

CHAPTER 3

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE TEACHER OF THE CHILD WITH A HEARING LOSS

“I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions which they have delighted in explaining to their colleagues, which they have proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabric of their lives”

- Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) -

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Change is never easy, as it involves a process that takes time, sometimes up to several years, rather than a single occurrence or event (Villa & Thousand, 1992:112). It involves more than just programmes, material, technology or equipment, but is primarily about individuals in an established system. It is highly personal, affects people, is viewed differently by each participant and requires personal growth. Yet change is inevitable when innovative practices demonstrate greater effectiveness than past services (Ryndak & Alper, 1996:xiii).

For years, education systems worldwide have provided special education and related services to students with special needs (Ryndak & Alper, 1996:xiii). As discussed in Chapter 2, reform in education has led to a move away from segregation of learners with disabilities in special classes toward the inclusion of such learners in general education.

In spite of the initiation of new policies and curricula, this process of change has

raised numerous questions about the role and responsibilities of school personnel in providing appropriate education for all learners enrolled in the ordinary schools (Daane & Beirne-Smith, 2001:331). As agents of change in the education situation, it is not surprising to find that teachers have many concerns about the implementation of these new initiatives (Forlin, 1998:87). The reason for this is that 'change' is difficult to bring about in schools and classrooms as it requires simultaneous reforms in professional development, curriculum, learner support services, classroom management, along with a change in teacher attitudes, beliefs, values and knowledge. (Fullan & Miles, 1992 in Weiner, 2003:13; Reynolds, 2001:466).

It is specifically the last-mentioned aspects that may act either to facilitate or constrain the implementation of inclusive policies, as the success of such a challenging programme depends on the co-operation and commitment of those most directly involved (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000:278). The teacher's knowledge, beliefs and values are brought to bear in creating the effective learning environment for pupils, and thus they are a crucial influence in the development of an inclusive system (Reynolds, 2001:466).

Against this background, the purpose of this Chapter is to explore the current situation regarding the teacher in inclusive education in South Africa, with a specific focus on the challenges the teacher of the child with a hearing loss has to face. Firstly, the Chapter will review the larger body of research on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion in order to elucidate some of the factors that might impact on the formation of these attitudes. Secondly, the Chapter will focus specifically on the teacher of the child with a hearing loss in inclusive education, followed by a discussion of teachers' knowledge of and attitudes towards this unique population. The essential competencies necessary to teach these children will be suggested and discussed. As the South African context presents unique problems in the development of an inclusive system (discussed in Chapter 2), the demands posed to the teacher of the child with a hearing loss in the South African context will also be discussed.

3.2 THE TEACHER AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

As explained in Chapter 2, education systems used to be constructed to include some children and exclude others. The differentiation implied that some children 'could not cope' within the ordinary education system because of their individual deficits. The idea of separation between special schools and ordinary schools promoted a traditional and medical view of special needs as attention was focused on the problem affecting the individual child (Carrington, 1999:257). This medical model has influenced teacher training and beliefs, as well as attitudes and practices in education.

Fortunately this has changed as the development of inclusive education gained momentum in recent years. It has become clear that teachers are the *key element* in the successful implementation of the inclusive policies (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:130; Swart et al., 2002:177; Marshall, Ralph & Palmer, 2002:201) This is because the regular education classroom has become the *primary* context within which inclusive education has to be implemented (Sands et al., 2000:26). Teachers are now obliged to seek ways to instruct all students in their classrooms (Brownlee & Carrington, 2000:99), giving special attention to the physical environment, instructional strategies employed, classroom management techniques, as well as educational collaboration (Voltz et al., 2001:7). These changes must result in fundamental alterations in the way teachers think about knowledge, teaching, learning and their role in the inclusive classroom (Carrington, 1999:260).

