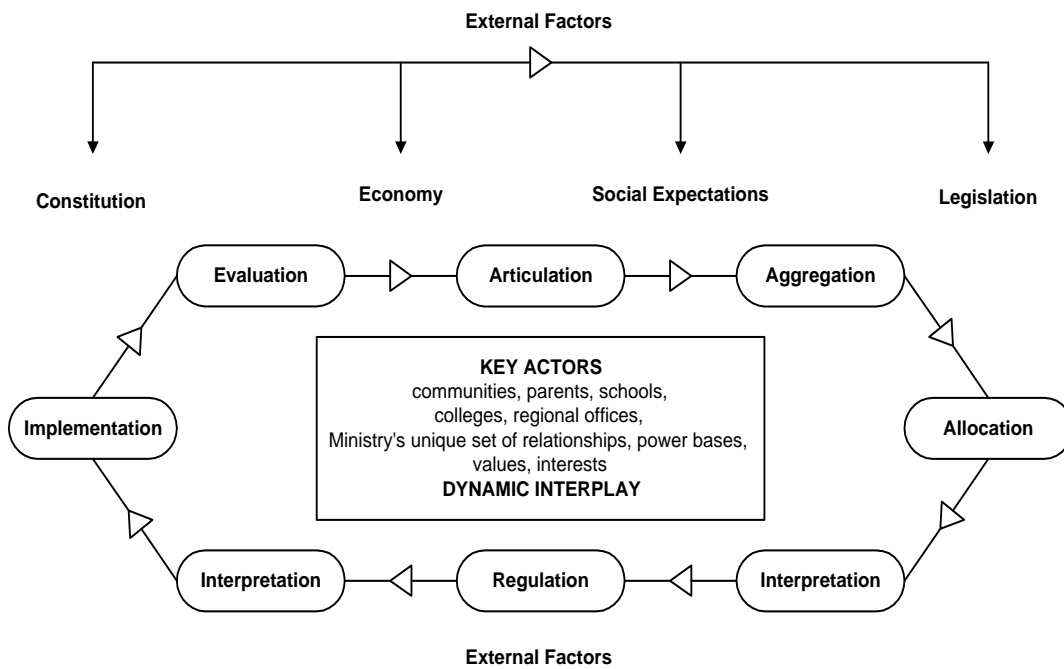

Figure 2.5: The policy development process in Namibia (Swarts 2002)

Swarts (2002:10) summarises this particular cyclical policy-making process model:

> *Policy formulation is not only an initiating stage of the policy process, rather, it accompanies implementation throughout the cycle and allows for reformulation at significant stages. Feedback is believed to enhance the chances of successful implementation of a policy and make it iterative i.e. cyclical, expanding, back-looped and never closing (ibid:10).*

Swarts' (2002:10) presentation also provides indicators for policy failure, such as the type of policy, timing, inadequate articulation, inadequate integration, insufficient negotiation, deficient interpretation, bureaucratic subversion, insufficient involvement and insufficient resources.

The Namibians are aware that many barriers to policy implementation can arise. However, they believe: "that once awareness has been raised, one can purposefully set out to counteract the negative effects and plan or put contingency measures in place" (Swarts 2002:6).

The policy formulation process allows for interplay between policy formation and policy implementation. This creates a system of reform that leads to continuous changes in the policy formulation. In some policy processes Namibian policy makers have the option to deliberately stall the legislative process.

As Hoppers (undated:14) indicated: "Policy is often far from the neat clinical looking blueprint; it can be a messy, unscientific and irrational process". The linear approach based on Fowler's model neglects to mention that all policies are mediated through the context in which they are implemented. Furthermore, the approach does not provide for Sosniak's (1998:1809) view, that "each interpretation of the policy under discussion may be rooted in a particular temporal and cultural context". The consideration of context adds a further dimension to the study of policy-making.

I found the traditional linear model of Fowler adequate for the purposes of analysing the steps in the policy development process. However, my study will show that in the various steps of the conventionally defined policy process, politics, will intrude. As Smith et al. (2004:8) argue "to study policy without studying politics is to miss crucial dynamics and divisions". They maintain that:

> *…education policy reflects politics of the times and illustrates, at any particular time and place, which groups have more power to influence the state in its alloca-tion of values* (ibid).

Initially I needed to know what happens at each stage of the policy development process and which critical factors and politics could possibly have an impact on the process. However, through a further review of the policy development stages I have constructed a wider more unconventional lens from which to view the policy-making process, i.e., from the theory of political spectacle.

This theory holds that contemporary politics resemble theatre with directors, stages, casts of actors, narrative plots, and most importantly a curtain that separates the action onstage, what the audience has access to, from the backstage, where the real allocation of values takes place" (Smith et al. 2004:11). I added this to my conceptual framework.

2.7   Tools for policy analysis

Two analytical tools for policy analysis have been identified by researchers i.e., "forward" mapping and "backward mapping".

They have also been used to underpin change models and processes. See Figure 2.7:47.

2.7.1   Forward mapping

The "forward mapping"[22] lens describes the relationship between the policy creator and policy implementation (see Figure 2.6:44). The policy creator looks primarily to the outcome of the process.

Most of the published models on educational change provide little information on education policy and implementation strategies in the context of developing countries.

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[22] Forward mapping is the most widely recognised type of analysis. It begins with the objectives and goals of the policy and works its way towards the outcomes that are to be measured in determining success. This process often begins with legislation that outlines the intent of the policy.
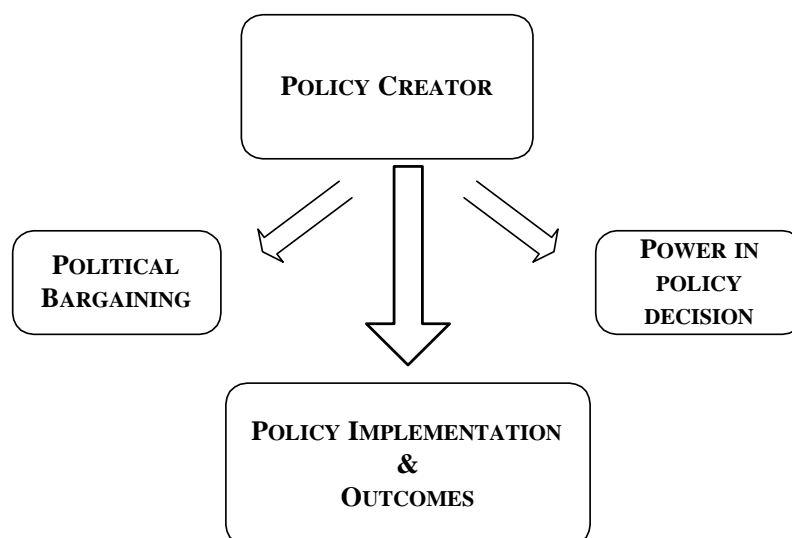
Figure 2.6: The top down or forward mapping approach to policy analysis (taken from Elmore 1979)

However, Elmore[23] (1979:601) and McLaughlin[24] (1998:79) focus on the role of political bargaining and power in policy decisions, and the actions of local actors, respectively. They therefore provided the dimension I required to examine not only the political role players and their ensuing participation in the policy development process, but also the individual contributions of respondents in anticipation of the event i.e., the implementation of the Special Needs Education policy in South Africa. Both researchers seek to understand why policies are not implemented as intended or why change is not sustained in a given context. The role of political bargaining, influencing factors and expected outcomes can be analysed using the "forward mapping" approach whereas "backward mapping" is the more appropriate analysis tool for establishing unpredictable or unintended outcomes.

In Chapter Five I will use this approach in my analysis of the role-players concerned with the development of the Special Needs Education policy.

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[23] Richard Elmore suggested an approach to policy analysis that went beyond the traditional top down analyses used in many studies. Through his approach Elmore intended to understand why and under what conditions policies are adopted locally.

[24] One of the general findings in the McLaughlin Change Agent Study was that there is not a 1:1 relationship between policy and practice.

2.7.2   Backward mapping

The "backward mapping" approach to policy analysis, according to Recesso (1999:2)

> *results in a "definitive explanation of the role of the local actor and the use of discretion in decision making".*

Recesso also confirms that the final analysis of "backward mapping" goes beyond the measurement of policy objectives being met and explains the meaning of local level participation. He defines backward mapping as an alternative to the traditional top-down methods, since it analyses: "stakeholders' perception of specific and important effects and local organisation characteristics within a community environment".

2.7.3   Dual approach

Figure 2.7:46 shows that both "forward mapping" and "backward mapping" approaches can be used together in policy analysis. Moulton et al. (2001:14) used both approaches similarly in their study of basic educational reforms in sub-Saharan Africa. From their viewpoint (ibid.) a top-down perspective starts with the policy goals and traces them through their administration to their effect on intended beneficiaries.

A "bottom-up" perspective starts with conditions and perceptions and traces them back through the administration and formulation of policies. Thus an analytical framework that uses both approaches will have several aspects and consist not only of the content of the policy (technical aspects), but also the actors (political aspect) and the context (political, social and economic) of a policy.

2.8   Conceptual framework

> *When justifying the selection of a theory to be used to explain a change initiative it should be coherent, plausible, powerful, and elegant (Jansen 2001)*[25].

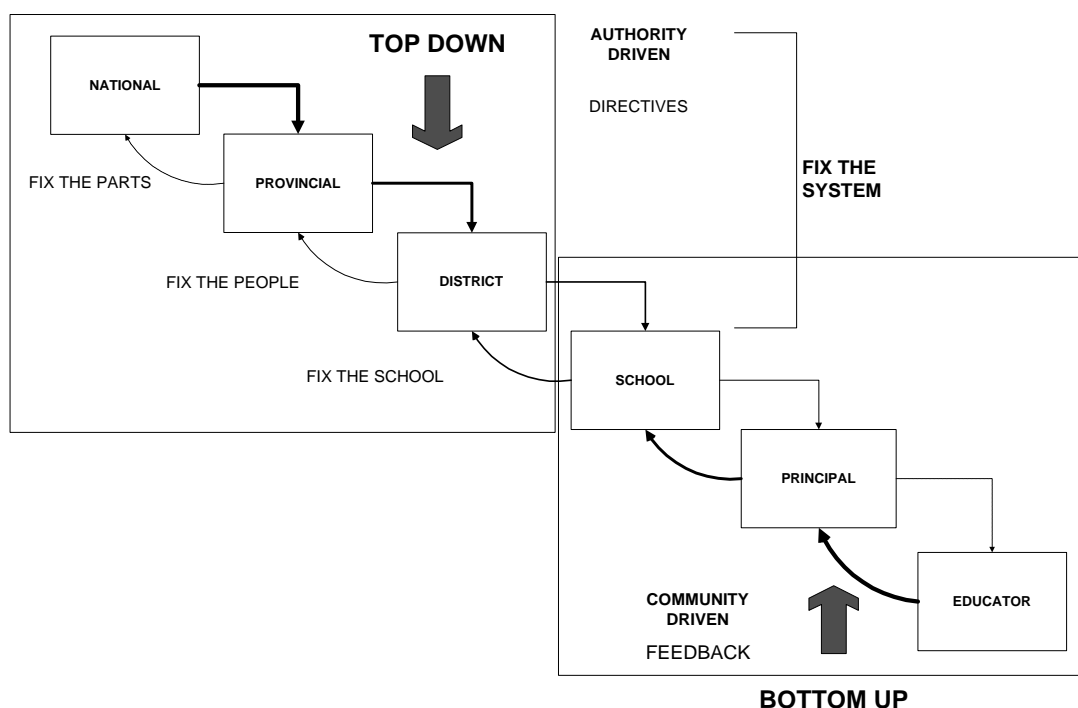[25] A PhD lecture by Prof. JD. Jansen, University of Pretoria 2001

Figure 2.7: Change models and processes

With this literature review a dynamic, holistic and integrated conceptual framework was developed, which would serve as the overall guide to this study. The ensuing conceptual framework provided a multi-modal perspective. See Figure 2.9:51 for a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework.

This multi-dimensional approach consisted of examining contexts and factors that affect policy including issues of delay, the policy formation process and the use of policy analysis tools. This approach also provides for interpretation of the policy and processes, as well as the factors that influence policy development. This broadened approach provided me with insight into the policy puzzles associated with the SNE policy development process and more specifically the aspect of "non-reform".

The framework further enabled me to describe and compare the diverse views of the important stakeholders and to highlight essential factors of the Special Needs Education policy. The multi-modal framework became an "heuristic" device that invited a broader and deeper examination of the SNE policy development trajectory. Because my conceptual

framework is a primitive tool and not an elegant theory, I have limited myself to describing its major components and some of the insights it generated into the Special Needs Education policy development.

The major components and accompanying principles are described in Figure 2.8:49. This discussion should also be read in conjunction with Figure 2.9:51. Both serve to provide a conceptual and analytical approach, as well as a device that sensitises one to the issues associated with the policy development process. This framework could be further developed into a useful tool for probing the development of other policies in transitional contexts. This would direct attention to the different elements of the policy-making process and provide an understanding of the main events associated with the policy. The headings A-D in Figure 2.8:49 i.e., context, process, "theory of action" and "theory in use" provide the dimensions of policy development that I sought to understand in relation to my main and secondary research questions on the Special Needs Education policy. This template would form the basis of my structural outlines and analyses in Chapters 5, 6 7 and 8.

2.9   The research question

I extracted my key research question from the literature review. I felt strongly that my area of focus needed to deal with the non-emergence of the policy and phrased it: *Why did the policy on Special Needs Education (SNE) not emerge in South Africa when it was widely expected?*

On the grounds of the above theoretical debates by, amongst others, Jansen (2001a) and Hess (1999), with regard to "political symbolism" in policy-making, I subsequently formulated accompanying assumptions as they pertained to Special Needs Education policy in South Africa:

A: Context	Key factors shaping policy: actors, problems and values
Analysis of characteristics of policy makers • How are policy problems viewed by actors? • What conceptions of social ideals did the actors have? • How are the priority values of actors shaped? • How are actors affecting policy? • What are the leverage points and influence possibilities?	
B: Process	Activities and interactions, stages and phases
Analysis of: • How is policy initiated? • How is policy formulated? • How is policy enacted? • How is policy implemented and funded? • How is policy revised?	
C : Theory of action – forward mapping	Relationship between policy actions and effects
Analysis of: • How does a policy produce effects? • What are the policy effects or intended outcomes?	
D: Theory in use – backward mapping	Policy results and effects
An analysis of: • What are the unintended "products" of policy?	

Figure 2.8: The multi dimensional approach to policy analysis and its guiding principles

▪ Policies that encompass a paradigmatic shift in a transforming society take longer to get off the ground if they are value-laden and contested.

▪ A policy that is delayed in "getting off the ground" cannot necessarily be described as "non-reform".

▪ In the South African context the symbolic importance of having a Special Needs Education policy often overrides its practical implementation.

- The delay in the emergence of Special Needs Education policy reflects the lack of political status of Special Needs Education, as a reform programme within the government bureaucracy.

2.10   Chapter summary

Through this synthesis of the literature on *education policy as politics*, as provided by the works of Weiler (n.d.), Hess (1999), Jansen (2001a) and others such as Fullan (2001a) and Garn (1999), a conceptual framework for the study of the policy development process on Special Needs Education has been developed. In my study I explain what could have been the major causes for the delay in the policy development process for Special Needs Education.

I will also bring to the foreground my explanation of "non-reform" as well as the role of "political symbolism" within this policy.

 The extant literature suggests that Special Needs Education cannot be surveyed from one perspective only and that a variety of perspectives would be required, in order to set the parameters for this research.

The conceptual framework consists of several components which include the role and function of policy, the policymaking process, factors that influence policy and tools for policy analysis. The guiding approach of my conceptual and analytical framework is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.9:51.

The next chapter discusses how the study was designed in such a way that the questions raised, can be further explored with the purpose of reviewing, validating or expanding on the assumptions stated in this chapter.
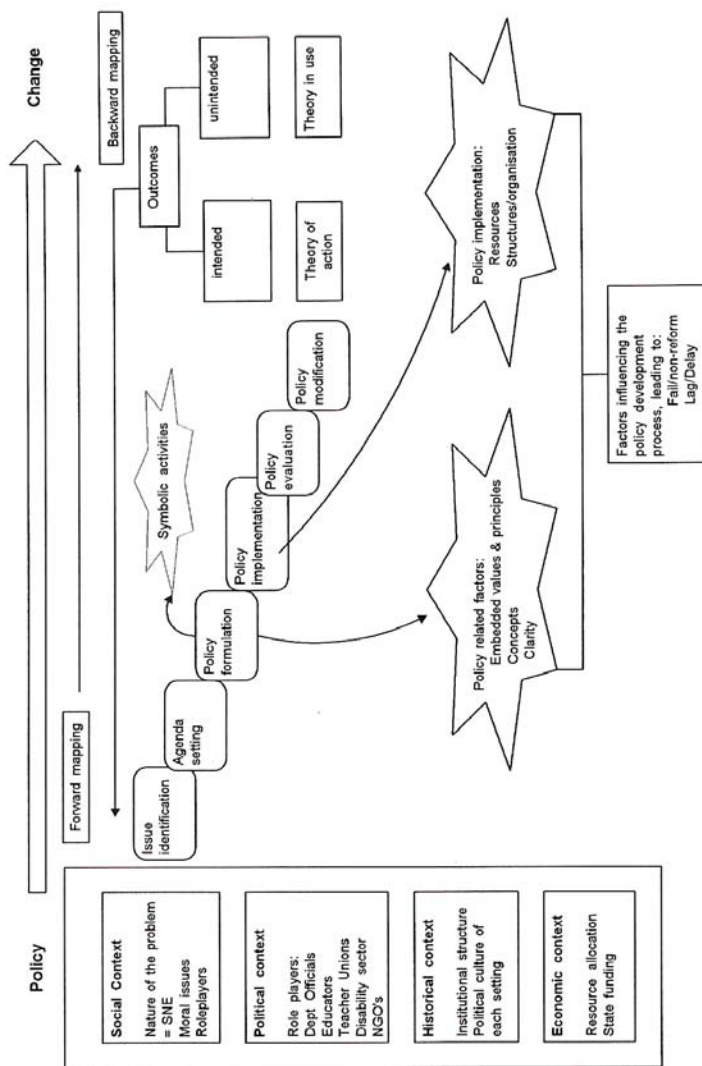
Figure 2.9: Overall conceptual and analytical framework

Chapter Three
The technique

The methodology and methods deployed

3.1   Introduction

In this chapter I describe the methodology and methods applied in this case study of Special Needs Education policy in South Africa. I will also show how efforts were made to minimise bias and error and validate the research findings.

3.2   Research problem

Initially this study was conceived as mainly qualitative in nature. In addition to other changes, the lack of access to relevant provincial officials caused me to look for other source material, thus extending the area of research. I included a substantial critical analysis of the education budgets of the provincial departments. This introduced a quantitative element to my empirical study. I used the research questions to guide my selection of interviewees and the sources of evidence that would be the most appropriate. Not only would I examine the content of the policy, but also the policy route followed. Much of the available literature distinctly draws one's attention to the important role of stakeholders in the policy process. With a view to broadening and widening my investigation I formulated the following subsidiary questions:

Who were the major actors in the policy-making process? This question required me to aim my research at both the key policy makers in the national and provincial departments and the main disability groupings.

What factors contributed to the delay in the emergence of the Special Needs Education policy? This question required that a thoroughly and systematic interrogation of the areas known to cause delay in policies in education. It also called for a critical analysis as to whether new areas surface that are pertinent to this particular policy-making process. I also had to consider a range of contextual issues whilst examining this aspect.

Could the Special Needs Education (SNE) policy be dismissed as "non-reform"? This research question needed to be explored in depth, since it had to elicit the subtle and not so subtle nuances that the respondents were to provide.

Given the absence of official government policy, what de facto policy shaped Special Needs Education practices in the field? In a policy vacuum other initiatives or previous policies are drawn on or referred to in order to keep the system going. This question required that I determine through the interviews, whether or not, provincial departments of education had used other sources or policies to guide them in the interim period.

I had to be constantly alerted to the fact that words carry a range of meanings, and to be careful not to overlook the deeper meanings in the discourses that I analyse, as they could easily have been masked by rhetoric. This also meant that I had to look for answers in items other than the one used to elicit these responses and to see whether meaning was carried covertly in other areas of response.

3.3   Research process

The research methodology followed the process outlined in Figure 3.1:55. Prior to the case study I undertook a review of the literature in order to provide the theoretical framework and produce some clarity for the research questions. This examination also served to assist in the

interpretation of the data gathered (Merriam 1998:153).

3.4   Research design

Qualitative and contextual

I used a single qualitative case study for my research design. The literature suggests that this is the most effective means with which to investigate a phenomenon of interest in depth. I needed a study that would be intensive and provide the opportunity for holistic descriptions and analysis of a single phenomenon. Since the phenomenon under study was Special Needs Education policy reform, I needed to observe it in natural settings and under natural circumstances so that I could understand it in its operational context (Stake 1995, Yin 1994).

The White Paper 6 on Special Needs is a case with its own intricate and dynamic system. It needed to be studied as a bounded system (Miles & Huberman 1994:25). In order to comply with the general requirements of a case study I had to consider the Special Needs Education policy and its own particularistic and heuristic nature. In my study of multiple data sources I had to rely strongly on inductive reasoning (Merriam 1998:16) which I frequently employed while conducting my case study. I also used multiple sources of data, which allowed for generalisations and themes to emerge (Hamel et al. 1993: 40).

Descriptive, Interpretative and Exploratory

Descriptive

The focus of my research was aimed at detailed descriptions of the Special Needs Education policy reform. The design was deliberately descriptive in nature (Mouton & Marais 1990:52) and used the rich and complex descriptions of the actions, meanings and feelings that the relevant stakeholders experienced. These descriptions were recorded and analysed so that "interactants as the interaction unfolded" could be determined (Denzin 1989:101).

The Research Process

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┌──────────────────────┐
│   Theory Framework   │◄──┐
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           ▼               │
┌──────────────────────┐   │
│   Research Problem   │   │
└──────────┬───────────┘   │
           ▼               │
┌──────────────────────┐   │
│   Research Design    │   │
└──────────┬───────────┘   │
           ▼               │        ┌──────────────────────┐
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│   Research Format    │   │        └──────────────────────┘
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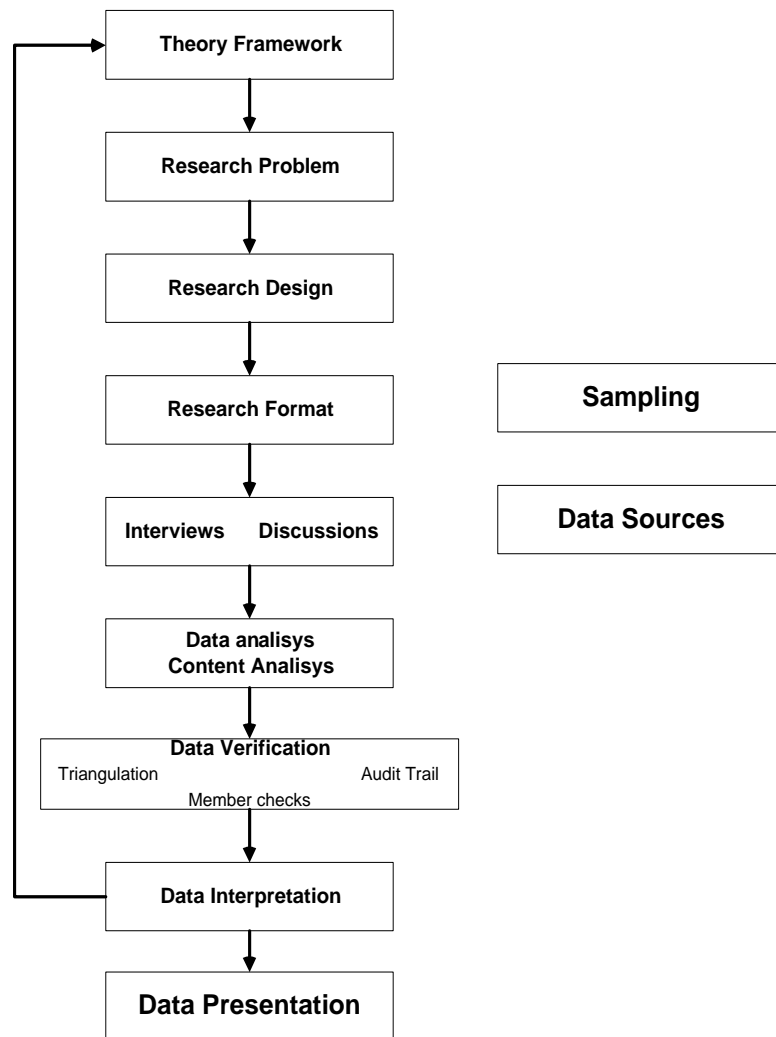
Figure 3.1: The ideal research process

Interpretative

In order to understand the experiences, I interpreted them in such a manner as to assign clarification and meaning to them. In this process of knowing and comprehending I had to interpret the meanings as they were felt, intended, and expressed by the stakeholders. One had to be able "to read between the lines". This according to Denzin (1989:108-120) means the ability to "enter into, or take the point of view of, another person's experiences".

Exploratory

55

Since the study was intended to elucidate and provide new insights into the phenomenon, I included elements of exploration and discovery (Mouton & Marais 1990:45). The design I employed, allowed for categories and themes to emerge from the information, rather than necessitating their identification before the research began (Creswell 1994:95). This emergent design provided rich, context-bound information, which led to patterns that helped to explain the phenomenon under scrutiny.

I regarded my case as particularistic because it focused on an individual policy development process as the unit of study. The case study on the White Paper 6 for Special Needs was also microscopic as only one particular case out of many was analysed (Hamel et al.1993: 35). I hoped that my case study on Special Needs Education would prove to be helpful and heuristic in uncovering new discoveries with regard to the phenomenon of "non-reform" and in bringing about a new understanding of it.

3.5   Research format

My explanatory framework is best described as employing the constructs of "non-reform" and "political symbolism" in one particular policy, with a view to opening up new avenues for theory building in the area of policy studies.

The policy development process for Special Needs Education reform was a sufficiently broad domain within which to gather information and to provide new insights into the factors that cause delay or non-emergence and to investigate the role of "political symbolism" in the policy-making process in the South African context. I intended to provide new insights into models of policy trajectories in contexts undergoing transition.

The area of Special Needs reform is by its very nature an emotive subject. With time it has become more ideological in its content and more partisan in its politics. The policy development process in South Africa was protracted and accompanied by many consultative and collaborative processes. It was one of the few policy-making processes that was preceded by two enquiries that were undertaken simultaneously, namely, the National

Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National
Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS).

The complexities that surround the understanding of the policymaking process and my initial
intent to scrutinise only "political symbolism" was broadened by the vast body of knowledge
in policy-making that directed me to enquire more widely on the matter. My discussion had
to be preceded by touching on change and models of change, the policy development
process and the factors that cause policies to go awry. As I proceeded, so I became
conversant with the substantive issues involved in this area of study.

3.6   Sampling

I had a particular interest in Special Needs Education and deliberately chose White Paper 6
because I wanted to explain the underlying cause of the delay and to interrogate it as a
possible case of "political symbolism", as many preceding policies had been so labelled. I
had been closely associated with its development and wished to map its development in a
scientific study, which could be used to highlight policy development in a society
undergoing transformation. So much work and energy had been attached to this policy, that I
could not believe that it was a case of "blind man's bluff" and that there were not real
intentions to get it off the ground.

 I had to seek the answers, but it was imperative that my understanding and my search for
answers was empirically grounded. I would then have sufficient information to substantiate
my claims. I felt that I would get most of my insights by tracing the policy formation process
of White Paper 6 (Hamel et al.1993: 43).

Merriam (1998:48) argues that there is a need to provide criteria for the selection of a study. I
used the following criteria as the basis for my selection of stakeholder respondents:

- Direct involvement in at least one of the stages in the policymaking process.
- Professional involvement, directly or indirectly, with the disability sector.
- Knowledge of the education system, specifically as it related to special needs and

provisioning.

- Association with a Disabled Peoples' Organisation (DPO).

In order to find the most pertinent and accurate answers and to provide differing and/or opposing views on the policy process, I set out to interview education officials and a diverse range of relevant stakeholders who had been involved in the policy-making process both prior to and since 1994.

The list of interviewees included relevant officials at the national Department of Education, the Directorate: Inclusive Education and members of Disabled Peoples' Organisations (DPOs). Most of my interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and each took more than two hours to complete. The interviews were supported by a broad semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B). Those respondents included in the purposefully selected sample are described in Tables 3.1:59 and 3.2:60 respectively. I was able to conduct interviews with the former Director-General of Education, Dr. C Manganyi and the former NCSNET commissioners, including the Chairperson (Prof. S Lazarus) and the co-ordinator. I interviewed former members of the NCESS and provincial officials who had either represented their province or who had worked, or were working in, units connected to ELSEN or Inclusive Education. I also managed to interview officials from the Directorate: Inclusive Education at the national Department of Education, including the director, Dr. S Naicker. I had an express need to interview provincial officials but my attempts to get them to respond were, in most cases, to no avail.

The literature on "non-reform" made me aware that resources would need to be allocated to several of the activities proposed in the White Paper 6 if it was to be implemented. I was thus intrigued by the concept of funding as it related to "non-reform". I decided to do a comparison of provincial budgets in lieu of my interviews with provincial officials. This would serve as a stable platform for examining "theory in use". I hoped that the "action" of provincial spending would speak louder than words.

Level	Position	Unit
National Department of Education		
Senior Management	Director-General	1
	Deputy Director General: Systems Branch	1
	Deputy Director General: GET Branch	1
	Chief Director: CADLA	1*
Director	Director: Inclusive Education	1*
Line function officials	Chief Education specialist: Inclusive Education	1*
	Deputy Chief Education Specialist: Inclusive Education	1
Provincial Departments of Education: Western Cape	Director: Special Needs Education	1
Commissioners and members of the NCSNET and NCESS		
	Chairperson	1
	Co-ordinator	1
Other service providers	Consultant	1

Also a member on the NCSNET and /or NCESS

Table 3.1: Multi level of data sources associated with the national Department of Education

Some interviews could not be conducted on a "one-on-one" basis because officials and/or role players had relocated. In such cases, the interview schedule was sent via email, but on return it was clear that the responses lacked the quality and depth of those that were conducted personally.

One of my interviewees was quite angry about the language I had used in my questionnaire, and more specifically, about my mention of the term "special needs". He became reluctant to answer and quite obnoxious, inferring that the phraseology I was using was placing me within a paradigm that was not acceptable to him. I did not succumb to this intimidating behaviour and continued relentlessly, ending the interview congenially.

My next set of data sources, contained in Table 3.2:60, came from outside the national Department of Education and involved members from disability groupings and the organised teaching profession. Two of these interviews were conducted electronically and I was unable to follow up with contact interviews. I had known some of these participants to be enthusiastic and committed towards Special Needs Education issues. It appeared that over time they had become complacent and their enthusiasm had diminished. One participant

was of the opinion that, no matter what they did as disability groupings, the national Department of Education still went about things in their own way. One member, who could be described as sitting on the proverbial fence, found the experience of answering questions during the interview to be difficult. She had previously served in the role as activist against the government. As a loyal bureaucrat she felt limited in the depth of the response that she wanted to provide. She resolved this problem by answering from the "two hats" that she wore. My transcriptions were accordingly adjusted so that the different voices that came from one person were clearly demarcated. The data sources, i.e., Tables 3.1:59 and 3.2:60, provided additional evidence that allowed me to address a broader range of attitudinal and behavioural issues. This additional evidence assisted me in the development of convergent lines of enquiry (triangulation) through corroboration.

Grouping	Position	Unit
South African National Council for the Blind	Member	1
Down Syndrome South Africa National Department of Education	Parent member	1[26]
South African Teachers Union (SATU)	Chairperson	1
Office on the Status of Disabled Persons in the Office of the Presidency (OSDP)	Deputy Director	1

Table 3.2: Multiple data sources within the disability and other sectors

I found the publicly available budget presentations by the Provincial Departments of Education on the web site[27] of the National Treasury. I used this as a further source of information. I compared and analysed this data for trends in spending, with regard to programmes associated with Special Schools and auxiliary services. In Chapter Seven of this study, I included a breakdown of the actual and estimated expenditure for the financial years 2000/01 - 2006/07.

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[26] Also a member on the NCSNET and /or NCESS

[27] http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/budget/2003/provincial/budget%20Satements/default.htm

I considered myself to be a data source as I had worked in policy development in the Special Needs field at the national Department of Education from 1994-2002. I would us my personal recollections from memory as a data source throughout this study. I was particularly aware of the fact that I would need to protect this study from personal bias. My unique position as insider had allowed me to have been a silent observer. Nonetheless, I would have my recollections peer-reviewed by those that had served with me at the time and the transcripts scrutinised by those who had provided me with the data, thus mitigating possible personal bias and providing a degree of triangulation to this study. An innovative aspect of my case study was the configuration of my own position as an experienced data source. I was actively and intensely involved with the policy development process within the national Department of Education from the time of its inception to the time of the NCESS report. I had my own experiences to draw from. In some instances, my connection to the Department of Education provided me with easy access to the relevant participants. At other times, the fact that I had left the Department of Education made me acutely aware that I had become an outsider.

3.7   Procedures, methods of data collection and processing

Semi-structured interview protocol

The main purpose of my semi-structured interview protocol was to obtain specific information that would provide answers to my research problem. I wanted to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind" (Merriam 1998:72) in order to gauge the stakeholders perspectives, feelings, thoughts and intentions.

In some questions I provided additional cues, so that I could ensure that all the issues I wanted to explore were covered. This allowed me to "respond to the emerging world of the respondent and to new ideas on the topic" (ibid:74) in a flexible and professional manner.

I had practised my interviewing skills before I embarked on my actual interviews, with a view to being able to minimise distortions by being "neutral and non-judgemental and refraining from arguing" and to reinforcing my interviewing skills, by "being a good

reflective listener" (ibid:75). In most of my interviews, respondents were able to express their thoughts, feelings, opinions and their perspective on the topic freely. I recorded the interviews on audiotape cassettes after I had been granted permission to do so. I also made rough interview notes, which were extremely useful when I did the transcriptions. The respondents' information was compared to the other accounts, in an attempt to establish its plausibility and to minimise distortions and exaggerations.

Documents

I found documents to be useful and sources of data. Sometimes the most cogent records were unobtrusive but their discovery as "ready made sources of data easily accessible to the investigator" (Merriam 1998:104) was welcome.

 I accessed a variety of documents from the national Department of Education, including the White Paper 6, the recent audit on Special Schools and the recent Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Education as well as the NCSNET /NCESS report and the latest document on Inclusive Education from UNESCO. There did not appear to be any need to doubt the general validity of these documents and one felt reasonably safe making inferences based upon them (Yin 1994:85).

