

CHAPTER 2

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE CHILD WITH A HEARING LOSS: A THEORETICAL PROBABILITY OR PRACTICAL POSSIBILITY?

“A school should not be a preparation for life. A school should be life”

- Elbert Hubbard (Vargo & Vargo, 1995:45) -

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“For many learners, attending school with their peers in their neighbourhood schools, learning the core curriculum that their school community deems essential, participating in all facets of school life, and having relationships with people of their own choosing are reality” (Grenot-Scheyer, Fisher & Staub, 2001:1).

For years the traditional education systems worldwide have provided special education and related services to students with disabilities. As the educational, social, political, and economic needs of society underwent rapid change, it became increasingly evident that these traditional ideas of schools and classrooms were becoming outdated (Sands, Kozleski & French, 2000:4). It was now clear that increasing student diversity and changing economic and social conditions were straining the capacity of any education system to produce well-educated learners. The effectiveness of current education systems was questioned and as a result thereof, the concept of ‘inclusive school practices’ was widely discussed as a philosophical basis for the development of one education service delivery system to serve **all** learners.

It is the aim of this chapter firstly to provide an overview of world initiatives for the development of such education delivery systems. Secondly, the direct impact of these initiatives in the South African context will be discussed, with specific emphasis on relevant policies. As the diverse characteristics of learners, and their individual needs, must necessarily challenge schools to understand the individual characteristics of learners and respond flexibly, this chapter will finally focus on the child with a hearing loss.

Various questions arise when the feasibility of inclusive education for this unique population is considered, namely: What are the goals of inclusive education for the child with a hearing loss? What needs and issues must be addressed and what decisions must be made to achieve these goals in an ever-changing South African context, having its own unique barriers to learning? A discussion of these aspects will highlight the complexity and challenge of instituting inclusive education in South Africa, especially for the child with a hearing loss.

2.2 WORLD INITIATIVES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

During the 1960s the idea of *normalisation* emerged in Western societies as one of the outcomes of a series of earlier socio-economic and cultural transformations (Engelbrecht & Snyman 1999:7). Changes in world views, the explosion of media technologies, political shifts, etc., led to the development of a liberal-progressive society in which acknowledgement of diversity and equality of opportunities began to be promoted.

In the 1970s these changes in liberal, critical and progressive democratic thoughts had a direct influence on the education system as the traditional practice of segregating learners with special needs in separate schools was challenged to an increasing extent (Engelbrecht & Snyman.1999:7).

Since 1975 education for individuals with disabilities has received worldwide attention and commitment, both as a result of United Nations (UN) activities and through global statements and initiatives endeavouring to bring about 'Education for

All' (Smith-Davis, 2002:77). In the *Declaration of the rights of disabled persons*, UN member countries confirmed their support for human rights, education, integration, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress for persons with disabilities. Since 1981 different initiatives have been published to promote the rights of the disabled (Smith-Davis, 2002:77), such as the following:

- The world programme of action concerning disabled persons (1982)
- The world declaration on education for all (1990)
- Standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities (1993)

In 1994, representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations met in Salamanca, Spain, with the aim of promoting inclusive education for children, youths and adults with special needs. The so-called Salamanca statement of principles, policy and practice in special needs education and framework for action states that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are "... the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the entire education system" (UNESCO, 1994:10) This conclusion implies that the placement of children in special schools or special classes should be the exception and not the rule.

With reference to developing nations (i.e. those nations designated for UN technical assistance) it was noted that, although education for individuals with disabilities in these countries might still be at an early stage, ideas on special education should strive not to replicate the earlier segregated approaches that had been abandoned in many countries.

In April 2000 the *Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All* was adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar, with the aim of achieving worldwide education for

all by 2015 (Smith-Davis, 2002:77). Aspects that were emphasised were early childhood education, literacy, gender equity and education for all – including the disadvantaged and those with special learning needs. In order to provide legally binding standards for protecting the rights of people with disabilities in every country, the UN voted to start planning a Convention on the Human Rights of People with Disabilities in November 2001.

From the above it is clear that international patterns and trends regarding disability have undergone major shifts, focusing mainly on the move from a medical discourse to a rights discourse (Naicker, 1999:12). Impairment is no longer linked with disability, but seen as a social construct. Equal opportunities, self-reliance, independence and *wants* rather than *needs* are of importance now in order to extend full citizenship to all people.

2.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS A SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY

The changes in world initiatives regarding inclusive education have to a large extent influenced the motion towards inclusive education in South Africa (Naicker, 1999:12). The first important shift towards inclusive education occurred when the move from the medical model, utilised for so long in the field of special education, changed to an ecological and systems theory (Hay, 2003:135). The medical model utilises the patient-diagnosis-treatment sequence, emphasising pathology, using as its point of departure the philosophy that the child and his impairment is the problem (Hall, 1997:74) and cause for educational failure (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000b:277). The solution was to adapt the child and his circumstances to the requirements of the world as it is (Hall, 1997:74). This model reflects particular diagnostic criteria and rarely comes with clear guidance about the educational impact of the child's difficulties in learning and relationships (Dockrell & Lindsay, 2001:370).

The strong movement away from this theory can probably be ascribed to: "...the realization that unique human beings cannot be classified into simple medical-disability diagnosis and that learners may have different medical disabilities, but

similar educational needs” (Hay, 2003:135) The changed viewpoint no longer places the focus on the individual who needs to fit in, but on the potential and responsibility of the circumstances in which the individual is placed (Swart et al., 2002:176). The environment (system) must change to accommodate every individual, irrespective of any disability. This approach is best described by the concept ‘inclusion’, which is more commonly applied in education systems but is also true for the wider context of communities, workforces and all social, economic and emotional life situations.

The concept of inclusion is, however, not monolithic. In terms of education it is becoming increasingly evident that inclusion has different meanings in different contexts, in spite of the fact that various countries share a commitment towards inclusion (Swart et al., 2002:176). Although varieties of inclusive practices are beginning to emerge, each offering different solutions, some critical aspects fundamental to this concept are commonly agreed on, such as the principles of social justice, equitable education systems and the responsiveness of schools towards diversity (Swart et al., 2002:176). The implementation of this can and should first of all be evaluated against the framework of relevant education policies.

Since a democratic dispensation was introduced in South Africa in 1994, the country has been in the process of social, political, economic and educational transformation aimed at developing a more inclusive society (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001:213).

Policy development has received a lot of attention and reflects the commitment of the South African government to address the diversity in the learner population and provide a continuum of support within a democratic South Africa. International guidelines such as *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights - 1948*; *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – 1989*; *The standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities for disabled persons – 1993* and the *World Conference on Education for All – 2000* provide an overall framework for policy development (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:307).

Relevant government initiatives¹ include:

- The *White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa* (Department of Education, 1995)
- The *South African Schools Act* (Department of Education, 1996)
- The *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (Ministry in the Office of the Deputy President, 1997)
- The National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services (Department of Education, 1997)
- *White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (Department of Education, 2001)

The most important government policies that have influenced inclusion are analysed in Table 2.1, and an indication is given of the specific policy, the premise of the policy and the key initiatives involved in each.

¹ The government policies included in this discussion do not include a complete list of all policies, but only those relevant to the specific discussion and thus selected with the specific research question (indicated in part 1.2) in mind.