Teachers are often expected to accept new policies and practices and cope with these changes without giving much consideration to their personal beliefs and rights (Forlin, Hattie & Douglas, 1996:2). It is clear that the development of inclusive education has the potential to unsettle teachers and this could prevent overall school development and reform (Carrington, 1999:260).

It is therefore necessary that education reformers obtain more than a basic understanding of the classroom environment and proposed outcomes (Carrington, 1999:259). They should consider not only changes to the curriculum and methods or assessment, but also the teacher's fundamental beliefs, attitudes and knowledge

(Carrington, 1999:259).

3.2.1 Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion

“People’s perceptions determine their actions” (Williams & Finnegan, 2003:40). It is argued that a person’s perceptions and attitudes are often related directly to learning experiences provided by the environment and the generalised belief systems of the society (Schechtman & Or, 1996 in Swart et al., 2002:177), while they also have a direct influence on the way in which one responds to the world. Therefore it seems that ‘attitudes’ may have a cognitive (learned) component, an emotional (affective) component and a component of observable behaviour (Swart et al., 2002:178; Opdal, Wormnaes & Habayeb, 2001:144). In other words, if the teacher feels positive about a certain aspect (based on his/her belief system), it will have a positive influence on his/her behaviour.

In terms of inclusive education it can be accepted that teachers’ perceptions of inclusive policies will not only determine their acceptance of inclusive policies, but will also affect their commitment to implement such policies (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:130). Furthermore, the teachers’ attitudes towards learners with specific needs appear to influence the type and quality of teacher-learner interactions, directly impacting on the learners’ educational experiences and opportunities (Cook, 2001:204; Reynolds, 2001:466).

Research reveals important information about teachers’ attitudes that have to be taken into account by policy makers who tend to focus on knowledge, skills and practical support without giving much recognition to implicit needs and emotional aspects (Swart et al., 2002:178; Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001:213). This data will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.2.1.1 Research findings in foreign countries

Research on professional attitudes toward mainstreaming/inclusion undertaken in several foreign countries has provided a wide range of information in this area.

As teachers' attitudes towards integration and inclusion have received continued interest over the past 20 years, the review presented here cannot possibly be complete. The aim is also not to draw fixed generalised conclusions, since studies conducted in different countries cannot possibly be compared to one another given the variations and differences in their education systems, policies and philosophies. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the two terms 'integration' and 'inclusion' are often used interchangeably and it is not clear if they have common meaning across national boundaries (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:131). As the term 'inclusion' has superseded the term 'integration' in the vocabulary of recent education systems, taking on a wider significance and popularity within a human rights discourse and having broader social and political value, the focus of this discussion will mainly be on the teachers' attitudes towards 'inclusion'.

In general it seems that a majority of teachers support the idea of inclusion, but foresee problems in its practical implementation. In their meta-analysis of teacher attitudes in the USA, Canada and Australia, which included 28 studies published between 1958 and 1995, Schruggs and Mastropieri (1996:11) reported that two-thirds of the teachers (n=10560) surveyed agreed with the general concept of mainstreaming/inclusion. Responses appeared to vary according to whether these practices were applied to their own classes and to different disabling conditions. Only one-third of the teachers believed they had sufficient time, skills training and resources necessary for implementing any policy regarding mainstreaming/inclusion.

Teachers with a negative view of the process of inclusion seem to link their attitude to active experiences of inclusion. Vaughn et al. (1996, in Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:134) determined – through the use of focus groups interviews – that the majority of teachers, who were not actively involved in inclusive practices, had strong negative feelings about inclusion and that "...the decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities" (Avramidis et al., 2000b:280). Several factors were

determined that would affect the success of inclusion, namely class size, inadequate resources, lack of teacher preparation and the extent to which all students would benefit from inclusion.