3.8   Data analysis, consolidation and interpretation

Data analysis

My data was collected over a period of 12 months. It sometimes took as much as four months to get a response from certain of the stakeholders. I compiled my case study record from the data collected as transcriptions (Yin 1994:91). I proceeded to reduce the data by taking away unnecessary elements that did not pertain to the key questions before I could start with interpretation (Marshall & Rossman 1989:114). In cases where I was unable to complete the interview schedule in the given time, I scheduled follow-up interviews.
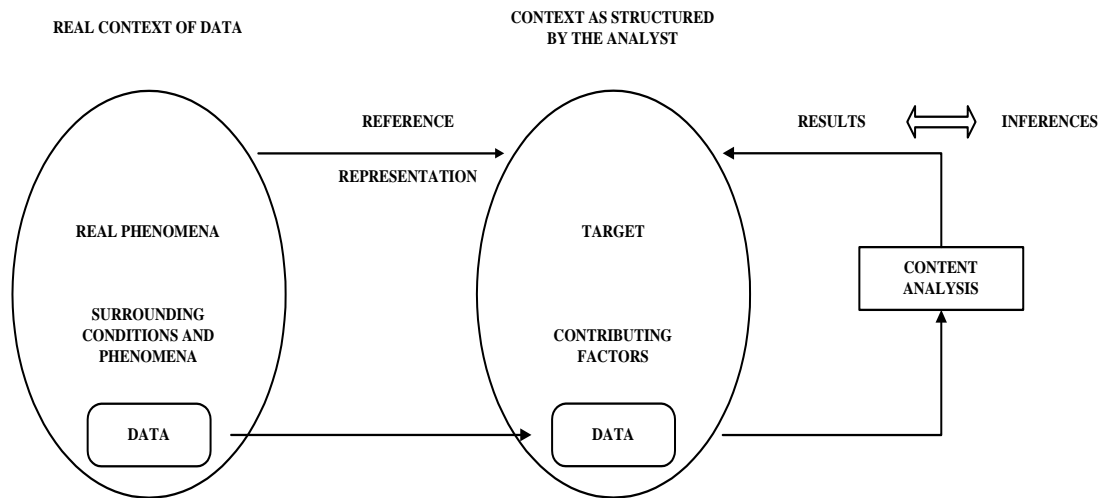
Figure 3.2: The framework for content analysis (adapted from Krippendorf 1986:28)

I found that only once the transcriptions had been completed and typed, could I begin with reflective interpretation of the data. I analysed the data using the content analysis procedure of open-ended coding as described by Berg (1995:185). I used data collection and data analysis concomitantly and the process soon became interactive (Merriam 1998:119).

Data consolidation

My next step was to complete the open-ended coding and organise the data into coding frames (Berg 1995:188). My first coding frame consisted of the themes and categories that emerged.

I took the emergent themes and reduced them to relevant categories by gathering related themes together. These themes were clustered into categories in the specific phases of the policy development process with a view to better understanding the phenomenon that I was exploring I subsequently sorted the data into groups of data that bore similar patterns or characteristics (Miles & Huberman 1994:249). I found that once the categories were constructed, they were internally homogenous and thus inclusive of similar data, but also heterogeneous and thus the differences between the categories were clear. I had designed the categories to reflect the purpose of the study (see Appendix C).

Data interpretation

Once my data was consolidated, I had a basis for systematic interpretation (Merriam 1998:140). I made deductions from the research findings within the theoretical framework based on the literature review (Miles & Huberman 1994:69). Essentially I made my interpretations by looking for "relationships among the categories" (Merriam 1998:141) and noting the patterns to see what went with what (ibid:245). The data that I had assimilated was holistic and rich. There was more than a heightened element of intrigue on my part, because I found the data that the study had collected was both absorbing and full of potential meaning.

3.9   Data verification, reduction and cleaning

I transcribed all recorded interviews and returned the typed scripts to the interviewees for verification. After the data gathering exercise, I abridged the data to eliminate irrelevant elements and then cleaned it for coding. I undertook the task of coding the data and its subsequent arrangement in themes manually. I did this only after I had duly considered the use of electronic data capturing and attempted to use statistical analytical packages. I estimated that the time necessary to learn a new package, such as NUDIST or NVIVO, would have equalled or unreasonably exceeded the time it would have taken me to perform a manual analysis. I therefore decided that the effort could not be justified for a study of this nature and size given the time constraints.

3.10 Validity concerns

> *The value of qualitative research as a whole is a mere*
> *means to observe and 'understand' a phenomenon, it*
> *could be defended, but even then reliability would still be*
> *an important factor* (Merriam 1998:174).

Steina Kvale (1996:217) argues that validity must be seen in the context of three communicative contexts: (1) external legitimisation (general public), (2) philosophical foundation (theoretical community) and (3) intrinsic validation (interviewee).

I was alerted by other qualitative researchers to the fact, that I would be extricating pieces of non-quantifiable personal and social aspects of the world (Merriam 1998:82). This meant that I would need to emphasise the purpose of my research rather than concerning myself that it was "quantitatively acceptable".

My research would therefore rather reflect the qualitative nature of the study using the lens of the interpretivist epistemology, which espouses the view that external validity is not concerned with universal generalisations. My focus would be on the overall validity and the need to understand my case study in depth, rather than on applying it to many other cases. I did not concern myself with the analytical generalisations of a broader theory.

I therefore selected from the epistemologies on the qualitative methods and validity checks, which would enhance and improve the quality of this case study. I used this variety of options that were open to me in order to significantly enhance this study's validity. A multi-modal approach meant that I had framed my own investigation into units based on the policy formation stages.

Through the use of quantitative data, I had allowed other participants into my research domain by applying *triangulation* to all of the responses including my own. I had also availed myself of *member checking*, reflexivity and *peer debriefing*.

I would also use thick, rich descriptions of the interviews, in such a way that the setting, the participants and the themes of the study would be enriched by their detail.

I believed that readers of my study would feel as if they had taken part in the experiences that I had lived through as a researcher. The descriptions also related the experiences and actions of the stakeholders within their specific situations. As I knew that Special Needs Education is an extremely sensitive area in the public domain, I also attempted to describe some of the emotive and personal aspects invoked by the respondents.

Triangulation

I was the sole researcher involved in this research and I was constantly aware that I had to counteract my own bias. I resorted to corroborating the data generated from the analysis of the various discourses through peer debriefing and member checking.

Peer debriefing

I used two of my study companions as peers. Both had worked with me in the national Department of Education and were familiar with the development of this study. They offered intensive and continuous feedback during the duration of the research and even after my data had been processed. Their challenge of my propositions and their questions about the method and interpretation of my data, contributed to the robustness of this study.

Additionally, the role that my promoter played in the mechanism of peer debriefing was extremely beneficial, as he possessed a wealth of understanding on the policy development process in South Africa.

Member checking

I used member checking throughout the study and sent the raw data back to the participants via e-mail for their approval. I did this with the intent that they confirm the credibility of the information and the narrative accounts. I regarded non-response from the participants as acceptance of the content.

3.11   Limitations of the study

I limited my study to the examination of the policy development process and did not investigate the phases after adoption i.e., implementation and institutionalisation. There had been a considerable time lapse between the NCSNET and NCESS and my own investigation. Some participants had difficulty in recalling events so far back. This may have impacted on the reliability of their data. It was not possible to interview all the actors who

were involved in the policy development process of this specific policy. Most of the data was collected on the perceptions of the main policy makers and the main stakeholder groupings.

Throughout this investigation, I was led to the international studies of Hess and Argyris and Schön. I interrogated these researchers' empirical studies on "political symbolism" in depth. They make a strong case to cover the political ground where resources and capacity are not the prime explanatory variables for non-implementation. Because of this, I drew extensively on their research to provide my theoretical framework for "non-reform". For local insights I drew on Jansen (2001a) for "political symbolism" in the South African context.

3.12   Ethical considerations

Verbal consent was confirmed during the interviews. Participants were fully informed of the research. Participants were given the choice to remain anonymous. Transcriptions were returned to the participants via email or fax for verification of their content.

3.13   Chapter summary

I have approached this study mainly from an interpretivist perspective. This lens provided me with the ability to individualise the accounts of the stakeholders as constructs of a single reality.

I have substantiated my choice of the sample as well as the data collection instruments and the procedures used to gather my data.

Because I have chosen a case study, my findings are very specific and my findings cannot be generalised to other cases but rather serve to support the theory (Yin 1994:44) on policy development. In the following chapter I will identify the stages of the policy-making process and the salient factors that can cause delay. I will reintroduce the issues of "non-reform" with regard to the Special Education Needs policy within the South African context.

Chapter Four

The composition

The Special Needs Education policy trajectory

4.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give a full and "thick" description of the Special Needs Education policy trajectory[28] from 1994-2004. The account given in this chapter is founded on my personal observation and experiences and as an employee of the national Department of Education from 1994 to 2001. During this period I was responsible for line function work involving special needs issues, I was also an appointee to the NCESS[29], secretary to NACOCO for ELSEN[30] and administrative support officer to the pre- and post NCSNET[31] activities. I have validated my contributions through peer reviews with other departmental officials, who had served with me in the National Department of Education at that time. In the description of this process I will elaborate on the peculiarities of the South African conditions in which this policy was developed. In my conceptual framework I allude to the social, political, historical and economic factors influencing the policy development process. I consciously place the Special Needs Education policy within the South African context.

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[28] According to *The New Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* (1976:1174)) trajectory means path of a projectile in its flight through air.

[29] The National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS)

[30] The National Coordinating Committee for the Education of learners with Special Education needs (NACOCO)

[31] The National Commission for Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET)

In the second section of this chapter I describe the trajectory of the Special Needs Education policy and refer to factors that influenced the various phases of this policy's development path. In the third section of this chapter I describe the trajectory as separate phases of the policy development in so far as this process has been completed. In the concluding section I provide a summary of the key proposals of the White Paper 6 within the framework of a theory of action.

4.2   The Special Needs Education policy in the South African context

Policy making in South Africa, or elsewhere, does not occur within a vacuum; it was led by changes in the global economy, changes in transitional policy development and the termination of apartheid.

4.2.1   An overview of the external factors

Socio–economic criteria, global and or international trends and political contexts have a direct and causal influence on a policy's trajectory. Such factors also interact dynamically with each other. I discuss the role played by each of these factors. A diagrammatic representation of the dynamics between these factors is presented in Figure 4.1:69.
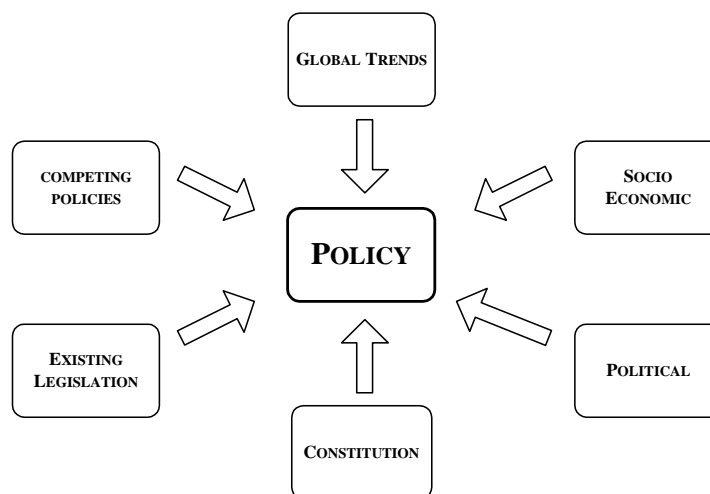

Figure 4.1: Dynamic interplay of external factors that impact on the development path of a policy

Global trends and modernity, socio- economic and political factors

South Africa's politics and policies are intimately connected to and shaped by changes in the global political economy (Carnoy 1999:37, Waghid 2001:458). There is a reflexive response by Government to what happens elsewhere in the world. Global-driven reforms place pressure on the education system to respond effectively to the needs of the country (Carnoy 1999:37). In the education and training sector, changes in the world economy have "provoked three kinds of changes". According to Carnoy (ibid.) these constitute "competitiveness-driven, finance-driven and equity-driven reforms". Different countries would therefore respond to the phenomenon of globalisation in various ways as it argues for a "broader view" than was previously the case (Louisy 2001:436). They can involve themselves in international seminars, conferences or exchange programmes; they can learn about comparative structures, policies and practices or they can develop a greater understanding of international events and forces which generate social problems. Through international perspectives they are brought to consider issues of human rights and social justice (Lyons 2002). Once these global trends have been internalised, they can incorporate them in their own documents, policies and processes and become signatories to international conventions.

In South Africa such global trends are evinced in several policy documents developed by the new government. This trend is reflected in its policies throughout the education system. South Africa has ratified several international conventions, including the Salamanca Statement of 1994. In particular the Special Needs Education policy is clearly based on trends towards an inclusive education approach, as practiced in Europe and more specifically in the Nordic countries.

The governing party in South Africa was determined that after 1994, the major focus for education policy makers would be to put policies in place that would transform the education system and move it away from all vestiges of the apartheid regime.

These policies would be founded on the new Constitution.

Constitution

In 1994 an added challenge came from the Constitutional imperatives of this new democracy that there be one education system for all schools. This presented major organisational and procedural changes to reorganise almost every facet of civil society, including the transformation of education. The Constitutional imperatives were access, equity, redress, quality, efficiency and democracy. These important issues led to social expectations which were the driving forces behind the Special Needs Education policy development process.

Education legislation

> *Many policies and activities were directed primarily to transforming the education system and secondly to provide effective educational responses to improving the quality of education for all* (Ainscow 1998:118).

Immediate origins of the Special Needs Education policy

In the analysis below it appears that since 1994-2004 policies were written for all levels of the education system. Many of the legislative processes led to the formulation of acts and a plethora of policy documents with varying degrees of status i.e., White and Green Papers. Jansen (2001b:ix) says all of this was described by Government within the ubiquitous term "frameworks".

	General	GET	FET	HE	Other	Total
Policies	2	53	7	5	3	70
Bills	4	Nil	12			16
Acts	15	2	3	3	1 (Corporate Services)	24
Regulations	1	1	1	6	1 (Office of the DG)	10
White Papers	Nil	3	2	1		6
Notices	4	5	5	5		19
Total	26	64	30	20	5	145

Table 4.1: A summary of the official documentation produced by the national Department of Education from 1994-2003

Based on the number of policies written, prioritisation was given to the GET band (see Table 4.1:71). Of the five White Papers written, one was dedicated to Special Needs Education. See Appendix D for the detailed list of bills, policies and regulations developed by the national Department of Education since 1994.

In a further analysis of the development of the policies over time, it appears that the Special Needs Education policy was developed at the tail end of what Jansen (2001a) described as the "flurry" of policy development that had taken place under the new government soon after 1994 (see Table 4.2:74).

The National Plan of Action for the Department of Education, called *Tirisano*, differentiated its programme into nine areas of priority. Neither Special Needs Education nor White Paper 6 issues were amongst them. It is important to record that the writers of several education policies[32] preceding the White Paper 6, such as the South African Schools Act (SASA), the Assessment Policy for Grades R-9, ABET (1998) and the Further Education and Training (FET) Act, had left sections unfinished pending the outcome of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET).

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training reported that the Higher Education policy had not "focused its academic development programmes on disability and thus resulted in the minimal access for learners with disabilities" (Department of Education 1997:27).

 It is evident that some education policy processes have Special Needs Education as "added-on" segments, or they have omitted these issues from the development of their own major strategies or else they have simply remained silent on the issue. The result was that policies

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[32] GET-Both, in the development of the C2005 curriculum and in the assessment policy document, the matters relating to ELSEN were left pending, awaiting the results of the Commission.
The FET document drew some attention to the ELSEN component but did not offer sufficiently broad outlines on the implementation and the role of practitioners.
The Early Childhood document recognised the need for early identification and assistance but neglected to define the 'new role' for the practitioner.

"could not be sufficiently prescriptive to indicate how these sections of education could contribute to overcoming barriers which had led to the social exclusion and sustained marginalisation of significant sectors of the population" (Department of Education 1997:45).

The analysis of the development of policies over time shows that with regard to the legislative context in South Africa, Special Needs Education was kept "on" the main agenda but not "in" other major policy-making processes. The Special Needs Education policy did not surface within the timeframe taken to complete other policies affected by the same urgency of transformation. Such observations urged me to examine competing priorities, especially those that could militate against the Special Needs Education policy.

Competing priorities

There were three systemic elements that influenced the availability and allocation of resources within the newly established Department. They were Curriculum 2005, the HIV programme and Early Childhood Development (ECD). A new approach to knowledge, content and pedagogy had been incorporated in Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). This is South Africa's new curriculum and assessment framework which reflects the notions of learner-centredness and the integration of knowledge. Curriculum 2005 was a radical breakaway from the traditional approaches to curriculum (Jansen & Taylor 1993:44, Jansen 2000:8, UNESCO 2002:107). Jordaan and Faasen (2001:238) found that: "Many educators were stranded helplessly as they tried to come to grips with what they perceived as a new mind and habit changing dogma". Unfortunately, this new curriculum, which was intended to be fully implemented by the year 2005, generated many unforeseen problems that subsequently compelled the then Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal, to commission a review of the Curriculum. This endeavour resulted in the streamlined New Curriculum Statements (NCS). Priorities in the various directorates shifted to accommodate the Minister's resolve to re-establish the credibility of OBE and prevent the schooling system from collapsing. I distinctly recollect how members of the various sections had to "down tools" in their own sections and assist officials as additional members, to task teams whenever provincial and site visits related to curriculum matters were undertaken. One result of this crisis agenda was that little space was left for Special Needs Education issues.

YEAR	POLICY, PROGRAMME OR ACT
1994	Constitution and Bill of Human Rights
1995	South African Qualifications Act White Paper 1
1996	South African Schools Act National Education Policy Act[33] Curriculum 2005 National Commission on Higher Education report White Paper 2
1997	School Register of Needs[34] Survey Higher Education White Paper 3 Higher Education Act
1998	National Norms and Standards for School Funding The Assessment Policy for Grades R-9 and ABET Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998 White Paper 4
1999-2000	Call to Action
2001	Implementation Plan for Tirisano White Paper 5 White Paper 6
2002-2004	Implementation Plan for Tirisano

Table 4.2: Development of major education policies and important strategies 1994-2004

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[33] *The National Education Policy Act* gave the Minister of Education the power to determine national norms and standards for educational planning, monitoring and evaluation, and allocated the function that allowed him/her to execute policy and deliver in districts and schools to the Provincial Governments. This same act allows for the decentralised system of school management through democratically elected and representative school governing bodies.

[34] The 1997 *School Register of Needs* has provided the national Department of Education with information on the poor, and sometimes non-existent, basic amenities such as telephone, water, electricity and ablution facilities in many schools.

From my experience at that time I know that it was extremely difficult to engage other directorates on special needs issues. Official representatives of Special Needs Education were asked to influence certain aspects of the C2005 programme by incorporating the notion of inclusive education into the already written texts. It was requested of us, as officials, to plead that "special needs" issues were not to be appended to the end of documents but rather that they be "infused" into the documents to avoid creating the impression of a proverbial "add-on" approach. Understandably, such "persuasions" at times led to irritation and antagonism, because it meant that all documents that had already gone through the process of consultation would have to be re-consulted and rewritten to accommodate the new paradigm. Indeed, some were sceptical about the paradigmatic shift. It took a long time for us, as official representatives of the new inclusive education approach, to convince officials in the curriculum unit that Outcomes-Based Education was one of the most suitable approaches to addressing learning needs for all learners. The curriculum officials did not have the time, or in some cases, the inclination to go back to the drawing board. Adding to their frustrations was the fact that many officials in the curriculum section were not conversant with "special needs" issues. The national Department of Education was understaffed, exhausted and overwhelmed by their professional in-house responsibilities at the time. Educators[35] in the field also had little knowledge of and experience in education for diversity.

The Special Needs Education policy competed with programmes of national importance, such as the programme to counter the massive and explosive HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 2001, the HIV/AIDS factor and not the "special needs" factor came to feature prominently as a programme objective in the *Tirisano Implementation Plan*[36] (Department of Education 2000). A national budget of R150 million per year was awarded to it. Budgets for adult education, Early Childhood Development and Special Needs Education were reduced. These external factors have provided a clearer understanding of the context in which this policy development process is set. I will use this framework to question areas in which delay could be found. The remaining and overriding question was: *Why was the Special Needs Education*

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[35] Training programme for SBST in Gauteng April 2003.

[36] The Department of Education's Implementation Plan for Tirisano, which covers the period January 2000 to January 2004, is silent on the subject of Special Needs Education.

policy not treated as a priority and given greater prominence?

In the next section I discuss the internal factors that impacted on the Special Needs Education policy.

4.2.2   An overview of the internal factors

According to Patti Swarts (2002:4), several factors can play a significant role in the development of a policy. I have considered these generic factors and have subsequently developed additional factors that are pertinent to the Special Needs Education policy development process:

- The timeframes in which the policy development process occurred;

- New terminology or nomenclature associated with this policy;

- The envisaged restructuring of the education system;

- Resources and/or human capacity and development; and

- Funding within the State's budgetary constraints.

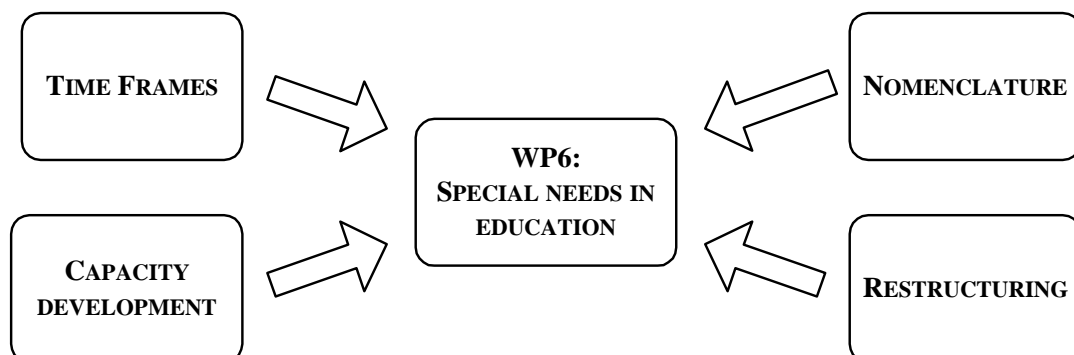These factors are diagrammatically presented in Figure 4.2:76:

Figure 4.2: Internal factors impacting on the Special Needs Education policy in South Africa

The time-frames in which the policy development process occurred

The period in which a policy is developed, can have a significant impact on not only its content but also the course it follows. I have used the three phases for the transformation of the education system in South Africa that have been outlined in the report, *Education in South Africa: Achievements since 1994* (Department of Education 2001b:3-7). For the purpose of critical analysis, I placed the policy development stages of the Special Needs Education policy within these three broad time phases, in a typical linear progression as seen in Figure 4.3:77.
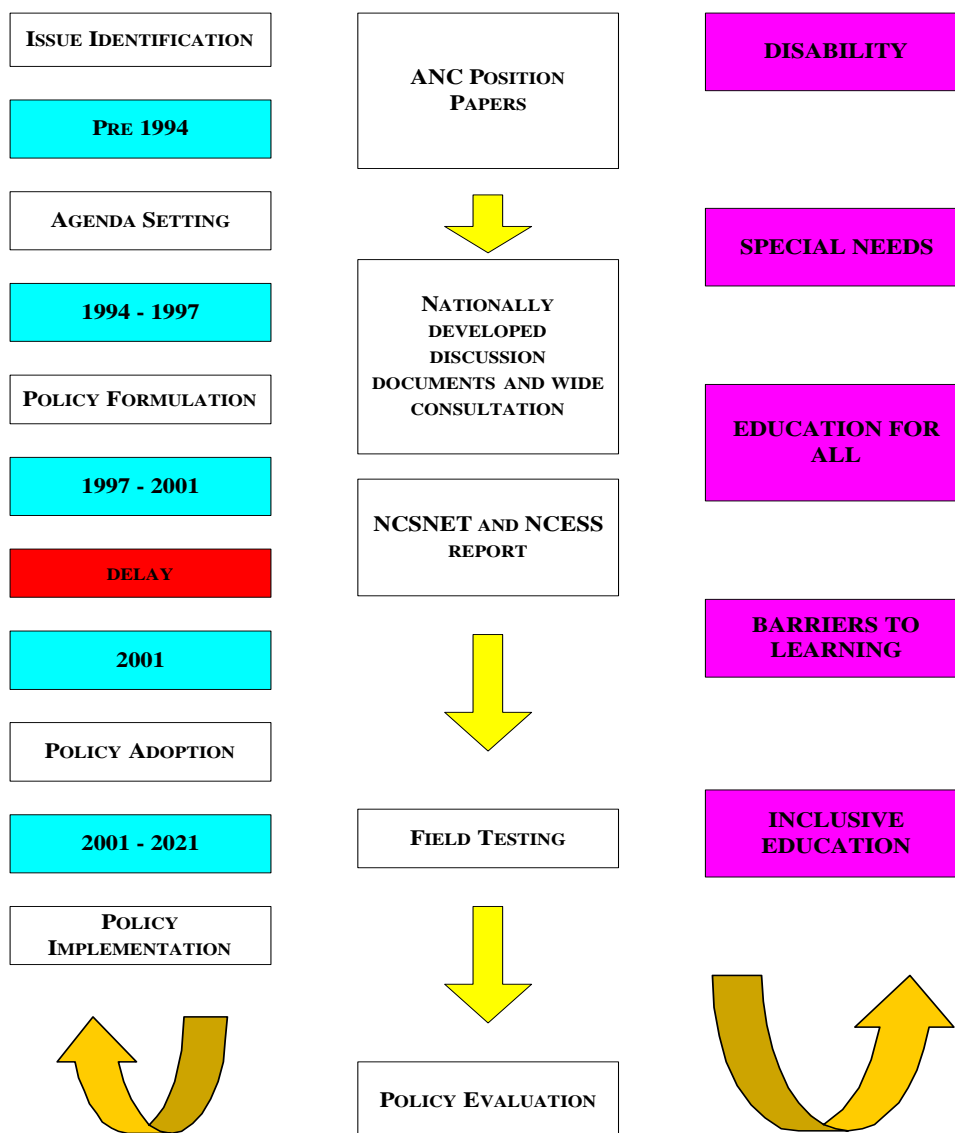
ISSUE IDENTIFICATION	ANC POSITION PAPERS	DISABILITY
PRE 1994		
AGENDA SETTING		SPECIAL NEEDS
1994 - 1997	NATIONALLY DEVELOPED DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS AND WIDE CONSULTATION	
POLICY FORMULATION		EDUCATION FOR ALL
1997 - 2001	NCSNET AND NCESS REPORT	
DELAY		BARRIERS TO LEARNING
2001		
POLICY ADOPTION		INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
2001 - 2021	FIELD TESTING	
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	POLICY EVALUATION	

Figure 4.3: Policy formation process (trajectory) for Special Needs Education in South Africa 1994-2004

- During the ***first phase,*** *Creating the framework,* which lasted from 1994–1997, was aimed at creating an equitable system of financing, a policy framework and the dismantling of the apartheid structures (Jordaan & Faasen 2001:238);

- The ***second phase***, *Transforming the system,* between 1998 and 2000, deepened systemic transformation, using targeted actions that focussed on implementation and delivery, such as the Tirisano programme; and

- The ***third phase***, *Achieving equity in education provision,* since 2001, focuses on creating greater equity, the quality of learning conditions and improving standards and learner outcomes.

Phase one: Creation of an equitable society 1994-1997

Both the issue identification and agenda setting stages of the Special Needs education policy can be included in this Phase. More specifically, the *issue definition* stage where the conceptual framework for the Special Needs Education policy is laid, can be considered completed by 1995. By the early 1990s, Special Needs Education issues had already been mentioned in the National Education and Planning Investigation (NEPI) documents[37]. The international events that propelled South Africa towards "inclusive education" and "Education for All (EFA)" in its policy reform related to special needs, were the *Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education* (1994) and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990*).* The latter was incorporated into the South African Constitution[38] and the former used to inform the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET.

During the early sages of the development of the Special Needs Education policy, the narrow definition of the term *Education for All*, as proposed in the Salamanca Statement, was used

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[37] These were the framework documents which were developed by the ANC policy working-groups prior to the establishment of the new democracy.

[38] The supreme law of South Africa specifically stated that no discrimination against people with disability was allowed to take place (*Constitution of South Africa*, Bill of Rights 1994. Section 9:3) and that all learners have a right to education (*Constitution of South Africa* Section 29:1-2).

by the official policy makers and included disabled learners. Thus the early policy makers were intent firstly, on writing policy that would no longer marginalise disabled learners and secondly, on insuring that the new policy proposals paid sufficient attention to the development of support service delivery. The *Integrated National Disability Strategy for South Africa* in 1997 also assisted in shaping the future policy framework and echoed the intent on accommodating diversity in South Africa.

There were clear indications that Special Needs Education policy was high on the political agenda during the early years of Nelson Mandela's Government of National Unity. There were constitutional imperatives to establish support structures for special needs education. These imperatives compelled the Department of Education to investigate fully the issues of special needs and support services in the country to improve access and quality education and provide redress for disabled learners within a single integrated education system. This was a clear signal to the stakeholders that there was a certain urgency to reform Special Needs Education and that it was a key issue on the political agenda.
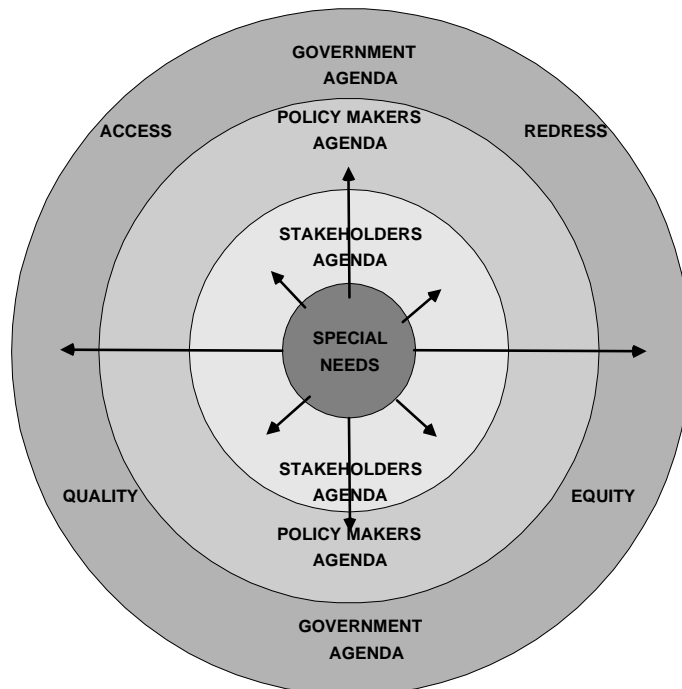

Figure 4.4: The interdependency and impact of the various agendas of the stakeholders in the policymaking process for a Special Needs Education Policy in South Africa

In order to bring about many of the proposed policy changes, South Africa relied on partnerships with civil society, such as teacher unions and organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private and the international sector. Given this urgency to transform Special Needs Education, some of these groups, which had vested interests, started to promote their own agendas. The dynamic interaction between the various agendas of the stakeholders and their vested interests is presented in Figure 4.4:79. The early positioning of these stakeholders on Special Needs Education issues would significantly impact on the development trajectory of this policy.

Phase Two: Deepened systemic transformation and focus on Tirisano, 1998-2001

This phase includes the policy formulation stage and the time required to complete the activities of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) and the development of the White Paper 6. The NCSNET and the NCESS can be considered as the main contributors to the formulation phase.

The Commission had given expression to the stipulations in the White Paper 3 with the issue of their report in 1997. This document was a watershed event in the history of Special Needs Education in South Africa. It was significant because it symbolised the intent of the State to continue its pursuit of reform in Special Needs Education. Most importantly, the conceptualisation of Special Needs Education had embraced inclusive education. This approach would in future include all learners with "barriers to learning" and not only learners with disabilities.

In addition to promoting an inclusive education approach, the report also suggested a strategy aimed at alleviating the lack of professional staff in education support services. It was believed that in some contexts, "inappropriate or inadequate support services" might have contributed to learning breakdown or to the exclusion of learners (Department of Education 1997:17).   In fact, the policy makers were adamant that there would be no "inclusion", without a highly developed support service (Department of Education 1997:18).

After the report in 1997, a period of four years would lapse before the policy surfaced as White Paper 6 under the title of *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (Department of Education July 2001). This delay resulted in a great deal of speculation about the policy being placed on the "back burner".

The policy formation process in government is a fairly complicated and protracted process. In South Africa it can, however, take as little as a year to complete the process from the time the "issue" is identified, until it is embedded in a White Paper.

The White Paper policy route

The "White Paper policy route" is detailed in Figure 4.5:81 and is based on my recollection of the events and processes related to the development of the Special Needs Education policy as an official within the National Department of Education.
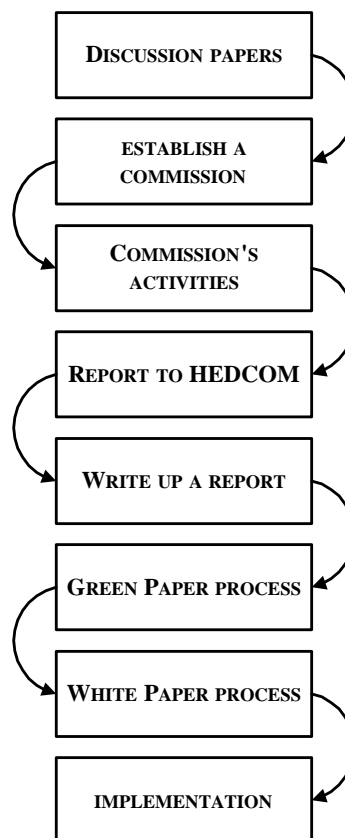
DISCUSSION PAPERS

ESTABLISH A COMMISSION

COMMISSION'S ACTIVITIES

REPORT TO HEDCOM

WRITE UP A REPORT

GREEN PAPER PROCESS

WHITE PAPER PROCESS

IMPLEMENTATION

Figure 4.5: The White Paper policy route

- The process was initiated by a set of discussion papers or position papers, in this instance from the disability sector in response to an advertisement in the main printed media.

- The national Department of Education compiled a discussion document, which was disseminated for debate.

- The Department of Education then solicited input from various stakeholders to refine the document.

- The document formed part of the brief for the Commission, which was to be established to facilitate the process.

- The Commission was set up. This was an extensive process of nomination and selection of commissioners, accompanied by announcements in the government gazette. The Commission had to produce a project plan and was provided with a budget.

- Throughout its deliberations, the Commission reported not only to the responsible directorate, but also to the sub committee of the Head of Education Departments (HEDCOM).

- The Commission followed a process of wide consultation. It invited submissions, held public hearings and presentations at its national conference and the last round of inputs were gathered from relevant stakeholders. The Commission also undertook research in other African countries to widen their understanding of local issues and provide comparative contexts.

- The draft report was submitted and underwent several iterations within the national Department of Education. The Commission's work was then concluded with the publishing of the final report.

- In the case of the Special Needs Education process, some Commissioners' contracts were extended so that they could formulate the positions of the report into a draft Green Paper. This draft Green Paper would normally have been distributed for further comment.

- In the case of the Special Needs Education policy development process, the Green Paper was withheld. A discussion document was subsequently written "in-house" and submissions were once again taken, which led to the document being refined for publication.

- This document was then published as a White Paper 6 in the Government Gazette.

It is important to note that the activities of the Commission were not delayed and that the Commission ran according to schedule. However, between the submission of the report in 1997 and the release of the White Paper 6 in 2001, a considerable delay between policy formulation and policy adoption is evident.

Policies in the national Department of Education usually proceeded from the white paper phase to the promulgation of an Act. This meant that the approval of Parliament would be sought and that the President of the country would give final approval. The White Paper 6 therefore only has the status of an official policy statement, that reflects the present position of the State on issues regarding Special Needs Education.

Phase three: Creating greater equity and quality learning conditions - 2001 onwards

This phase includes the implementation of the envisaged policy and the evaluation of the Special Needs Education policy.

Policy implementation

The envisaged policy implementation plan for White Paper 6 is intended to take place over a period of 20 years, from 2001-2021. By 2004 it had partially been implemented in designated nodal areas and resourced from international funders. It was apparent that some officials had pre-empted the future directives in the policy and had started implementing inclusive education in "pockets" before it was formalised as White Paper 6.

In 2002, a National Audit of Special Education Provision[39] was conducted, as an outcome of the proposals in the White Paper 6. This audit and the proposed field-tests, were to be undertaken with the view of providing the Department with logistical insight and costing information, before embarking on full implementation. In 2002 members of the consortium[40] that had conducted the national audit, reported that staff members in schools and provincial

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[39] The National Audit of Special Education Provision in South Africa 2002. Final Draft National Report.