Table 2.1 Important/Primary government policies that influence inclusive education

Policy and premise	Key initiatives
<p>The White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa – 1995</p> <p>“Education and training are basic human rights. The State has an obligation to protect and advance these rights, so that all citizens irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age, have the opportunity to develop their capacities and potential, and make their full contribution to society.” (Department of Education, 1995:21)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To restore respect for diversity and the culture of teaching and learning - The Culture of Teaching, Learning and Services (COLTS). • To give recognition to prior knowledge and the concept of life-long learning - The National Qualifications Framework (NQF). • To develop a curriculum that responds to the diverse learner needs, respects individuality and is based on the belief that all learners can achieve success. It is ‘inclusive’ by nature and focuses on the processes whereby learners achieve the desired outcomes. - An Outcomes-Based Curriculum (OBE). • To recognise 12 official languages – including Sign Language - The New Language Policy. • To develop a holistic and integrated approach regarding education support services (ESS).
<p>The South African Schools Act – 1996</p> <p>“... the governing body of a public school must promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school” (Department of Education, 1996:14 (section 20:1a))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide quality education for all learners. • To allow for greater autonomy in school governance and funding at local level through the use of School Governing Bodies (SGBs).
<p>The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy – 1997</p> <p>(Conducted simultaneously with the NCSNET/NCESS. Recommendations incorporated into the Commission’s Report)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that people with disability are able to access the same fundamental rights and responsibilities as any other citizen. • To recognise the need to restructure society, including the physical environment, to enable everyone to participate fully in society. • To provide life skills training for independent living. • To provide assistive devices and specialised equipment.

Compiled from: Department of Education, 1995:21; Department of Education, 1996:14; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:308-310; Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:318.

The paradigm shift from the medical model to a more social model is reflected clearly in these documents. It also indicates the first initiatives towards moving away from a dual, special and/or general education system in a search for the transformation of general education so that it recognises and addresses the diverse learning needs of **all** learners.

These initiatives were developed even further in the education policies that followed. In July 2001 the South African Ministry of Education released *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education – building an inclusive education and training system*. This policy was initiated in 1996 when the Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) to undertake a needs analysis and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa (Department of Education, 1997). The scope of the investigation was broad and covered all bands of education: early childhood development, the general education and training phase, further education and training, higher education and adult education. All aspects of education, including organisation and governance, funding, curriculum and institutional development, utilisation and development of human resources had to be included (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:320). The Final Report of this investigation was released on 28 November 1997 (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:322).

The key task of the NCSNET/NCESS was to come up with proposals regarding a vision, principles and strategies for the future. As this report is quite a comprehensive document of more than 218 pages, Figure 2.1 has been compiled to summarise its findings as well as the strategies envisaged to achieve the vision.

needs' problematical, as the phrase signifies that the learners who are referred to in such terms by implication do not 'fit into' the system. Their 'needs' highlight their personal inadequacies rather than challenge social inadequacies in the system (medical model). According to the Commission it is important to identify the causes for learning breakdown in the system and focus the need for 'education support' on the development of the system rather than merely on the support of individual learners (ecological systemic approach). The concept of 'barriers to learning' was proposed in order to identify all the aspects that could possibly lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, which could in turn lead to learning breakdown or prevent learners from accessing education provision (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:311). It was stipulated that the barriers could be located within the learner, within the centre of learning or school, within the education system or/and within the broader social, economic and political contexts (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:324). "The challenge is to minimize, remove and prevent barriers to learning and development and thereby assist the education system to become more responsive to the diverse needs of the learner population" (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:311).

The concept of barriers to learning can be effectively applied to the South African context and as such the following most important barriers were identified (Department of Education, 1997:11-19; Department of Education, 2001: Eleweke & Rodda, 2002:116-119, Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999:53; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:311-312):

- *Socio-economic barriers:* As effective learning is fundamentally influenced by the availability of educational resources to meet the needs of society, socio-economic disadvantages have had a negative effect on education. Poverty, underdevelopment and lack of basic services are contributing to learning breakdowns. Access to basic services is a big problem as these services are sparse or non-existent, or because learners, especially those with disabilities, are unable to reach learning centres due to lack of transport and/or inferior or even absent roads. Poor living conditions, undernourishment, lack of proper housing and unemployment have a negative impact on all learners. Conditions may arise within the social, economic and political environment in which learners live in

dysfunctional families, or even have to suffer sexual and physical abuse, civil war, violence and crime, or chronic illnesses including HIV/AIDS. These factors threaten the physical and emotional well-being and development of these learners.

- *Attitudes:* Negative and discriminatory attitudes in society towards differences in terms of race, class, gender, culture, disability and religion become barriers when directed towards learners in the education system.
- *An inflexible curriculum:* The rigid and inflexible nature of the curriculum that does not allow for individual differences can lead to learning breakdown. Socio-economic disadvantages that have had a negative effect on education will include aspects such as lack of relevance of subject content, lack of appropriate learning materials, resources and assistive devices, inflexible styles of teaching and classroom management, and inappropriate ways of assessment of learning.
- *Language and communication:* In South Africa, teaching and learning takes place through a language that is often not the first language of the child. As a result, communication breakdowns can occur in the classroom, resulting in learning breakdown, as communication is essential for learning and development in both formal and informal contexts.
- *Inaccessible and unsafe physical environments:* Many of the school environments are not suitable for education and are not adapted to the needs of learners with physical and/or sensory disabilities.
- *Support services:* Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services in the system does not facilitate the development of learners.
- *Lack of parental recognition and involvement:* Active involvement of parents in the teaching and learning process is central to effective learning and development. Negative attitudes towards parental involvement, scant recognition of their role, lack of resources to facilitate involvement and lack of parental

empowerment contribute to inadequate parental involvement in the education system.

- *Lack of human resource development:* Inadequate on-going teacher development and training is a unique barrier to learning as teachers are the key to any inclusive system.
- *Lack of protective legislation and policy* hampers the development of an inclusive education and training system.
- *Disability:* As a result of the barriers already discussed, the particular needs of many learners with impairments are not met. This causes the impairment to become a handicap to the learner and prevents effective learning from taking place.

With the key findings in mind a vision for an inclusive education and training system was articulated and the key principles as stipulated in the Constitution and White Papers on Education and Training were identified. Specific strategies were agreed on that could be applied in the restructuring of the system (Department of Education, 1997:54-67; Department of Education, 2001; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:312-313; Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:327-331). These strategies are discussed more extensively below:

- *Transforming the system:* The whole education system must change if it is to respond effectively to the needs of all learners. All aspects of the education system must move away from an isolated focus on 'changing the person' to a systems-change approach.
- *Developing an integrated system of education:* The separate systems of education ('special' and 'ordinary') would have to be integrated in order to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population. This integrated system will be expected to offer a range of options for learners, giving learners the possibility of moving from one learning context to another, providing opportunities

for the inclusion of the learner in all aspects of life.