However, it appears that the implementation of inclusive practices often resulted in positive changes in teacher attitudes. Villa et al. (1996:10) indicated in their study that although teachers appeared to be negative in general, the implementation of inclusive practices often resulted in their attitudes turning positive at the end of the implementation cycle, once they have gained the professional expertise needed to implement the inclusive philosophy. These findings were confirmed by a study undertaken by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000a:207), which indicated that educating learners with special needs in inclusive settings resulted in positive changes in teacher attitudes. Although a high level of experienced teaching in inclusive classrooms is associated with higher rates of concern for included learners with special needs, it does not guarantee positive attitudes as teachers with a great deal of negative inclusive experience may be less likely to be concerned about their included students (Cook et al., 2000:20).

General aspects of concern appear to be the rights of not only the learner with specific needs but also the rights of the other learners in the classroom and their own rights as teachers (Forlin, 1998:103). Teachers are concerned about their own expectations regarding their role during inclusive practices, as they need to be accountable and responsible for the learner with specific needs as well as for their regular class learners. Their perceived lack of knowledge and personal efficacy regarding the education of a learner with specific needs appears to be their biggest concern (Forlin, 1998:103).

On the assumption that teachers' attitudes can have a significant effect on the success of education policies, some researchers focused on the attitudes of *student teachers*, as they were likely to have had limited experience of implemented inclusive programmes (Avramidis et al., 2000b:281; Marshall, Stojanovik & Raplh, 2002:478). The data revealed that the participants appeared to be positive towards the overall concept of inclusion. They agreed about the importance of developing a new 'ethos' if an inclusive education system was to be developed and that radical

change was needed in the organisation of schools while implementing inclusive education. However, the results also indicated the participants' lack of confidence in meeting the individual requirements of children with specific educational needs (Avramidis et al., 2000b:289) Those participants, who perceived themselves as competent enough to teach in an inclusive setting, appear to hold positive attitudes towards inclusion. If attitudes are seen as developing out of interaction between knowledge, skills and experience, these results imply that newly qualified teachers must have appropriate levels of knowledge experience and skills before being able to support learners with specific educational needs in an inclusive setting (Avramidis et al., 2000b:289).

3.2.1.2 Research findings in South Africa

Only a limited number of studies have been done in South Africa on the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education.

It is clear that teachers lack adequate knowledge, skills and training for effective implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. A comprehensive study conducted by Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001:213) revealed that teachers (n=2 577) in South Africa have a definite lack of knowledge about issues relating to inclusive education. Furthermore, the teachers felt unprepared and unequipped to teach in inclusive classrooms as a result of their lack of training, lack of time, large classes and lack of teacher experience. Fear of not being able to manage diversity resulted in feelings of hopelessness and in learners being referred for assessments by specialists and placements in special programmes (Swart et al., 2002:183). Other specific concerns associated with attitudes, included the lack of educational and teacher support, insufficient facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices. Negative attitudes and labelling resulted from misconceptions and assumptions about learners with specific educational needs and the potential effect of inclusion on these learners as well as on other learners in the classroom (Swart et al., 2002:185).

A further study identifying the possible stressors for South African teachers in the implementation of an inclusive education revealed the four most stressful areas as administrative issues, the behaviour of the learner, the teacher's perceived self-

competence and the parents of the learner with specific educational needs (Engelbrecht et al., 2000:1). Administrative issues that worried the teachers included having to take full responsibility for the learner with specific educational needs as well as for all the other learners in the class. Further administrative issues included adapting the curriculum, adjusting lesson plans and obtaining funds for necessary support. With regard to the learners' behaviour, poor communication skills and short attention span appeared to place stress on teachers. The teachers' perceived lack of competence as a result of reported inadequate pre-service or in-service training to prepare them for inclusive education also caused them to stress. Issues pertaining to the parents of the learners with specific needs included limited contact with parents, and parents' perceived lack of understanding of the learner's capabilities (Engelbrecht et al., 2001:82).