[40] The consortium consisted of a national working group comprising of representatives from the various provincial education departments, nine provincial audit co-ordinators and 102 contracted researchers with expertise in the field, including researchers from DPOs (2002:12).

education departments, were negative towards the audit. They stated that this appeared to be "linked to the general dissatisfaction with Education White Paper 6 proposals and its focus on the development of an inclusive education system of education and training". The writers of the national audit stated that it was evident that:

> …*many misconceptions existed which may have led to resistance to the process for example the thinking that the audit may result in the closure of Special Schools (DoE 2002:19).*

The audit also revealed that there were "many educators who work under extreme pressure and struggle with limited resources" (ibid.). This confirmed that educators in Special Needs Education are highly committed to their learners and are impassioned by the work they do. The audit confirmed that "not all district officials were totally committed", due to other "more urgent duties". District officials "did not always participate actively" during the site visits and were negative about the process, confirmed by the fact that "they had left meetings early". If the audit had correctly captured the general attitude towards the White Paper 6 proposals, it did not bode well for the future implementation of this policy.

Policy evaluation

Policy evaluation is an integral part of the policy development process. It is evidenced by reflexive components which are normally used to redirect or re-consider the policy trajectory. The monitoring and evaluation of the policy implementation is only scheduled for 2004. Indicators for this process have, as yet, not been developed. Two large pilot studies, supported by Finnish[41] (DoE 2001) and Danish[42] (DoE 2002a) research projects, have already been undertaken. The aims of these projects are twofold, firstly, to establish best practice for inclusive education and secondly, to develop learning support and other materials. The implementation of White Paper 6 is presently targeted to take place in 30 ordinary schools, 30 special school and 30 education districts[43]. This field test will take place under the auspices of the National Department of Education and is funded by international

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[41] The Finnish project is known as SCOPE.

[42] The project was known as The Resource and Training Programme for Educator Development: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System and was funded by the Danish international Development Assistance (DANIDA).

[43] This has become known as the 30- 30- 30 rollout plan.

donors. The implementation plan for the rest of the system will be left to the devices of the provinces.

The actual implementation of this policy is beyond the scope of this study, however my elaboration of the policy development in the three main phases and the various stages, confirms that the Special Needs Education policy conforms mainly to the traditional linear model of policy development.

4.2.3   Nomenclature

The discussion that follows is based on my role as participant in the NCSNET and NCESS processes and relates to aspects surrounding the introduction of new terminology and concepts that are associated with a new policy direction. I observed that as the policy for Special Needs Education developed, so did the understanding of its key term "Special Education". In the pre-policy formation stages the concept pertained more to learners that were "special", because of the challenges arising from the specific disability. It was believed that these learners needed a different schooling system and curriculum to cater for their "special needs". Educators were trained in the various categories of "specialisation or disability". Learners, who had disabilities and were out of the system, would within the new approach need to be included in the education system. This approach was informed by the human rights movement in disability, which included the belief that education support provisioning should not be separated, as had been the case during the apartheid era. As policy makers became more skilled in the subject of "inclusive education" and the posturing of the human rights movement continued, it was inevitable that a break from the "disability" discourse would manifest. The previous understanding of "special education" gave way to the influence of the inclusive approach. Eventually, the broadened understanding portrayed in the White Paper 6 included increasing access to "Education for All" learners with barriers. This signalled a clear move away from the direct service delivery model, based on the medical approach. This change meant a move from the categorisation of learners in terms of disability, to categorisation according to their support needs. The entire education support service delivery model at all levels of the education system would need to change in order to accommodate the change.

It is envisaged that all schools in an inclusive education system would be able to cater for all forms of diversity. This would occur primarily through adaptations in the curriculum to include: multi-level and multi-lingual teaching and embracing the idea of multiple intelligence and co-operative learning. It is assumed that most of the learner support will come from the ordinary educator and that schools' support structures would be re-engineered to cater for the change. The report by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) revealed that 60% of learners in the South African education system had "Barriers to Learning". Acceptance of the broader definition of "special needs", implies that in the South African context the accepted norm for the proportion of special needs learners in any system (12%) is significantly increased. A diagrammatic representation of the changing concept of special needs alongside the development stages is provided in Figure 4.3:77. It demonstrates how, initially, the construct was taken to the "extreme" and then regressed back to its "original meaning".

As the Special Needs Education issues received prominence through the NCSNET process, the national Department of Education had to respond by developing its capacity to meet the challenges. Acceptance of the broadened concept of inclusion meant that other barriers to learning, such as HIV/AIDS and Out-of-School Youth issues, were added to the responsibility of the already overburdened inclusive education unit in the national Department of Education. Intervention programmes for HIV/AIDS have a strong medical bias. This raises two questions: *Could one summarily throw away the medical model and could the Directorate: Inclusive Education adapt to meet these new demands?*

Since 1994, the national Department of Education was restructured several times and the issues of Special Needs Education were caught up in these changing scenarios.

4.2.4   Re-structuring of the National Department of Education and the Special Needs Education unit

In order to accommodate the changes within the national reform agenda, the Department of Education underwent several major organisational changes. The ensuing discussion is based on my observations as an official of the Department during the period 1994 to 2001. A

schematic diagram representing the relocation of the Special Needs Education unit between 1994 and 2004 within the organisational structure of the Department is represented in Figure 4.6:88. When I first started at the national Department of Education in 1994, the special needs component was run under the auspices of the Systems Branch, by a task team *cum* committee. This in-house committee consisted of officials who had served in the previous government at national level and officials from the new department. The two key official policy makers at that time were Dr. Chris Madiba (Director of the Systems Branch) and Dr. Trevor Coombe (Chief Director of the Systems Branch). The nine provinces were co-opted through the establishment of a National Co-ordinating Committee for the Education of Learners with Special Education Needs (NACOCO for ELSEN). I was the Secretariat for that committee and experienced first-hand the tensions that engulfed crucial policy issues.

During the period 1994-1996 several delegations from the disability sector were received at the national Department of Education, at times by low ranking officials and on other occasions by the Minister of Education. A close liaison with the Office on the Status of the Disabled in the Office of the then Deputy President, Mr Thabo Mbeki, was also established. For the greater part of this period I dealt with normal line function responsibilities associated with Special Needs Education issues. During the period of 1996-1997 Dr. Trevor Coombe and Dr. Chris Madiba were promoted to Deputy Director General and Chief Director respectively. This period was devoted to establishing the national commission, preparing discussion documents and reporting on special needs matters to the Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM) and the sub-committee for ELSEN. A reference group, the largest of its kind, was also formed to give direction to the Department and to give expert advice on issues relating to disability.

In 1997, Mr Zwandile Matthews, as Director, was made responsible for issues regarding special needs, which now fell under the policy development section of the Systems Branch. The support needed by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) dominated the activities of the unit at the time. Soon after the director's appointment, Ms B Ngoqo was employed. She was immediately nominated by the Department to take up a position in the NCSNET. The activities of the unit fell under the new umbrella term "ELSEN".
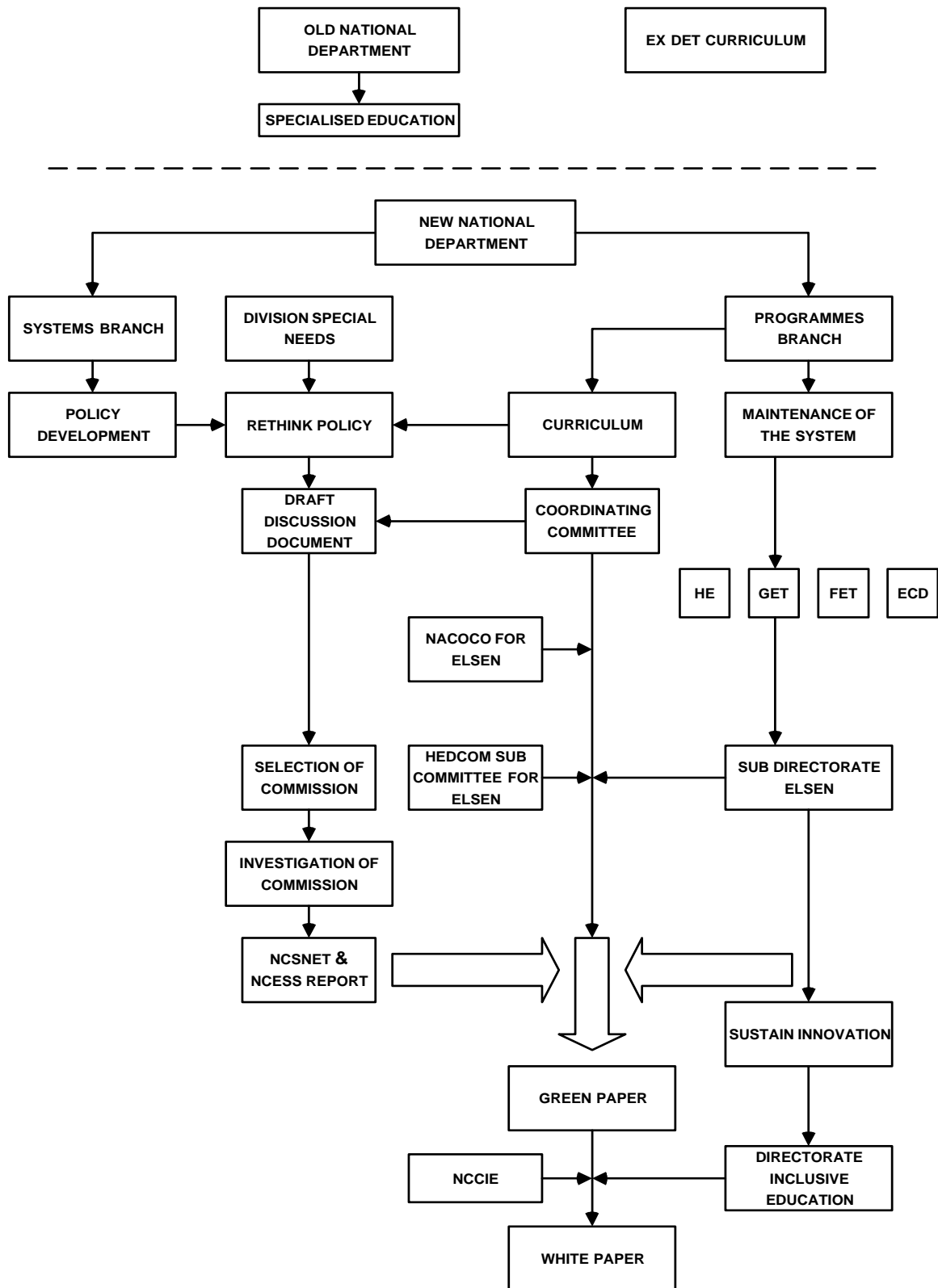
Figure 4.6: A diagrammatic representation of the relocation of the Special Needs Education unit within the organisational structure of the National Department of Education between 1994 and -2004

During the period of 1998-2000, a sub-directorate for ELSEN was established and placed in the General Education and Training Branch. The responsibility for this unit lay with Dr. Ihron Rensburg as Deputy Director General. Further, Mrs E Mahlangu, Mr J Nanise and Mr J Gumede were appointed at Deputy Chief Education Specialist level, thereby broadening the unit's capacity. As the work of the NCSNET and NCESS was nearing completion, staff had to be trained to run the subsequent processes of Green Paper, Draft Discussion Document and the White Paper 6 processes.

Following further restructuring, undertaken by the national Department of Education, a new unit, known as National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development, was formed. I was transferred in this unit with the task to design an assessment policy for special needs learners. As a result, I was not any longer directly involved in the Sub-directorate: ELSEN.

In 2001 the name of the Sub-directorate: ELSEN was changed to Inclusive Education and its status was upgraded to directorate level. Dr. Sigamoney Naicker was appointed director and tasked with the responsibility of completing the White Paper 6 and ensuring the implementation thereof. Dr. Naicker had also served on the NCSNET as a Commissioner. The directorate was the responsibility of the Chief Director, Mr Edcent Williams, who had previously been a member of the NCESS. In this period, the NACOCO for ELSEN was replaced by another reporting structure, namely, the National Co-ordinating Committee for Inclusive Education (NCCIE).

4.2.5   Human resource development within the Directorate: Inclusive Education

The Directorate of Inclusive Education used several mechanisms to capacitate the education system in the inclusive education approach. These consisted mainly of using existing structures to promote the philosophy, as well as enlarging the staff component of the directorate with resources who were aligned to the new inclusive approach:

- Dr. Sigamoney Naicker expanded on "a new body of knowledge" by presenting the philosophy in departmental and intra-departmental meetings and related public conferences.

- The existing organisational and policy development structures such as HEDCOM[44] and NCCIE[45] were also used to support the paradigm shift.

- The Directorate attempted to meet the demands of the provinces by developing new guideline documents as part of the advocacy campaign to the provinces.

- It is expected that the results of the two research projects, SCOPE and DANIDA, will be used to promote inclusive education in South Africa.

- It is envisaged that a popularised version of the White Paper, once translated into the various official languages, will bring understanding of inclusive education to grassroots level. .

- The national Department of Education has strategically employed ex-members of the NCSNET who were advocates for inclusive education.

Capacitating the South African education system in the understanding and acceptance of inclusive education, was purposefully driven by the Education Department in preparation of the roll-out plan of the new policy.

4.2.6   Socio-economic

The availability of funds is crucial not only to the development of a policy, but also in the implementation phase because policies fail as a result of lack of resources. A criticism has been lodged against many of the earlier policies written during the transformation period, that insufficient consideration was given to the costing component. Because of its importance, I have dedicated Chapter Eight to a further analysis of this aspect.

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[44] A statutory body known as the Head of Education Departments (HEDCOM)
[45] National Co-ordinating Committees for Inclusive Education (NCCIE) is a sub-committee of HEDCOM. Membership is made up of the organised teaching profession, relevant stakeholders and provincial co-ordinators.

This section served to describe the unique context in which the Special Needs Education policy was developed in South Africa. The outcomes of a process are articulated as "theory of action". It is within this relevant framework that the White Paper 6 is further described in the next section.

4.3   Theory of action

> *…theory structures, assumptions, models and practices must change in line with White Paper 6* (Naicker 2001).

The outcomes for Special Needs Education have been documented in the implementation plan in White Paper 6 (Department of Education 2001a:42). However, since this policy has not yet been fully implemented, I looked for the intended outcomes through the discourses embedded in discussions, presentations and planning meetings on inclusive education that I attended.

In 2002, Dr. Naicker (2002) presented his views[46] on White Paper 6 as follows:

- There would be a paradigm shift in education that would change classroom practices;

- The paradigm shift would suggest new models for Special Schools, Full Service Schools, Site (School/ Institutional), District Based Support Teams and Education Support Staff;

- Teaching methods that accommodate difference would need to be employed and cater for difference in intelligence, differing learning styles and learners that read and write differently, in such a way that the ways and methods of the practitioners would reflect the diverse needs of learners;

- Educators would need to use an array of methods and approaches that would ensure that difference is accommodated and that possibilities were created for all learners;

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[46] Inclusion Conference held at Birchwood, Benoni, South Africa in September 2002.

- The policy was futuristic and gradualist, which meant that over time Special Schools cum Resource Centres together with District Support Teams, will assist Full Service Schools and ordinary schools in dealing with the diversity in the classrooms. By implication this means that special classes in ordinary schools will be phased out and be taken over by newly trained Institutional Based Support Team (IBST) leaders after training;

- The role of education support staff would change to focusing on barriers to learning, as well as developing instruments that assess the environment rather than the individual;

- A paradigm shift was envisaged that allowed for a short, medium and long term implementation plan, to run over 20 years; and

- A paradigm shift was envisaged that would set new models for staff provisioning and deployment throughout the entire education system.

During the previously mentioned conference, Naicker emphasised the shift that was needed to move thinking from "pedagogy of exclusion" to "pedagogy of possibilities" within a constructivist and "new critical theory paradigm" (2001:1-5). Within its current status the Special Needs Education implementation lies straddled between its immediate to short-term steps (DoE 2001a:42) and medium term steps (DoE 2001a:43).

The following activities according to Naicker (ibid.) must be accomplished by the national Department of Education in order to prepare the system for full implementation:

- A report on a resourcing model;
- A written plan on redeployment;
- The appointment of assessment and curriculum commissions;
- Selection of project managers for the field study;
- Planning and reporting frameworks;
- District audits on full services and district based support teams;

- Manual on accountability tools for District-Based Support Teams (DBST);
- Development plans for Special Schools as Resource Centres, Full Service Schools and DBST; and
- A monitoring and evaluation team for both a longitudinal and an impact study.

These activities mark the development work and areas targeted for change that are currently being undertaken by the national Department of Education with regard to the Special Needs Education policy in 2004.   These implementation activities are taking place in the 30 targeted special schools, the 30 Full Service Schools and the 30 districts in the nodal areas. The remaining policy imperatives will be left to the provincial education departments.

4.4   Chapter summary

In this chapter I have provided an overview of important factors which impact the trajectory of the Special Needs Education policy within the uniquely South African context. I have further discussed the intended outcomes of the White Paper 6 in the context of its early stage of implementation.   Through analysing the context of Special Needs Education, I have confirmed that the Department prepared itself for the implementation of the new policy directives. I have gained new insight into areas and factors that affect policy and have established where in the process of the Special Needs Education policy development the delay occurred. I have not as yet determined the reasons for the delay and I am left pondering my research question*: Why, amidst all the activity of policy-making at the national Department of Education, did the policy on Special Needs Education take so long to surface?* I felt urged to deepen my analysis as I desired to know the full answer.

Chapter Five

Adding variety

The role players

5.1   Introduction

> *It is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice, especially across levels of Government* (McLaughlin 1998:71).

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the key roleplayers involved in the development of the Special Needs Education policy in South Africa. From their responses an overview of their position is provided in terms of when and how they were involved in the decision-making processes.

Change theorists contend that if the policy-making process yields unintended results, then it is desirable to utilise other methods that "may aid in determining predictors of success" and also the ability to discover forces influencing policy acceptance or integration (Recesso 1999:2). The perceptions of the key stakeholders and their involvement in decision-making processes could possibly be overlooked, when only a forward mapping approach is used to analyse policy. Thus both backward and forward mapping approaches are recognised. In Chapter Two I described the "backward mapping approach"[47] as a means to gain valuable information on the policy-making route. The inclusion of the multiple levels of data sources

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[47] Used as an approach to determine why policies fail e.g., Blackboard Project India.

provided me with various points of interpretation i.e., from the high level participation of Government officials where "theory of action" was decided, to the relevant stakeholders and parent groupings, who were close to where policy would be implemented i.e., "theory in use". I developed a diagrammatic representation of the bottom–up or backward mapping approach to policy analysis, as it pertained to this case study on Special Needs Education policy formulation in South Africa (Figure 5.1:95).
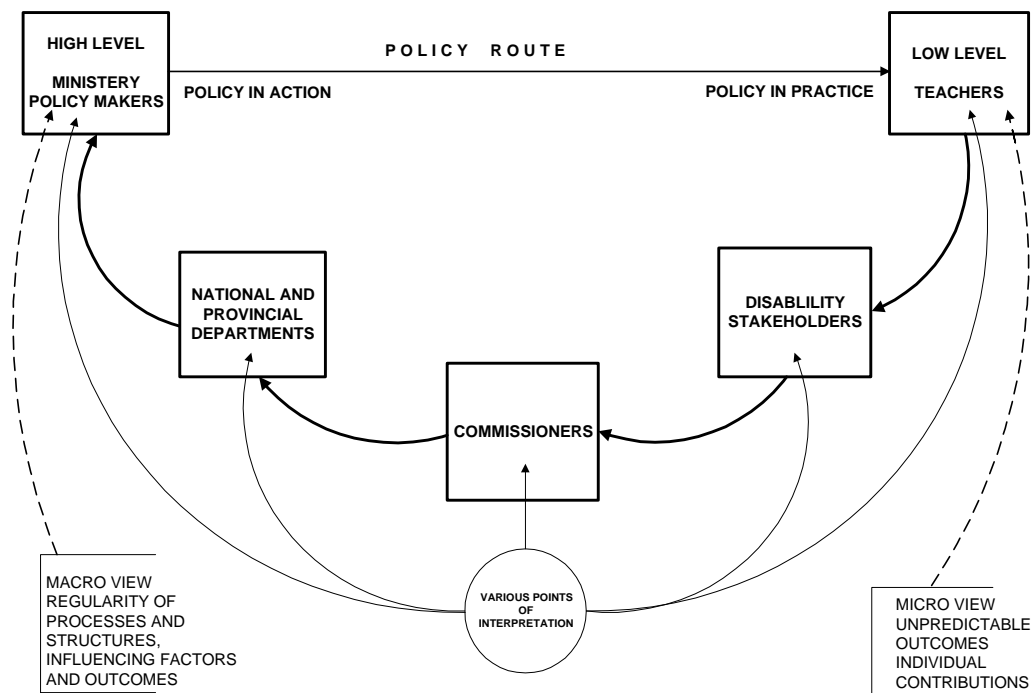

Figure 5.1: Diagrammatic representation of backward mapping as an analytical tool in the policy development process

My findings are set within a specific context and in the specific period of history when the new South African democracy was involved in putting its major policies of transformation in place.

I will now introduce the specific policy makers who participated in the research and in answering my subsidiary question: *Who were the major players in the Special Needs Education policy-making process?*

5.2   Major role-players

> *To a great extent, politics is about communication, both written and spoken, Government officials communicate frequently through campaign speeches, televised talk show appearances, decisions in hearings, reports, the Internet and Newsletters. In determining the overall shape of Government's approach to a particular public problem, examining this communication is helpful* (Fowler 2000:8).

As I had assisted in the management of the Secretariat functions at the national Department of Education, for both the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Education of Learners with Special Education Needs (NACOCO for ELSEN) and the National Commission for Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET), it was relatively easy for me to involve most of the participants in the business of these committees. Not all of the major policy makers contributed to this study. Despite several attempts to procure interviews with key officials (such as Dr. Chris Madiba and Mr Mzwandile Matthews) of the national Department of Education and the provincial Department of Education, these interviews did not materialise. None of the respondents who had participated in the planned interviews indicated that they wished to remain anonymous. In one instance a respondent indicated that some of the information provided was "off the record". I fully respected that condition in the recording and the representation of the interview data.

After I had procured the co-operation of respondents at all levels of the system, I could proceed with my data collection by means of the semi-structured interviews. However, in some cases where biographical information had not been provided or was limited, I augmented the data from the Internet and where possible with follow up discussions. It was not possible to do this for all the candidates that I interviewed and so the data for some participants is sparser than for others.

I was granted interviews from grassroot stakeholders right to senior management officials within the national Department of Education. The interviewees included the previous Director General, senior managers in the Department and others who had moved on to new positions elsewhere. Prof. Sandy Lazarus, in her capacity as Chairperson on the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) went beyond the

structure of the interview schedule and provided additional data, which further enriched this study. I also interviewed members from disability organisations and, with difficulty, one provincial official. The latter group was included because my sampling criteria required officials who had participated actively in the Special Needs Education policy process. Many of the provincial officials however, due to natural attrition, had been replaced.

Most of the information comes from the interviews. Some respondents provided only the barest of information from which I could sketch a short biography. Thus the volume of text for each respondent is uneven, however, in some cases valuable factual information that supported the explanation of the delay of the Special Needs Education policy was provided.

In the following section the 14 key policy makers who participated in this study are introduced:

Senior officials from the national Department of Education

(1) Dr. Noel Chabani Manganyi

Dr. Manganyi was interviewed on the 9th of April 2003. He has a doctorate in Psychology from the University of South Africa and has undertaken advanced training as a Postdoctoral Fellow in Clinical Psychology at Yale University in the United States of America. Between 1976 and 1980, he established the Department of Psychology at the Umtata Branch to the University of Fort Hare (later the University of the Transkei) in the capacity as its first Head of Department. He later became the first Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Following his departure from UNITRA in 1980, he worked as a professor and senior research fellow at the African Studies Institute of the University of the Witwatersrand until 1990. Beginning in the early 1970s, Dr. Manganyi published a range of scholarly papers and nine books (both nationally and internationally). Wits University Press published his last book, *A Black Man Called Sekoto,* in 1996. He is currently doing work on the transitions of the 1990s in South Africa. Dr. Manganyi has practised extensively as a professional psychologist in private practice and he was an expert witness in the Supreme Court of South Africa during the turbulent days of the 1980s and the early 1990s. He has served on the Board of Directors of a

number of companies and organisations. More recently he was employed as Vice Chancellor of the University of the North (1990-1992) and Director General of Education (1994-1999). At the time of this interview he was Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria.

(2) Dr. Trevor Coombe

I interviewed Dr. Coombe on the 11 December 2002. His recollections formed an invaluable backdrop to this study and deepened my understanding of the development of the Special Needs Education policy in the South African context. Dr. Coombe's informed contributions provided my study with historical information. Dr. Coombe was keen in his own words to "help to fill in the general picture that you are trying to paint".

Dr. Coombe started the interview with a disclaimer, saying that he did not want to speculate on things that he had not been involved with, but was prepared to offer insights or information of a more general kind. At the time of this interview, Dr. Coombe was an internal consultant to the National Department of Education on a full-time renewable contract. He had been in "those circumstances" for two years. He had retired from the Department at the end of August 2000. He had occupied the position of Deputy Director General from April that year. This, he said, left him out of "the inner circle of policy responsibility in the Department". However, his insight into policy development had been limited over the last couple of years to the fields of private provision of education for the FET, the higher education level, the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Study Team of the NQF. This made him feel diffident because "once one is in the line management and there is one break one loses currency, loses the day to day knowledge of what is happening, and one's focus narrows". He could relate this to his own role within events around the Special Needs field, which had been fairly intense, and had then ceased abruptly after a certain point. He sketched the historical and political background in the context of "Special Needs Education" within the National Department of Education.

Dr. Coombe recounted his role and his changes in designation since he first entered the national Department of Education. In January 1995 he was appointed to a position in the new Department as Chief Director of the Systems Branch and subsequently became Deputy Director General for the Branch. Prior to that (i.e., between May 1994 and the end of 1994), he was a member of the Strategic Management Team before the Department was re-organised. The Strategic Management Team was preoccupied with two activities i.e., the re-organisation of the Department in line with the new Constitution; and preparatory work on the first White Paper on Education and Training. Dr. Coombe's role was to co-ordinate that work and to lead the writing process for the first White Paper released in March 1995.

There were two branches in the national Department of Education that split the responsibility for maintenance and policy development i.e., the Programmes and Systems Branches respectively. The Programmes Branch, which had inherited its name from the old Department of National Education, had responsibility for programmes i.e., an operational focus on the maintenance of learning and teaching programmes in the system. By the mid-1990s maintenance had a very high priority on the agenda of the national Department of Education, because there was such "terrific political volatility". The new organisation in the Department of Education, created by the Public Service Commission, was under construction and the recruitment of new people and the change in power relations had to be ensured to sustain the change. This also involved consolidating and establishing the patterns of interactions between management components. Dr. Coombe explained that the "alteration could not have been more drastic or more radical". He elaborated on the way the change had affected everybody and on how uncertain people were about their position in the new National Department of Education.

> *… especially old timers that had been in the system, and maybe in that period of uncertainty the re-organisation seemed to be more volatile than it actually was, because it was a system being followed (Coombe 11/12/02).*

There were directives, Dr. Coombe explained, from the National Government that was represented by the Public Service Commission. He explained further that: "Rules had to be applied, and I think those rules were followed very rigorously, so the precise allocation of responsibilities was very much an internal matter for the Department".

It was apparent that a lot of work went into issues of reorganisation and, according to Dr. Coombe, "it was a reasonably coherent process during those years of re-organisation". The Programmes Branch had the role of maintenance in close collaboration with the new provincial authorities, where the level of re-organisation was, if anything, "more drastic and more difficult than at a national level".

The National Department of Education kept its provincial colleagues informed about the structural changes through the Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM), which was a policy development committee. HEDCOM had a sub-committee on Special Needs Education, which was a very active committee, lead by Dr. Chris Madiba and it kept provinces informed on matters of change. Minister Sibusiso Bengu and Prof. Chabani Manganyi (Director-General) were the key decision-makers with respect to the structure of the Department of Education, and were advised by the Senior Management. The role of spearheading the re-thinking of policies was allocated substantially to the Systems Branch, which did not have programme responsibilities. Programme responsibilities rested with the Programmes Branch[48] which maintained a culture of separated learning levels until it was dismantled. It became evident that in order to sustain the schooling system and not be counter productive, maintenance and policy development needed to be combined and the impetus for new policy development applied by the "new branches". Once the formal processes of investigation for the Special Needs Education policy had been undertaken and the line of policy began to emerge i.e., the further development of the Special Needs policy was:

> *…taken up by the people who worked with it and who were particularly closely connected with the system itself i.e., the actual management and maintenance and developing of the system (ibid.).*

The investigation into Special Needs Education was a very protracted process and included the management of the delivery of the NCSNET report. A growing agitation developed in the newly established General and Further Education Branch, as they wanted to take over the control and the initiative from the Systems Branch. According to Dr. Coombe: "There was

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[48] The Programmes Branch was split into branches for Higher Education and the separation of General Education and FET.

never antagonism but there was very strong expression of intent on the General and Further Education side" which he thought was entirely to be expected and "…very legitimate, and it was certainly high time for them to take over the responsibilities from Systems". When the transfer actually happened, Dr. Coombe said there was "by no means resistance from our side".

The transfer of the Special Needs Education component to the Programmes Branch was fully endorsed by Dr. Coombe, who said that he felt it:

> *was an absolutely correct move. I was also very sympathetic to the idea that the Systems Branch was a body which could initiate, but which could not sustain innovation (ibid.).*

Thereafter Dr. Coombe's contribution was "as close to zero as it is possible to imagine". In other words after the responsibility had changed hands it was a "very clear-cut change over process". Dr. Rensburg then assumed responsibility for the General and Further Education Branch and became completely responsible for the development of the policy process from that point onwards until the Commission reported in 2001.

Dr. Coombe thereafter made no direct contribution to the White Paper 6 process as he was "out of the game all together" (ibid.). Dr. Coombe's specific contribution to the White Paper 6 development process was made while he was head of the Systems Branch.

This meant that he had been responsible for the initiation of the policy and for supervising those activities, not only in respect of Special Needs, but also in other areas of policy.

Dr. Coombe had the overall responsibility:

> *to ensure that things happened as well as what they could possibly make it happen, to interface and be guided with respect to policy development by his colleagues in senior management and particularly by the Prof. Manganyi as Director General at that time (ibid.).*

Dr. Coombe emphasised that policy development in the field of Special Needs Education, and other fields, had been approached "collectively" by the national Department since 1994.

He (ibid.) strongly felt part of that collective, and therefore found it "very difficult to isolate his role on a personal level".

(3) Dr. Ihron Rensburg

Dr. Rensburg was interviewed on the 3rd of May 2003, when he was the Managing Director: Education, Public and Registration for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Dr Rensburg was tasked with three roles in that portfolio i.e., programming policy news (editing the policies for education and religion); developing a universal access policy for local content and language; and providing leadership to talented young educators and producers for the public service broadcaster. He made mention of his ties with the liberation movement in South Africa and explained that the work of education policy units at that time, had found their way into the ruling party's policies. His interlude with the special needs policy started in 1995, soon after his arrival into the national Department of Education. The White Paper 5 had just been promulgated and priorities had to be set "by distilling" what had arisen in the education system since the 1950s and by relating that back to what was needed for current school reform.

He felt, in terms of a truly African collective spirit, that there was no personal claim to make. He believed that the process was not a "me" but "a team and country" achievement. His role while in the national Department of Education, had been to focus on that which could be delivered, to introduce changes in a deliberated manner, to seek support from top management and to influence other sections e.g., financing, in order to mobilise support. As Deputy Director-General (DDG) he was the final person in the chain of responsibility within his Branch, which meant that he had to be competent as "writer and editor". He had spent "a lot of time redrafting, from an ideas policy, to a policy that had teeth and for which the national Department of Education could be held responsible". As DDG he had to "take the view from the mountain rather than the view from the village level" and make it into a national project. The project would then move across to the "key interlocutors" i.e., the Heads of Education Departments (HODs) who would have to be convinced that the programme could be implemented and that the provinces had the resources to do so.

Thus, Dr. Rensburg, as the Deputy Director General at the time of policy formation, acted not only as a co-ordinator at the national level, but also played a significant role in writing the policy in a language that the public would understand.

Advisors to the national Department of Education

(4) Dr. Lois Crouch

Dr. Crouch responded via email on 15 July 2002 at that time he was in South Africa consulting to the national Department of Education on a "demand basis" and mainly on financial matters including funding norms and standards for Special Needs Education. He is presently Director of the Research Triangle Group (RTI). An economist with an interest in financial analysis, planning, and policy reform, Dr. Crouch specialises in educational economics and planning, educational research and the use of research outcomes for policy debate. Dr. Crouch has worked in over 25 countries, most recently in South Africa, where he served as a key policy adviser to the Department of Education. He provided the department with technical assistance in education, finance, economics, and information systems. For example, he helped them to develop policy to allocate funds differently and move away from the apartheid patterns of distribution.

 Dr. Crouch, who has lectured and published extensively, earned his B.A. in anthropology at The University of California (UC)-Santa Barbara, and his M.S. and Ph.D. in agricultural economics at the University of California-Berkeley. Before joining RTI, he taught and conducted research at UC-Berkeley, UC-Santa Cruz, and at institutions in Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

Policy-makers as members of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET)

(5) Professor Sandy Lazarus

My interview with Prof. Lazarus was held at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Benoni,

on 29 September 2002 during the Inclusion Conference. Prof. Lazarus is the former Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. She has a combined interest in teaching and research.

This consists mainly of:

- Community psychology perspectives on education/educational psychology;
- Special needs / inclusive education and in particular managing diversity;
- Education support services, focusing on inter-sectoral collaboration;
- Institutional/school development: development of a framework to integrate organisation development, the health promoting school concept and inclusive schools;
- Education management and leadership; and
- General aspects of life-skills education with a particular focus on human rights education.

Prof. Lazarus acknowledged that she had acted both as a policy implementer and psychologist in the policy formation process. In her own words she describes her position within the process as follows:

> *I try to contribute to my profession by looking at the implications of this White Paper for my profession, and that's where I am an implementer. I also, in a University context and my job of training, take the policy seriously when I consider my training (Lazarus 29/09/2002).*

Prof. Lazarus offered a detailed reason for her involvement in affairs of policy over the past 10 years. She says that her involvement stems from being a community psychologist and is based on an understanding of people:

> *… that take seriously, that their context plays a major role of making them who they are and that policy is part of that concept, so it is really important that as a psychology profession, that policies are - that psychologists are involved in policy analysis, policy development, policy evaluation to make sure that the well- being of people in our country is being promoted and that is my motivation (ibid.).*

Her association and knowledge of the policy development process had come from her schooling in that field.

> *I had a framework of understanding already, of processes of social change, and policies for the processes. So, when I chose to get involved with NEPI and the processes thereafter, in a way I knew what I was doing. I knew that I would try and*

> *make a difference, by trying to help create a policy environment that would help to enable the promotion of the well-being of people. That is quite honestly what it is all about for me (Lazarus 29/09/2002).*

She explained that her connection to the political anti-apartheid struggle was motivated by her passion for the well-being of the people in this country.

In her own words:

> *So during the 80's, which was before the whole NEPI process, my involvement was not at policy level, because none of us was involved in the Government at that point, it was as a political activist level, which was also important in terms of policy development. Part of the journey that you take in a country is to move the issue forward, to set the agenda and in our country it was radical (ibid.).*

Prof. Lazarus believed that her contribution to the policy was not just as an "implementer", but as an "influencer" too. She speculated and says:

> *I think I have tried in the past, and I still try, to influence policies. I don't think the White Papers are the end of policy, which is why I have stayed involved, because I believe policies are a long term thing (ibid).*

Prof. Lazarus recounts her continued involvement in the policy formation process after the report of the NCSNET had been delivered, up to and including the initial stages of the White Paper 6 process.