- *Infusing support services:* Instead of supporting individual learners, the support system must support educators and the system should be responsive to diversity.
- *A holistic approach to institutional development:* All aspects of centres of learning should be developed in order to facilitate a positive culture of teaching, learning and services. This would include aspects such as strategic planning and evaluation, organisational leadership and management, structures and procedures, staff development and other mechanisms.
- *Development of a flexible curriculum:* A flexible curriculum must be provided, capable of responding to the differences among learners and ensuring that all learners can participate effectively in the learning process. These recommendations include critical aspects regarding the content of learning, teaching approaches, learning materials and assessment.
- *Promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents:* As parents play a critical role in the education of their children, it is important that their roles are recognised and that partnerships are developed between parents and the educators. Parents must not only be empowered to participate but must become actively involved in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of education and support.
- *Development of a community-based support system:* Structured community participation is essential to develop and support education provision, since the existing support services are functioning as highly specialised, high-cost models available to only a small minority of learners. Existing support systems in the country and communities must be utilised in order to reach a larger number of learners and to support the learning process more widely.
- *Development programmes for educators and other human resources:* Educators and support providers must be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge

to promote appropriate attitudes so that they can respond to the needs of all learners. This should include effective development programmes that focus on orientation and pre- and in-service professional development, within a team approach.

- *A preventative and developmental approach to support:* The aim should be to develop the centres of learning in such a way as to prevent social and learning problems. This approach should include reducing environmental risks, promoting resilience among learners and communities, and developing a supportive and safe environment for learners.

The findings and recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESSS led to the publication of *Consultative Paper 1 in Special Education: building an inclusive education and training system* in August 1999 (Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2002:176) and eventually to the release of the *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education – building an inclusive education and training system* in 2001.

The White Paper provides a framework for establishing the inclusive education and training system, details a funding strategy and lists key strategies to be adopted in establishing the system in South Africa (Department of Education, 2001:5). These strategies include aspects such as the following:

- Emphasising capacity building at leadership and managerial levels and fostering intersectorial collaboration at all levels
- Strengthening education support services, with the focus on the conversion of special schools into resource centres and developing support teams at district and institutional level.
- Expanding access to and provision of education.
- Developing a flexible curriculum, curriculum support, institutional development, appropriate assessment, appropriate development of materials, and assistive

devices.

- Launching a national advocacy and information programme in support of inclusion.

2.4 A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Educational reform is fundamental to the future well-being of our society. Schools must be expected to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, challenges based on the rapid changes in our demographic, economic and social foundations (Sands et al., 2000:14). A significant shift in the ways schools are organised and deliver educational services is necessary to be able to respond to the demands of society. By analysing the philosophy of inclusive education in greater depth, it is possible to understand some of the integral aspects of educational reform that our education system so urgently needs to adopt. With this in mind, the following framework (Figure 2.2) has been compiled in order to set out clearly the complexity of inclusion.

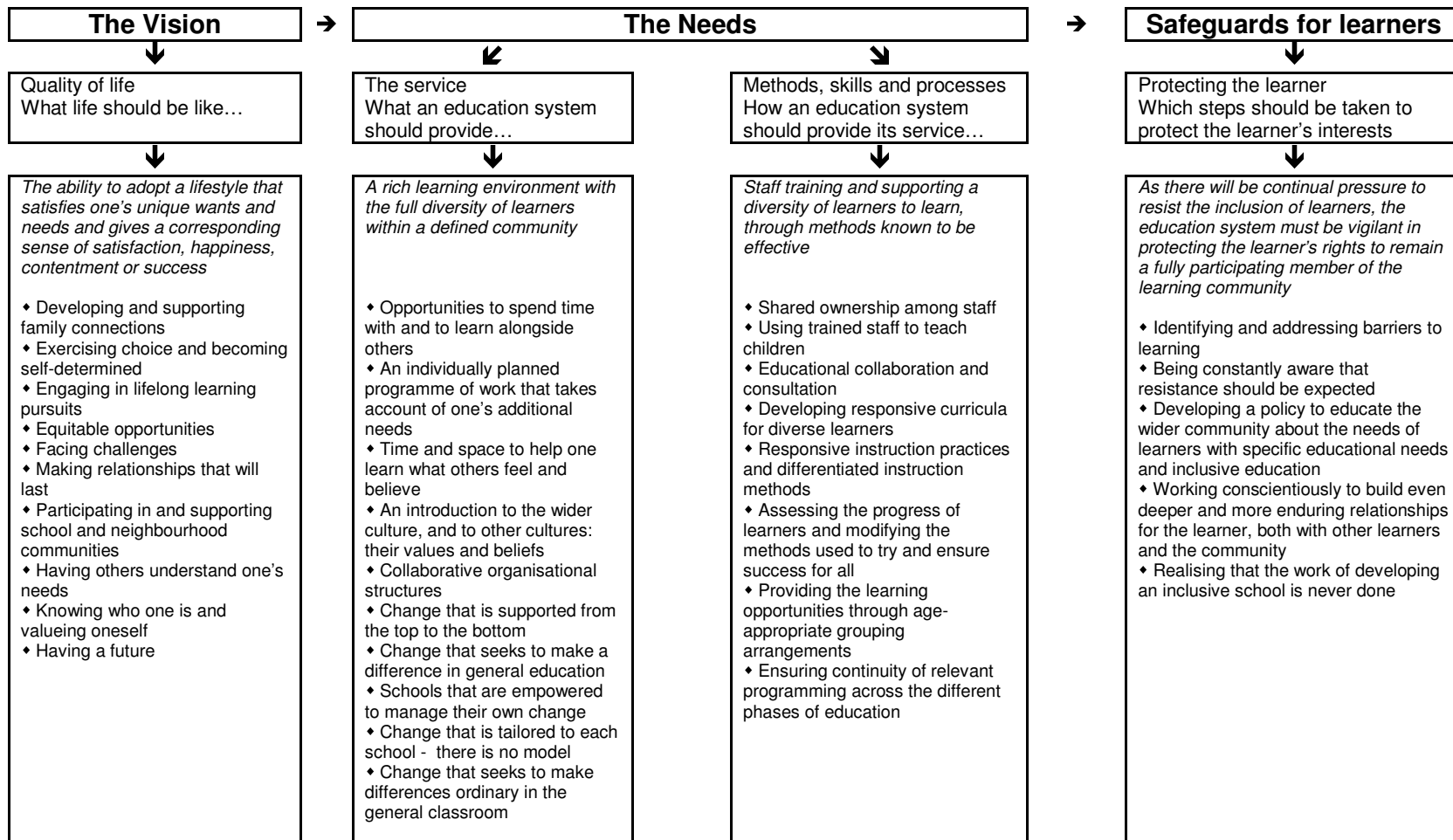


Figure 2.2 A framework for understanding inclusive education

(Developed from Hall, 1997:148; Grenot-Scheyer, Fisher & Staub, 2001:5-7, 12-15; Sands et al., 2000:28-32).

The elements of this framework must be regarded as critical components in the planning process of a significant and meaningful inclusive programme for any child with specific educational needs. Although the framework is mostly self-explanatory, the following aspects need to be elaborated further:

- **The vision**

The most logical response to our rapidly changing social, economic and political contexts is to create schools that are grounded in democratic principles and the constructs of social justice (Sands et al., 2000:5). The concept of *inclusive education* embodies these values and involves the practice of including everyone – irrespective of talent, disability, socio-economic background or cultural origin. It involves changing the structure of the parallel systems of special education and general education to a single system in order to provide similar broad educational outcomes (Grenot-Scheyer et al., 2001:3) (as shown in the figure). Ensuring that all learners have opportunities to achieve the highest possible quality of life poses certain challenges to the education systems. “These challenges are met when we embody the concepts of inclusion, community, collaboration, democracy and diversity, and when “all children and members of the community have a future of fulfilled human and community potential, security, belonging and valued interdependence leading to meaningful contributions” (Sands et al., 2000:5).