On closer investigation of these research results, it appears that teachers in South Africa still tend to think in terms of the previous education system when it was accepted that some learners 'could not cope' within the ordinary education system because of their individual deficits (refer to Chapter 2). The idea of separation between special schools and ordinary schools promoted a traditional view of special needs with the attention on the child with the problem (Carrington, 1999:257). This traditional medical model influenced teacher training and beliefs, attitudes and practices in education. It is thus not strange that teachers presently lack adequate skills and knowledge, as well as positive attitudes about inclusive education.

3.2.2 Factors influencing teachers' attitudes

It is clear from the discussion above that none of the results of the studies attempting to assess the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education have been conclusive. One important fact that emerges from these research results is that teacher's beliefs and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusion since they are likely to affect their commitment to implement it. The results also suggest that teachers' attitudes might be influenced by a variety of factors. Following the typology framework suggested by Avramidis and Norwich (2002:134), research findings regarding factors that influence teacher attitudes are discussed in terms of

'child-related', 'teacher-related' and 'educational environment-related' factors (refer to Fig 3.1) in an attempt to clarify the relationship between selected factors and teacher attitudes.

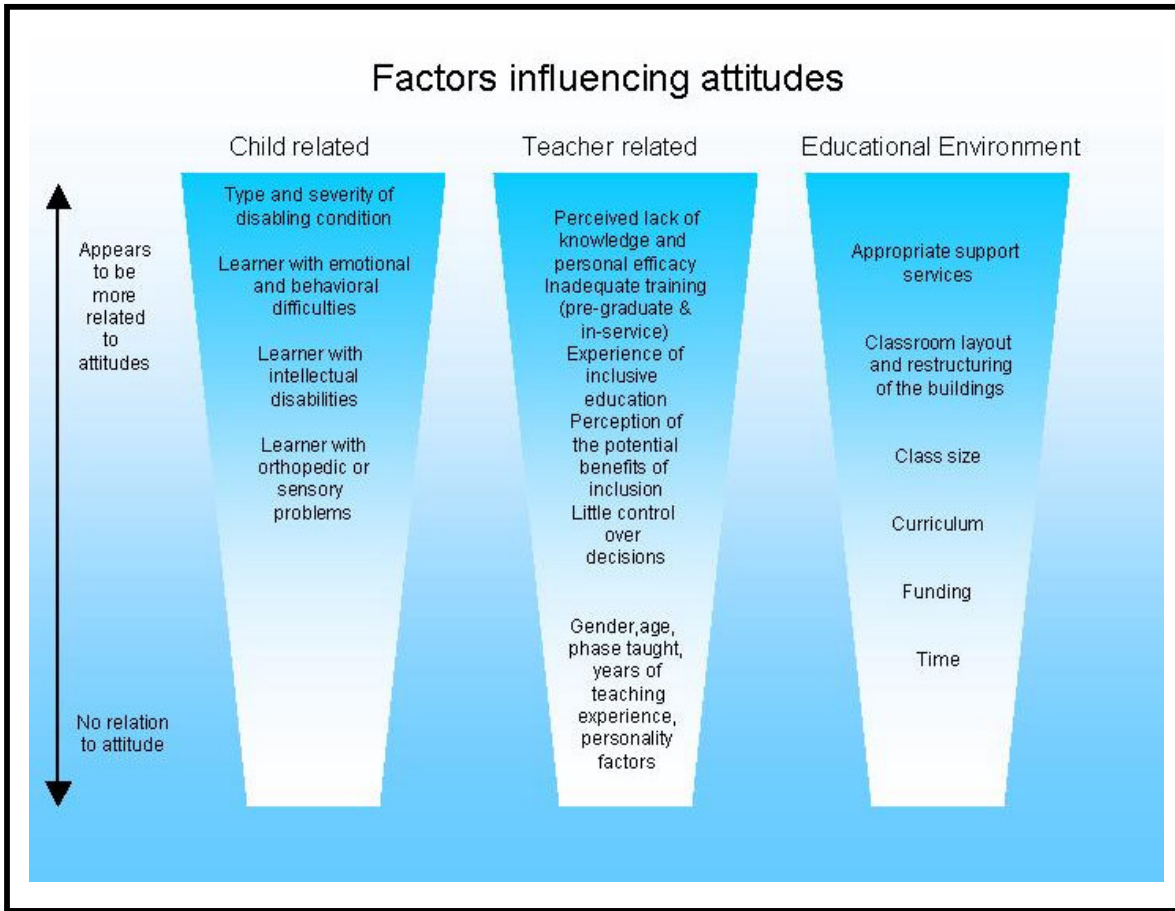


Figure 3.1 Factors influencing teacher attitudes towards inclusive education

- **Child-related variables**

The attitudes of teachers towards learners with specific educational needs are considered a very important teacher attribute to the success of inclusive education (Briggs et al., 2002:2; Cook, 2001:204). Child-related variables that were found to influence teacher attitudes include the type/nature and severity of the child's condition that determine his/her specific educational needs (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:134; Briggs et al., 2002:2; Opdal, Wormnaes & Habayeb, 2001:145). Teachers were found to be negative towards teaching learners with emotional and behavioural

difficulties and learners with intellectual disability than towards teaching learners with orthopaedic problems and sensory problems (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:135; Briggs et al., 2002:3). Briggs et al. (2002:4) go on to speculate that these findings could possibly be the result of the specific classroom management and/or discipline issues that learners might experience in the classroom, e.g. understanding and obeying classroom rules. On the other hand, learners with orthopaedic and sensory problems pose certain challenges to the teacher with regard to instruction and not necessarily with regard to classroom management and discipline. Such learners are treated with more positive attitudes from teachers.