She responded to the White Paper 6 by voicing her opinion to the national Department of Education, which placed her in the role of "policy analyst". She extended this position by talking to role-players, both at national and provincial level, who were involved with implementation. She also spends her time on advocacy:

> *I have been involved in a lot of public speaking and workshops where people are trying to take the policy and make it happen. (Lazarus 29/09/2002)*

(6) Ms Colleen Howell

Colleen Howell returned her response via email on 11 November 2003. Howell is a researcher in the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE), formerly the Education Policy Unit, at the University of the Western Cape. Most of her work consists of applied

research in the area of education policy. She has been involved in the area of policy development for about 10 years. In 1996, she moved more directly into the area of education policy.

Her previous involvement with the disability field led her to make specific contributions to the development of SNE policy. She provided a short history of that involvement, which started in 1996 when she worked for Disabled People South Africa (DPSA). Part of that work involved assisting the organisation and its sister organisation, the Disabled Children's Action Group (DICAG), with the development of initial policy goals for the creation of equal education opportunities for disabled learners in South Africa.

 In 1997 she was appointed to the position of National Co-ordinator of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET), where she became centrally involved with the development of the final report of the NCSNET/NCESS. She was also asked to be part of the core writing team, responsible for the initial drafts of the Green Paper on inclusive education, which was the next step after the NCSNET/NCESS report.

During the course of 2000 and 2001 she and Prof. Sandy Lazarus were requested by the national Department of Education and DANIDA to carry out a national quality evaluation of a pilot project funded by the Danish government. The objective of this project was to pilot the implementation of the new policy on inclusive education.

The evaluation process aimed specifically at extracting lessons from the pilot project, that would contribute to the implementation of White Paper 6 in the rest of the country. She claimed (11/11/2003) that her most important contribution to the development of Special Needs Education policy was not confined only to her involvement in these initiatives, but included the: "…development of a conceptual shift in the way in which we understand why particular learners, especially learners with disabilities, experience learning breakdown, or continue to be excluded from the education system."

She believes that the "paradigm shift" is critical to the creation of equity for all learners in the education system. She also contributed to the implementation of the new policy imperatives and to building of the capacity of the system, to address this aspect of transformation.

At present her work, including her doctoral work, focuses on addressing the implications of White Paper 6 for the higher education system.

Policy makers who were members of the National Commission on Special Needs In Education and Training and who were, at the time of this study, employed by the national Department of Education.

Continued influence by policy makers in the policy development process has advantages. Several of the policy makers who had been involved in the NCSNET process, are currently employed by the national Department of Education in a variety of positions that are directly related to the implementation of the new policy.

(7) Mr Edcent Williams

I interviewed Williams on 14 March 2003 at his offices in Sol Plaatje House. The ensuing biographical data was augmented from a website bearing his name. Williams is Chief Director for Curriculum Assessment and Development, Language and ABET (CADLA). The Directorate of Inclusive Education also belongs to this line function. Williams represented the education support services for Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) on the National Committee for Education Support Services.

(8) Dr. Sigamoney Naicker

Dr. Naicker was interviewed in his office at 123 Schoeman Street, Pretoria on 11 March 2003. The Western Cape Education Department previously employed Dr Naicker and he was responsible for managing the learning support section. He also served as a Commissioner in the NCSNET. He now heads the Directorate: Inclusive Education at the National Department of Education, where his main responsibility is the management of the implementation of White Paper 6. Previously he was an academic attached to the University

of the Western Cape where he focused on teaching policy development and analysis. He states that his contributions to the policy were multi-fold. They included the promotion of inclusive discourse; its translation into action and to provide "frameworks of thinking". The most important contributions he made to the development of Special Needs Education policy were specifically the "focus on theoretical issues and theory building" and to "tinker with these things". He also wanted to shift the paradigm and "impose a new intellectual framework which informs attitudinal change". The latter task he considered to be "tedious", yet particularly relevant to inclusive education, impacting on and influencing what happens to mainstream education. He was also involved with the complex issue of "considering OBE in the context of social change" and the new kind of thinking it involved, how it operated and how this would impact the practice of teaching and learning. Dr. Naicker has published several books on inclusive education in South Africa.

(9) Mrs Marie Schoeman

I interviewed Mrs Schoeman at her office on the 11th December 2002. Schoeman had also been a Commissioner on the NCSNET. She wore two hats on the Commission i.e., that of a representative of the South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD) and that of a parent-member of Down Syndrome South Africa (DSSA). At the time of this research she held the position of Chief Education Specialist in the Directorate for Inclusive Education in the national Department of Education. Her main responsibilities in this portfolio were writing the interpretation guidelines for White Paper 6 and eventually she was to "translate the raw policy into norms and standards". She was totally committed to the policy development process for inclusive education and mentioned that she did not like to see "any of the legs of the policy going ahead", without her input.

Her second area of focus, was to ensure that inclusion became operational in the new curriculum. This had been propounded in the Salamanca Statement and would require advocacy. The legislative aspect was yet another area of focus that needed to be revised, in order to enable the Department "to implement effectively".

As a Commissioner, Schoeman had been responsible for reviewing existing policy legislation to identify its inadequacies, as well as what needed to be changed "in order to make inclusive education a reality in South Africa".

Schoeman has been involved with the disability sector in South Africa since 1989. She regards herself as one of "a very small group of pioneers who lead the whole drive to inclusive education".

A depiction of her involvement in the disability field and national Department of Education follows:

In 1989 she submitted her first memorandum on inclusion, on behalf of the Down Syndrome South Africa (DSSA), to the Director-General of the National Department of Education and Training and Directorate for Special Needs.

In 1994 she presented a draft policy on inclusive education on behalf of DSSA, a parent movement, to Ministers of Education Committee (MECs) of all nine provinces.

During the period 1994-1995 she was involved in deliberations based on the Salamanca document between DSSA and the South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD), with a tendency towards education and disability. During this period she was acknowledged as a "mainstream activist". According to Schoeman the sole purpose of the Salamanca Statement was to apply the Jomtien findings to the field of Special Needs Education and to "move away from the parallel process" of having two education systems.

In 1995 she was asked by the SAFCD to establish an education task team and was the first South African to visit the UNESCO unit on Special Needs Education and Dr. Lenah Saleh, a worldwide proponent of inclusive education. During 1995-1996 she became an active participant in the NCSNET processes.

By 1997 she had joined the ranks of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and started implementing inclusive education "within a policy framework that had not yet been

finalised". In the GDE, she was also involved in the development of teacher supply, utilisation and development.

From 1997 to 1998 she was involved in the Four Nations Research Project, together with prominent leaders in the field of inclusion, namely Prof. Tony Booth and Dr. Mel Ainscow. She joined the national Department of Education in 1998 as an official in the Directorate for Inclusive Education, where she remained at the time of the interview.

Policy makers and implementers as line-function officials in the national Department of Education.

(10) Mrs Eva Mahlangu

I interviewed Mrs Mahlangu on 29 November 2002. Mahlangu serves in the national Department of Education as a Deputy Chief Education Specialist in the Directorate for Inclusive Education. She is also a member of the National Co-ordinating Committee for Inclusive Education (NCCIE), which is a sub-committee of HEDCOM. She has been employed by the Department of Education since 1999 and was previously connected to a Special School during the NCSNET investigations. Her responsibilities in the national department include the advocacy campaign for inclusive education and two funded projects, SCOPE and DANIDA. Ms Mahlangu is wheelchair bound. She is a member on several committees for the disabled. She actively represented the position of her school during the public hearings on the discussion documents that preceded the Green Paper.

Policy makers and implementers as line-function officials in the provincial departments of education

(11) Dr. Matthi Theron

Dr. Theron completed his interview schedule electronically on 5 October 2003. At the time of this research he was Director: Specialised Education Support Services at the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED). His line function responsibilities included policy development, macro planning, capacity building and resourcing, as well as quality assurance.

He had been responsible for Special Education in the old government at national level and in the new Department of Education, he was made responsible for "the initiation" of the special needs policy. Dr Theron has 16 years of policy development experience across the entire spectrum of education. During the NCSNET and NCESS processes, he provided inputs firstly from a national perspective and subsequently from a provincial level after he took up his new portfolio in the WCED. He is presently a member of the National Co-ordinating Committee for Inclusive Education (NCCIE), a sub committee of the Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM). He considers his greatest contribution to the process to have been "aligning theory and practice".

Policy makers as members of the organised disabled community

(12) Dr. Henoch Schoeman

I interviewed Dr. Schoeman on 7 November 2002 at the Colosseum Hotel in Pretoria. Dr. Schoeman had served as a senior official in the ex-Department of Education and Training and had been responsible for all schools of the Blind that fell under the Department. He was seconded to the new national Department of Education to serve in the Curriculum section with the responsibility of organising matters involving "Specialised Education". He was subsequently appointed to serve on two of the internal structures established by the national Department of Education, to deal with matters regarding special needs while the NCSNET process was still in progress. The two structures were the National Committee for Special Needs in Education (NCSNET), under the curriculum unit, and the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Education and learners with Special Education Needs (NACOCO for ELSEN), in the Systems Branch. Dr. Schoeman is actively involved with matters related to the education of the visually impaired, blind and partially sighted people.

Dr. Schoeman is the director for Optima College in Pretoria and is also a member of the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB). He is involved in policy development and has been responsible for submitting several of the SANCB policy position papers to the national Department of Education.

He assisted one of the members of the NCSNET, Ms Connie Aucamp, in her deliberations with the Commission.

(13) Mr Shuaib Chalklen

Mr Chalklen completed his interview and submitted it electronically on 26 April 2002. He is currently director at the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons in the Office of the Presidency (OSDP). Mr Chalklen was most active during the pre-Commission stages and represented the strong supportive view of the Government towards the disability sector. He is also known as an activist and lobbyist for the disabled.

Policy makers as members of the organised teaching profession.

(14) Dr. Kobus Pieterse

Dr. Pieterse is a member of the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie (SAOU) or the South African Teachers Union (SATU). He provided his interview schedule electronically on the 24th of February 2003. He represented the organised teaching profession at several meetings and discussions held by the national Department of Education, with regard to Special Needs Education issues.

5.3   Summary of stakeholder responses

Some general information about the respondents was provided in this section. Some, such as Coombe, Lazarus, Schoeman and Howell were generous in giving their views of the problems associated with the Special Needs Education policy and provided rich descriptions of how their personal values contributed to the Special Needs Education policy. A brief summary follows:

Characteristics of stakeholders

Various characteristics of the stakeholders manifested themselves. These were: that they were generally very motivated by disability or inclusive education issues, they were

dedicated and responsible citizens that took their role in the political arena, such as it pertained to Special Needs Education, most seriously.

The pool of expertise involved in the development of this policy had a background in politics but came from different ranks, different associations, and different affiliations that were mostly connected to special needs in schools or from the disability sector. Some had institutional knowledge. Rensburg (03/05/2003) would term them "policy crafters".

Officials were not equally equipped in the skills of policy development. Although Lazarus (29/09/2002) claims that several key officials had little knowledge of the structures that regulate a democratic bureaucracy this is a world-wide experience and not unique to South Africa.

> *… people are sitting in the Departments and given the job of formulating and im-plementing policies, and yet the people in the Department don't have a sense of process. People are acting out a role. Look it is not a bad thing, but if there are things that can be learnt then learn them (ibid.).*

The absence of a clear policy formation process in South Africa, leads one to question the understanding of the policy-making process amongst policy makers. Policy makers need to think like change agents. They need to be skilled in the culture of change and the techniques of change management. Policy implementation, even when implemented from the top down, occurs without hitches if a detailed, clear and well-costed implementation plan is followed. Policies that are open to various interpretations are more likely to misfire or not get implemented at all.

Previous knowledge of policy development, motivation, dedication and skills are attributes that need to be recognised in policymaking studies. In the Special Needs Education policy formation process these "learning and buy-in" factors, as described by Solmon (2003), could be significant in causing the policy to lag.

Problems

As problems arose regarding the content of the Special Needs Education, stakeholders would

group themselves according to the prevailing problem. As a group, stakeholders could be divided into proponents for or opponents against a specific issue. This meant that the disability sector did not always represent itself as a united front.

Conceptions of social values and how policy shaped values and vice versa

Most stakeholders upheld social values based on the human rights model. They would however differ in the practical implementation of values to schooling for specific disabled groups of learners. The views were most strong when it came to issues of mainstreaming, Education for All (EFA) and/or inclusion. Some fought their battles on the grounds of moral obligations, other on the availability of resources.

How stakeholders influenced the policy

The stakeholders influenced the policy not only with regard to its content, but also its trajectory. Hours of deliberation to clarify main concepts resulted in a substantial period of delay from when the NCSNET report had been issued and the White Paper 6 had been released.

Stakeholder leverage

It would be thought that as an official of the Department of Education, one would have more say in the policy-making process. The leverage of the individual stakeholders rested, however, on personal attributes. This would include leadership and the amount of support one could conjure for an idea. Primarily, they would be respected for their professional opinion.

5.4   Chapter summary

In the description of my guiding conceptual framework in Chapter Two, I noted that important policy makers and their role in shaping policy, needs to be duly considered.

This chapter served to answer the subsidiary question of: *Who were the key actors involved in the policy-making process for Special Needs Education?* It is from these roleplayers and the subsequent analysis of their discourses, that a picture will be provided of how stakeholders viewed the events related to the development of the Special Needs Education policy, how they influenced policy through their own participation and belief systems and how they   reacted to the various decision making issues regarding the content of the Special Needs Education during its development path or trajectory.

What I could not initially untangle in my analysis was how the great integrity of intent to get this policy adopted, was enshrouded and troubled by the clear signs of division amongst its stakeholders. It was only when I introduced, for purposes of my own critical analysis, the thoughts around "acting in the interest of the child", that I found an explanation. Most of the "warring parties" had risen to the defence of what they considered to be in the best interests of the children in their constituency. The arguments expounded from both sides made good, solid sense. But ultimately it was not what either wanted, it was what the South African Government was able to deliver that held sway. Both arguments bore significant funding implications for the entire system. If one wanted specialised education for a specific disability only, it would cost millions to provide the required resources equitably to all provinces. If one only wanted inclusion, then the state was obligated to provide adequate support services for all. *It will remain to be seen whether Government was able to come up with a pragmatic solution in its policy statements that appeased but could not please everyone.*

This analysis has not only added to my understanding of policy formation processes, but has also allowed me to critically analyse the role of the key policy makers at all levels of the system including as Recesso[49] described, the local level data. One fundamental principle of this approach is "back tracking", with the view to determining problems before committing to an event, in this case: the implementation or roll-out plan of White Paper 6. I hope that this will alert policy makers to areas of difficulties that might arise out of implementation.

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[49] Reccesso AM. 1999. An Effort at Backward Mapping. Education Policy Analysis Archives. Vol. 7:11 March 1999.

The role of politics amongst policy makers is critical in the development of any policy in a transforming, democratic society. The contributions of the stakeholders can influence the direction of a policy and the time it takes to get the policy off the ground.

In the next chapter the analysis of this variance would account for the distinction between stakeholders as either opponents or proponents. It would also provide multi-facetted views on issues and events that influenced the particular policy trajectory for Special Needs Education in South Africa.

Chapter Six

Adding colours

Exploring the trajectory

6.1   Introduction

> *One could simply not put all one's eggs into the basket of reform and transformation …One had an absolute obligation to the people of South Africa and particularly to the learners in the system and the educators to keep the current system going, whatever its deficiencies, structurally or otherwise* (Manganyi 09/04/2003).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore why the Special Needs Education policy followed its particular development trajectory. I will use the views of the key stakeholders to demonstrate the politics and positions taken during the stages of this policy's trajectory. I will recount their portrayal of issues as vividly as possible, to gain depth of understanding of the phenomenon of delay and "non-reform".

 I start this section with an analysis of the initial stages of the policy development, namely issue identification and agenda setting, touching on issues of compromise within the policy. I continue with the policy formulation stage and the three significant sub-themes that arose i.e., the paradigm shift to inclusion and the terminology and constructs associated with the new paradigm; the major stakeholders, dominant ideas, positions and pressure groups; and the controversial issue of Special Schools.

I conclude my explanation with the last stages in policy development, namely policy adoption implementation and evaluation. I anticipated that the factors causing the delay would emerge from the debates during the various policy development stages.

6.2   Issue identification and agenda setting

> *Policy analysts and commentators forget that the ANC government came into power with a packet full of policy positions.* (Manganyi 09/04/2003)

Special Needs Education and disability issues had already been on the political agenda of the ruling party since before 1994. Several policy makers involved in the policy development process for Special Needs Education had shared that history. Some had remained involved throughout its development.

Policy makers in the new Department of Education had experience in structures outside the bureaucratic structures of government and each had his/her own understanding of Special Needs Education. These differences would impact on the policy content not only during the "issue articulation" stage, but some would remain unresolved throughout the policy-making process.

According to Manganyi, the then ruling party had done considerable amounts of preparatory work in education prior to the "profound transformation", whereas after 1994 the party had the "opportunity to clean up the decks" (09/04/2003). Manganyi felt that, in some ways, this was a "blessing and a problem", because being in government was "different to government policy and different to party political policy".

Things could not "just be factored into the blue sky", but had to be kept within the parameters of current policy decisions. "Special Needs" issues had been identified in the new ruling party's policy processes together with the development of many other policies.

Several respondents indicated that they had had previous experience in policy development processes and cited the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) and the ANC yellow book as examples. Not all respondents that had been involved in the official policy-making process had experience in "Special Needs", although some had been "activists" for disability during the political "struggle".

The new ruling party was determined to see the vestiges of apartheid disappear, especially in the way it had affected the disabled learners. Many believed that having policies in place was the only way for true transformation to take place.

A few participants in the policy-making process for Special Needs Education had come from the ranks of the disability groupings and had no experience at all of policy-making, but were encouraged to see disabled learners included in the mainstream system.

Lazarus's experiences, portrayed below, indicate the background typical of those who had been previously exposed to the ANC's intentions and goals. Her own personal involvement in policy-making started ten years ago:

> *Even at that point I wasn't the only one that felt, it wasn't enough to be throwing out options, they needed to be followed through, which I did do through always being involved with the Commission, and then obviously the Commission was very directly related to the policy process, in that it was a policy process the consultation process that made recommendations (Lazarus 29/09/2002).*

Besides having a deep-seated belief in the transformation process, many of the policy makers were also leaders in the field of disability and community psychology. It was obviously through their connections to the disability groupings that they had been able to become involved with the policy formation process. Lazarus's own account:

> *…when the DG phoned me to ask me to chair this Commission, I was completely taken aback, I couldn't understand why he would ask me to do it. I asked him, and he gave me two reasons; the one was that he had heard that I was good in conflict management and he said this is the most difficult group of stakeholders. So he needed a process first and he said he needed someone who could handle the processes. Then he said to me the other reason is that he knew that I came from a Community Psychology background. He knew what my framework was, and he wanted that as the background. He made a very deliberate choice and I don't even know if other people are aware of that. He read my work and we had been colleagues in the past as he was a psychologist, so that's quite interesting. I don't*

> *think many people know that some policy makers were given recognition because of their leadership role in the field of the disabled. They were appointed directly by the Minister to give direction to the policy formation process (Lazarus 29/09/2002).*

Special Needs Education was an item on the transformation agenda but would constantly be threatened in remaining so by other competing priorities. Manganyi (09/04/2003) thoughtfully explained how the early policy makers were tasked with getting the main priority i.e., a legislative framework, off the ground. The first White Paper was regarded as a "road map" or "blueprint" for the transformation of the entire education system. He said that there had been a group of officials who had been trained in policy development processes and procedures and who "under the exigencies of that work", had set about "doing what needed to be done with regard to legislation". He pointed to:

> *…the considerable work that needed to be done with regard to 247 negotiations…. I think people have forgotten that there was also a mini-CODESA or a mini something in education…. But it took a long time and lot of energy in those years. And this was not something that the department or the Minister had imposed on itself; it was a constitutional requirement that had to be met. And hundreds of people, literary hundreds of people, contributed to the process and the records are in the archives attached to education (Manganyi 09/04/2003).*

Respondents such as Rensburg (03/05/2003) provided other vantage points and maintained that there had been a need to prioritise "against the scale". Under those conditions decisions were adopted that pointed to the establishment of commissions "to look at things", while the rest of the political leadership in the national Department of Education was "building the system". Therefore, according to Rensburg (ibid.), commissions and committees were generally given one to three years to complete their work. It was expected that by the third and fourth year, a set of policies and action plans would be in place across the board. Hence, they turned the "heat on" those committees to complete their work within the given time frames. Senior officials in the national Department of Education also prioritised what needed to be "tackled first". For example, in 1995, the school curriculum reform and transformation programme, "to in effect edit out the old fragmented curriculum, replacing it with a fundamentally new approach to learning and teaching", was considered a top priority. This meant that the envisaged changes had to be accompanied by the development of legislation, that would "transfer power and responsibility to learners and parents into a shared

community" (Rensburg 03/05/2003).

Rensburg (ibid.) indicated that working according to priorities was a dilemma for policy makers and some false choices were made, like we "can do them together". This was why the White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education were "at the tail end". Early Childhood Development and Special Needs Education were priorities lower down the list than the realities of a school system, that was "haemorrhaging" in 1998 because of the violence, crime and its outdated curriculum. The main pressure was on removing the old schooling system first. The result of having competing policies, was that implementation activities i.e., norms and standards for the funding of Special Needs Education issues, or inclusive education, took "the back seat" (Schoeman 11/12/2002). Although competing priorities took their toll on developments, Schoeman said that it was also the due to the problem of not having "a clear idea yet of exactly how the funding norms to drive inclusion should present themselves". In her own words:

> Even if there had been good ideas, processes would have been stymied as funding is couched in a much broader vision of school funding, which will imply change on a massive scale, which is very political. I think that there are lots of serious economic debates around school funding that are still being waged within the department of which Inclusive Education is one small component. So I think that the whole issue of implementing it from a funding point of view will take a bit of time and I think that the whole implementation plan and the time that is allocated to that is just very realistic about how long it will take us to develop the new funding norms. That's one part, the other part I think is where the lack of prioritising implementation has been very critical and negative for the country in that we have not been able to ensure that Teacher training gets on board the inclusion policy. We have lost a valuable five years. At least with OBE, universities were forced to train all new teachers in outcomes based education. We might as well have just made sure that that incorporated inclusive education as well because now you are having like five years of teachers entering the field without any knowledge of inclusive education.   So, I hope that now with the new phase, the new implementation of the National Curriculum Statements, that one would see more inclusion surfacing which should be an absolute priority. I think that those are two aspects of implementation, logistically the whole issue of dismantling Special Education and refocussing the Special Schools, which is a vital part of implementation, I still think that we have a long way to go. I think that at a policy level, it would be quite important to put in place powerful levers to get the change to take place there. I think the delay in passing the policy is perhaps due to the fact that the drafters of the White Paper [6} were struggling with how to get the levers right in terms of what change in the Special Schools would imply (Schoeman 11/12/2002).

Provincial difficulties/responses to the new policy directions

On the pronouncement of the integration of the education system, the National Department of Education experienced difficulties with provinces, as each had their own provisioning model. As Manganyi recalls:

> *… and I think we established a special committee at that time to look at this particular area. I like to believe that we were the only State department that institutionalised co-operative governance even before it was investigated by the committee. We could put into law, as you know, national education policy and how it needed to be developed. Which was one of the policy pillars that was developed quite early in order to regularise the whole process of how policy gets developed in the context of how the state system is organised (Manganyi 09/04/2003)*

To assist with the difficulties and to give credence to Special Needs Education, a special sub-committee of Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM) was established where such issues could be debated. According to Manganyi, this was most important for the process, as "…once it been established in law, the national Department of Education and its provinces could move together in identifying priorities and solving problems and go on in developing policy together" (Manganyi 09/04/2003).

Manganyi (09/04/2003) felt that this attempt to get all parties heard, was significant as it made the national Department of Education a forerunner with regard to co-operative governance, even before it had been investigated and was in the statute books. The Ministry was instrumental in appointing people to leadership roles, who were recognised for their work in the political arena in the initial stages of issue identification and agenda setting for the Special Needs Education policy development. It further became clear that although issues of "Special Needs" had been on the political agenda, there were more important issues, which had priority. Special Needs issues were pushed further down the agenda, when priorities were re-arranged with regard to fixing the schooling system. There were thus various reasons for Special Needs Education issues not emerging more prominently onto the political agenda. My analysis at this point of the policy development process, was that the lag in the Special Needs Education policy was mainly due to the following three factors: the lack of foresight to promote inclusive education as an approach to the schooling problem; the lack of practical skills amongst the stakeholders; and the fact that the field of Special Needs

Education was not viewed as important enough to gather political support.

6.3   Policy formulation

> *…NEPI was the agenda setting and where the agenda setting was happening and then eventually turned into the formulation process, which is where the Commission was involved, and then the implementation and the evaluation* (Lazarus 29/09/2002).

The fact that over time, a significant number of policy makers were employed as policy implementers within the national Department of Education, could be significant for the implementation. What this holds for policy implementation remains to be seen. It is a factor mentioned by change theorists. The important question raised in this regard is: *Are these key policy makers now in a position to steer the implementation in the intended and negotiated direction or will they steer it towards their own agendas?*

In my ensuing analysis of this phase of policy development, I intend to describe and explain the content of the major debates and the positions of the stakeholders. I will then proceed with my argument by examining the influence of the stakeholders on the policy development process.

6.3.1   Paradigm shift to inclusion, terminology and constructs

> *Even the people who are experts are struggling to tell me and this is precisely what I wanted to know from officials. What does this mean? What are the people talking about? I am not to go offer a definition. I am in need of clear definition of what inclusion really is* (Manganyi 09/04/2003).

I have chosen this as an opening statement to illustrate the intense feelings of exasperation that are evoked by the lack of clarity regarding the notion of inclusion. Even a seasoned observer like Manganyi, remains unclear on the issues of inclusive education. The concept of inclusion is wide and complex. It seems incomprehensible and amorphous to some, but others have strong convictions about it.

It appears from the responses that the introduction of inclusion into the policy-making process for Special Needs Education, cannot be examined without the disability sector and, more specifically, the South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD), playing a role. Their exposure to international events led to substantial effort to put the notion of inclusive education on the political agenda after 1994. Although some members of the organised disability sector readily accepted the notion of inclusive education, others disagreed. This led to a wide range of opinion, with exclusion on the one side of the spectrum and the opposing idea of inclusion on the other. Several disability groupings, at the time of the NCSNET process, had formed within the ranks of the SAFCD. It was known that Down Syndrome South Africa (DSA) advocated for full inclusion. The Deaf Federation for South Africa (DEAFSA) argued for the opposite, while the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) were found to be somewhere in the middle. This tension around inclusion versus exclusion continued throughout the policy development process. It also appeared that the strength of the deliberations of the disability sector during the policy formulation phase weakened over time. The initial effort put into government policies dwindled, as members terminated their affiliations and others were taken into the employ of the departments of education. By the time the White Paper 6 was released it seemed as if the policy had been steered towards the narrower understanding of inclusion as mainstreaming and not, as the full inclusionists had hoped for, "Education for All". The fact that Special Schools would no longer be closing, but instead were to be reinforced and become institutions, like the Full Service Schools, supported this view.

Theron (5/10/2003) indicated that moving from a medical deficit model, to a rights based positivistic support model, was an issue that took the longest to resolve because of "the protection of own interests".

According to Dr. Schoeman, the differences in peoples' understanding of inclusion falls within a range or a continuum, based on provisioning:

> *…(the) whole notion of mainstreaming and concept of 'inclusivity' and the debate of what that really means, and what it really means to understand the range of difference, for the lack of a better word, that is an end of a category of learners who were normally being treated within the categories of children with special needs (Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002).*

Manganyi (09/04/2003) claims that the debate on inclusion was alive and there were those members in the education fraternity who were helping in thinking this matter through and trying to work on the policy.

He came to the conclusion that the policy proposals that were emerging at that time, and the theoretical paradigm that was in use, could have meant one of two things:

> *That the normal classroom is fine and is the vehicle for education for all children, which supposes therefore that all teachers and all categories are capable of delivering outcomes with any kind of child. The presupposition we would see that one needed the right kind of pedagogy to do that; and*

> *On the other hand, if you are suggesting that there is a need to think differently about the classroom and pedagogy because your opening up the space, then that would lead one to the conclusion that there may be special things that you need to do, beyond the kind of things we know about i.e., the improvement of teacher support (ibid.).*

Manganyi (ibid.) cautioned that if one became too ideological about issues, it could raise difficulties. There was the need at the time to concomitantly undertake the National Commission on Special Needs In Education and Training (NCSNET) and investigate the quality of the education support provisioning through the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). This implied: "…an indication that there is something special in a way, or that there are circumstances that need(ed) to be taken into account (ibid.). He also concurred with the importance accorded by the new policy to the notion, that it is "a good thing not to stigmatise children' which is what the old system did, but at the same time acknowledged the need to recognise that "under certain circumstances some children may need extra assistance" (09/04/2003).

Although these lengthy discussions resulted in a greater understanding of the complexities involved in the change, a clear division arose between policy makers i.e., those that represented the "new" paradigm and those that were regarded as being within the "old" paradigm.

The differences in peoples' understanding of the notion of inclusion, could certainly have a bearing on the education system's readiness to respond. Whatever understanding of inclusive education reigned, it would have implications for the implementation plan and the funding

model needed to support the reform. The fact that the tension regarding these issues remains, is cause for concern.

It was clear that those policy makers who had firm beliefs, based on the human rights model, that the education system needed drastic change, would stand fast on these issues. An example of this, was that the notion of a "single seamless school system" was maintained (Rensburg 03/05/2003). This imperative was a "non-negotiable", that survived during the development of the Special Needs Education policy. Rensburg (ibid.) envisaged that "Special Schools will be built up and curriculum improved so that these learners perform" and that the same criteria would exist for the mainstream schools. He believed that there would be a "bigger investment" in targeted Special Schools that catered for a single disability but, in addition, Full Service Schools would be ordinary primary schools open to all learners, whether disabled or not.

Schoeman (11/12/2002) held the view that "the whole issue of addressing barriers and to move away from a medical model is a non-negotiable" and that "there must be more equitable spending".

Others were adamant that:

> *Because of the overarching equity imperatives of the government and the underly-ing imperatives around issues of social justice etc., the final policy document re-flects a commitment to systemic change and thus the more 'systemic' paradigm (Howell 11/06/2003).*

However, Howell (ibid.) convincingly states: "The policy document contains a number of ambiguities and contradictions that reflect the compromises that were reached".

Theron (5/10/2003) reflected this view in his statement that "inclusion is a Constitutional right", but added his understanding that "learners cannot be mainstreamed without support". He believed that Special Schools, although they will be transformed, "will stay intact".

Manganyi (09/04/2003) summed up the question of compromise on certain issues by comparing the development of this policy to "a mini-CODESA". Compromises, he argued,

were part of any policy-making process. Coombe (11/12/2002) reasoned that South Africa, in particular, had a history of compromise and this is reflected in our Constitution e.g., independent provinces and a quasi-federal state.

Several people (Howell, Manganyi and Coombe) agreed that the White Paper 6 bore the appearance of a compromised document. Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) felt that this was particularly true of the position that Government had taken on Special Schools which, he maintained, differed much from the Commission's report. Even though the White Paper 6 still had limitations for the SANCB he felt:

> *…fairly comfortable with the broad guidelines that it provides. We regard it as an opportunity and not as a threat … we need to regard this as an opportunity, because why would one like to see Blind people excluded (Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002)?*

The compromises of White Paper 6 had benefits for most parties. For the SANCB it had dual implications i.e., "Special Schools would be strengthened", and the extended time frame would bring realism to the new concepts introduced by the policy, such as the Full Service Schools.

Dr. Schoeman is of the opinion that "if everything is not rushed into a new structure" then perhaps it would give stakeholders "some time to implement"(ibid.). Theron (05/10/2003) agreed that the "gradual phasing in of inclusive education", was a major compromise between the previous formulations and White Paper 6.

 Howell (11/06/2003), on the other hand, believed that an important "non-negotiable' that survived the policy development process, was the recognition that:

> *… learning breakdown and exclusion take place because the system fails to provide for and accommodate the full range of learning needs i.e., the move away from a deficit paradigm to a systemic one"*

Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) thought that some views adopted by official policy makers were unrealistic, when they implied that if any teacher merely receives appropriate training then:

> *…(he) will be able to cope with any form of typology in the classroom, I think is a good idea of lack of realism – I don't think it is realistic, especially in a country where you have large classes (ibid.).*

Dr. Schoeman (ibid.) believes that there were lessons to be learnt from both sides with regard to the policy development process. His thoughts on the matter were expressed as follows:

> *… from the other side I think we functioned very strongly in the medical model, and we needed the balance to understand also the barriers within the system. I am thinking back on how we struggled to get money for our Special Schools from the Department of Education and Training. It is true that we overlooked and I am really trying to be balanced in this whole thing, we overlooked the systemic problems that caused people (learners) not to be placed in the system. I think it is true that there were some compromises perhaps to the advantage of the whole situation (Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002).*

Howell (11/06/2003) also contributed her ideas on what the major compromises were:

> *I think that there are a number of places in the White Paper 6, where the language used is at best ambiguous and in fact may even fall back into the 'deficit' paradigm. However, there are other places where the document is very clear in taking forward the systemic paradigm, which includes ensuring that the system has the capacity to meet the full range of learning needs and support each of its components in doing this. Over and above these issues, I would argue that the notion of the full-service school is problematic (as it has the potential to be conceptualised as another kind of special school rather than as a piloting exercise, which may have been the intention). I also think the policy is weak in emphasising the importance of a community-based support system. All these areas reflect compromises (ibid.).*

It becomes apparent that the "learning lag" and "buy-in" that was associated with the new paradigm, would contribute to the delay in the Special Needs Education policy development process.

6.3.2   Major stakeholders, dominant ideas, positions and pressure groups

> *Were the first policies more emotive or more rational? That is, helter-skelter from passion and not confusing* (Rensburg 03/05/2003)*?*

Several respondents agreed that the major force propelling the issues of special needs reform came initially from the disability sector. In the early stages of the policy's development, during the NCSNET process, the disability groupings had successfully united under the South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD). This collective front was determined to have as much representation as possible on the NCSNET processes. Even before the

NCSNET process had started, a delegation[50] had gone overseas and met with Dr Lenah Saleh, from UNESCO.

All of the respondents within the disability sector did not share this apparent coherence. Mahlangu alluded to this:

> *…there was no co-operation between them, so stakeholder politics played a very critical role in the delay (Mahlangu 29/11/2002).*

In fact, with time the divisions became marked and tensions were so apparent that Schoeman (11/12/2002) described it as a "big battle" between two main groups i.e., the rights-based disability movement and all their affiliates and the service providing organisations. She maintained that:

> *I think there is a very strong position, even from DEAFSA and the South African National Council for the Blind, which were the main components against inclusion and still have their reservations about inclusion. They all agree on the fact that they would like to see all other aspects of the Integrated National Disability Strategy be implemented, that for instance integration into social life, into the world of employment, that becomes a right (Schoeman 11/12/2002).*

The bottom line, according to Schoeman, was that the voice of disability was "very strong, very mobilised with all the battles won about the rights-based". She was convinced that:

> *Nobody will be standing up in public and taking a radical stand or go against the rights- based notion towards disability (Schoeman 11/12/2002).*

Crouch (15/07/2002), an outsider to the process, recollects that the debates at the time appeared to be "a more unilateral hectoring from one side claiming absurd levels of moral high ground". His opinion was:

> *Who can be against handicapped kids? But, I bet, of those who never raised a cynical tone, out of fear of being branded reactionary, very few believed one word of the Special Needs Education rhetoric. I bet those who were pushing the rhetoric believed it, at least not if pushed in a logical debate. But the logical debate could not be had because the issue was so emotional and because the pressure groups were so good at claiming the moral high ground (ibid.).*

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[50] The delegates from South Africa were there to give support to the Salamanca Document, as they had lost the opportunity to be a signatory.