This vision challenges all concerned to become part of school reform and improvement. It does however imply that certain **needs** should be addressed in order to ensure the optimal development of an inclusive education system.

- **The needs**

The inclusive education system is a response to the fundamental strains imposed on education systems. If the system is to respond to diversity and innovation it is important to move away from standardisation and become flexible, responding to the ‘needs’ of an inclusive education system. Firstly it is important to have a look at the ‘what’ and then at the ‘how’ of these needs.

In terms of 'what': The education system should be able to provide a rich learning environment with the full diversity of learners within a defined community (Hall, 1997:148). As shown in Figure 2.1, this would involve the provision of opportunities to spend time with and to learn alongside others; time and space to help one learn what others feel and believe; an individually planned programme of work that takes account of one's additional needs, as well as an introduction to the wider culture and to other cultures, their values and beliefs (Hall, 1997:148). Collaborative organisational structures should also be provided to meet the best interests of the learners (Sands et al., 2000:25).

In relation to 'how': A wide spectrum of ideas have been suggested and the most commonly accepted are the following:

- Shared ownership among all staff for learners with and without special needs (Voltz et al., 2001:24). This implies that all staff members, as a team, are responsible for meeting the needs of all learners and for supporting all learners in reaching their maximum potential, although there may be variance among the staff members in terms of expertise.
- As inclusion is not simply added on to the current school programme but requires significant changes in how teachers work, it is important that they gain new perceptions of teaching and learning as well as new skills (McLeskey & Waldron, 2001:4). Using trained staff to teach will ensure not only that inclusive education can be implemented successfully, but also that the ownership of the inclusive school will be broadly based and changes be widely accepted among teaching staff (McLeskey & Waldron, 2001:5).
- Education research supports the existence of a collaborative culture and the use of collaborative structures and supports as key elements of inclusive schools (Kugelmass, 2001:47; Coben et al., 1997:427). Mutual efforts are required by professionals and parents as a team to meet the needs of learners by engaging in interactive processes and using specialised content to achieve shared goals. These collaborative structures are characterised by different but equal status between professionals (Coben et al., 1997:428).

- “The curriculum is a focal point of inclusionary school practices” (Sands et al., 2000:293) In a classroom with heterogeneous learners, an education team has the responsibility to consider all possible curriculum content for each learner as learner’s learning priorities will vary in complexity, depth and breadth (Ryndak & Alper, 1996:56, Villa & Thousand, 1995:118). The aim of this strategy is to maximise the learner’s acquisition of activities and skills that will be most meaningful for him/her in both current and future environments (Ryndak & Alper, 1996:56).

- Learners with specific needs in education may be unable to participate in functional and general education activities in the same manner as their classmates and require adaptations to facilitate maximal independent participation (Ryndak & Alper, 1996:121). This includes careful choices of instructional approaches, combined with attention to the organisational structures of the learning environment, allowing the learner to perform the same activity as the classmates without relying on another person and without changes in the curriculum content (Sands et al., 2000:361).

- Assessment, whether formative or summative, is an essential component in the inclusive classroom and should involve the family and focus on issues of curriculum, instruction and measurement, keeping the learner outcomes in mind (Sands et al., 2000:249). Several assessment processes should be implemented in order to provide valid, reliable measures of the learner’s performance, and to identify the effects of the teacher instruction on the learner. By doing this, teachers can refine their teaching activities to optimise student learning (Sands et al., 2000:249).

- The best way to serve learners with specific needs in education in an inclusive setting is to frame the services rendered to the child within a lifespan approach. This encourages teachers and professionals to look beyond the traditional school years to consider the needs of the learner after high school (English, 1995:11). This implies that a continuity of relevant programming across the different phases of education should exist in order to support the long-term goals (outcomes) for learners with special needs.

- **The safeguards**

It is important to realise that there will always be societal and structural pressures that aim to keep people with specific needs from participating in the mainstream of life. This can in part be attributed to the fact that no one can predict with absolute certainty if the change to inclusion will be effective and that learners will in fact benefit from it (McLeskey & Waldron, 2001:6). Furthermore, teachers and administrators are expected to make substantive changes in everything they do, not simply to add on to what they are already doing. These circumstances can result in resistance. “This is why it is so important to try and ensure that there is no stinting of the effort to keep the child in his mainstream school, and this will mean constant preparation for each new teacher and phase of the system” (Hall, 1997:146). It also implies an adaptable and open attitude in order to identify and address barriers to learning as they arise, to educate the community and to realise that the work of developing an inclusive school is never done.

2.5 THE CHILD WITH A HEARING LOSS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The above discussion tried to address the generic position of those who advocate inclusion, and who believe that the fundamental characteristics of inclusive education would be of benefit if enacted within all communities. It has not focused on any particular group of learners. The question that needs to be answered now is how well the concepts and practice of inclusion will hold up when applied to **children with hearing loss**.

It is quite apparent that the South African policies as discussed in paragraph 2.3 can offer an opportunity for children with a hearing loss to be placed in educational settings together with normal hearing children. In fact, similar laws and policies in foreign countries have led to a significant change in service delivery models for children with hearing loss (Ross, Brackett & Maxon, 1991:67). This change is evident in the fact that approximately 83% of learners with a hearing loss in the United

States are currently served, at least part-time, in general education classrooms (U.S Department of Education, 1999 in Luckner & Muir, 2001:435).

Aspects that specifically motivate the educational inclusion of the child with a hearing loss are the following:

- Due to a special focus on *early identification* and *intervention* the outcomes for infants with hearing loss have improved (Samson-Fang, Simons-McCandless, Shelton, 2000:77). This is confirmed by recent studies indicating that identification of and intervention with children with hearing loss by the age of 6 months result in overall age-appropriate language scores (Robinshaw, 1995 in Samson Fang et al., 2000:78). Yoshinago-Itano et al. evaluated language abilities in infants identified before 6 months and indicated that the mean language quotient of the earlier identified children was almost a full standard deviation higher than the mean language quotient of the later-identified group. Early identification and intervention can provide children with a hearing loss the opportunity to develop language within the normal range of development during the early childhood period (Yoshinago-Itano, 1999:317), giving these children the means to be successfully included in classes with normal hearing children.
- Of all the incredible technological developments of the 20th century, none has made a greater impact on the lives of children with hearing loss than the *multichannel cochlear implant* (Archbold et al., 2002:158, Ertmer, 2002:149, Moog, 2002:138). Intensive research indicates that the consistent use of this device can lead to speech perception and speech production abilities beyond those typically associated with children who use hearing aids (Ertmer, 2002:149). Not only have substantial increases in oral language been documented, but progress in terms of academic achievement has been noted as well (Moog, 2002:138; Ertmer, 2002:149). The majority of these children can be put into inclusive settings with skills comparable to those of their hearing classmates. "... achieving this level of performance will affect everything about their future lives – socially, academically, and economically" (Moog, 2002:142).

Notwithstanding the above positive basis for successful inclusion of children with hearing loss, it has become clear that education systems cannot always effortlessly provide a fundamentally appropriate education for children with hearing loss (Siegel, 2000:65). According to DeConde Johnson (personal communication, 28 July 2003) this can be attributed to the mistaken notion that the inclusion of the child with a hearing loss is an easily accomplished process. This misconception led to a situation where children with hearing loss were transferred out of settings in which they received a great deal of individual attention, had special amplification equipment and were taught by specifically trained educators (Ross et al., 1991:68) to systems devoid of all these necessary elements. Today, armed with more knowledge concerning the effects of hearing loss, authorities have realised that inclusion “meant far more than just placement in a class with normal hearing peers” (Ross et al., 1991:68) and that the inclusion of children with hearing loss is not such an effortless process as initially accepted.

It is crucial that the inclusion of the child with a hearing loss be based on careful analysis of the aspects that have to be changed in the system, with careful attention to the unique characteristics and needs of the individual (Stinson & Lang, 1994:156). The reason for this is that the personal and societal cost of failed communication as a result of an inadequate education system can have a devastating effect on the child, his family and his future.

2.5.1 Characteristics of the child with a hearing loss²

In order to fully realise the ramifications of the inclusion of a child with a hearing loss, the unique characteristics of the child as a result of a hearing loss must be understood because they can form the frame of reference against which the barriers to learning for these children can be identified and handled. The following model (Figure 2.3) gives a broad indication of the unique characteristics of the child with a congenital/early onset hearing loss. However, it must be noted that this figure is merely a comprehensive attempt to indicate the more common characteristics of the

² For some learners who experience barriers to learning, the key to the barrier may be situated in the learner him/herself, in this case the *hearing loss*. This barrier, which implies certain characteristics in the learner, can lead to learning breakdown, if the diverse needs of the learner, as a result of the unique barrier to learning, are not met (Department of Education, 1997:v).

child with a hearing loss. It does not deny the fact that every child with a hearing loss is an individual and may therefore not display the characteristics listed.

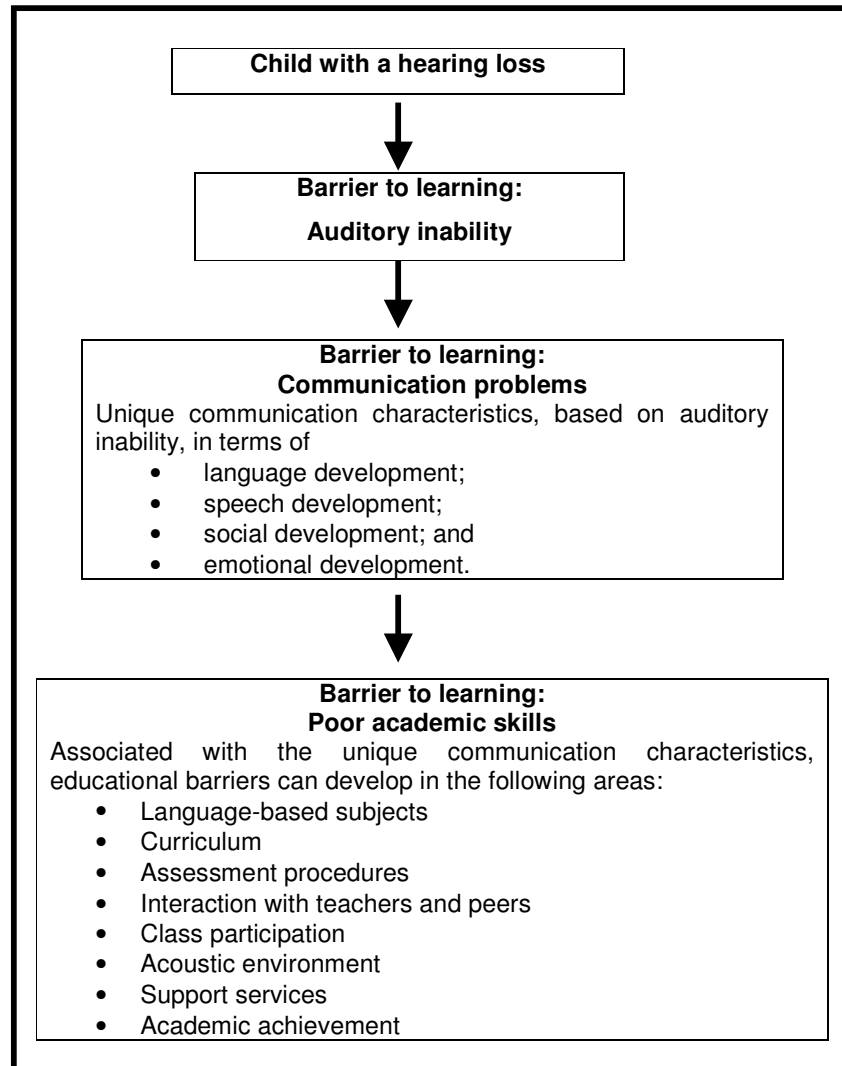


Figure 2.3 Characteristics of the child with a hearing loss that can lead to specific barriers to learning

“Although the primary effect of a hearing loss is an inability to hear some or all of conversational speech, its impact on communication development dramatically alters social and academic skill acquisition” (Brackett, 1997:355).

The presence of a hearing loss results in a distortion of incoming auditory signals, reducing the auditory information available to the individual (Sanders, 1982:159). A child with a congenital or early onset hearing loss will hear only a few, if any, environmental sounds and speech sounds, until amplification is provided. Such a hearing loss can affect the developing child's ability to learn language and speech, to socialise and to achieve academically and it may eventually have a negative impact on the child's vocational choices (ASHA, 1997:230).

It is clear that a hearing loss significantly affects the whole life of a child. Although the educational impact of the hearing loss will vary in each child according to the severity and permanence of the hearing loss, these children share several common characteristics in the following areas:

2.5.1.1 Language

“Because of impaired hearing, such children are unable to develop the same competent and intuitive grasp of the language as do their normal hearing peers” (Ross et al., 1991:21). As these children receive only fragments of an intended message, they struggle to synthesise them into a meaningful message (Ross et al., 1991:21).

Attempts to describe the language characteristics of children with hearing loss have often resulted in controversy. Some professionals refer to the language skills of these children as being delayed, while others classify the skills as deviant (Ross et al., 1991:40,42)

Irrespective of what the viewpoint is, the language used by the child with a hearing loss displays certain characteristics of which the following are the most important (Ross et al., 1991:36-42; Sanders, 1982:160-162; Tye-Murray, 2004:638-641; ASHA, 1997:232; Paul & Quigley, 1994:105-117):

- **Vocabulary**

- Slow development of vocabulary in relation to children with normal hearing.
- Vocabulary development (signed or spoken) derives largely from the language addressed (and explained) directly to them, in familiar contexts.
- Less flexibility in language skills in extended conversations, particularly those involving abstract topics.
- Difficulty in understanding analogies, multiple meanings of words and synonyms.
- Learning of content words, especially words referring to concrete aspects (dog, walk, blue) more easily than function words (the, a, am) and abstract ones (hate, after, ability).
- Difficulty with word combinations that do not literally convey their dictionary meanings.
- Trouble with certain academic tasks because of a misunderstanding of the vocabulary and/or syntax of the directions or difficulty with academic vocabulary.
- Difficulty in making use of the context to figure out the meaning of a new word when the language context in itself is understood insufficiently.