His summary of the events was that the debates were blown out of all proportion and "the definition of special needs anyway, and what was possible to do, and the fact that choices had to be made, was heart wrenching" and consequently "no one was willing to face the notion that choices had to be made".

It was interesting to note that some respondents, for example Theron (5/10/2003), considered the Commission and national Department of Education to be major stakeholders. Special Schools, unions and disability organisations were also considered to have been major stakeholders.

Theron's (ibid.) view provided a range of possible interpretations of the positions taken by stakeholders. During the period of the NCSNET, several Commissioners had been advocating for "full inclusion in the short term", whereas some school and unions were "against inclusion" and the disability organisations somewhere "in between" (ibid.).

According to Schoeman (2002) this lead to tensions since:

> *…the Council for the Blind and myself personally believe we were roughly in the middle, we saw the merit of inclusive education, and also saw the possible dangers. So I think those were the major stakeholders. Of course people with mental disabilities, street children – those people didn't have strong organisations to talk on their behalf, and that can perhaps be regarded as a silent majority, people who could not really speak for themselves, but as far as the disability groups are concerned, the blind and the deaf were very outspoken, not sharing exactly the same place within the spectrum (Schoeman 07/11/2002).*

It can be seen that the two major stakeholders, the SANCB and DEAFSA, remained consistently alert to the new government's policy throughout the policy-making process. Although not opposed to mainstreaming, they had serious reservations as to whether there were sufficient skilled human resources to serve and provision the entire system. One of the concerns they raised, was whether sufficient recognition would be given to the specialised pedagogy needed for these disabilities. They were not fully convinced that simply "good" teaching and access to a flexible curriculum, could summarily substitute for this specialised area of skill. They were certain that an ordinary pedagogy would not cater to their learners' needs. The idea of having all the available expertise locked up in the district office, and not

available to learners on site, was also raised as a concern. Dr. Schoeman deliberates on the positions taken by the various stakeholders with regard to inclusion:

> *I think there is a spectrum, on the one side of this continuance, you will find DEAFSA who rejected everything against being involved in inclusion, because they felt threatened that their needs cannot be addressed, because of the great difficulties and complications and so on. So you had the worried side, and on the other side you had the full inclusionists, and in the middle roughly the National Council for the Blind and the Physically Disabled found themselves. I think those people were more to the inclusion side, and so those were roughly the deviations as I saw them. You had people who looked at it from a practical point of view, you had a group of people who viewed it from a philosophical approach (Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002).*

The continual wrangling about the concept of inclusion obviously disturbed the relationships within the disability groupings. During this naming, blaming and shaming process, matters became personal. This led in turn to the marginalisation of the SANCB.

According to Theron (05/10/2003), the national Department of Education created the perception that people who did not follow their route were "labelled" which then gave them the opportunity:

> *…to marginalise us. If I may use the "us" as part of a group of people who wanted to contribute and wanted our people to have the benefit, we were not given the opportunity (ibid.).*

This was specifically the case of people who had served under the previous government and who had been attached to Special Schools. Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) expounds on this matter:

> *To bring it down to the bone, the notion that was created, was that special education was equivalent to apartheid, and that polarised people. People in specialised education were accused - as the apartheid system segregated people from each other; the whole approach to special education was to segregate people, get them out of the mainstream education. While some of it could be true, I really disputed that; because having been in Special Education since 1974, I know what people tried to do, to help disabled people get a proper education. I think that is one of the major complaints, and that polarised people into camps, and it really caused a lot of suspicion, because people didn't trust each other. Each group believing that people had got their own agendas and so on and I think that was the basis. It was difficult to convey this reality of being practically involved in this education field. So, those were difficult debates because I think people mistrusted each other, which caused it to be so difficult. At times it was difficult to have a normal discussion, and exchange of views, because the moment you said something, you put*

> *yourself in a camp. Those things made it difficult to come to resolutions and so on (Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002).*

Dr. Schoeman (ibid.) gives his account of events regarding the way in which the national Department of Education's officials dealt with stakeholders from particular groupings. He stated that it led to a situation of mistrust and a lack of understanding, which gradually led to some sectors of the disability sector moving from a participator's position to a spectator's position. As the representatives of the SANCB experienced covert hostility towards their views by certain members of the Commission, it became progressively difficult for them to put their views across, as there were:

> *…lots of politics in the whole process and we ignored it to a certain degree and just went about doing our work, because our, or my main focus, was to ensure that Blind and partially sighted get the best deal – not at a price or at the expense of others (ibid.).*

The ensuing isolation of important stakeholders made a mockery of the consultative process. Dr. Schoeman (ibid.), speaking from the interests of the visually disabled sector, claims that:

> *I think if we can look at the stakeholder politics, we find it very strange that while the Department pretends to have been transparent and consultative in its approach, NGOs in the disability sector are practically marginalised and are seldom consulted. It is maybe like the old apartheid situation where some people decided for other people what is best for them. They don't ask the NGOs what would they like to see. They come with this philosophical approach and then just go for it, bulldoze it in. We have strong views and we can be a very strongly supportive and support the process, but, what they have successfully succeeded in doing is to put us in a camp outside and the result is that we are very critical observers of what is taking place. I think their approach was one that excluded us and they will find it fairly difficult to get DEAFSA and the Council for the Blind and the Council for Physically Disabled on board because they decided to go ahead without us. While we were, right from the beginning, always willing to assist, but I think they regarded us as a political body that they would rather exclude us (ibid.).*

I found from my analysis that a good argument arises from a new concept. The lack of clarity and continual bickering caused great tension, which prevails to this day. It was clear that the participants were to be found within both the disability sector and the national Department of Education. It is important that new terms and concepts receive absolute clarification during the policy formulation phase. This was not the case for the Special Needs Education policy.

Inevitably, unclear policy formulation led firstly, to various interpretations in the field, which caused a lack of conformity within the system and, secondly, to guideline documents by national Department of Education that were vague.

Contrary to the prevailing belief at that time, the SANCB was supportive of the philosophical approach towards inclusion that was proposed about by the policy makers. There was no "desire for the SANCB to haul people out of the mainstream of life to special places" (Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002). He said that the strong views held by the SANCB were to protect their learners against "inclusion" in settings that did not have educational support. In his own words:

> *The only reason why we propose that the education will be better catered for in Special Schools than in mainstream schools is practical. Teachers who can Braille equipment and those things are a reality. I wouldn't like to see Blind learners in settings where there is no support, and that is what we said right at the beginning of the process, go for it, but provide the support system and surely if the support is there the Department can bank on the support of the Council (ibid.).*

The continued well-being of their learners was the prime consideration that made the SANCB stand its ground firmly during the debates. They were intent upon pursuing their claims to the end. If their claims were not to be realised, then the policy makers would have to deal with the fact, Dr. Schoeman (ibid.) says:

> *… that we are going to be very ' stroppy' if they put our children in situations where they are worse off than in Special Schools. We don't ask more for blind children than for any other children, we ask the same. (ibid.).*

Despite the apparent tensions within the groupings of the disability sector on the matter of inclusion, it did not deter them from adhering to, and addressing, the Constitutional principles. Given the historical background and the political sway of most of the members of the NCSNET and of the policy makers, this was to be expected. All respected the view that one education system should exist and that it would include a single model of funding for all schools. They agreed unanimously that there were disabled learners who could be mainstreamed.

My findings confirm that a huge amount of political hectoring and posturing took place during the policy formulation stage of the Special Needs Education policy. Although debate

is always healthy in any policy-making context, it does appear that the opposing forces breached an unspoken code of conduct at times. The respondents could be classified mainly into two broad versions of understanding of the term inclusion:

> *The radical and or broad approach i.e., the changing of the whole educational system to accommodate all learners with barriers; and*

> *The conservatist or narrow approach i.e., the accommodation and inclusion of only disabled learners into the mainstream or ordinary education (Manganyi 09/04/2003).*

This dualism created huge tensions, not only in the disability sector, but also amongst the policy makers and the policy implementers at the National Department of Education. It also is apparent that some officials used their political positions to further their own beliefs and that they used mechanisms of the state to do so.

From the analysis in this section, it is clear that the way in which the new paradigm was introduced, created antagonism. The special schooling sector, in particular, was negatively affected and experienced the changes as an imposition rather than a negotiated reform. It appears that the extreme views were the result of individual departmental officials who used the mechanisms of State and the ensuing power of being in a line function position at the national Department of Education, to further their claims.

The public view, as propagated by respondents, was that the Department's position triumphed mainly because of the fact that they had the "machinery to deal with it" (Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002, Theron 5/10/2003).

6.3.3   Special Schools, Resource Centres and Full Service Schools

> *They just don't understand it! They haven't heard it! It is not a notion that is a reality for them every day.* (Schoeman 11/12/2002)

Schoeman's exasperation with Special Schools, is voiced succinctly in the above quotation. It was common knowledge to those involved in the policy development process, that the Special Schools were the proverbial fly in the ointment. They were accused of having hidden

agendas and deliberately curtailing developments regarding their restructuring. Many of these schools were still headed by the "old guard" and it was felt that they did not display sufficient understanding of the changes and that they would not be able to accommodate the changes at site level, in order to bring about the reform envisaged in the White Paper 6. In the apartheid regime Special Schools were favoured and funded under a separate funding programme. This programme was considered lavish, in terms of physical and human resources, and discriminatory because their provision had targeted primarily the white ex-model C schools. New policy makers such as Williams, Naicker and Schoeman were adamant that the money ploughed into Special Schools could be better used to serve a wider range of learners through a new funding system.

According to Lazarus (29/09/2002) and other respondents (Schoeman 11/12/2003, Rensburg 03/05/2003) the role of Special Schools was "always on the policy-making agenda". Lazarus believed that Special Schools in the South African context posed a specific problem, as they straddled first and third world realities. In her own words she explained that:

> *The Special School sector, I think in this country and this is something that I became aware of when I went to Kenya, Uganda and also from what I've heard in the past year from the SADC countries, is that it is much more difficult using the inclusion route when you have got a very, very solid - almost 400 schools - that have an interest to protect, and they perceive it that way. It is much more difficult in this context of 1st and 3rd world reality than it is in a context where you have got nothing, you have to start from scratch almost, because people who have, will protect what they have. When you have nothing, you sit together and you find new ways of doing things. But when you have all these advantaged / disadvantaged - for want of a better way of putting it - differences; third world differences, I think it is very problematic. I can't remember which country that felt very sorry for us, and said we had a very difficult job because of this (Lazarus 29/09/2002).*

Prof. Lazarus predicted that it would be difficult to get rid of Special Schools in any context where they had had a long history of providing services to disabled learners (Lazarus 29/09/2002). Another fact that had to be reckoned with, was that the majority of black people still wanted to have Special Schools, as they were a right that they had been deprived of by the previous dispensation (Schoeman 11/12/2002). The hesitancy in accepting the new philosophy of inclusion at schooling level was most prevalent in the Special Schools. They were also the most reluctant to change. Their representatives were accused of having "hidden agendas" and issues of "turf".

Those knowledgeable on issues in Special Schools, intimated that because of their hands on experience in dealing with disability, that they were merely questioning how issues of theory and practice could be aligned (Dr. Schoeman 7/11/2002; Theron 5/10/2003).

Rensburg (03/05/2003) voiced concerns about the logistical implementation and felt that insufficient attention had been given to pragmatic issues, such as what the place of Special Schools would be and how one would create a fully inclusive environment in the current mainstream schools. Schoeman (11/12/2002) took a more balanced stance, believing that one has: "got to have practice to get off the theoretical issues". She pointed to the fact that, internationally, there had been "a huge theoretical shift" over the last 10 years in the way inclusive education was being developed and in the theory of its implications. She elaborated her understanding:

> *When people talk about practical implementation in the classroom, they have this vision of what do you do to make it work for the child with Downs Syndrome. What are the step by step guides on how to do it for the Blind and so on and then they do not understand that it is not about technical knowledge. That it is this radical break with the medical model and the special needs notions, and the new way of looking at pedagogy and many other factors that involve support that have to be grasped in order to do it. I think that the two go hand in hand and once you get the one right, for instance, if you get the whole theoretical basis of outcomes based education right and you understand that fundamentally. If you understand the change in the classroom, the whole notion of constructive learning and so on then I think you ought to get things right in the classroom as well (Schoeman 11/12/2002)*

Serious political debates surfaced that were specific to the notion of Special Schools within the paradigm of inclusive education. So-called opponents were further ostracised because of their adherence to the medical model. It stands to reason that they would therefore bear the defamatory wrath of the inclusionists. In some cases Special Schools were threatened with closure, and had, in isolated cases, had budgetary restrictions imposed on them. These activities were performed, in part, by some "maverick" officials who were not sanctioned to act in this way. These actions kept the Special School community highly suspicious of departmental officials. This negative attitude hampered subsequent liaisons.

Schoeman (11/12/2002) said that she had gathered the viewpoints of other international people, who were conservative with regard to inclusive education. From those meetings she

had concluded that there existed a point of view that, if one gave people "good training" and "access to specialised training at the school level", it would be much easier "to include them when they were adults" because they had been better trained. She argued that this perspective she reckoned was "going against" the opinion of others that "schooling constitutes the largest part of your growth as a human being" and that it was where one developed one's adult identity. The former outlook on schooling i.e., in an isolated, protected and segregated environment of a special school, was disabling in itself, as one was not empowered enough "to stand up to the problems that you have to face when you have to face society as an adult" (ibid.).

The general perception among people with disabilities and parents of disabled children was that Special Schools lower expectations. Schoeman (11/12/2002) does not think, "Special Schools have actually lived up to what they pretend to be delivering. They are not of the academic standard that they should be, given their claims of specialisation" (ibid.).

Her interpretation of "strengthening Special Schools" was to upgrade the qualifications of the staff in Special Schools, as they had seriously lagged behind the new developments in curriculum (ibid.). In her judgement:

> One can see that from a very small percentage of people that came from that kind of expensive schooling and entered university and higher education, the teaching has not been up to standard, and in the field of intellectual disability what has been going on in schools for severely intellectually disabled has really not been up to standard. They have not kept abreast with international developments in that area. So I think that those are the concerns that people have. There is a concern that the Special Schools are giving so much more, but parents and people with disabilities themselves are realising that in some instances this is not so. I think schools differ, but I think that the majority of Special Schools aren't really living up to their names (Schoeman 11/12/2002).

Schoeman supported the view that government should not be threatening Special Schools, but should make life uncomfortable for them "in the sense of placing challenges at their delivery modes". She believed that government should prioritise in terms of advocacy and the mobilising of parents in order to understand these issues properly (ibid.).

The notion of Full Service Schools arose after the policy formulation stage and with the advent of the White Paper 6. These schools were erroneously associated with the functions of Special Schools in many ways. Government had previously been adamant that access to Special Schools should be limited. The arrival of this new concept seemed for many to contradict the previous position taken by government that Special Schools would close. The introduction of this new construct into the education system would take additional time to deliberate. Consequently additional time would be needed to introduce this idea.

I was unable, even with intense questioning of the major stakeholders, to determine the genesis of this new notion of Full Service Schools. I was convinced that it had been conceived by the national Department of Education, but had been shared with few. Lazarus insisted that the notion of a Full Service School had not come from the Commission. Even people who had been closely associated with the process of policy development, like Lazarus, had been most alarmed at the new development. Her astonishment is reflected in her own words: "Well I have to say, I don't know where that came from, the Full Service School idea, I don't think it is a good idea. I just don't think it is a good idea" (Lazarus 29/09/2002). She exclaimed further, that from the minute she saw it in the White Paper 6:

> *…I was frightened about how it would be interpreted (ibid.).*

In fact, Lazarus said, that everywhere that she had been, people had been interpreting it negatively. She believed that Full Service Schools:

> *…is not going to take us forward. I am hoping that it will, somebody has thought it up and I hope that they have thought it through, and that maybe I just haven't seen it yet. I can see dangers at such schools. I can really see dangers (Lazarus 29/09/2002).*

Lazarus (ibid.) sensed from her own experience that the danger lay in the different ways the that the notion of Full Service Schools was being interpreted:

> *I know from the literature and from my experience in politics, that this report, this interpretation is what makes the difference in how the people who made the policy and those who implement it, the differences are coming through the interpretation. When I read this White Paper for the first time and I saw this Full Service, after reading it a few times, I interpreted it to mean that what they were going to do, was to focus on a few schools to start off with and develop them into a good school, like a pilot in a sense, and that the country would then learn from that and eventually over 20 years, more and more schools would develop in that way. But, that is not*

> *how it is being interpreted, that's not how its been picked up, even in these guide-lines. It sounds like it is turning into a special kind of a special school. I think that is problematic. But, I hope I am wrong on that one, maybe I have not understood whoever came up with that idea, but I can tell you that most people on the ground don't know what a Full Service School is. So surely at the level of interpretation of policies there is going to be a problem around those schools. Different people are interpreting this in different ways and most people are throwing their hands up and saying, I don't know what this is about (ibid.).*

In my analysis of the issue of Special Schools I identified another tension in the policy-making process that rested within the gambit of Special Schools. How this was eventually translated into the intended policy directives, is evident from the White Paper. It is clear that, after the White Paper 6 had been released, many of the tensions that deal with the debates on Special Schools, had receded into the background. Special Schools would not be closed, as had been anticipated, but their mode of service delivery would be defined around learners' needs rather than on disabilities. In fact, Special Schools would be instrumental in providing support, through their now recognised expertise, to Full Service Schools. Special Schools were to be given a new status and would be re-engineered into resource schools. It appears that South Africa had come up with a hybrid model that included not only the systemic, but also the medical approach in the provisioning of support to learners.

Not everybody was pleased that Special Schools were not "scaled down". Schoeman (11/12/2002) felt greatly disappointed at this unpredictable turn in events and felt it was the "top compromise" in the policy. However, she regarded this compromise as "rather superficial" because it was undermined by the White Paper 6 document which stated that: "Special Schools must become resource centres". Although the departmental officials themselves were struck by the controversial statements in the policy, they were adamant that it "would depend greatly on how that rollout would be seen and to what extent the compromise would be sustained". Schoeman attributed this sinisterly to the fact that "…the redress in equity means that equitable spending is going to influence the Special Schools and their status" (ibid.).

It appears that the debates on Special Schools were just as acrimonious as the debates on the notion of inclusion. The battle around the notion of inclusion was serious and the Special Schools became the battlefields. Special Schools at that time were not representative of the

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philosophy of inclusion. They housed those who felt that they had a valid case for their continued existence. My findings also describe the intense debates during the policy formulation stage. I believe that the two issues of the philosophical nature of the new philosophy, and the envisaged structural changes, were initially not sufficiently clarified. This contributed to the fact that government would spend additional time, in fact four years, resolving and reformulating these concepts.

6.4   Policy adoption, implementation and evaluation

One cannot imagine that policy makers would not be serious about putting a plan in place that would be implementable. Many of the earlier policies developed by the national Department of Education were accused of lacking in this respect. Policies that are subject to "non-reform" are characterised by this phenomenon. *Was it possible that this policy would succumb to the same faults/criticism?*

There was general consensus amongst the respondents that implementation was always high on the agenda and, according to Lazarus (29/09/2002), it had been addressed appropriately. It had been part of the NCSNET's brief and all draft documents had some bearing on the matter. The NCSNET had even allocated a task team to "look at" implementation. Policy implementation had been taken seriously "it's not as if the people sitting there didn't want to make a difference on the ground. Every single person sitting around that table in the Commission wanted to make a difference on the ground" (ibid.).

The Special Needs Education policy was characteristically different to other policies, where implementation begins only after the policy has been officially promulgated. It was common knowledge that even before the White Paper 6 had been released, some officials in the provincial departments had already read "the writing on the wall" and were operating under their own interpretations. In some, but not all cases, this had led to "incorrect actions". Lazarus (29/09/2002) confirmed these premature operations and stated that:

> *…we started the implementation before the White Paper actually even came out. There is a whole cycle going on (ibid.).*

Lazarus (ibid.) expanded on how this aspect of implementation was experienced by the NCSNET process and its members:

> *They were one of the most passionate groups of people that I have ever come across, but I think that when you are sitting around the table, something happens and it is not just academics, because we were not just academics on the Commission. Something happens when you are around the table, you become pulled into the stories and the debates and don't look at the consequences and the Commission did not look enough at the consequences of each of its recommendations (ibid.).*

Lazarus (ibid.) had serious reservations about the implementation. She thought there had been a lack of time for debates and discussions in the NCSNET process. This issue had interfered significantly in many of the major policy development processes that had run before the White Paper. As Lazarus adamantly stated:

> *There wasn't the time, it was not that they did not have the will; the Commission was not able to take the recommendations and play with them for a couple of months (ibid.).*

She believed that the NCSNET process, and all other policy processes during that period as well, had been seriously flawed by a lack of time. The following quote substantiates her (29/09/2002) views: "All the Commissions say, and if you look at their documents, all say that there was not enough time to do this process. All of them, it was not only ours".

In the following section I analyse the responses, with a view to gauging the extent to which the rationale behind the 20-year implementation plan, outlined in White Paper 6, was accepted. I needed to determine whether there was real intent or whether it was a ploy of government, to conceal the real issues the government had on hand.

It was apparent that a 20 year-plan was not only "reasonable" (Coombe 11/12/2002, Lazarus 29/09/2002, Dr. Schoeman 07/11/2002), but also "sufficient" to ready the system. Howell (11/06/2003) claims that the 20-year time span is symbolically significant, as it allowed for the changes to happen in a systemic way and as such "would also give more time to advocate the policy to the more dissident thinkers".

Schoeman (11/12/2002) queried the wisdom of placing the 20-year term in a policy statement as this could be incorrectly interpreted as "dragging your feet in terms of commitment". She assumed that the time frame was probably based on international experience that system-wide change took that long:

> *I think that it is realistic in that given where we stand, how little inclusive practice we already have in the country, how much training has to take place, how much restructuring, how much re-writing (ibid.).*

Coombe (07/11/2002), however, expressed his reservations about an implementation plan that ran over 20 years, as it did not fit with the government's expenditure plan, which ran over a three-year funding cycle. It was most probable that, as time lapsed, the initiative would be overshadowed by other priorities that would arise.

This extended period allowed for gradual change and not the revolutionary change that had been propagated unofficially by many departmental officials. Extending the time frame would also allow government to field-test some of its newer innovations, such as Full Service Schools (FSS) and the transformation of Special Schools into Resource Schools. Yet, according to Williams (14/03/2003), most of the radical changes envisaged would in any event take place in the first eight years of implementation and the system should not relax and think that changes were not going to take place at all. Williams (ibid.) explains in his own words:

> *You must understand that we don't just change a country overnight, although some people would like to do it. So to my mind the 20 years is actually a positive development, because that will hopefully give people time to put things in place, which would have been negatively handled if it was just an overnight decision to change existing processes (ibid.).*

Schoeman (11/12/2002) echoes the sentiments of Williams, stating that "most of the messages" that had emerged since the passing of the White Paper 6, indicated "that most of the changes would occur within the first five to eight years". This confirmed my suspicions that other messages were being carried across by policy makers, that were not necessarily reflected in White Paper 6.

Various respondents who agreed to the extended 20-year implementation plan, felt that it had signified that "sanity" had fortunately reigned. Some of the firm proponents, like Schoeman, reiterated that change of this magnitude could not happen overnight. Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) provided an analogy to illustrate his argument:

> *…if I live in a house which I don't want it anymore, I can do one of two things, I can either break down this house and stay under a tree in the meantime while I am building my new house, or I can build my new house, plan it properly, build it properly and when it is ready move in and destroy the old house. I would have liked to see the latter, but unfortunately people have destroyed the structures and things without anything in place (ibid.).*

Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) raised concerns about changing overnight when "there is not enough expertise, human resources, physical and monetary resources". He believed that the 20-year plan would "give us some time to develop", which would hopefully produce a "good system".

According to Schoeman (11/12/2002) the time allocated to implementation was a political issue. She reckoned that it was:

> *A statement, trying to convey a message that Government is aware of the challenge that it poses and also that Government is realistic about its capacity to deliver such a scale and realistic also about how long it will take to change very entrenched practices which have entrenched the way of Special Needs Education in our system and attitudes toward that (ibid.).*

Schoeman (ibid.) also believed that this 20-year time frame could also be construed as a statement to minimise the threat that it "posed to the special education sector on the surface". There were thus disparate views as to whether a system could indeed change in 20 years. Although some policy makers praised the idea that one could cast one's thoughts so far into the future, it came with the accompanying reservation that budgetary processes were not aligned to 20-year cycles (Coombe 11/12/2002).

Rensburg (03/0502003) explained that when the new factors such as ECD and SNE were introduced into the system, they "went through fire unlike other policies".

They were "scrutinised more closely" as there was a greater awareness of the limitations and competencies of schools as institutions. Provinces wanted further clarity and therefore the policy was rewritten (ibid.).

The net result, according to Lazarus (29/09/2002) was that:

> *…inevitably the country now sits with documents that are very well meaning, that are wonderful from a human rights point of view and theoretically very sound, but the consequences, the practical consequences were not explored (ibid.).*

When these admissions are taken into account, the pragmatic and somewhat judgmental view taken by Theron (05/10/2003) becomes understandable. He was of the opinion that the first years of the development of the policy had concentrated more on developing a broad progressive policy and had "not much" when it came to the practical implementation thereof. Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) recalled the "heated discussions" that took place in the NCSNET around implementation, as the standpoint taken by the SANCB was that they wanted the philosophy translated into "practical realities".

Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002), backing Ms Connie Aucamp, the representative for the SANCB on the NCSNET, had raised the concern that the emphasis of the philosophical approach, had resulted in a negative outcome in that "they don't think through the realities of the Blind and the physically disabled and whose needs need to be taken into consideration" (ibid.).

Although, as Lazarus said (29/09/2002), there was specific attention paid to issues of implementation, ultimately the process was flawed in its lack of attention to important detail. This had been caused by the urgency with which policy documents had been developed.

Crouch (15/07/2002) was one of the few respondents who conceded that: "a policy could be implementable if there was a clear distinction between a principled goal and inevitable compromises between reality and that goal". He feels that South Africa has not "got there" save by the "somewhat disappointing option of pushing implementation 20 years into the future". However, Howell (11/06/2003) contradicts Crouch's response. She maintains that:

> *I think that one of the ways in which the 'fears' of a number of the more powerful stakeholders were addressed, was through assuring people that an incremental*

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> *process of change was being embarked upon. I also think, and correctly so, that valuable lessons were being learnt in the process of implementing other policy processes, especially C2005, that were extremely important for the implementation of new policies. In my opinion, we were becoming aware of how dysfunctional an education system we had inherited from the apartheid system and how the kind of systemic change that was needed, would take a lot longer to bring about than we had initially envisaged. I also think that the area of education support has been a very marginalised area and so ensuring that it becomes an integral and valued part of all aspects of the education system, is still in many respects, an argument that has to be won at all levels of the education system. I also think that there is still a tendency to see support as costly additional resources, such as professionals, rather than harnessing capacities and resources that already exist in the system and within communities (ibid.).*

Policies of "non-reform" also "play up" the importance of having a broad and progressive policy, often overruling the possibilities of implementation. Theron (05/10/2003) acknowledged that this tendency could also be attributed to the policy statements associated with the development of the White Paper 6. Schoeman (11/12/2002), on the other hand, believed that they can be separated, but are not separable. A broad and progressive policy, she maintains, goes "hand in hand" with policy implementation. She indicated that one cannot "have practical implementation in the schools if you do not understand the progressive policy around inclusion". She maintained further that "…you have to win the battle at that level, otherwise you cannot see change taking place in the schools" (ibid.).

The policy makers had successfully incorporated the principles of the Constitution, but had neglected to provide the guiding principles regarding implementation. In my opinion, this lack of depth reflects the presence of "non-reform" within this policy. Because of the complexities surrounding policies in transforming societies, the reflexive component of reviewing the strategic direction becomes vitally important. I think that this is more the case if the policy is intended to be gradualistic and not revolutionary. This aspect was negated in the development of the White Paper 6 process. It did not, however, take place continuously, but only at the dawn of implementation.

Policy evaluation

> *No single implementation of a policy and no one evaluation study should be expected to provide definitive evidence of a policy's*

> *worth, pro or con. Rather we need multiple applications of a program and a number of evaluations. Then we should judge the effectiveness of a policy by considering the 'preponderance of evidence'* (Lewis Solmon 2003).

The reflective component for the Special Needs Education policy process, was composed of two pilot studies and the national audit on Special Schools conducted in 2003. To what extent the findings of these activities will guide the policy direction, is unknown, due to the fact that they have only recently been released. Taking lessons from past experiences to evaluate new innovations, such as inclusive education, should be invaluable. White Paper 6 as policy has only been in place since 2001. According to its plan, it is expected to be officially implemented in 2004. Previous policies and intervention programmes, such as C2005, had preceded the White Paper 6 process and had undergone rigorous scrutiny from the public. This would serve as a warning to subsequent policy processes and there was an urgent need to learn from difficulties of the past. Rensburg (03/05/2003) in particular cautioned that policy crafters for Special Needs Education should have taken lessons from other policies, such as the school funding norms programme and C2005. He urged that in the process of developing new policies, policy makers should interrogate not only their convictions about whether it was "realistic to say that the special needs programme must be mainstream, that is, for all children", but also consider international experience and policies. He suggested that lessons could be learned from countries such as Norway but that "it needed to be tested". He provided a list of ideas and further questions that the policy makers for special needs should be asking themselves. What was to happen to the existing 300 Special Schools?; How could the policy ideas be thrust into a practical programme or mainstream?; What goes on in the Special Schools?; What were the resources?; What were the roles of parents and governing bodies?; What support is given to these schools?; Who were the learners?; and What were their "special needs" profiles (e.g. ramps, special toilets etc.) (ibid.)?

Rensburg cautioned further that:

> *Experience announced is not policy implemented and that resources set aside do not mean policy implementation. It was also important to be reminded of the distinction between the understandings of policy and process drawn from universities and NGO's as opposed to officials that already had five years experience in government and how to interpret that against an understanding of competence and levels of passion (ibid.).*

He (ibid.) then suggested that there are a number of lessons that needed to be learned from other policies with regard to issues such as "competence management, administration, teacher and school levels". The Danish government, in 2002, sponsored the pilot study for the implementation of the special needs policy for inclusive schools, prior to full implementation. Lazarus (29/09/2002) commented on these pilot studies, which had been undertaken by the national Department of Education, to "field-test" certain aspects of the implementation. She had participated as a researcher and was hopeful that:

> *…the Department will be more open to re-looking at its policies in five years time, after evaluating, like the kind of thing that we have been doing through this Pilot, that they take those – that's why these reports are important …What's the point of doing them if there are not lessons to be learnt from the ground and the policy has got to look at that (ibid.)?*

The DANIDA project, according to Lazarus (29/09/2002), had served to pinpoint aspects regarding the implementation of White Paper 6:

> *…the issues on the ground have been correctly identified. In other words the findings of the evaluation support the White Paper rather than trash it. The issue for me is not the framework; the issue is the resource support and the leadership that is needed to make it work, which are fundamental implementation issues. On the ground, experiences of this re-enforce what the Commission and the White Paper highlight in one way or the other. Although I know there are some differences on the focus (ibid.).*

She had found, in this research project[51], that there were two sides to the story. The one side was that it did provide concrete evidence "to show that despite the lack of infra-structures, despite the lack of social structures to support education, despite massive difficulties around poverty and so on. Schools can do it and can get it right". Inclusion has helped those schools to become more effective schools. It not only helped them become more effective, but also helped the whole school, even in "the face of such social difficulty". The other side of the story was a situation where those factors were just so massive, that they did not get very far. So she suggests that "one must look at what and when something does work, and when it doesn't" (ibid.).

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[51] Howell, C. & Lazarus, S. 2002. Final report of the national quality evaluation for the educator development: inclusive education pilot project, funded by DANIDA.

Lazarus (ibid.) ponders the issues of critical factors. She theorised as a community psychologist on the dynamics between school and society, and that there were "things" that "cut through" and others that did not. Her views were twofold:

Firstly,

> *…I have a view of social change in that you cannot go in the one direction or the other. You cannot only focus on changing people, you cannot only focus on changing structures, or society, you have got to work on the two together, that's where I am coming from.*

And secondly,

> *…that fundamentally where change does happen, it's where people feel empowered and where there is good leadership. Good leadership and empowerment go together. So where people see that they can make a difference, where their passions are touched, and where there is enough of a critical mass of support and collective strategy – you need those critical leaders, those people who make the difference (ibid.).*

It is clear that the lessons from the past had put a damper on bureaucrats who promised the public that which the State was unable to deliver. Policy makers would be more realistic with their plans regarding Special Needs Education. I question what appears to be the current thinking of education officials, who are considering garnering personal contributions only, rather than relying on funding from the State. *If all education policies were to rely solely on the goodwill of its educators, would they ever be implemented?* I ask this question given the South African context, where educators have, over the past eight years, been inundated and over-burdened with new policy developments.

6.5   Chapter summary

I have found that the Special Needs Education policy development process or trajectory followed the traditional linear policy development route only partially, that is, from the issue identification until the NCSNET report or first formulation phase. In this initial development phase time schedules were kept. Debates and discussions were taken from the broad stakeholder community within each of the stages, which led to vigorous and sometimes unpleasant debates.

My subsequent findings show that the political posturing, positioning and subsequent partitioning occurred in all phases of the policy-making process, similar to that described within the "political spectacle theory" of Smith et al. (2004:12). The policy formulation stage elicited more responses from participants than other stages did. It presented several of the elements associated with "political spectacle", namely, symbolic language, casting political actors as leaders, allies and enemies, dramaturgy (staging, plotting and costuming), the illusion of rationality, the illusion of democratic participation, disconnection between ends and means and the distinction between the action on stage from the action backstage.

The formulation phase of the Special Needs Education policy spanned the time after NCSNET report until when White Paper 6 was being developed. Between these two major activities, several iterations of the content took place, without the broad consultation process that had characterised the initial phases.

The White Paper 6 had some outcomes that were far removed from the intentions set out in the NCSNET report. Surprisingly, it was certainly not what had been desired by the directorate for Inclusive Education.

Not only had the policy development process come to a halt after the NCSNET report, but the expected transformation in the education system with respect to Special Needs Education, did not happen.

The White Paper 6 was considered a compromise between what had been intended in the NCSNET, that is, the ultimate removal of the existing medical model and what Government was able to support, that is, a hybrid between the medical and inclusive model. In this instance the context of transformation was not as radical as had been anticipated. The inability to formulate certain issues in the early development stages and their resultant circumvention, had repercussions for the time it took to complete the rewriting of the policy. In fact, it took considerably longer than expected.

From the responses it is clear that the future policy route for the Special Needs Policy would

be continually governed by reflection. The trajectory would be determined by all the elements within a dynamic system. This holistic view puts Government in the leading role and intricately links to those who were passionate and were pushing for reforming the schools at grassroots level.

This complies with the "political spectacle" theory espoused by Smith et al. which states that policy cannot be "looked at from a reductionistic model of causality" as this is "too simple to picture …a single arrow from some cause to effect" (Smith et al. 2004:35).
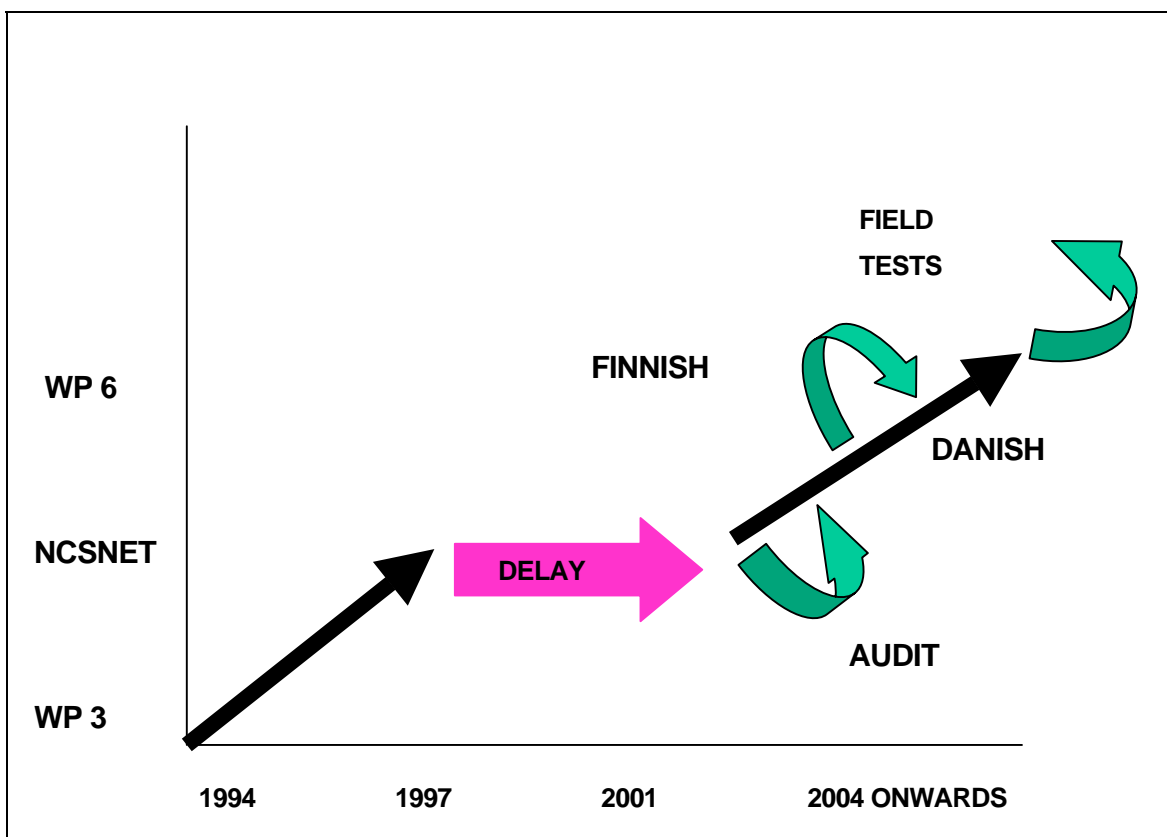

Figure 6.1: The envisaged trajectory for the Special Needs Education policy

Therefore it is envisaged that the future trajectory of the Special Needs Education policy is likely to undergo several iterations due to the planned reflexive components i.e.; the audit and the two field-tests are to be considered but that implementation might also be "bottom-up". This demonstrates a break-away from the typical linear approach and points to this

policy's future development process being characterised by iterative models on policy development such, as the model pursued by Swarts (2002:40) (see Figure 6.1:148) yet based theoretically within the unconventional "political spectacle theory".

In the following chapter I continue with the analysis of the respondents with a view of examining the reasons for the delay. The thesis that "non-reform" was intricately connected to policy delay has become more evident in this chapter.

Chapter Seven
Adding depth

The delay

7.1   Introduction

> *'Inertia' plays a strong role in the obstruction of social change* (Edelman 2001:23).

In this chapter I intend to increase the understanding of the factors that caused the lag in the development of the Special Needs Education policy. I will rely on the responses of the 14 participants identified in Chapter Five.

The subsidiary questions I will address in this chapter are: *What factors contributed to the delay in the emergence of the Special Needs Education policy? What* de facto *policy influenced the Special Needs Education practice in the field, given the absence of official government policy? Could the Special Needs Education policy be dismissed as 'non-reform'?* I will use these subsidiary questions as the basic principle of organisation of this chapter.

There are scholarly positions which claim that the early policies developed by the national Department of Education faltered, because Government did not provide implementation details (Jansen 2001a). This was seen as partially due to the speed of policy formulations, but also as a result of the rhetorical and symbolic actions of the State. These policies did not lead to the intended reform, because they simply lacked operational detail. I set myself the task of testing such contentions against the field data generated with regard to Special Needs Education policy. My data is based on the experiences of key role-players concerned with Government's Special Needs Education policy.

The data presented in the previous chapter laid bare the sensitive nature and the complexity governing the politics in policy-making. I continue with this chapter, bearing in mind the partisan nature of special needs stakeholders, as well as the deeper meaning that can be found in the various participant discourses. I will look at the responses of the respondents holistically and carefully consider whether there had been mention of the same issue in other sections already covered, with the view of establishing the links between the relevant chapters. I will provide substantive quotes from individual respondents, where relevant, to support my argument. After each section I provide a critical analysis.

7.2   A delay or not?

I found the difference in opinion among stakeholders, as to whether or not there had been a delay, most interesting. The range of opinion amongst the participants extended from not believing that there had been a delay, to an affirmative "Yes, there was a delay but it was reasonable", and a solid confirmation that "Yes! Of course there was a delay". I positioned the responses against the particular context that surrounded the policy at the time.

The policy development process for Special Needs Education had started at much the same time, early 1995, as other so called "important" policy-making processes, but it was only released as a White Paper 6 seven years later. It was thus preceded by several other white papers and emerged as White Paper 6 in 2001, even though the investigating committee had tabled its report in 1997.

No! There was not a delay

Williams (14.03.2003) chose to believe that there was no delay and that the "policy formation process had been kept on track". He stated that it was "a deliberate attempt" by the national Department of Education to choose the appropriate time to release the policy (ibid.). If one analyses Williams's response, then he is partially correct, because the NCSNET process was one of the few investigations that ran according to the given time schedule. It was, on the other hand, difficult to accept that a state department could take five years to make a pertinent decision on the convenience of timing.

There was a delay, but it was reasonable

Several participants recognised that there had been a delay, but felt that under the circumstances, it was "reasonable". Other people who had been associated with events regarding the policy-making process, confirmed this view (Crouch 2002, Mahlangu 2002, Schoeman 2002). Several respondents from the "understandable group", explained their reasons mainly in terms of the Ministry's immediate priorities and the fact that the education system had been tasked with "greater priorities", namely to rid the system of its apartheid legacy. Ridding the system of the apartheid legacy, included establishing one uniform education system and an urgent need for a legislative framework within which all other policies would operate. Hence, much effort went into the preparation of the first white paper, which would contain the guiding principles for the rest of the system. Before that had been established, the seemingly less important issues would have to wait.

Most respondents expressed some understanding of the fact, that although "special needs" was high on the agenda, during the period of transformation it was not the "flavour of the month". Lazarus (29/09/2002) thought that the delay had more favourable than other adverse outcomes, as it had allowed the national Department of Education the opportunity to pursue its advocacy campaign. This, she believed, had won the co-operation of a greater number of people and reduced resistance, especially from the Special Schools. She believed that the system would not have been ready, if the White Paper 6 had been released at the time it was intended for release.

Yes! Of course there was a delay

Some respondents were adamant that there was a delay in the delivery of the White Paper. Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) confirmed that: "…definitely there was a delay. I think in submitting the Commission's report at the end of 1997 to the Minister, and only last year did we see progress in as far as the final White Paper is concerned, then there was a definite delay." Other respondents were more outspoken, even aghast at the apparent dawdling, stating that: "No, I think that the delay was shocking, to say the least, because I think that the NCSNET report was so well written and so translatable into policy directly, that I think that it could have happened much sooner" (Schoeman 11/12/2002).

Manganyi, in his reminiscences about the delay, attributed it to the dependency that policy makers had on gaining information through enquiry. He explained:

> *So I mean you have these kind of things going on at the time and when you are do-*
> *ing that kind of work, you also depend on commissions and special investigations,*
> *and to some degree, the speed with which you are able to move, is also dependent*
> *on how quickly consensus is reached by the experts who work in the different areas*
> *(Manganyi 09/04/2003).*

The policy makers were not united in their opinion about whether there had been a delay in the policy development process or not. It appears from their accounts that there were more important priorities within government and that those priorities dictated the policy development path i.e., the overriding need for a legislative framework would take precedence. Other policy developments would be put on the "back burner". Hence, much effort went into preparation of the first White Paper, which would contain the guiding principles for the schooling system. Less important issues would need to wait and take their turn in the ranking of importance. It is evident in the hierarchy of priorities that the government was using the time to map out a route for itself in terms of what direction the system was going to take. It is reasonable to believe that government could not interrupt the development of its blue print for "the whole" system, for the sake of what then was understood, as "the few" special needs learners.

My conclusion on this issue was that the different perspectives of the delay of the process, depended on whether one was an outsider to the process or an insider. The bureaucrats were

more inclined to accept the delay as being reasonable, whereas outsiders were more inclined to perceive the delay as a serious setback.

7.3   The possible reasons for the delay of the Special Needs Education Policy

I delved deeper into the possible reasons for the delay, as seen by the major policy-makers and stakeholders, after the White Paper 6 policy had emerged late in 2001. Most of my interviews were conducted between 2002 and 2003.

I knew from my own experience that the disability sector in particular, had been anticipating the release of the White Paper 6 for a few years. My findings revealed that several factors could have attributed to the delay.

I grouped them according to sub-themes and used this classification as a structure for this chapter. I support my discussion with the diagrammatic overview provided in Figure 7.1:154.

- Human resource capacity in the national Department of Education,
- Personal agendas,
- Critical mass,
- Lack of clarity including paradigm shifting,
- Ruling party policies,
- Previous mishaps,
- Leadership at Ministerial level,
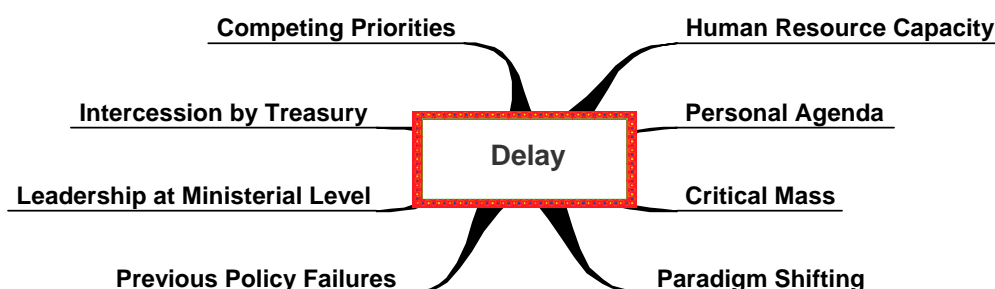- Intercession by Treasury, and
- Competing priorities.

Figure 7.1: Reasons for the delay in the Special Needs Education policy process

Human resource capacity in the national Department of Education

> *I think that in many respects the leadership weaknesses revolved around issues of capacity rather than a lack of political will. However, I think both these things are important for effective policy development and implementation and thus there were times in the process, when I think it would be correct to argue that there was a lack of political leadership in taking the process forward* (Howell 11/06/2003).

Some respondents were quite adamant that the reason for the delay was the lack of human resources and skills within the national Department of Education. Dr. Schoeman's view (07/ 11/2002) was that delay was caused by the lack of skills in the Department, rather than the political leadership. He claimed that:

> *These people who are in these positions today, they did not come up in the ranks of the Department, they were from Universities and all over. They have their own philosophical ideas about things, and I think it was just a matter to a large degree a lack of knowledge of what this whole field of special needs was all about (ibid.).*

The lack of skills within the national Department of Education at the time was due to the fact that:

> *The Department ushered out many people who were experienced in this education, because they thought they will be stumbling blocks, whereas my approach has always been that if a person has got a ready heart for a child with a disability, it is much easier to get him on board, but I think that is not carried very widely (ibid.).*

Dr. Schoeman continued with his explanation, stating that:

> *There weren't enough people to translate it into policy document. If there had been a political will, there could have been people available to do that, but with*

> *that I have also got to say that there in general is a shortage in the country of peo-*
> *ple to appoint. So it is a sort of complex issue (ibid.).*

The lack of capacity in the national Department of Education at the time of the policy development process, was partially due to the restructuring of the new national Department and the loss of capacity that could have been provided by the "old guard". Those who had not taken early retirement packages or resigned were deliberately silenced. This left Special Needs Education issues seriously under-represented on the agenda at the national Department of Education. There were also not many specialists in the ranks of the new government who had the technical skills or knowledge required of Special Needs Education.

When people in leadership were appointed to the field of special education, they tended to be more "radical theorists and human rights activists", than Special Needs Education specialists. They were also bent on politically eliminating those who had been associated with the former apartheid and elitist provisioning system, as they were considered to be too conservative to adapt to the envisaged changes.

In the earlier stages of the Special Needs Education policy's development, members of the old guard were separated from the development process, as the policy-making process was undertaken in another section of the Department. By the time the Programmes Branch took over the policy-making process from the Systems Branch, most members of the "old guard" had left the national Department of Education. The tactic to get special needs out of the hands of the "old guard" had been successful.

Personal agendas

One respondent ascribed the delay directly to the personal agenda of a specific Commissioner on the NCSNET who had a mentally challenged child. He felt that this had interfered with many of the policy-making events. Crouch (15/07/2002) felt that in all probability the delay was the result of this particular sector and the personal involvement of certain people:

> *This is one sector where few people have direct personal reasons to be involved.*
> *Everyone has children in school, everyone who has worked in policy has been to*

> *university, but, Special Needs Education has a narrow interested support base because relatively few people are directly touched by it… but those who are touched are intensely touched (ibid.).*

My personal experience, as an ex-bureaucrat and working within the disability sector, is that many are passionate about their learners' needs and will go to great lengths to protect what they believe is in their learners' best interests.

Stakeholder politics

In the previous chapter I dealt extensively with those actors who had championed and those who had resisted the intended reforms. The respondent from whom I quote extensively in this section, evidences the extent to which the politics of participation impedes on the policy process. A vignette of the history of stakeholder politics in South Africa, as it pertains to Special Needs Education, follows in her own words:

> *Stakeholder politics I think is an issue. I think Government is sitting with the predicament that all governments in Africa are sitting with, and that is that I always like what Lena Saleh said, and that is that western modes of delivery are actually so detrimental to the whole continent, in the sense that they set the tone in how people thought special needs education needs to be addressed through lots of specialised staff and so on. It never became a reality on the Continent since there were never enough, so probably one of the worst things that ever happened in Africa was the introduction of the notion of special needs in a system where the system itself has a special need, where education delivery is so scanty. You know if you bring in issues of specialisation and so on then it becomes very complex and then there is just such a massive lack of delivery and such inequity. You are bound to skew the whole debate, and it is unfortunate that through all the missionary movements and churches and Western groupings that introduced Special Needs Education into Africa and into South Africa, that was just part of the historical factual terminology that that was the light that they had at that stage and they translated whatever they had in Europe into an African context. It is amazing how that whole notion became absolute truth seen amongst the very ordinary people. Even the people in the deepest rural areas would know that a child with a disability has to have special treatment. I don't know who established the notion, but it is probably part of the bigger corruption of colonialism that it took away the belief in community solutions and cultural solutions to problems that may occur in any kind of community, and brought in a notion of the service providers. So I think that it is so deeply entrenched in the minds of people, that it is very difficult for Government to come at this stage with a message of finding group community solutions for issues, where people are expecting after 1994 equalisation for special services. People who had not had access to special services, they wanted it now. I think if we just listen to some of our own colleagues who have been in mainstream educa-*

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tion, they are still bringing up the issue that they did not attend a Special School because they couldn't be admitted because of political reasons, and they never asked if whether that had been to their advantage or to their disadvantage. The reality is that Black South Africans want specialised services because they think its their due now, and I think deep down they feel that inclusive education is a second best and a compromise. So I think the reticence that you find among political leaders is that they are afraid of that whole notion that there might be a backlash, the Blacks might say that yes at another level you cannot deliver, you cannot give us Special Schools, you cannot give us services, you cannot give us support services that we need. (Schoeman 11/12/2002)

Howell (11/06/2003) also provided insight into how, as the Special Needs Education policy unfolded, the "voices" of stakeholders became more apparent. She referred specifically to how those one could regard as:

…being more powerful and having greater access to resources, dominated the policy process – I believe that the policy compromises that were reached in this process are now evident in White Paper 6, particularly in some of the ambiguities that exist in the policy text. I think that these ambiguities allow for different interpretations of the policy that have the potential to limit effective transformation in key areas (ibid.).

Howell (ibid.) believes that stakeholders had a particular position. She said that:

In fact in most of the key stakeholder groups there were differences, some that reflected the inherent tensions discussed above and some that reflected other differences that related to that stakeholder group and were not really about issues to do with 'special needs education (Howell 11/06/2003).

In the preceding chapter I conducted my analysis mainly from the stakeholders' position. Schoeman's anecdote provided another view. It refers to the need for government to "read" and address the expectations of the ordinary public and not necessarily what the academe have to say about Special Needs Education issues.

Critical mass

Critical mass, as a construct appeared to embrace critical mass within the population, the educator, the policy-makers and the academe.

Critical mass within the population

Schoeman (11/12/2002), Howell (13/06/2003) and Lazarus (29/09/2002) all raised the issue that the lack of critical mass was a restraining factor on the policy-making process. Schoeman believes that there was a lack of critical mass amongst the population.

She says:

> *I also think politically speaking, that because of the fact there is not a critical mass within the population who really want to see inclusive education work, there wasn't so much pressure on the political drivers of education to make it a priority to" up-front" it. Given the fact that the Curriculum 2005 roll-out was taking up all the energy of the Education Department, it wasn't seen to be so important to at the same time transform the Special Needs Education sector. There could be an argument that there was an understanding among the political leaders of education transformation in South Africa that Curriculum 2005 is in actual fact driving inclusive education quite effectively, that it wasn't necessary to tamper with a system which at that stage wasn't bothering too many people. (Schoeman 11/12/2002)*

Schoeman (11/12/2002) and other respondents such as Theron (5/10/2003), felt that the delay was also partially caused by a difference in understanding between the government and its people. Schoeman (11/12/2002) explained:

> *I think that government wants to go with a more progressive view as set out in the NCSNET report, but they also understand that the progressive view isn't understood by people on the ground. So that there is not a public that is sort of champing on the bit to see it happen. Government knows that a lot of advocacy will have to go into making it understood amongst the members of the public. There is no capacity at the moment, because even if you have people at the National Department who can draft an advocacy programme, put all the documents on the table and translate it and so on. Even if you had them, you wouldn't have it at the Provincial level because there is just not enough depth in the field, so I think it was actually to be understood that more of the energy went into the Curriculum 2005 process. I do think that at that level, at the Curriculum 2005 level, aligning to the inclusion message could have been more forceful, but I also think that the fact that it wasn't done was because of the lack of depth at the provincial level of people understanding the basic philosophy of Curriculum 2005 as being inclusive (ibid.).*

Critical mass within the educator community

> *The movement towards "inclusion" in special education looks like a sharp change in the working life of those teachers who are involved* (Lortie 1998:154).

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Manganyi (09/04/2003) reflected on the discussion that happened during the period of policy formulation and its connection to post provisioning, stating that:

> *It was certainly a very difficult area to work around, because we had to appreciate that education people are not necessarily specialists but one of the conditions that come to count amongst children with impairments. … There is whole range of degrees of employment, for example, and all those kinds of matters that come to the fore when ideas about mainstreaming and inclusive education are taken into account (ibid.).*

Crouch (15/07/2002) was the only respondent who recognised that the suppliers of special needs services i.e., the specialised education educators could also have caused the delay. He surmised that this made the "political economy of the interest groups very complex". The educators' lack of support for the Special Needs Education policy process reduced the importance of the issue and therefore also contributed to the process being stymied.

I knew from my own experience, that the teacher unions were not solidly in support of the reforms of Special Needs Education. Rensburg (03/05/2003) was the only respondent who referred to the teacher unions. He ascribed the delay, and other difficulties with regards to policies during this particular period, to the inability to get the organised teaching profession involved. In addition to the problem related to funding, Rensburg (ibid.) points out that the teacher unions created a buffer between government and the teachers. There were 200 000 teachers doing their jobs with limited financial resources and competence. The drive to transform the curriculum would have been "more powerful" if all three unions had supported the national Department of Education. The understanding with the teacher unions, he described, was "not really adversarial" but neither was it "a relationship" (ibid.), even though he claimed that "this is what they wanted i.e., kind of values and principles" (ibid.). But, like "a beauty contest with depth and breadth", the reform programme was influenced by the "lack of passionate support" in the teacher movement. In short, Rensburg (ibid.) states that it was a case of "priorities versus limits". There existed the reality of competing priorities on the state budget. In 1994 there were overwhelming challenges for housing and education, but education "did not get the number one because of the social economic legacy" (Rensburg 03/05/2003).

Unionists had indicated to me, in off the record discussions at meetings, that their membership was not keen on adding the "burden" of special needs to their agenda, which was already full with items such as Curriculum 2005, new assessment regulations, Whole School Evaluation, the teacher Development Appraisal System and Systemic Evaluation. I could not explore the role of the Unions further. The data from the one union member that I managed to interview was not substantial.

Rensburg's (03/05/2003) contribution to the analysis of the role of educators within the change was most valuable. He mentioned another priority:

> *For policy makers at the national level there was the assumption that there would always be the 'financial resources' and that the teachers were 'on board'. These financial resources should have been sufficient to design, develop and test the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in Grade 1 (1998), Grade 2 (1999), Grade 3 and 8 (2000), Grade 4 and 9 (2001), Grade 5 and 10 (2002), Grade 6 and 11 (2003), Grade 4 (2004) over 6-7 year period. The policy makers had bargained on 6-7 years to phase in the new curriculum with a 'a committed bunch and committed teachers'. This turned out to be false: teachers were not competent and experienced and there were no competent administrators either at the district level (ibid.).*

Critical mass within the ranks of policy makers

Crouch (15/07/2002) maintains that there was definitely:

> *A lack of honest and clear thinking and the lack of ability to force choice making on something that is emotive. The lack of personal identification of most policy-makers with the issue, generated a vast amount of hypocrisy. They can't say you must think clearly because the issue is emotive and defending the interest groups so morally compelling. But they see the exaggeration and they know that most of it is a pipe dream, and they have nothing personal at stake. That has lead to the paralysis and will continue to lead to paralysis for as long as the issue is approached as a moral one, or as ONLY (own emphasis) a moral one (ibid.).*

Schoeman (11/12/2002) believed that lack of clarity was also a contributing factor to the delay of the policy process and I quote her deliberation:

> *… it is quite a sophisticated policy that we trying to sell and I think the people who have to write about it, people who have to translate it, haven't been clear enough on the kind of documentation that has been developed. I think lack of compromise, I wouldn't say is a reason, I don't think. I think there have been compromises, so I*

don't think a lack of compromise is a reason for the delay, but definitely a lack of expertise. I have already said lack of capacity, but I also want to extend that issue and say that it is a lack of expertise in a broader notion of inclusion. I don't think people… the people that we have, have been trained in specialised modes and are finding it very hard to move away from that position (ibid.).

Critical mass within the ranks of academe

Schoeman (11/12/2002) was most critical of academe's role because of their lack of participation regarding Special Needs Education at the tertiary level. It appears, according to Schoeman (ibid.), that universities had not met their obligations:

I think that the lack of expertise is especially strange to understand, really hard to understand is the lack of transformation at the universities and the Departments of Special Needs Education at universities, the faculties of education. That is, one of the strangest things in South African is that the faculties of education are so slow to transform. At a recent conference I have just seen the mass of support for inclusive education, the mass of literature appearing, it is strange that South Africans are finding that the debate is new or so when it is quite an old debate.   I find it strange that books aren't prescribed, that the students aren't trained, that the inroads haven't been made to get it going. The universities could have taken the lead, but they are actually dragging the process back. So the two major forces that are actually holding the process back are the universities and certain service delivery organisations in the country (ibid.).

Amidst these "strange" happenings it would seem that lack of skills and capacity lay not only within the national Department of Education, but also with those who were responsible for the training of educators in the country. I interpreted this response as an attempt to deflect the blame away from the Department.

Paradigm shifting

> *Many people struggled, and continue to struggle, to move beyond their past understandings of these issues* (Howell 11/06/2003).

The discussions taken on this issue were more overwhelming than any of the other reasons given for the delay. Respondents tirelessly recounted their impressions regarding the mind shift. I have included an in-depth response by Howell (11/06/2003), because it clearly states what the conceptual difficulties, could have been:

… how one understands why particular learners had historically been excluded from the system or had experienced learning breakdown in the classrooms, often

resulting in exclusion from the system. Essentially, there were those people who articulated a deficit discourse where the problem was seen to lie with the learner and their particular kind of "impairment" or problem (they had something 'wrong' with them). This discourse had dominated "special education/special needs education" and education support services in this country and in other countries. Learners regarded as having 'special needs' were 'pathologised' and attempts made to make them fit in or cope with the system as it was. In this country, in particular, 'special needs learners' were often learners from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who were regarded as being unable to 'cope' in the mainstream system. On the other hand there were those who argued that within any learner population different learning needs exist (what the learner needs to learn effectively) and the system has a responsibility to meet these different learning needs. Where these needs are not met (through lack of provision, inadequate provision or inappropriate provision and practices) learning breakdown takes place and learners are excluded from the process of teaching and learning or from the system. This suggests that the problem lies with the system and it is thus the system that needs to be changed (ibid.).

Some respondents had admitted to developing insights over time, but what most wanted to know, was where the paradigm shift would be taking them and what it meant in reality. They were not prepared just to accept any term at its face value and wanted it clearly spelled out in "doable" terms (Schoeman 07/11/2002). As I was analysing the texts related to paradigm shift I recalled that words in themselves carry meaning. In this instance the phrase "paradigm shift" has multiple interpretations and multiple meanings. For most, the paradigm shift had been embedded in rhetoric that many people did not understand including the officials at the national Department of Education. What Manganyi called "heavy language" had burdened the policy route. Manganyi (09/04/2003) specifically recalled how one of the major difficulties was around the use of "dense language" in the draft policies and the need "to engage in some real serious work" to:

…find ways around these difficulties without undermining the policy intentions (ibid.).

Howell (11/06/2003) observed:

I think that essentially many people found it really hard to get beyond the need to categorise learners in some way and to move beyond the belief that effective service delivery can only take place when provision is orientated towards particular 'kinds of learners. So I think that the more difficult issues were essentially around the core issues in the debate, although these were often disguised, in my opinion, around issues related to operationalising the new policy imperatives (ibid.).

Schoeman (11/12/2002) alluded to the idea of possible tension within the ranks of the national Department of Education regarding the shift:

> *…I think people in higher ranks knew about the realities, and were more pragmatic than those with a philosophical approach. There was a tension of interests with those in higher ranks, so the policy was delayed and referred back to the Director-General again and again (ibid.).*

Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) ascribed the delay to a number of reasons particularly to those factors that were embedded in the new approach. He believed that the policies were:

> *…so philosophical and divorced from the realities on the ground, that somehow processes had to be taken into consideration too, pulling the people nearer to reality (ibid.).*

Crouch (15/07/2002) believed that lack of clarity or, as he termed it, "fuzzy thinking" was largely responsible for the delay. He suspected that the interest groups that were pushing for Special Needs Education had tried to garner support by making the definition of Special Needs Education "ridiculously broad". This had ultimately resulted in the decision-makers taking the sub-sector less seriously. His conclusion on the matter was, that if "everyone has special needs, no one does". In short, this "over-reaching" had "backfired" (ibid.).

There was a body of respondents (Crouch 2002, Theron 2003, Schoeman 2002, and Manganyi 2003), who that had indicated that paradigm shifting could be a factor contributing to the delay. Mahlangu (29/11/2002) believed that: "…even the policy makers have that mind, so as a result progress in the implementation was very, very slow".

In the previous Chapter I identified systemic and institutional issues that were contentious during the policy formulation phase of the policy development process. Some issues, like that of the Special Schools, persisted even after the NCSNET report. Trying to find their way through this debate and reformulating the policy took time. Due to the fact that the inclusive policy had come out of a "particular context and time" and had been challenged like many other policies, the White Paper 6 was "admired and respected internationally" and was a success, but it needed time "to redefine the debate, language and ideology" (Naicker 11/03/2002).

The dilemma of Special Schools issues, which had persisted since the inception of the policy, also had an influence on detaining the process of policy development after the NCSNET report. Schoeman (11/12/2002) expressed her views on the subject as follows:

> *I think I can say that why people are afraid of the Special Schools sector as we know it, we know what we have, we do not know what we will get if we disband the Special Schools as they are functioning now, because we are dealing with a highly dysfunctional education system especially in the rural areas and the townships. It is hard for people to believe that one will be able to deliver the kind of expertise and knowledge that you need in the mainstream in a dysfunctional system that we have now. There are very few people that believe, or the message that the kind of methodologies that you need to manage inclusion in the classroom, is the method-ologies that you need to improve teaching in general. Very few people understand or believe that (ibid.).*

Political and ruling party policies

Recent research has highlighted politics as a major reason for policies not being implemented as they should be. Lazarus (29/09/2002) put forward an enlightened and informed view about ruling party and politics as a delaying factor:

> *I think that the underlying reasons were politics. I think the politics were about the politics of disability. I think that the people in the Department, especially the Di-rector General, were very conscious, nervous almost of the organisations in this country who could rock the boat, and so there was a lot of kind of tip-toeing, I think around some of those interest groups that were fighting for their interests in this process of special needs. So, I think that part of the contest, was around dif-ferent interest groups in the country (ibid.).*

Lazarus (ibid.) expanded on the above-mentioned reason for the delay:

> *…the Department was very sensitive to the ANC polity, the polity tries to come out with policies that don't rock the boat too much, but take the country forward.*

This perspective helped my understanding of delay in relation to the Special Needs Education policy. It is my interpretation that policies would only be given due consideration by the government, if they would not upset or disturb the country's roadmap of keeping schools on track. It also showed however, that collective bargaining was not powerful enough to place or retain Special Needs Education or inclusive education on the main political agenda.

Lazarus raised another dimension that was confirmed by other respondents. The Department, it seemed, was determined not to draw further negative attention to itself after the C2005 debacle. The Department had been placed under intense public scrutiny because of its past mistakes. I quote Lazarus's (29/09/2002) impressions on the issue:

> *The Department's own sensitivity and a little bit of fear I think moving in that direction because of this one or that one, because quite honestly whichever way the Department goes, they will upset somebody because we know it was a very polarised debate (ibid.).*

Mahlangu (29/11/2002) indicated that several officials from the national Department of Education who were involved in the process "had to follow up" on the many "inquiries from the public as to why the White Paper 6 was not out". In response to the requests, the officials undertook their own internal enquiries and were told by the Chief Director at the time that:

> *… South Africa has got a history of writing nice policies, which are not implementable. So as a result, they don't want to make a mistake, they were going to look at the financial implications and see about the delay (ibid.).*

It seemed that the Department had burnt its fingers with other initiatives and had made mistakes that they did not want to repeat. Howell (11/06/2003) echoed this sensitivity around implementation issues. The above-mentioned comment by Mahlangu did not only support the precautionary view that the Department held at the time, but introduced a further element critical to the delay, which had thus far been avoided in the responses namely, the issues around funding. In the paragraph, *Intercession by Treasury,* on page 166 of this Chapter, I will deal with the issue of financial resources. In Chapter Eight, I will highlight the Government's fiscal programme as it pertains to Special Needs Education.

The leadership at Ministerial level

The Constitution of South Africa stipulates that central government sets norms and standards and provincial governments are responsible for the execution of policies. Ministers of Education hold their term of office for five years. South Africa has had two education Ministers namely Prof. S Bengu (1995-1999) and Prof. K Asmal (2000-2004). *Could the change in office affect the timeous delivery of a policy?* Some respondents were in agreement

that there was a difference and that it could have led to the delay. *Was it in the leadership styles or was it contained in the given set of circumstances?*

Rensburg (03/05/2002) maintained that during Bengu's term the policy process had been geared towards "policy-making" whereas the Asmal years it "shifted significantly to the implementation of policy". Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002) felt otherwise. He believed that Prof. Bengu had a very "philosophical approach" and that Prof. Asmal was more a "pragmatist" who expected results. He maintains that under Prof. Asmal "the debate became more realistic in the later years", and not everything was seen as "wrong and useless", there was some realisation that Special Schools had been "alienated, left or pushed out" (ibid.). Yet Theron (05/10/2003) felt that the development of the policy had been given less impetus during the Asmal years. Schoeman (11/12/2002) added a further dimension to the opinions about the tenure of the two Ministers. She thought that:

> *… there was more of an impetus in the Bengu years for the revising of the policy. I think it was the upsurge of the disability movement's own victories. You must re-member in 1997 the Integrated Disability Strategy came out, and people were ex-tremely excited about that and ready to go and the NCSNET report was completely aligned to it, so I think people were ready to see the whole policy ready to take off (ibid.).*

Prof. Asmal, Schoeman (ibid.) explained, did not understand the leverage for improvement of the system which inclusive education offered. She did not think it was a limitation of his, but rather that there were not enough strong advisors at that stage to get the message to him:

> *I also think that it might be the Minister himself, or it might be the broader Cabi-net, which is very sensitive about services to people with disabilities (ibid).*

Schoeman (ibid.) continued to elaborate on what could have influenced Ministerial thinking at that time:

> *Disabilities are a very vulnerable group, and I think that Government does not want to see any kind of services taken away from them, that it becomes very public, that they are losing services, so Government is very sensitive about that and I think that the Minister Asmal is very realistic about the capacity of this system to deliver. I think that he inherited a weak implementation of Curriculum 2005 and it was a first priority to ensure that was corrected and also the whole issue of management of schools would become a very big priority (ibid.).*

Transformational policies are greatly affected by political leadership. This policy had run over two cycles of government and it appeared that support for the process differed between the Ministers. However, most respondents agreed there was little or no difference with regard to the development of the policy process under either tenure. The difference lay rather in the roles that they played as Ministers. Prof. Bengu had been on the forefront of policy development, and Prof. Asmal had to ensure that implementation would take place. Prof. Bengu had been in office when the report was delivered on time and Prof. Asmal was in office when the White Paper 6 was released.

Intercession by Treasury and limitations in financial resources

In his writings, Jansen (2001a), has alluded to the non-availability of finances as a contributory factor in policies of "non-reform". He states that policy makers are inclined to revert to "political symbolism" in the absence of sufficient funds, with a view to obscuring the lack of financial resources. Hess (1999), McClaughlin (1998) and Jansen (2001a) insist, however, that that the lack of financial resources alone are not the sole reason for policy failure. I believe that whether resources are allocated to a particular programme is a sound indicator of Government's intent and understanding of Special Needs Education issues. Non-allocation of funds indicates that the programme has not met the requirements to keep itself on the Government's political agenda. In support of my argument I refer to the HIV/AIDS issue. Since 1996 it has not only received huge amounts of capital from the State to be allocated towards education, but has also been identified as one of the main areas of attention on the national Department of Education's action plan document i.e., *Tirisano*. Special Needs Education policy issues on the other hand have not yet achieved this political status. In general, the statements from the respondents did not reflect a deep understanding of fiscal issues and how the mechanisms of state work with regard to the allocation of resources. In Chapter Eight I examine this issue in more depth and have restricted myself to an evaluation of the State's mechanisms, through policies and procedures, and how these hampered the process of policy development.

Both Theron (05/10/2003) and Schoeman (11/12/2002) indicated that "limited resources" was an issue. Schoeman (ibid.) highlighted the fact that the policy could basically only be

done on a "human development level". She stressed that:

> *It cannot occur through large scale deploying of additional funds to make it work and if you would rely on basically making people work differently and within a new framework then you have to be realistic about the time it takes (ibid.).*

I recall when I was employed at the national Department of Education, that when funding issues were raised they were summarily removed, ignored or circumvented. When costs per learner per province were provided, it added fuel to the fire and was used to reinforce the arguments that Special Schools were costly.