- **Syntax**

- The normal developmental growth pattern is depressed by a hearing loss. Due to insufficient and inadequate input at an appropriate developmental stage, children with hearing loss use their linguistic rule-generating ability to create functional, though deviant strategies for language comprehension and

production.

- Children with hearing loss have difficulty in processing complex sentences.

- **Pragmatics**

- Although a large number of the intentions of children with hearing loss are expressed in a non-verbal manner, they do attempt to express some intentions verbally. They are, however, limited in their ability to carry over their message verbally. As a result they make extensive use of gestures, facial expressions and intonation patterns.
- Children with hearing loss have difficulty to initiate or maintain a conversation or to repair a communication breakdown in communication.
- They have problems with taking turns and asking for clarification.

It is important to note that, regardless of which communication mode is used more frequently, be it Sign Language, aural/oral or total communication, most children with hearing loss do not learn any language well (Tye-Murray, 2004:638).

2.5.1.2 Speech

Children with hearing loss most often display *speech* problems because of their inability to hear the acoustic cues during the period of time when phonemes or language forms are emerging (Brackett, 1997:358). They also experience problems in monitoring their own speech through auditory feedback and as a result have to use their visual, tactile and kinaesthetic senses to a greater degree than normal hearing children. Their speech may be characterised by omissions of consonants, substitutions, distortions, nasalisations, problems with co-articulation of consonant blends, etc. (Ross et al., 1991:29-31). In terms of supra-segmental aspects, their speech may be characterised by unrhythmic speech, minimal pitch, increase in nasal quality, poor breath control, excessively low or high pitch, etc. (Easterbrooks, 1987: 198). As a result of these, the speech of child with a hearing loss may sound

unintelligible to the normal hearing individual.

2.5.1.3 Social and emotional

The unique language and communication characteristics of children with hearing loss may also affect their social and emotional development (English, 1995:21). These children often feel isolated, friendless and unhappy and may have difficulty in their communication with family and friends. According to Antia and Kreimeyer (1992, in English, 1995:21), these children may not acquire social competence skills learned through interaction, as they may not have the same opportunities as hearing children to interact with adults and peers.

2.5.1.4 Academic achievements

The unique characteristics of a child with a hearing loss, as discussed, can have a direct effect upon learning and academic achievements. All areas of academic achievement may be affected, especially reading and mathematical concepts (ASHA, 1997:232). Children with hearing loss often have to repeat grades, and have reading levels that reach a plateau at the fourth- or fifth-grade level (English, 1995:119) Performance in written language is equally affected (Samson-Fang, Simons-McCandless & Shelton, 2000:77), resulting in underachievement in literacy. This may have profound effects on the individual's overall academic achievement and life success (Samson-Fang et al., 2000:77).

2.5.1.5 Relationship between hearing loss and performance

A very important aspect to take into account is the fact that most research has indicated that the characteristics discussed above are determined by the severity and permanence of the hearing loss (Brackett, 1997:355; Ross et al., 1991: 47; Bess & McConnell, 1981:119) The reason for this is that hearing loss is not an 'all-or-nothing' phenomenon (Bunch, 1987:177). It can range from a mild loss that causes minor problems up to a total loss of sensory function, which is extremely rare. Most children with hearing loss have residual hearing and may be able to learn though the auditory sense, depending on how much, how early and how successfully hearing

can be amplified.

Table 2.2 is a description of efforts by certain researchers to describe and, in a sense, to quantify the effects of the degree of hearing loss upon the understanding of language and speech.

Although this theory seems to concur closely with the so-called medical model (refer to Par. 2.2) and is thus open to criticism in the present context in South Africa, a view such as this regarding the influence of a hearing loss is extremely significant. Without necessarily excluding the child because of his unique characteristics, an understanding of the characteristics of this population is vital for the realisation of what demands the system will have to comply with to be able to successfully accommodate these children.

Table 2.2 Effects of a hearing loss upon the understanding of speech and oral language

Influence of hearing ability on communication efficiency and speech- and language development	Hearing ability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with people speaking softly • Sometimes unaware of subtle innuendos in conversation 	Minimal hearing loss (16-25 dB HL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can lose 25 – 40% of speech signals at 30 dB • Background noise, distance from teacher and the course of the audiogram determine the nature and degree of problems in die classroom environment • Can miss up to 50% of class discussion in particularly if people speak softly or outside the line of vision • Problems with consonants, particularly in the case of high frequency loss 	Mild hearing loss (26-40 dB HL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands conversational speech at a distance of 1 - 1,5 m • Hearing loss of 40 dB and 50 dB (without amplification) can lead to 50 - 75% and 80 - 100% loss of speech signal respectively • Language problems: limited vocabulary, slow development of or faulty syntax • Can exhibit faulty speech production • Voice quality may already be toneless 	Moderate hearing loss (41-55 dB HL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation must be very loud to be heard without amplification • Can lose up to 100% of the speech signal • Increasing, distinct problems with verbal communication (one-to-one and groups) in the school environment • Slow speech and language development • Speech production mostly unintelligible • Toneless voice quality 	Moderate to severe hearing loss (56-70 dB HL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hears loud sounds ± 10 cm from the ear • Can identify certain sounds in his vicinity • Can discriminate vowel sounds, not all consonants • Pre-lingual hearing loss: speech and language do not develop spontaneously or slow speech and language development is exhibited • Post-lingual hearing loss: deterioration of speech and language abilities 	Severe hearing loss (71-90 dB HL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts more to vibrations than to sound • Visually rather than audively inclined with regard to communication • Speech and language do not develop spontaneously • Rapid deterioration of speech and language abilities in the case of a post-lingual hearing loss 	Total hearing loss (91+ dB HL)

(Compiled from: Anderson & Matkin, 1991:1-2)

Although it appears that each aspect of the child's development is considered

relative to the degree of hearing loss, a fair amount of variation may occur. In this heterogeneous population individual differences regarding language and communication development may be the result of aspects such as etiology of hearing loss, age at onset of hearing loss, early identification, use of amplification, remedial procedures and family commitment.

2.5.2 Implications of the characteristics of the child with a hearing loss for the inclusive system

It is clear that apart from the direct effect of hearing loss on an individual, several aspects must be taken in consideration when placing the child in any education system. In order to evaluate the possibility of inclusion for children with hearing loss and to understand the specific demands made by a hearing loss on the inclusive education system, the framework for understanding inclusive education (as discussed in Figure 2.1) was applied to the previously discussed characteristics of the child with his hearing loss and his specific educational needs. This will form a logical basis for the evaluation of the educational inclusion of children with hearing loss.