According to Rensburg (03/05/2003), the Department "could not always raise" the necessary resources, as was the case with C2005, where further financial resources could not be mobilised. The reason, according to Rensburg (ibid.), was that at an estimated cost of "R100 per grade one 1earner, that the budget was estimated to be R150 000 million in training". This calculation was done with the proviso that teacher education colleges would do the training (03/05/2003). Howell (11/06/2003) added:

> *I think that resources will always be a factor, especially in our context where there are many competing priorities. However, I also think that there is a tendency to see inclusive education and the imperatives of White Paper 6 as very costly. I don't think that this is necessarily the case. As already argued, I think that the challenge lies in reorganisation within the system and harnessing capacities and resources that already exist (ibid.).*

When White Paper 6 was published, I made some preliminary calculations to estimate some likely costs associated with improving the basic physical facilities of an ordinary school site, for example special ablution facilities and ramps. The calculated costs using a simple mathematical formula of multiplying 30 000 schools by R25 000 per building site tallied to a grand total of R 750 000 000. This is an astronomical figure. It seems that the costs for teacher training programmes for Special Needs Education should at least be queried? The fact is that any new programme that is to be properly introduced into the education system would costs huge amounts of money. When the issue of costs were raised with the Department it was summarily dismissed as a "conundrum" (Naicker 2001).

I would argue that because the costs that were put forward to Treasury were inadmissible in terms of the procedures for funded mandates, valuable time was wasted in waiting for them

to respond and to decide on financial issues. Policies that carried serious costing implications first had to be run through National Treasury before the Department could sanction them. This in turn meant that the delivery date for the policy was continuously extended. Mahlangu (29/11/2002) also confirmed the lack of financial resources to kick start implementation:

> *…so because in the first place we didn't have a budget, so we couldn't start with implementation, there was no money, we had to rely on a non-budget (ibid.).*

Mahlangu (ibid.) explained that the policy also needed to be submitted to other government structures, such as National Treasury and State Expenditure, with a view to also "look at the financial implications". According to the account by Mahlangu (ibid.), the policy was returned several times for review after its submission to National Treasury. Upon return from National Treasury it was given to the Senior Management Meeting[52]. Both the Treasury process and the internal reviewing were extremely time-consuming processes (ibid.).

Crouch (15/07/2002) provided some additional thoughts in relation to the funding issue:

> *…the original point of view of there being a relatively fixed proportion of special-ness in all schools, which went along with the notion of mainstreaming and which went along with the notion of block grants as opposed to post provisioning had lost its ground.*

He believed this was most unfortunate as it "did not make sense", at least to him (ibid.). He felt that:

> *…the current path returning to the measurement of exact degrees and types of dis-abilities was absurd. (Crouch 15/07/2002)*

It does seem that respondents expected resources to be allocated to the policy for Special Needs Education. The fact that resources were not raised through the state funding mechanisms, could be explained by a lack of sufficient political will to substantiate the case of Special Needs Education, or that the monies requested were just not available in the State coffers. In this respect I believe that it was the continuing requests for Treasury's approval and the subsequent delays that contributed to the lag in the policy development route for Special Needs Education.

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[52] An internal reporting structure within the national Department of Education.

Additional factors contributing to the delay and other constraining forces on the further development of the Special Needs Education policy

Several other factors were mentioned but not elaborated on by respondents. It was believed that these factors would impact negatively and also constrain the further development of the Special Needs in Education implementation.

My analysis thus far revealed that there were several forces that collectively contributed to the delay in the development of the Special Education Needs policy. I have added to the lists provided by Lazarus (29/09/2002) and Howell (11/06/2003), who maintained that these inhibitors of the new policy not only contributed to the delay, but would also plague the future course of this policy. These additional factors are:

- The struggles within the tension of inclusion and exclusion;
- Financial constraints and mismanagement;
- Narrow views of people in relation to special needs;
- Lack of a sufficient critical mass of leaders who understood the challenges of inclusive education and were "passionate" about putting it into practice;
- Government's competing priorities;
- Failure of people to move beyond a deficit paradigm;
- Vested interests of particular groups;
- Limited systemic capacity in the education system, especially around integrated strategic planning to manage the implementation of inclusive education. This is related to leadership capacity, especially at the provincial and local level;
- Lack of support for teachers in schools;

- Ongoing failure on the part of higher education institutions to train teachers to address issues of diversity in their classrooms;
- The continued marginalisation of issues around inclusive education from other key debates and initiatives around educational change in South Africa;
- Lack of support for the development of a community-based support system;
- Competing priorities. According to Howell (11/06/2003), competing priorities were "a very real factor and something that is not unexpected in a new democracy such as ours, with the legacy of inequity that has to be overcome";

- Government itself. Theron's (05/10/2003) view was that government itself was a major constraining force as they determined the priorities, for example, the new OBE curriculum and the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) were seen to be the first priority and inclusive education came somewhere after that; and

- Curriculum issues. Besides the several factors that came out of the discussions regarding forces constraining the development of the policy, another issue that was raised as a concern was the importance placed on the new curriculum as a panacea for successful inclusion.

Why and how, with so many constraints, did this policy document ever surface? Crouch succinctly stated that pressure would be exerted regarding the issue of Special Needs Education, as it was a "humane one" (15/07/2002). Theron (05/10/2003) indicated that the major driving forces were the national and provincial departments of education and the disability organisations. Schoeman (11/12/2002) felt that *Education for All*, which included out-of-school youth, over-aged learners and children dropping out of the system, was a force propelling the issue.

Howell (11/06/2003) believed that it was:

> *Equity and social justice concerns, especially from the most marginalised and historically disadvantaged sectors, such as people with disabilities and their organisations.*

It appears that the combined forces propelling the development of the Special Education Needs forwards must have been greater than those holding it back, as the policy eventually did surface, albeit delayed.

7.4   Policy vacuum

> *I think that generally people in the schools, especially in very disadvantaged areas just coped as best they could and in fact tried in sometimes innovative ways to address the barriers they were confronted with on a daily basis* (Howell 11/06/2003).

In this section I will analyse the responses to the subsidiary question: *Given the absence of*

official government policy, what policy references influenced Special Needs Education practices in the field? This item on my questionnaire read: *What do you think the provinces used in their practice of Special Needs Education during the years in which the White Paper 6 was being developed?*

Lazarus (29/09/2002) was one of few respondents to provide some insightful responses. She indicated that in South Africa, the Special Education Needs policy was being implemented "bottom-up". She did not regard this as an unofficial action; rather it was seen as policy implementers premeditating the changes. She exclaimed, "people knew that it was coming" (Lazarus 29/09/2002). That provincial departments went ahead with Special Needs Education matters without government's official sanction, was also confirmed by Theron's (05/10/2003) response, which indicated that his department, the Western Cape Education Department, knew what "the new policy would be more or less and started already in 1996 transforming the system accordingly".

Lazarus was apprehensive about the provinces not waiting. She saw "danger" in the various interpretations that had happened in provinces in the absence of policy. On the one hand she felt that "actions [that] have been taken that shouldn't have been taken", but on the other hand it showed that there was commitment and "people in the provinces have done something" (Lazarus 11/03/2003).

Rensburg (03/05/2003) had his own ideas of what happened in the context of the policy vacuum. He maintained that between 1997-2001, when policy was signed off, there was a great deal of "ambivalence and ambiguity". Some provincial departments had representation on the NCSNET and NCESS committee and according to him "some inexperienced government officials" were looking for something "to justify their jobs"(ibid.). The policy thrust was towards inclusion and mainstreaming, but no policy had been formally promulgated, which led to "a bit of mischief promoting draft policies that had not been tested" (ibid.). In some instances this premature behaviour had led to the closing of, and restrictions in the funding of, Special Schools and the re-deployment of staff to regions or districts. He (ibid.) maintained that this had been "clearly irresponsible" and alluded to the fact that it was possible that the relevant provincial Head of Departments (HOD) did not

know: "What was going on?" It was apparently only with the Special Needs Education policy that this type of "adventurism" and "recklessness" occurred in a few of the provinces.

Lazarus (29/09/2002) confirmed that she knew that the work of the NCSNET/NCESS was "used" as a policy framework until the White Paper 6 had come out in 2001. Naicker (11/03/2003) claimed that provinces used the apartheid policies but they were "conservative".

Schoeman (11/12/2002) also referred to "pockets in the provinces", where policy was being implemented unofficially and indicated that there were some provinces that were more pro-active to start with i.e., the Western Cape Province and Gauteng. They had started off actively implementing "notions of inclusive education" through District-Based Support Teams (DBST) (ibid.). She confirmed that many provinces started training widely on school-based support teams (SBST), which was in line with the directives of the new policy, but were hamstrung in terms of how far they could go, because of the lack of national policy (ibid.).

Her explanation was twofold; one couldn't effectively do what had to be done "in the absence of norms and standards for funding and budget provisioning"; and most of the provinces who went through the restructuring processes had tried "to get the notion of an infused service off the ground"(ibid.). Schoeman felt that the provinces did not combine their special needs or inclusive education units with other programmes when they undertook major organisational restructuring.

Provinces lost an opportunity to solidify inclusive education within the broader realm of school change and school improvement. She (ibid.) claimed that their not making this major shift was a "pity", but she knew that other provinces, like the Western Cape, Gauteng and the North West, were "emerging in that direction". She said in addition:

> *I am not so sure about the other provinces, but the opportunity was grasped to in-fuse the old special needs service into a broader school change, school improve-ment (ibid.).*

Under the circumstances i.e., the policy vacuum, extreme shortages of staff and a lack of

guidance at district and provincial level occurred and many "valuable people", such as therapists and psychologists, and especially those in the old education support services, were lost to the system. In some instances, Schoeman (11/12/2002) explained, people assumed that specialist services had become completely irrelevant and inadequate with the result that:

> *…one is finding a very dismal state of affairs where psychologists are being used to run the HIV/AIDS and Life Skills Programmes. The new managers within the provincial departments didn't know how to make better use of specialised staff, especially with regard to classroom improvement (ibid.).*

Conversely, Schoeman (11/12/2002) states that: "the service providers did not act in a proactive enough way" and "were counter productive to the inclusive roll out". She suggested that to remedy the situation in the future, with regard to these valuable people, "a very strong awareness programme" was needed to "tie them down through norms and standards and new job descriptions, if you really want to see change happening from that quarter".

Schoeman (11/12/2002) blamed the lack of knowledge and absence of policy on the universities. She states that "the limited extent to which the universities, service providing people, and people who train support staff, have grasped the shift in paradigm" was "surprising and disappointing".

> *Given how big the debate is internationally, one wonders how much people read and keep abreast of developments (ibid.).*

Theron's (5/10/2003) interpretation of the lack of policy, was that schools had used newly developed provincial policies and had also drawn on general education policies. In the Western Cape a combination of old and new policies had been used, some of which had been influenced by international practices, albeit to a limited extent (ibid.). Howell (11/06/2003) indicated that previous policy directions had been used "predominantly".

I knew that, with regard to Special Needs Education, the provinces did not have sufficient policy to rely on and that very few Special Schools had been targeted for the newly introduced OBE training. This practice of not including Special Schools in the national training programmes did, however, differ between provinces. Schoeman (11/12/2002)

provided an explanation that:

> *There has not been support from the district level in terms of helping them to align their own outcomes based education curriculum. I think there has not been dedicated taking of responsibility of the Special Schools by the circuit managers, and they have very often fallen between the tracks with no people taking care of what is going on there, so I do think we have lost valuable time and opportunity. If they had at least been brought on board with Curriculum 2005, it would have been much better, but now they have to become part of resource centres.*

Schoeman (ibid.) felt that legally, provinces had to conform to the "the South African Schools Act" even though it was ambivalent "in terms of forcing schools to go the inclusion route". In Schoeman's (11/12/2002) opinion the provinces could also have referred to Curriculum 2005, but:

> *Many schools are saying that it is not flexible enough to incorporate inclusive education, that it is too complicated, that it is even more difficult than the old curriculum and that it is going to be impossible to include diverse learning needs.*

Schoeman (ibid.) felt that the inability to use Curriculum 2005 to assist in the inclusive education approach in the classroom, was based on "a lack of understanding that needs to be addressed as matter of urgency".

She felt it was important to determine the "origin" of this lack of understanding and was circumspect about "…whether it comes from curriculum facilitators or from the training at universities" (ibid.). Schoeman (ibid.) believes, based on her own experiences and from working with black teachers, that there is greater readiness amongst black teachers to implement inclusive education, especially in the more disadvantaged areas. She could not say the same of "the Model C Schools". In her experience, when she worked at the district level she had found that:

> *…it was actually the teachers that are resisting the inclusion, mostly the best teachers because they are afraid that they wont be able to keep up the standards, that they won't be able to do everything that needs to be done, because of their diligence and commitment, so I think if one can get them to understand what it is and how to do it effectively they will become allies. I have often found that the biggest opponents to new ideas can later become the biggest advocates, once they have made it their own and made a commitment to make it succeed (ibid.).*

Manganyi's (09/04/2003) opinion stands in direct contrast to the above-mentioned views. He

was adamant that:

> *…we had to appreciate that education people are not necessarily specialists but one of the conditions that comes to count amongst children with impairments (ibid.).*

My findings have revealed that in the absence of Special Needs Education policy, the provinces were not left entirely in a policy vacuum. They had borrowed from past practices and in some instances were creative and developed their own. In other instances these formulations may not have been in alignment with the new policy when it finally became official.

My findings also revealed that provinces should not have claimed that they were without policy, as the South African Schools Act and the OBE programme should have been sufficient to guide them with regard to classroom practice.

The fact of the matter was that Special Schools had not been targeted for most of the early education intervention strategies and programmes, which resulted in their being further marginalised.

7.5   Reaching for the stars

I asked respondents for their views on "experts agreeing to the creation of a truly inclusive system as being beyond the reach of our education system". Their analysis of the question reflects their beliefs and convictions based on their every day experiences of policy in action.

Howell (11/06/2003) strongly disagrees that an inclusive education system is beyond reach. She states convincingly:

> *I think it depends on what one understands by inclusive education. I think that every education system has a moral responsibility to be constantly developing its capacity to meet the needs of all learners and to constantly address and confront those factors, which may be leading to exclusion, and learning breakdown. So if you see inclusivity as a process and the nature of barriers to learning as something that is constantly changing and thus must always be addressed, I don't think that it is about reaching or not reaching an 'inclusive education system'. It is about en-suring equitable access to education for all learners (ibid.).*

There was a range of interpretations from the respondents as to whether this goal is attainable or not. Lazarus (29/09/2002) was extremely optimistic and maintained that: "It is never beyond a system to strive to fulfil particular values –and to try to put them into practice". She appeared to be realistic and anticipated that building an inclusive system was going to be a "tension-filled" process of trying to uphold the fundamental values of the South African Constitution. She believed that:

> *We have to keep trying … it will always be an ongoing struggle to strive to include all people and as a part of that to fight any form of prejudice and discrimination in attitude and practice. That includes the very PRACTICAL [own emphasis] challenges of developing a responsive and flexible curriculum (ibid.).*

Lazarus (ibid.) also affirmed that creating an entirely inclusive system was about change and the sociological question of whether schools play a role in the changing of society, and whether schools do or do not make a difference to society as advocated in "the theories of the neo-Marxist approach". Lazarus (ibid.) believed this gave rise to another tension because of a paradox that we, in South Africa, work and live with:

> *the school does make a difference in building an integrated society, and not because it does not make a difference if the fundamental structures of society are not changed. I think that you are sitting with a dynamic that if you are going in either direction you are going to be wrong (ibid.).*

Dr. Schoeman (07/11/2002), speaking from the standpoint of the SANCB, is of the belief that:

> *A truly inclusive education system in South Africa and in many developing countries, is a wonderful idea, but it is not possible to reach, simply because we don't have the infrastructure. If you go to a country like the Netherlands, I have a little bit of experience there, I think it is a very open community, so they write wonderful services documents there, because they have the money. We don't have the money to do it, and we also have cultural issues that need to be worked through. So I would say that I believe that it is something we should work for, but I don't know if it can really be reached in the true sense of the word.*

Dr. Schoeman (ibid.) maintains his argument on personal grounds, as well as by expressing his concern related to the vast effort required by mainstream education. He said that:

> *We are talking about thousands of teachers and thousands of learners and thousands of schools. To really get this thing through is going to take a lot of time, and then you still have to break down the barriers and beliefs and so on and so forth. I*

> *think it is also something that we should strive for. It is a vision, a goal that we should go for, but we must understand that it will take another kind of economy to really make it possible (ibid.).*

Theron (05/10/2003) shared Lazarus's optimism. He agreed that a truly inclusive system was within the reach of the education system. He maintained that the gradual implementation of the support model as suggested in the White Paper 6 is possible and within the South African context: "it could be regarded as full inclusion" (ibid.).

Schoeman (11/12/2002) believes that:

> *Inclusion isn't something that has to happen over and above the changes that take place in all Special Schools, it is through which education transformation must happen. It is something that – through doing it, teachers get to understand what real child-centred education is all about; child-centred classrooms and teachers trusting their own instincts when it comes to diverse abilities and so on.*

Her (ibid.) explanation was based on her view that there were many factors "stacked up" against a truly inclusive system and that they were at a much "deeper level" than was currently being addressed:

> *… that people do not have answers for how to overcome the divisions in social life in South Africa. There are racial divides and class divides and that is the more serious part of inclusivity that needs to have attention. I want to believe that one can have an inclusive system in all government schools, because I think if the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) can find an answer to get all government schools as well functioning democratic schools, I think then it can work. I think that the way in which we lead inclusive work, is the need to see to what extent democratic education is possible in countries such as ours. Even though one cannot do it in all places, in all sites we can come a long way. We have urban schools that have the capacity to do it and quite quickly, but there is resistance on an attitudinal level and I think in the more dysfunctional rural schools if you can get an understanding of how to run an inclusive education classroom (ibid.).*

Schoeman (11/12/2002) hopes that with the roll-out plan of the White Paper 6, the notion of inclusive education will become embedded in all other processes within the national Department of Education, namely quality assurance, school effectiveness and district development, all being aspects of inclusive education. If that notion is well embedded, she anticipates that it would become a very powerful driver of notions in inclusivity (ibid.).

I have found from my analysis that there was adequate positive intent embedded in the belief systems of the policy makers, that was and still is connected to the new approach of inclusive education. Whether this adequate intent can be translated into sufficient critical mass is questionable. Attaining a truly inclusive system in our schools will not be an automatic event. It needs to be accompanied by major support programmes and is clearly dependent on the combined and integrated efforts of all government's initiatives and the Department of Education's ability to keep it on the political agenda for some time to come. Others felt that the idea was wonderful, but given financial constraints, more like a "pie in the sky" scheme.

7.6   "Political symbolism"

> *Hortatory or persuasive policies are primarily discursive, using symbolism and imagery to appeal to values in order to encourage citizens to act on their values (Fowler 2000:255).*

The next section is an analysis of a question from the interview schedule that read: *There is a perception that it is important to have a broad and progressive Special Needs Education policy. Is it possible to implement such an ambitious policy in every school in South Africa?*

The analysis is aimed at determining the perceptions of the policy makers on whether the Special Needs Education policy was "rhetorical" or not. Jansen (2001a) describes this phenomenon as "politically symbolic". This is a criticism that has been levelled against many of the earlier transformation policies of South Africa that were developed at that time. Sometimes, in the haste of getting policy off the ground, policy makers in previous transformational policy attempts had neglected to consider the "implementability" of their intentions. This led to policies that were unable to be implemented or encountered serious difficulties in the implementation phase, for example the C2005 initiative. C2005 was an educational programme that appeared extremely good on paper, but suffered from assumptions which turned out to be incorrect: i.e., that educators would support it; and that there would be funding in the provinces to execute it. The lack of support from the teaching corps and lack of provincial resources was a major setback. Thus, in the development of subsequent policies, policy makers were more mindful of "loopholes" and were therefore more cautious. Policies needed to be "do-able" and not be obscured by rhetoric and over-shadowed by "political symbolism".

It is significant to note that responses to this section of the questionnaire were very limited, to such an extent, that I could not procure adequate information on which to base a proper analysis. Only three respondents ventured to give their views.

Rensburg (03/05/2003) was adamant that symbolism was not an adequate reason for the delay. He agreed that symbolism was attached to the initial stages of previous policies such as Curriculum 2005, but that this was not the case in policies developed subsequently.

Crouch (15/07/2002) agreed that: "political imperatives override practical imperatives", whereas Howell's (11/06/2003) maintains that:

> *I think that the concerns with developing a broad progressive framework as a first step were correct and in my experience, throughout this process, its practical implications for the classrooms were constantly being considered and thought through. I think that the issues in the delay were more related to the broader factors.*

There is sufficient evidence that despite the good intent, rhetorical discourse abounded. However, the ensuing guidelines to the White Paper, which were developed in 2002 to support the implementation of the White Paper, were once again accused of having "dense language" and as not being sufficiently "practicable".

It appears that even though policy makers might have been sensitive to the criticism, their products would still emphasise "rhetoric" at the cost of the "doable".

7.7   Chapter summary

In this chapter I have determined that there were several contributing factors for the delay in the Special Needs Education policy development process. Several reasons were put forward and many of these reasons have been confirmed in other academic studies.

There was a certain currency in the thinking about Special Needs Education in South Africa that seemed to be accepting of the delay. I tend to interpret this rather differently. I believe that because specific aspects, such as nomenclature, had not been cleared in the early stages

of issue identification, they kept resurfacing. I also believe, as Crouch (15/07/2002) stated, that this inability to keep to the conventional understanding of Special Needs Education, broadened the inclusive education approach to such an extent that, if accepted, the policy would never get off the ground purely on financial grounds.

 The result was that the policy crafters had to go back to the drawing board repeatedly, to comply with State regulations regarding funding for the Special Needs Education programme and the current realities within the education system.

The analysis also demonstrated clearly that highly specialised technical skills in costing, were not available in the ranks of the national Department of Education. Bureaucrats could not read the prevailing socio-economic landscape. *Would the voice of reason be found within the State funding mechanisms?*

The provincial authorities responded to the absence of policy in three ways: (1) they pre-empted the policy directions and, on their own initiative and without backing of the provincial Head of Department, started implementation of the expected policy; or (2) they developed their own policies based on the policy directions; and/or (3) used a combination of old policies and some polices that they had "borrowed from" other countries. The unfortunate outcome was that some provinces barged ahead, leaving behind a dissatisfied Special School sector, before the official implementation that was scheduled to start in 2004. Many problems did not miraculously melt away with the release of White Paper 6. *Was this policy going to defy the rules of policy implementation and start operating from the bottom up, as implied by Lazarus, even without funding? Was this policy's route regarding implementation going to be critically different?*

My analysis in Chapters Five, Six and Seven has provided evidence that supports previous studies that conclude that policies are delayed for more reasons than a lack of resources. Other studies, as mentioned earlier in this thesis have claimed that finances can also place restrictions on and/or impede the implementation of policies. Graeme Simpson (1996), in his article, *The Challenge of the State in Transition*, has pointed out the disjuncture between governments' capacity to generate sophisticated policy visions and its capacity to implement

such policy, which may contribute to the popular belief that "government has failed to deliver on its promises".

The purpose of the next chapter is to examine the funding and staffing for Special Needs Education, and to determine whether on the grounds of funding alone, the non-emergence of the Special Needs Education policy when widely expected, could be a case of "non-reform" as implied by the title of my study.

Chapter Eight

Adding detail

Theory in use

8.1   Introduction

> *Their burden of debt does not exempt developing country govern-*
> *ments from the need to give the highest priority to the investment in*
> *basic services that benefit children and to ensure that inefficiency*
> *and waste do not further weaken the impact of even these low allo-*
> *cations* (Kofi A Anan) (UNESCO 2001:15).

In Chapter Three, I introduced the idea of analysing the provincial budgets to determine whether funding, pertinent to Special Needs Education, was available. This would cover expenditure on either "special needs" or funding for a range of "inclusive education" activities, including staffing. However according to paragraph 3.5:39 of White Paper 6 (Department of Education 2001a):

> *…a large proportion of the additional costs in the short to medium term relates to*
> *providing for the approximately 280 000 children and youth not in the education*
> *system and converting primary schools (and later secondary schools and colleges)*
> *to Full Service Schools, eventually at least one such school in each school district*
> *in the country.*

I start this chapter with a brief exposé of the funding mechanisms of the State. I have found reference to two mechanisms that were used to redress inequities, which are firstly, the *equitable shares formula,* applied to the allocation of the provincial revenue from the national budget vote; and secondly, the *National Norms and Standards for School Funding* (Department of Education 1998). The latter provides a formula that grants the poorest of the poor schools, 60% of the provincial schooling cost budget. Despite an increase in the total expenditure on school education, which is relatively high compared with international norms, future funding of schooling will have to come from efficiency gains rather than an increased proportion of taxes. All levels of education are therefore compelled to be more prudent in financial management.

The next section of the chapter deals with the expected spending for Special Schools (Programme 4) and Auxiliary Services (Programme 8) and it concludes with relevant demographic information. I show the results of a high level analysis of the budgets for these programmes. This includes the envisaged additional *costs attached to expanding access and provision* (White Paper 6 paragraph 3.5:39), as compared to the relevant funding programmes.

8.2   Funding mechanisms of the State

> *In South Africa, the national Department of Education is responsible for policy development and it is generally expected to formulate norms and standards for the system as a whole, its only executive responsibility is the higher education system. The financial planning is the responsibility of the nine provincial governments.* (Coombe 11/12/2003)

White Paper 6, paragraph 6:39-43, proposes that in the first eight years, a three–pronged approach to funding will be followed. These three chief sources of proposed funding are: (1) new conditional grants from the Government; (2) funding from line budgets of provincial education departments; and (3) donor funds. I have concentrated on provincial budgets for the purposes of this analysis, as this will demonstrate the State's commitment to the policy.

The information for the section on state funding mechanisms has been drawn mainly from my interview with Dr. Trevor Coombe on 11/12/2003. I italicise his words to emphasise key aspects or thoughts regarding funding mechanisms of the State.

At present it is clearly understood by all that the national Government is *supreme*. The national Government can in fact exercise a very substantial influence on provincial decisions. South Africa's educational system is governed by a national system, with nine sub-systems[53]. It requires thorough understanding of the very sophisticated mechanisms for allocation of funds. Specific allocations or budget decisions according to certain priorities are simply "not made in the policy". Coombe (ibid.) states that these are solely the decisions of the provincial government and:

> *…it is exceptionally difficult if not impossible for a national line department to create a cast iron system of influence which requires a provincial department to make certain allocations in the province .*

Norms and standards that have been set thus far, only apply to schools in general, and not to Special Schools. Dr. Coombe explains that the "funding formula did not build in a specific mechanism to deal with allocations for special needs in the mainstream, well it may now, but it didn't at the outset" (ibid.). The Department, says Coombe (ibid.), certainly was remiss in dealing simultaneously with the very necessary, admittedly intricate, funding of Special Needs Education as a sub-section.

I asked Dr. Coombe *how any programme such as Special Education Needs could secure funding?* He explained that Government had a choice of two mechanisms for priority funding. The one mechanism is *Top-slicing* [54] and the other is *Ring-fencing* [55]. Neither mechanism has been used to secure funding for White Paper 6, which meant that the responsibility would rest with the provincial authorities to fund the activities as set out in White Paper 6.

I then asked Dr. Coombe *whether it was usual for national policies to come with a funding*

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[53] This concept was described in the first White Paper on Education.
[54] Top-slicing is a mechanism based on an averaged charge.
[55] Ring-fencing is a mechanism that guarantees the protection of funds for a project.

plan attached? Dr. Coombe (ibid.) responded that in South Africa, National Treasury determines what the ingredients of an expenditure framework will be for a line Minister. So in the typical South African case, says Coombe (ibid.):

> *…it is highly untypical for a policy document to incorporate the funding plans, and any funding plan that were to be involved, would almost certainly not have a guarantee behind it, it does not carry a 20 year guarantee.*

South Africa does not have a unitary system, in which all the funds of the system emanate from one single central point and therefore "funding decisions are made uniquely by National Treasuries" (ibid.).

The Minister of Finance, in South Africa, is ultimately responsible for this. It is impossible for a line Minister to say with any confidence that "such and such" funding allocations will be made over "x period of time", unless prior agreement has been negotiated with the Minister of Finance. If State departments were to do this, says Coombe (ibid.) "It could only be an expression of intention which would come festooned with provisos and qualifications". He claims: "there will always be a degree of destruction between what is intended, which almost invariably overstates what is possible".

> *Not out of stupidity or ill-will but simply because it is not possible to predict the time frame during which implementation takes place and one tends to err on the side of optimism believing that we can rise to the challenges and underestimate the time required for human understanding to be altered and for buy in to take place, for communication to occur and I think there was an in-built degree of optimism which is influenced by the trajectory within which political actors operate (ibid.).*

In such instances "political actors prefer to project a scenario in which one is dealing with what is possible, what is hoped for, rather than a scenario where one is dealing with what is not possible or what is exceptionally difficult" (ibid.). It appears that Coombe acknowledges "the bias towards circumspection as a fairly universal and inevitable reality in the field of policy making" (ibid.).

I then explored the 20-year implementation plan with Dr. Coombe. He explained that South Africa works within a three-year rolling funding horizon, which is a funding horizon. This is not from a national "planning" perspective but rather, a national "funding" perspective. According to Coombe ((11/12/2002):

> *A twenty year horizon doesn't of itself mean that one is trying to slow things down, it just means that one is putting a perspective which is medium to long term in terms of system development.*

Given the fact that conditional grants from the national Department of Education, as stated in the White Paper 6, paragraph 3.7.1:40, are only scheduled to be available for non-personnel funding, a further consideration of the provincial budgets follows.

8.3   Analysis of provincial expenditure for education

The White Paper 6 was overdue and only published in 2001. Implementation according to the plan is obligatory from 2004. If this is to be the case, then an examination of predicted spending patterns by the various provinces is an appropriate way of determining "theory in use". The provincial budgets[56] were analysed to determine whether tangible evidence exists that the White Paper 6 implementation plans, are being financially supported at provincial levels. Using the *National Treasury Intergovernmental Fiscal Review for 2003,* I ascertained the proportion of each province's budget that is allocated to Special Needs or inclusive education. I also examined the alignment between the different spending patterns in provinces in terms of their activities related to Special Needs Education. The provincial budgets show eight common funding programmes, namely:

1. Administration;
2. Public Ordinary School Education;
3. Independent School Subsidies;
4. Public Special School Education;
5. Further Education and Training;
6. Adult Basic Education and Training;
7. Early Childhood Development; and
8. Auxiliary and Associated Services.

The following key areas were examined in the analysis of funding for Special Needs

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[56] Republic of South Africa – National Treasury Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2003.

Education within the provincial budgets:

1. An overview of the total budgets spent by provinces on Education (Table 8.1:192);

2. The total budget spent by provinces on Special Schools (Table 8.2:193);

3. The percentage of the budgets of provinces spent on Special Schools (Table 8.3:194); and

4. The actual and estimated increases in the allocation of funding to Special Schools since the release of the White Paper 6 (Table 8.4:195).

Numbers 1-3, in the above-mentioned paragraph, give an indication of the total spending on education and the relationship between total spending and the Special Needs Education related spending. It needs to be noted that Special Needs Education related spending is on average about 2.6% of the total spending on education. Number 4 highlights the increment in spending towards Special Needs Education, in order to establish whether the required "additional costs" (White Paper 6 3.5:39) are reflected in the budgets of the relevant programmes.

Once the above-mentioned steps on funding were undertaken, I examined the human resource component and other demographic factors that I regarded relevant to this study, namely:

1. The number of staff employed by each province (Table 8.5:196);

2. The number of learners and educators in Special Schools in each province (Table 8.6:197);

3. The demographic spread of special needs learners per province (Table 8.7:198) and

4. The demographic spread of special needs in terms of gender and race (Table 8.8:198).

8.3.1   The sum of educational programmes per province

In Table 8.1:192, I represent the actual spending for 2000-2003 for all education programmes per province, as well as the estimated spending according to provisions made in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budgets for 2003-2006. The bottom row presents the total of the gross national figures for these periods.

The explanatory text in the *National Treasury Intergovernmental Fiscal Review for 2003,* indicates that a few provinces had special needs or inclusive education tasks specified in their Key Performance Indicators, but these were not marked as a separate funding programme within their budgets.

I found no clear evidence of "additional" budget allocations against the implementation of the White Paper 6.

R'000	2000/01 Actual	2001/02 Actual	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Voted	2004/05 MTEF	2005/06 MTEF
EC	7,191,331	7,863,493	9,361,503	9,912,190	10,900,912	11,740,728
FS	2,990,236	3,173,883	3,479,950	3,697,850	3,966,850	4,214,189
G	6,814,519	7,268,490	8,158,253	8,848,840	9,345,005	9,792,748
KZN	8,172,742	9,260,936	10,140,719	11,868,056	12,677,469	13,451,380
LIM	6,370,118	6,672,687	7,594,275	8,511,801	9,054,016	9,498,149
MP	2,996,635	3,330,933	3,886,419	4,522,763	4,919,529	5,374,330
NC	965,069	1,019,165	1,168,309	1,305,596	1,407,566	1,555,573
NW	3,698,935	3,972,100	4,380,383	4,767,819	5,240,563	5,584,740
WC	3,972,609	4,273,213	4,678,249	5,030,794	5,356,922	5,576,953
Total	43,172,194	46,834,900	52,848,060	58,465,709	62,868,832	66,788,790

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.1: The sum spending for all eight education programmes for 2000-2006

8.3.2   Actual spending on Special Schools

Table 8.2:193 shows the actual spending for 2000-2003 for Public Special School Education (PSSE), as well as the estimated spending, as provisions have been made in the MTEF budgets for 2003-2006. This information is shown per province and totalled to show the gross national figures for those periods.

R'000	2000/01 Actual	2001/02 Actual	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Voted	2004/05 MTEF	2005/06 MTEF
EC	81,837	128,561	149,161	196,579	183,639	195,844
FS	77,515	81,243	87,745	94,184	100,809	106,688
G	320,530	413,063	374,712	420,573	441,625	463,941
KZN	155,204	190,816	217,722	234,664	249,900	265,815
LIM	76,994	86,865	96,416	119,241	125,657	133,352
MP	50,983	52,836	64,457	68,924	73,023	77,368
NC	24,431	31,104	34,546	43,123	45,688	49,496
NW	58,828	65,619	71,079	76,061	80,082	83,831
WC	276,410	293,724	307,279	318,524	338,196	357,852
Total	1,122,732	1,343,831	1,403,117	1,571,873	1,638,619	1,734,187

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.2: The spending for 2000-2006 for Public Special School Education (PSSE)

It is evident that the "additional costs" (White Paper 6 paragraph 3.5.1:39) are included in the given education budgets. There is no further evidence that budgets for Public Special Schools Education (PSSE) have increased relative to other funded programmes, as I have reflected in Table 8.2:193. In fact, the Public Ordinary School Education increases reflect only an alignment with the inflation rates. There was no evidence of a substantial increase of funds for any of the other sectors' allotted programmes, such as auxiliary services. It seems that the costs of implementing White Paper 6 are included in the given education budgets. It appears not to be possible to measure the intention to implement White Paper 6 by monetary commitments.

8.3.3   Total expenditure per province for Special Schools from 2000-2003

Table 8.3:194 reflects the total expenditure for 2000-2003 for Public Special School Education (PSSE), as well as the estimated spending i.e., the provisions made in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budgets for 2003-2006. The information is shown per province and is expressed as a percentage of the total national expenditure for those periods.