- **The vision**

An important vision related to the quality of life for inclusive education of the child with a hearing loss is to promote the social development of the child, including effective relationships with both peers and adults (Stinson & Lang, 1994:156). This provides children with hearing loss the opportunity to develop relationships with **all** sections of the community and not only certain groups based on their limited communications skills. The stimulating and highly verbal inclusive setting provides opportunities for social interactions that would not be available in segregated settings (Alper, 1996:5). As interaction is the prerequisite for deriving benefit from the educational placement, the child with a hearing loss in an inclusive system is exposed to social, academic and communicative behaviours within daily academic routines (Brackett, 1997:355). Children with hearing loss are also exposed to appropriate models of behaviour, giving them the opportunity to observe and imitate socially acceptable behaviours of normal hearing children (Alper, 1996:5). Relationships with normal hearing children contribute to the development of social

skills that reduce the likelihood of social isolation and promote future psychological health (Stinson & Lang, 1994:156). All in all the vision for these children, as for other children with specific needs in education, includes the appropriate acquisition of functional academic, social, vocational and recreational skills in order to prepare them to live and work in a variety of integrated settings throughout their lives (Alper, 1996:5).

- **The needs**

“These children deserve to be in an environment where they can communicate with peers, teachers, and staff; to be in an environment that challenges them academically while meeting their social, emotional, and cultural needs; and to be in an environment where they are truly included in every aspect of school life” (Hawkins, Harvey & Cohen, 1994:167).

Although this seems quite evident and ‘straightforward’, it is more easily said than done. As these children present unique characteristics, based primarily on their language and communication development, it is important that the inclusive system should focus on two of their most basic needs and rights: the need and right to develop language and the need to communicate.

According to Siegel (2000:72) ‘communication’ must be recognised as the starting point and the central purpose of the education system. The reason for this is that the importance of communication is reflected in both the consequences of its absence and the benefits of its early and effective development (Siegel, 2000:67). Although other learners who experience barriers to learning such as blindness, physical impairment, etc., may also experience problems with communication, it is important to realise that the learners with a hearing loss differ from these learners as the core of their problem – lack of auditory input – results in communication breakdown. Thus the most important need of these learners is that the system should provide appropriate *communication access*, appropriate *communication assessment* of the child’s communication language, mode, and skills level, as well as an environment that will provide appropriate *communication development*, assisting the child in developing age-level language skills (Siegel, 2000:72).

Such a *communication-rich* and *communication-driven* system implies that specific issues need to be addressed in the development of an inclusive environment for the child with a hearing loss. This is clearly set out in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Factors that address the needs and facilitate inclusive education for the child with a hearing loss

Dimension	Facilitating factors
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For many, regular curricula need only be modified minimally to meet particular needs, where others can be exposed to the regular curricula without change, though the pace of progress through the curriculum has to be altered • Must be presented in forms and at levels to meet the abilities of the child
Acoustic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable listening conditions with relatively low background noise levels (good signal-to-noise ratio) • Sound treatment of classroom with carpeting, draperies, acoustic ceiling tiles, and/or acoustical wall treatments to reduce reverberation • FM system and hearing aid available for the child's use • Seat student away from obvious noise sources
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively small class size, allowing for individual attention • Desks arranged to allow for maximum visibility and audibility • Child seated at desk that allow him/her to see and hear optimally
Visual aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a full-face presentation during board writing and demonstration • Increased and deliberate use of visual aids to compensate for auditory limitations of the hearing loss e.g. television, slides, video, etc. • Lessons supplemented with visual materials e.g. pictures, photographs, writing on the board, etc. • Visual cues to indicate that someone is talking during class discussions • Teacher's face fully visible, well lighted away from glare • Seating arranged to allow the child with a hearing loss visual access to his or her classmates; flexible seating plan as the visual demands of the activity vary
Support services	<p>Appropriate support services readily available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher: Support in terms of all the educational aspects of hearing loss and workable teaching techniques • Child with a hearing loss: Academic support, speech-language intervention and audiological support <p>Team approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of parents in every aspect of decision making • Interdisciplinary team (including the parents) planning, implementing and evaluating an individualised educational plan for the child through collaboration and consultation
Classroom management	<p>Input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide written material of the key concepts, questions, vocabulary, and

	<p>facts when introducing new material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide copies of the teacher’s notes or summarise lessons • Use a ‘buddy-system’ whereby another learner can help the child with a hearing loss with aspects like instructions, etc. • ‘Preview’ and ‘review’ instructional vocabulary and concepts • Repeat information that has been expressed during class discussions • Repeat instructions and check for understanding • Direct classroom discussion by naming participants • Appropriate strategies for handling communication breakdown, e.g. request direct repetition or clarification • Careful preparation of lessons to manage possible vocabulary lag • Facilitate the transmission of information by using demonstration or other visual aids to support the verbal component <p>Output:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow more time to complete assignments • Allow alternatives to oral presentations such as written responses <p>Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide extra time to complete tests • Allow test items to be read to the learner • Keep students’ abilities in mind when constructing the test, e.g. vocabulary • Explain test questions and instructions • View achievement test results in conjunction with audiological, communication and psychological evaluation results to formulate a complete idea of functional skills
<p>Classroom teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptive to having a child with a hearing loss in the classroom, including working closely with support personnel • Willing to make modifications in teaching style • Willing to use an FM system • Given time for in-service training • Expectations appropriate to the child’s functional level

(Compiled from: Ross et al., 1991:73, 152-154, 277; Bunch, 1987:4, 8, 243, 246; Nelson & Soli, 2000:356; Luckner & Denzin, 1998: ; Brackett, 1997:356; East, 1994:167)

Unfortunately these facilitating factors do not fulfil **all** the needs with regard to the inclusion of the child with a hearing loss. Major concerns pertaining to curricular content and progress in school remain and must be taken into account by both the education system and responsible educators (Bunch, 1987:243). This would include aspects such as programme coordination, approaches to curricula, the relationship between the teacher and support personnel, and decision making in the inclusive process (Bunch, 1987:243).

2.6 INCLUDING THE CHILD WITH A HEARING LOSS IN SOUTH AFRICA: THEORETICAL PROBABILITY OR PRACTICAL POSSIBILITY?

From the discussion above it is clear that developing an inclusive educational environment for a child with a hearing loss is not a simple and straightforward process. When determining appropriate educational placements for such a child, it should be recognised that a given classroom could place limits on the child's potential when the facilitating factors (as discussed in Table 2.3) are not present. The absence of one or more of these factors could well be caused by the unique barriers to learning that arise from the South African context, thereby questioning the feasibility of successful inclusion of the child with a hearing loss.

Apart from the general barriers to learning that have been identified in the South African context and discussed in paragraph 2.3, the following specific aspects need to be taken into account:

- The education of children with hearing loss has been characterised by a continuing controversy regarding the *methods of communication* (English, 1995:32; Samson-Fang et al., 2000:80). It is not the aim here to add to this particular discussion except where it relates to the South African context and the question in hand.