Percent (%)	2000/01 Actual	2001/02 Actual	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Voted	2004/05 MTEF	2005/06 MTEF
EC	1.14	1.63	1.59	1.98	1.68	1.67
FS	2.59	2.56	2.52	2.55	2.54	2.53
G	4.70	5.68	4.59	4.75	4.73	4.74
KZN	1.90	2.06	2.15	1.98	1.97	1.98
LIM	1.21	1.30	1.27	1.40	1.39	1.40
MP	1.70	1.59	1.66	1.52	1.48	1.44
NC	2.53	3.05	2.96	3.30	3.25	3.18
NW	1.59	1.65	1.62	1.60	1.53	1.50
WC	6.96	6.87	6.57	6.33	6.31	6.42
Total	2.60	2.87	2.66	2.69	2.61	2.60

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.3: The expenditure for Public Special School Education for 2000-2006, expressed as a percentage of the total education budget

For the period 2002-2003, the actual spending for PSSE was 2.66% or R1 403 117 000, out of a total education budget of R 52 848 060 000. This amount is relatively small in comparison to the overall budget.

This appears to make the issue of Special Needs Education politically insignificant in terms of available funding. It appears that the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces consistently spend a higher percentage of their total education budgets on PSSE, followed by the Free State and Northern Cape.

8.3.4   Increase in percentage allocation per year for Special Needs Education

Table 8.4:195, indicates the percentage increase in the PPSE allocation above the total educational budget increases for actual expenditure during the years 2000-2003 in the provinces the MTEF budgets for the years 2003-2006. In the above-mentioned data set, I have indicated that there is an increase in the percentage of PSSE allocations i.e., above the total education increases over the period 2000 to 2004. Although nationally the increase is not significant, two provinces, namely Eastern Cape and Northern Cape have in fact shown significant increases to their PSSE allocation over the 2000 to 2002 period.

Percent	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
(%)	Actual	Actual	Voted	MTEF	MTEF
EC	1.44	0.97	1.24	0.85	0.99
FS*	0.99	0.99	1.01	1.00	1.00
G	1.21	0.81	1.03	0.99	1.00
KZN	1.08	1.04	0.92	1.00	1.00
LIM	1.08	0.98	1.10	0.99	1.01
MP	0.93	1.05	0.92	0.97	0.97
NC	1.21	0.97	1.12	0.98	0.98
NW	1.04	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.98
WC	0.99	0.96	0.96	1.00	1.02
Total	1.10	0.93	1.01	0.97	1.00

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.4: The percentage increase in the PPSE allocation above the total educational budgets increases for actual expenditure 2000-2003 in the provinces and MTEF budgets 2003-2006

8.4 Demographic factors pertaining to Special Needs Education in South Africa

White Paper 6 (2001a paragraph 1:9) refers to Special Schools as schools that "cater exclusively for white disabled learners". From various sources and during the interviews (Naicker 2003, Schoeman 2002) it is obvious that certain allegations were made about the Special Schools not responding to transformation with regard to Special Needs Education. I have taken the opportunity to use available statistics to show current trends in the sector which are contrary to the above-mentioned views.

8.4.1 Human resources

I found, from a perusal of the provincial budgets, that a number of the data points were un-available, in the *National Treasury Intergovernmental Fiscal Review for 2003*.

	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Voted	MTEF	MTEF
EC	1559	1485	1817	1584		
G	2135	2101	2200	2232	2514	
KZN		2051	2130	2154		
NC			380	380	380	
NW		704	705	705	705	705
WC			2206	2206	2206	

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.5: An overview of the number of staff employed

For those that were available, I have made certain deductions based on the light of the PSSE budget allocations. Firstly, staff numbers[57], as reported by some provinces, did not indicate a dramatic shift in attention to PSSE. This supported the budget analyses.

Table 8.5:196 shows that the human resources allocation appears to be constant for the provinces. This data was made available from the *National Treasury Intergovernmental Fiscal Review for 2003*.

8.4.2   Comparison between learners and educators per province

Two recent publications[58] by the Department of Education provided more detail with regard to staffing than did the provincial budgets (DoE 2002b, DoE 2003). However, to make the statistics in these two publications comparable to the provincial budget figures, I consider it necessary to clarify the difference between Public Special School Education (PSSE) and Education for Learners with Special Education Needs (ELSEN).

In short, the statistics on ELSEN include independent schools that cater for special needs learners. As there were only three of these schools in the country, I have, for the purposes of

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[57] As reported in the National Treasury documentation.

[58] Education Statistics in South Africa document (DoE 2003) and the draft National Audit of Special Education Provision (DoE 2002b).

this analysis, allowed the two definitions to be seen as one and the same. In other words, in the next graphic representations, ELSEN Schools are equated to PSSE schools.

Province	ELSEN Learners	ELSEN Educators	ELSEN Schools	Ordinary Learners	Ordinary Educators	Ordinary Schools	Province
EC	8,884	1,295	44	2,033,832	61,301	6,087	EC
FS	4,023	692	19	716,021	22,956	2,459	FS
G	26,800	4,009	91	1,561,359	50,876	2,213	G
KZN	11,206	1,914	61	2,698,453	74,240	5,751	KZN
LIM	4,548	792	21	1,816,189	57,511	4,631	LIM
MP	2,489	474	18	903,997	24,513	1,926	MP
NC	6,254	305	9	197,101	6,359	478	NC
NW	4,688	742	39	893,144	29,234	2,311	NW
WC	10,697	2,259	68	918,030	27,211	1,602	WC
Total	79,589	12,482	370	11,738,126	354,201	27,458	Total

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.6: Comparison between ELSEN schools and ordinary schools in absolute numbers

The *World Health Organisation* (White Paper 6 DoE 2001a section 1:9) figure for special needs learners in education systems throughout the world[59] stands between 2,2% and 2,6%.

According to recent statistics reported in Table 8.6:197, the total number of learners in Special Schools is currently 79 589 , which represents 0.67% of the total school population.
It could therefore be argued that the vast deviation from the global norm, means that the majority of learners with special needs are either unidentified and in mainstream education or amongst the out-of school-youth[60]. This number is estimated to be 280 000 (ibid.).

8.4.3   Demographic spread of learners per race and gender per province

Table 8.7:198 indicates that approximately 62% of all special needs learners are male and 38% female. The data further indicates that 51% of special needs learners are African, 15% Coloured, 3% Indian, 31% White, with 1% coming from other groups.

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[59] White Paper 6 paragraph 1;9 states that the World Health Organisation has calculated that between 2,2% and 2,6% of learners in any school system could be identified as disabled or impaired.
[60] White Paper 6 paragraph 1:9.

Prov	African Male	African Fe-male	Coloured Male	Coloured Fe-male	Indian Male	Indian Fe-male	White Male	White Fe-male	Other Male	Other Fe-male	Total
EC	4.0%	2.9%	1.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	1.5%	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%	**11.2%**
FS	1.3%	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	**4.7%**
G	10.6%	6.5%	1.7%	0.8%	0.4%	0.2%	10.3%	5.1%	0.1%	0.0%	**35.7%**
KZN	5.5%	3.6%	0.4%	0.2%	1.5%	0.8%	2.2%	0.9%	0.0%	0.1%	**15.3%**
LIM	3.6%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	**6.5%**
MP	1.2%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	**3.3%**
NC	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	**1.8%**
NW	2.6%	1.8%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	**7.1%**
WC	1.2%	1.0%	5.0%	3.7%	0.1%	0.1%	2.3%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	**14.4%**
Total	**30.5%**	**20.1%**	**9.2%**	**5.8%**	**2.1%**	**1.1%**	**20.4%**	**10.1%**	**0.2%**	**0.4%**	**100.0%**

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.7: The demographic spread of the special needs learner population per province in terms of race and gender as a percentage of the total special needs learner population in South Africa in 2001.

The statistics in Table 8.8:198 provide sufficient evidence that Special Schools no longer service an elitist white community. In terms of democratic principles, they are clearly in the process of transforming according to the Constitutional imperatives.

Prov	African Male	African Fe-male	Coloured Male	Coloured Fe-male	Indian Male	Indian Fe-male	White Male	White Fe-male	Other Male	Other Fe-male	Total
EC	35.7%	25.5%	10.1%	5.2%	0.7%	0.2%	13.3%	6.4%	0.4%	2.3%	**100.0%**
FS	27.2%	17.0%	4.7%	2.3%	0.1%	0.5%	31.0%	17.2%	0.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
G	29.8%	18.3%	4.6%	2.2%	1.1%	0.6%	28.7%	14.3%	0.3%	0.0%	**100.0%**
KZN	36.1%	23.6%	2.6%	1.4%	9.8%	5.1%	14.4%	5.9%	0.1%	0.9%	**100.0%**
LIM	54.7%	39.7%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	3.2%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
MP	36.3%	19.3%	2.3%	2.0%	0.3%	0.1%	25.7%	14.1%	0.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
NC	26.9%	16.9%	16.7%	8.9%	0.8%	0.4%	20.6%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
NW	37.3%	24.9%	5.4%	2.7%	0.2%	0.1%	18.6%	10.8%	0.1%	0.0%	**100.0%**
WC	8.3%	6.7%	34.5%	25.6%	0.6%	0.5%	15.9%	7.5%	0.1%	0.1%	**100.0%**

Source: National Treasury

Table 8.8: The demographic spread of t he special needs learner population per province in terms of race and gender (2001) as a percentage of the provincial special needs learner population.

Most special needs learners in Special Schools were African. The figures are as follows: in the Eastern Cape (61.2%), Gauteng (48.1%), Kwazulu-Natal (59.7%), Limpopo (94.3%), Mpumalanga (55.5%), Northern Cape (43.8%) and Northern Cape (62.2%). The greater percentage of special needs learners in Special Schools were White in the Free State (48.2%) and Coloured (60.2%) in the Western Cape.

8.5   Chapter summary

> *Policy makers in the new millennium should try and*
> *strike a balance between what they desire and what can*
> *be done* (Margo Sullivan 2002:235).

My conclusion with regard to provincial budgets and staffing is that Special Schools or ELSEN Schools (PSSE), consuming an average of 2% of the total education budget, do not feature high on the expenditure list in the nine provinces. There were no considerable increases planned in the MTEF period following the introduction of White Paper 6 on activities specific to inclusive education.

The budgetary allocation for special needs learners (SEN) is three to five times higher per learner than for ordinary learners. However, the proportion of SEN learners currently in Special Schools, is 0.67% of the total school population and this has little impact on the expenditure budget. However, a greater recognition of the number of learners who fall within this group, as suggested the White Paper 6 (ibid.), should call for a substantial increase in funding for the sector. The statistics I have provided reflect that access to the PPSE programmes for black learners has increased significantly in most provinces.

In summary, I conclude, that the nominal funding allocation (2.6% of the total education budget) to Special Needs Education programmes, the relatively low numbers of staff involved, and the relatively low number of special needs learners in the Special Schools collectively have contributed to the lack of political interest in the sector. In terms of political priorities this places them amongst the lowest on the reform and other political agendas within the national Department of Education, thereby attributing to the "non-reform".

The lack of provincial funding for the Special Needs Education policy for the short to medium term i.e., over the next six years, points strongly to the "limited reach of government". This fundamental problem according to Simpson (1996:2):

> *Ultimately amounts to the inability on government's part to match the demands of visionary new policy formation with technical and financial capacity to implement these policies.*

There are two outstanding facts from the analysis of my findings that point this policy solidly into the direction of non–reform: *Firstly*, the delay or lag it was subjected to after the National Commission on Special Needs in Education report; and *Secondly*, the lack of additional funding allocated to its proposed activities over the past and current funding cycles.

My second claim is strongly supported in Budget 2004 by the Wildeman's (2004:11) statements in his latest budget brief[61] on the *National Education Budget*. He passionately implores Government to urgently: "clarify the future funding of Special Needs Education". He also points to the fact that "although Budget 2004 announced the introduction of national norms for the provisioning of support staff to schools" it did not provide "terms of numbers and implementation dates" (ibid:12). Furthermore, the 2004 budget did not either address the promised conditional grants to Special Needs Education institutions at provincial level. Wildeman (ibid:14) requests that the national Department of Education very importantly, "needs to find a way of strengthening the case for additional funding for Special Needs Education". These aspects endorse the view that the Government is less committed to finance programmes related to Special Needs Education.

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[61] IDASA-Budget Information Service: 10 March 2004.

Chapter Nine

The finishing touches

A dialogue between theory and data

9.1   Introduction

> *When people deploy a pattern of rhetoric, then they typically do so because they believe it will help them to promote an appropriate response to their ideas, perhaps bringing about suitable actions* (Mark Bevir 1999:1).

The purpose of this chapter is to construct a dialogue between the initial theory of "non-reform" and the available data from this study in order to draw out the most significant findings of this research on education reform or ("non-reform") and its implications for theory, policy and research.

The first section of this chapter revisits the conceptual framework in order to re-examine its validity in the light of the data that was collected and analysed in the course of this inquiry. The second section summarises the reasons for the non-emergence of the Special Needs Education policy in the context of a theory on "policy lag time", and further describes the changes in the theoretical positioning of this study as it progressed towards completion.

9.2   Revisiting the conceptual framework

The original goal was to understand the late emergence of the Special Needs Education policy in South Africa and to unravel the roles of stakeholders in influencing its development. In the process the value of the concept of "non-reform" would be tested as an explanation for the delay in the emergence of the Special Needs Education policy. The use of political rhetoric in stakeholder discourse would be observed and analysed.

In the course of my research it became apparent that my original intention to merely examine the policy-making process was not sufficient. Both the literature and the emerging evidence indicated the need for a wider, multi-dimensional approach. In turn this prompted the development of a conceptual framework with guiding principles, which provided a heuristic device on which this study could be grounded (see Figure 9.2:213).

The policy development process could now be situated in its socio-economic, political and historical contexts that governed the Special Needs Education policy in the South African context. The policy trajectory could be followed and the role of specific factors explained as they impacted at each stage. The diverse views of the key stakeholders were described and explained to highlight the "push and pull" factors that had led to the non-emergence of policy, despite rhetorical commitments to the contrary.

9.3   Reasons for the non-emergence of the Special Needs Education policy between 1997-2001

Most change theories tend to focus on the logic of implementation. Few dealt with the distinctive steps in the policy-making process itself. The analysis of policy implementation typically employs a "forward-mapping approach" that focuses on intended outcomes. However "backward mapping" is more appropriate to a study of policy change, or more precisely the failure of policy change to occur, as it is requires analysis of the role of "the local actors" in the process, as well as the manner in which decision-makers used or failed to use their "discretion" in determining policy (Recesso 1999:1).

The findings of this study support Solmon's (2003) concept of *policy lag time*. Twelve critical issues contributed to the delay of the Special Needs Education policy process between the presentation of the Commission's Report and the release of White Paper 6 (1997-2001). All twelve issues were intricately related to the participation and interaction of key role-players in the policy development process. They were: the new terminology and the "war of words" around Special Needs Education, stakeholder politics; the relationship of trust; paradigmatic shifts; funding; institutional skills; critical mass; competing priorities; human resource capacity; negative experiences learnt through past experience; ruling party politics; and Ministerial leadership.

From the analysis of the data I was able to group the reasons for the delay into two main categories: 1. the practical constraints and 2. "political symbolism" within the explanatory framework of "non-reform" (see Figure 9.1:203). For four consecutive years, that is, from 1997-2001, these issues had kept the policy back on its development path with the result that no noticeable reform initiatives could be undertaken.
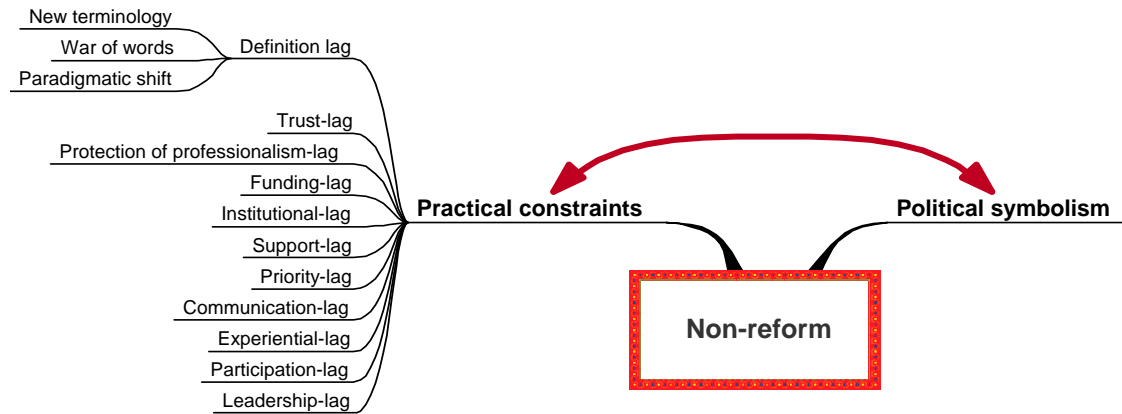

Figure 9.1: The complementarity of "political symbolism" and practical constraints as joint explanation of non-reform

The policy process began shortly after the election of the new Government of National Unity in April 1994. The NCSNET reported in 1997, but another four years elapsed before the release of the White Paper 6 in 2001. During that period more discussion was held between stakeholders and Department officials. One of the key debates centred on the meaning or definition of the term "inclusive education". The dialogue was less about the ideology of inclusive education, than its practical implications. Clarification of the implications was

necessary to reach consensus, which never really occurred. In fact the ongoing debate on the new terminology became a divisive issue, a "war of words" between the roleplayers in disability sector itself, as well as between them and officials in the national Department of Education. It contributed to the delay of the Special Needs Education policy. Many respondents argued that the language used, was value-based and emotion-laden. The terminology a person used would confine them to a distinct "camp". The struggle was more than "mere words", it represented a broader contestation over the very meaning of policy concepts that threatened to exclude/include important stakeholders and stakeholder interests. To avoid being "labelled" or considered as being from the "old order", some stakeholders withdrew from the policy-making process altogether. *Definition-lag* can therefore be added to the body of knowledge on "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Definition-lag* is the time it takes to define a particular concept in the initial stages of the policy development process and to reach agreement on its definition. The inability of key players to agree to definitions of major concepts, inevitably leads to delay.

The findings indicated that the two main disability groups, the Blind and the Deaf, were not united in their advice to government. Different interpretations of the term "inclusive education", complicated the task of the policy makers and disrupted relations between representatives of the Blind and the Deaf communities. *Stakeholder politics* can be considered as a component of *definition-lag.*

The fact that the policymakers themselves were not clear on the construct and scope of inclusive education, resulted in mixed messages to stakeholders. This was perceived by some stakeholders as deliberately misleading and led to a lack of trust between the participants. Officials of the national Department of Education advocated broadening the application of the international slogan *Education for All*, to include Special Needs Education. To them, other models of provisioning were not acceptable and were not allowed to be promoted as alternatives within the continuum of inclusive education practice. Some stakeholders came to believe that hidden personal agendas were playing a determinant role. Moreover they were unwilling to abandon their ideas for an alternative that appeared fluid and undefined. They needed time to ascertain what term was acceptable, which extended the deliberations and contributed to the delay. *Trust-lag* can be added to the body of knowledge on "policy lag

time" within the "theory in use". *Trust-lag* is the time required to build a relationship of trust between key stakeholders and decision makers in the initial stages of the policy development process. An inability to develop a relationship of mutual trust, inevitably leads to delay in reaching consensus.

The findings indicated that the expected *paradigmatic shift* from the medical model to a more eco-systemic model based on human rights, created difficulties within the disability sector. Some officials from the national Department of Education had created the incorrect perception that the eco-systemic approach would replace specialists in particular disabilities with ordinary classroom teachers. Although stakeholders were not opposed to the paradigm shift in principle, this perception was never corrected. The disability groups were not prepared to abandon the practice of specialised pedagogy in the classroom, and the argument over specialised pedagogy continued until White Paper 6 was released. Therefore the real lag was caused by the resistance of relevant stakeholders to the displacement of specialist teachers and not by opposition to the paradigm shift. *Protection of professionalism-lag* may be added to the body of knowledge on "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Protection of professionalism-lag* is the time required to convince policy makers to continuously affirm the need of specialists in the field of Special Needs Education in an inclusive education approach.

It was clear that there had been no substantial discussion on the *funding* of Special Needs Education between senior officials in the Department of Education and stakeholders and even less discussion on funding norms. Provincial budget allocations were examined to establish whether special funding had been allocated for the financial years 2001-2006. The analysis did not support the expectation that funding would be allocated. White Paper 6 clearly states that funding issues had not been finalised and would be determined after the results of field-tests had become available. The lack of debate about funding during the policy formulation phase, reinforced suspicion and mistrust among the stakeholders, since the issue was in fact circumvented and not allowed on the agenda. As stakeholders began to realise that no special funding provision had been made, the sense of urgency in favour of policy reform dwindled. *Funding–lag* may be added to the body of knowledge on "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Funding-lag* is the time required to debate funding

norms or alternatively the time added to the process as a result of funding norms not being established during the policy development process. The latter reduces the sense of urgency among stakeholders to complete the process and increases the perception that official advocacy fulfils a mere rhetorical purpose.

Many of the "old guard" officials from the national Department of Education were replaced by new appointees who wanted a radical break from the old system. These officials did not have the institutional skills necessary to drive the new policy through the complex, consultative, bureaucratic and political decision-making processes. An appropriate example of the lack of *institutional skills* was the Department's failure to develop funding norms acceptable to the National Treasury prior to the publication of the White Paper. *Institutional-lag* may be added to the body of knowledge regarding "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Institutional-lag* is the time required for officials to develop appropriate bureaucratic skills in the initial stages of the policy development process. An inability to perform the required functions smoothly and within the required time-frame, causes delays in policy development and approval.

For a policy to succeed it needs *critical mass*, that is support from a sufficient number of people in the affected social groups. This study has shown that there were not enough champions with sufficient influence on the policy makers to pressure them into action. The lack of effective lobbying characterised all concerned interest groups in and outside of government, including the teaching community and academics. *Support-lag* may be added to the body of knowledge on "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Support-lag* is the time required to build critical mass in support of the policy under preparation. The lack of support from interest groups directly affects the political urgency to deal with a policy matter. It contributes to the delay in decision making and allows competing programmes to take priority.

Respondents made clear in interviews that the Special Needs Education policy process was undertaken side by side with many others, including Curriculum 2005 and HIV/AIDS programme. These two activities in particular, were accorded higher political priority because of their high visibility and high potential impact. Special Needs Education did not

receive the attention it needed to progress. *Priority–lag* may be added to the body of knowledge on "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Priority–lag* is the waiting-period, when a policy initiative is not on the political agenda, and thus cannot be debated and finalised. The continual interruptions in the policy process, as a policy item is moved on and off the political agenda inevitably cause delay.

The study demonstrates that the capacity to convert the Commission's report into a major public policy document was absent among the line function bureaucrats in the Special Needs education component of the Department. As a result the task was taken up by the Deputy Director General in addition to his already overloaded agenda. Policy writing is a highly specialised and time-consuming task. The lack of skills in this area was an additional factor causing delay. *Communication skills-lag* can be added to the body of knowledge regarding "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Communication skills-lag* is the time required for a specialist unit in a government department to learn policy writing skills. Insufficient capacity to perform this task results in overload of the few who can and so adds to the delay.

The study indicated that the national Department of Education had become extremely cautious in developing policies after the C2005 mishap. More care was taken to ensure that future policies had been sufficiently thought through and would lead to successful implementation. *Experiential-lag* may be added to the body of knowledge in "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Experiential-lag* is the time added to a policy development process to enhance the chances of its successful implementation by applying lessons learnt from the past.

The literature indicates that political leadership or its absence may be a contributory factor in policy development. However, in the case for the Special Needs Education policy development Ministerial influence was negligible during both Ministerial terms. Nevertheless, *leadership-lag* may be added to the body of knowledge on "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". *Leadership-lag* is the time added or subtracted in a policy development process as a result of the absence or presence of political leadership to drive the process to conclusion.

The *leading party* in Government at the time fostered a participatory approach to policy making. The study shows that the national Department of Education was sensitive to the *modus operandi* of the ruling party. But the party also insisted on transformation of the apartheid legacy in all areas, and the Department was obliged to frame policies to put this into effect. In the case of Special Needs Education, the Department found it particularly difficult to reconcile the transformation agenda with a consensus-seeking, consultative approach to policy development. As a result the policy-making process was slowed down and eventually stagnated. In an effort to revive the process, the Department was obliged re-engage stakeholders to address unresolved issues and this added to the delay. However, the politics of participation had its own logic and utility, quite apart from what it might produce in terms of tangible outcomes. *Participation-lag* may be added to the body of knowledge regarding "policy lag time" within the "theory in use". This is the time required by policy makers to revisit previously unresolved issues from a previous investigative process and reformulate them in such a way that the consultative process is brought back on track.

9.3.1   Summary of findings on reasons for policy delay

Several factors contributed to the delay in the development and adoption of Special Needs Education policy before White Paper 6 was released. None was singly responsible for the delay. Thus, the unique combination of practical constraints with the "playing up" of "political symbolism" collectively caused the Special Needs Education policy development trajectory to lag significantly behind other education policies.

Each factor has been described and defined.   The addition of these factors to the characteristics of the Solmon's (2003) "policy-lag time" model enhance and refines the body of knowledge on policy development.

The added characteristics deal specifically with the early stages of the policy development process and help fill the gap in the current literature, which has concentrated on the policy implementation phase.

In consequence, the causal relationship between early events and subsequent problems and delays in later stages of the policy's trajectory has been inadequately investigated and reported.

9.4   Revisiting my theoretical lens

The multi-conceptual framework for this study was built on the literature of educational change, mainly on the theory of "non-reform", the policy development process and the analytical tools of backward and forward mapping within the notion of "theory in use". It has successfully led me to answer my main and subsidiary research questions.

My theoretical understanding of policy development has developed from a simple linear process to a highly complex and contested perspective, with which I was able to analyse the perplexing Special Needs Education policy development process.

This study has therefore provided a heuristic tool for the analysis of policy development in a changing political context. The emergent findings forced me to review my assumptions about policy reform or "non-reform".

9.5   Review of assumptions

In Chapter Two I declared the assumptions that governed this case study. In this section I revisit and test the assumptions against my findings:

Policies that encompass a paradigmatic shift take longer to get off the ground

The new terminology associated with the new paradigm of inclusive education and all that it is intended to embrace, was disproportionately discussed throughout the policy development process. This left little time to discuss and explore the substance of policy itself and implementation requirements.

After submission of the NCSNET report, more time than was expected, was spent re-drafting and renegotiating some of the content of the document in often heated and emotional debates. Nevertheless, almost all the respondents considered the delay to be reasonable, with only a single critic stating that the policy process had been intentionally delayed. This confirms the assumption.

A policy that is delayed in "getting off the ground" cannot necessarily be described as "non-reform"

Policies that get off the ground slowly may be delayed for genuine reasons. The mere lapse in time tends to be value-neutral, whereas "non-reform" tends to be value–laden. The study has revealed several elements of "non-reform", experiments with change, low priority for reform, absence of key leadership, lack of resources, changing structures; and undue "political symbolism". Such factors bear out a finding of "non-reform". If undue delay is observed in the company of elements of "non-reform", delay could be seen as an indicator or predictor of an intention not to reform. To that extent the assumption is modified.

In the South African context, the symbolic importance of having a Special Needs Education policy often overrides its practical implementation

This study demonstrates that the Department of Education's drive to consolidate the transition and transformation of the Special Needs Education policy was undertaken without great thought to the cost of implementation. It has become clear that the Government has not met the financial and technical requirements of the policy. By 2004, the policy had not yet been implemented and no additional funds have been allocated in the current Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period (2004/06), nor have funding norms been developed and approved. Special Needs Education policy remains on the symbolic plane. The expectation that full implementation will require 20 years, makes the prospects extremely bleak. The assumption is confirmed.

The delay in the emergence of the Special Needs Education policy reflects the lack of political status and influence that "Special Needs" as a reform programme has within the government bureaucracy

The findings reveal that political leadership was lacking with respect to the development of the Special Needs Education policy. Special Needs Education policies remained "on" the political agenda, but were not "in" the political agenda, in the sense of being a live issue, unlike ECD and HIV/AIDS. The political leadership did not ensure that budgets and commitments to institutional arrangements were enhanced. This assumption is confirmed.

9.5.1   Summary of assumptions

My assumptions for this study have mostly been confirmed by the findings. Special Needs Education issues have been on the agenda of the national Department of Education since 1994. Yet, in terms of operational policy, provisioning and changing the education system the policy remains visionary. In reality, most special needs learners are in much in the same position as they were in 1994. This includes the estimated 280 000 out-of-school learners. By 2004 Special Needs Education had not begun to undergo the intended reform and transition which had been promised by the policy in 2001. The expectations aroused in 1994 had not been fulfilled.

9.6   Implications for further research in Special Needs Education

This study has raised several implications for further research. It not only calls or the comparative analyses of low status education policies using the construct of "non-reform", for example, sports policies in schools, guidance education, and early childhood education; but also a comparison of first and third world states with respect to "non-reform" as explanation of policy lag.

More specifically it points clearly to the need for longitudinal studies in what happens to the White Paper 6 down the implementation road.

9.7   Theoretical contribution

This study has shown that there is a dynamic interplay between theory and data. It has confirmed that the 1:1 relationship is tenuous and emphasises the dialogue between theory and data.   The dynamic interplay or dialogue between theory ("non-reform") and data (practical realities) is subject to the specific case under study.

There is also a clear link between the practical reality as provided by the data and the implications it has for theory and future policy development and research (see Figure 9.2:213). This study has also made a contribution to the limited literature on the initial stages of policy development and uplifts the importance of the initial stages as determinants for the policy's trajectory.

9.8   Chapter summary

> *On the other hand, if inclusion is like many other attempted changes, absorbed through a variety of subtle adjustments or ultimately rejected as unworkable, we will learn a good deal about enduring characteristics of the occupation* (Lortie 1998:155).

This study adds to the research literature on the policy development process in society undergoing transition.

A multi-dimensional approach was employed to reveal the views and positions of the main policy- and decision-makers involved in the development process of the Special Needs Education policy in South Africa. Through a focused case study, it was possible to provide a detailed description and an exhaustive explanation of the complex processes at various stages of the policy-making process. Like any reform in public policy, change in Special Needs Education is a political process that requires stakeholder support and legitimacy. The main research question was, *Why did the policy on Special Needs Education not emerge when it was widely expected?* The multiple factors leading to delay have been identified and analysed. In the process the theoretical concept of "non-reform" that has been augmented by the isolation of factors at work in the early stages of policy development.

EXPLANATORY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK = EDUCATIONAL NON-REFORM	DIALOGUE CO-DETERMINATION MUTUALLY RE-INFORCING	DATA PRACTICAL REALITY = DELAY

EXTENDING THEORY ON DELAY

(ADDING NEW ELEMENTS)

IMPLICATION FOR THEORY

DISCOVERS

- PHASES IN WHICH DELAY HAS REPERCUSSIONS

- SENSITIVITY IN POLICY FORMULATING PHASE

IMPLICATION FOR POLICY

UNCOVERS

- VALIDATION BY FUTURE RESEARCH

-FINDINGS RAISED TO THEORETICAL LEVEL
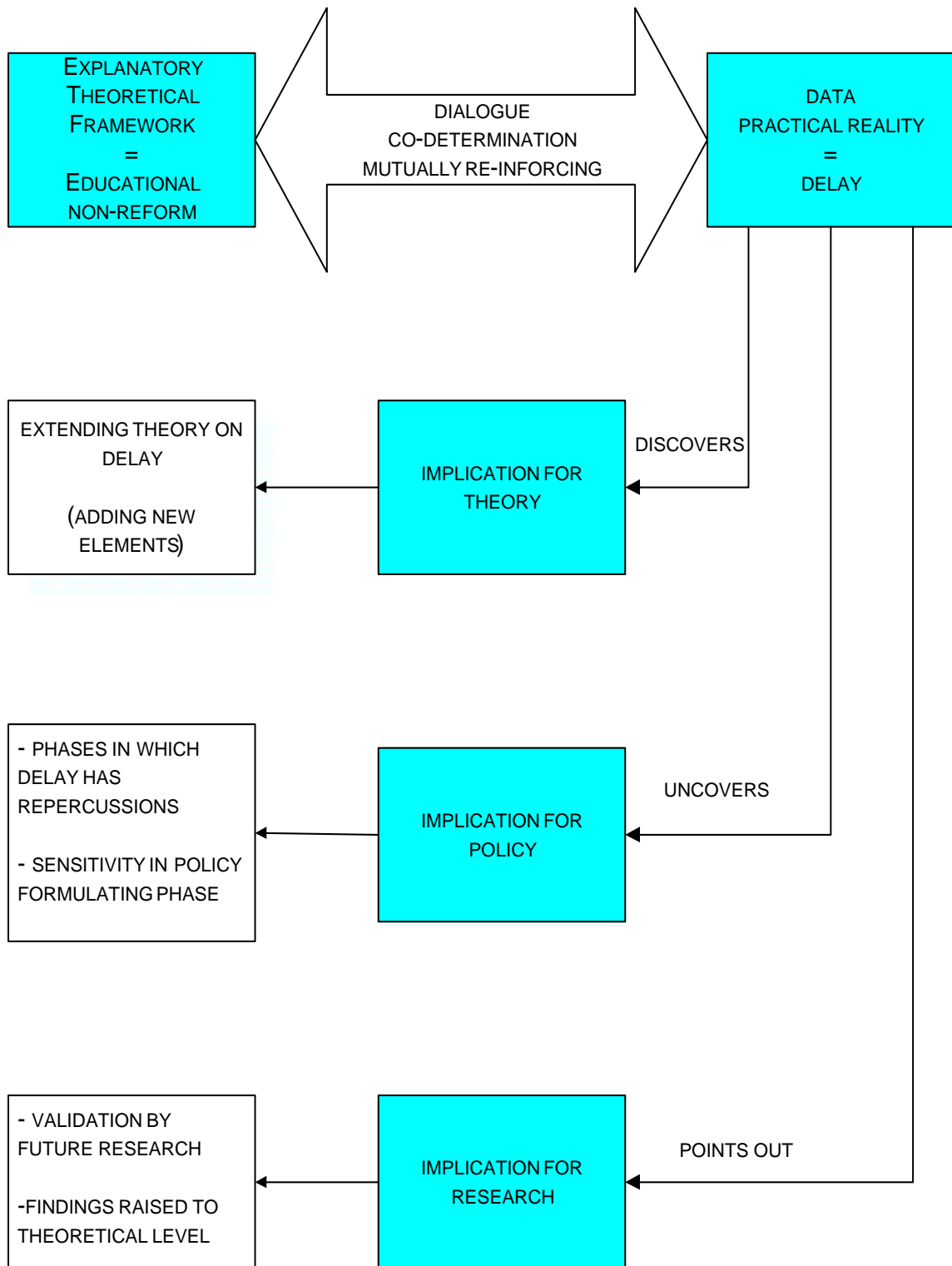
IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH

POINTS OUT

Figure 9.2: Diagrammatic representation of the dialogue between theory and data

This contribution demonstrates the complementarity of "political symbolism" and practical constraints, as joint explanation of "non-reform" in a specific sector of education policy, namely, Special Needs Education policy. It shows on the one hand, how "political symbolism" operates independently of practical constraints as an interest of the State to declare its alignment with modernity and globalised ideas of the modern state in respect of special needs policies; and that practical constraints function independently of symbolic commitments as a serious inhibitor of political commitment to reform, in this case, Special Needs Education in a transitional society.

On the other hand, this study also suggests that it is the practical constraints that reinforce the retreat into symbolic action and that "playing up" "political symbolism" further inhibits or delays intervention in the practical domain. In other words, this study does not find justification for singular theoretical positions of either the theory of "political symbolism" or the theory of practical constraints as adequate for explaining the complex phenomenon of "non-reform" in education policy. Herein lies the main theoretical contribution to the study.

This study casts doubt on the concept on "non-reform" itself, as an adequate construct for explaining what happened in the struggle to develop a comprehensive government policy for Special Needs Education after the emergence of the first democratic government in 1994.

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Appendices

Appendix A-   List of interview dates

Appendix B-   Semi structured interview protocol

Appendix C-   Themes emerging from data

Appendix D- Detailed list of bills, policies and regulations developed by the national Department of Education since 1994.

Appendix E- Other readings consulted during the course of this study