As stated before, an inclusive setting should provide all children with full and unlimited language and communication access. Hearing learners can communicate directly with all their teachers and peers through oral communication. The standard for access to communication for the child with a hearing loss shouldn't be any different. Therefore it is clear that the system has to make provision for the child who uses oral communication as well as for those children using Sign Language. Recent research indicating that 47% of teachers in specialised education for children with hearing loss in South Africa use Sign Language as a medium of language instruction further emphasises this fact. The problem with this philosophy is that the mere provision of interpreters would not

render the setting inclusive (Innes, 1994:155), as the limitations of even high-quality signing actually represent a situation that is 'inherently unequal' (Innes, 1994:155). This is because the use of an interpreter tends to be a one-way process, restricting the free communication between teacher and learner. As language is learned through interaction with teachers and others, those who are already experiencing language problems may not learn language by using an interpreter. Learners are not likely to be exposed to all relevant material in classes and to encode and comprehend the material at a level similar to that of hearing classmates (Patrie, 1993 in Stinson & Lang, 1994:158). Such significant communication barriers mean that while there is exposure to classroom activities, language and curriculum, children with hearing loss are often not able to benefit. Interaction with peers, which is crucial to the child's overall development, is also limited as the peers don't have any signing proficiency (Hawkins, Harvey & Cohen, 1994:166) and the interpreter cannot be present in all situations.

The problem is further aggravated by the fact that there is currently a very limited supply of qualified interpreters in South Africa and only a few teachers in inclusive teaching who can use Sign Language (DEAFSA, 1997). Supporters of inclusion often try to address this problem by regarding the teacher's role as a possible substitute for interpreters in using Sign Language. It is an unrealistic perception to think that the teachers of inclusive schools can learn to be fluent users of Sign Language in such a manner that the educational progress can be successfully accomplished (Hawkins et al., 1994:166). Statements like this only expose a lack of understanding of the complex process of acquiring a totally new language and trivialise the learning of Sign Language.

All the issues regarding the communication system of the child with a hearing loss in inclusive education appear to be limiting factors in the process. Whatever communication system is to become the means of instruction, it is important that such a system should be examined and assessed in terms of increased efficiency in instruction (Bunch, 1987:7), provision of effective communication and meeting the needs of all children with hearing loss (Siegel, 2000:65).

- Another aspect that may influence the success of the inclusive process is the dual role of *early identification* and *early intervention* (Yoshinago-Itano, 1999:317). As discussed (refer to 2.4), these two factors play a pivotal role in the successful inclusion of the child with a hearing loss. The reality in South Africa is currently unresolved and incomplete: although the academic importance is realised, early identification and early intervention still need to be addressed to the full. Without a universal newborn hearing screening programme in South Africa (or a realistic substitute allowing for the South African situation), the outcomes for a congenitally deaf infant are bleak, as research has indicated that without such a programme it is possible that the average age of identification will only be 11-19 months for children with known risk factors and 15-19 months for children without risk (Harrison & Roush, 1996 in Samson-Fang et al., 2000:78). Even identification by this age will not yield any anticipated outcomes, as appropriate intervention is not always available.
- The *involvement and attitudes* of South African *parents* are further crucial aspects that must be taken into account. Lack of parental involvement and failure to recognise parents as equal members of the team can be detrimental to the inclusive process of the child with a hearing loss (Colorado Department of Education, 2002:13; East, 1994:167) This stems from the fact that the parents must serve important roles as the 'advocates' for a child who may not be able to fight for him/herself as a result of possible communication problems. In addition to the strategies already proposed by the White Papers on Education and Training to address this aspect, it is also important to realise that parents must be supported to maintain their continued involvement throughout the school years and learn strategies for working effectively with their child (Ross et al., 1991:168). However, parents need to feel confident of their ability to effectively take part in the whole inclusive process, before they can be enlisted successfully in this capacity (Ross et al., 1991:168).
- In a developing country, *economic factors* can complicate the inclusion of a child with a hearing loss. The estimated cost of providing educational and support services for a learner with specific needs could be two to three times more than

the cost of education for a learner without specific needs (Chaikind, Danielson & Brauen, 1993, in Eleweke & Rodda, 2002:117). In a country where financial resources are limited, a well-structured funding arrangement will have to be in place before the needs of the learner with a hearing loss can be met in the inclusive classroom. As already indicated in paragraph 2.3, hearing aids and assistive devices – important prerequisites for successful inclusion - are quite expensive.

- “One of the most difficult problems encountered... is the determination of which children are to be considered candidates for a regular class placement. Instrumentation and selection procedures need further development” (Nix, 1976, in Bunch, 1987:248). Some children with hearing loss will be good candidates for the experience. Others will not, as the *diversity of the population* comprises a diversity of needs. It would appear to be sensible to define criteria for placement in inclusive programmes. This will maximise the opportunity for learners who can benefit from inclusive education to be selected, and minimise the possibility of accepting learners for whom inclusion would be a negative experience (Bunch, 1987:247).
- Finally, it seems that there are various dynamics that affect the appropriate placement and support of learners with specific needs (Bunch, 1987:245). Although primarily identified in the USA context, some of these problems may well apply to the South African context. They include realities such as the following (Bunch, 1987:244; Colorado Department of Education, 2002:2):
 - Lack of sufficient time for support teams to support inclusion effectively
 - Lack of support by administrators
 - Difficulty in accurately monitoring and reporting progress
 - Differences in opinion among parties involved
 - Lack of national programme guidelines to promote standards of practice for

including children with hearing loss

- Lack of a national framework to provide appropriate teacher pre-service and in-service training

The above factors must be dealt with directly and sensitively by those planning for the educational inclusion of the child with a hearing loss (Bunch, 1987:245).

From this discussion it is clear that a lot is still to be done before the vision of a child with a hearing loss in inclusive education in South Africa can be achieved. A child with a hearing loss can not be included in a regular classroom, *unless* that classroom is welcoming and supporting; *unless* the teacher is trained and positive about inclusion; *unless* an individualised programme designed to address the learning needs and styles of the child is put in place, and *unless* the support services and materials necessary to support inclusion are available as and when needed (Bunch, 1994:150). “If attempts were made to place children in classrooms where these requirements were not met, those who advocate inclusion would consider that both the theory and practice of the concept were being abused“ (Bunch, 1994:150). The inclusion of a child with a hearing loss in South Africa will then remain a **theoretical probability**, and will never achieve the status of a **practical possibility....**

2.7 CONCLUSION

Inclusive education is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end. As stated elsewhere in this chapter, it implies a sense of belonging and acceptance and therefore has to do with how educators and the system respond to individual differences. Moving into this new paradigm in South Africa, it is important to realise that renewal and change must be coordinated, comprehensive and efficient. It must present a clear and strong moral imperative to ‘do the right thing’ – that is, to promote the quality of life of the learner with specific needs and his family in order to become part of the mainstream education communities.

This would include children with a hearing loss, an unusually complicated group to include in ordinary classrooms. “This difficulty arises, not from lack of interest, lack of potential, or inappropriate behavioral characteristics, but, from the incapacitating effect of being cut off from normal auditory appreciation of the sounds of the world” (Bunch, 1987:11).

Regardless of the unique characteristics of children with hearing loss, inclusive education implies that *all* learners should have access to the core curriculum. Respect for these individual differences, needs, abilities and capacities, as well as the notion that all learners learn in different ways, should drive the decisions that schools make about organisation and the education community’s conduct with regard to the inclusion of children with a hearing loss. A sincere endeavour to actualise the emerging vision will result in inclusive school communities grounded in democratic principles and the constructs of social justice, able to provide equal educational opportunities for all learners, including those with a hearing loss.