- **Teacher-related variables**

Researchers have also examined the relationship between specific teacher-related variables such as gender, age, phase taught, years of teaching experience and teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000a:207; Avramidis et al., 2000b:280; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002:136-140). The results were inconsistent and none of the results mentioned could be significantly related to the teachers' attitudes or be regarded as strong predictors of attitudes.

However, the changes in educational philosophy regarding inclusive education have resulted in teachers - even experienced ones – being unfamiliar with new initiatives and the demands for rapid change in their roles. As a result they feel that they lack the necessary knowledge and personal efficacy to develop appropriate curricula and plan effectively for inclusive education (Forlin, 1998:103).

Teachers' perceived lack of knowledge and personal efficacy is linked to their training (Forlin, 1998:103) and experience in inclusive education practices (indicated in 3.2.1.1). Those who perceive themselves as competent enough to educate learners with specific educational needs (based on the fact that they were trained to do so) appear to maintain positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000a:207). Avramidis et al. (2000a:207) proved this statement in their research by identifying a specific relationship between teacher training in terms of inclusive education practices, and significantly higher positive attitudes. The importance of effective training in forming positive attitudes towards inclusion is also supported by

research results achieved by Avramidis and Norwich (2002:143); Briggs et al. (2000:4), Forlin (1998:89), Rose (2001:149), Marshall, Stojanovik and Ralph (2002:486) and Schruggs and Mastropieri (1996:12).

A further aspect that appears to influence teachers' attitudes involves their concerns about the effect of inclusive education on both the learner with specific educational needs and the regular learner in class (Forlin, 1998:102). This is linked to the fact that teachers tend to agree with statements about possible problems with inclusion and disagree or have mixed feelings about the potential benefits of inclusion (D'Alonzo, Goirdano & Vanleeuwen, 1997:1). Although these factors are not direct measures of support for inclusion, they should be considered, as well as the fact that teachers feel that they have little or no control over decisions regarding inclusive practices (Forlin, 1998:89).

- **Variables related to the education environment**

At this point it is already clear that developing any inclusive system places a heavy burden on teachers' shoulders – particularly during the initial stages. This is a result of fundamental restructuring of the education system and environment. Aspects that are inherent to the education system and that show up clearly in literature as determining factors in the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion, include appropriate support (D'Alonzo et al., 1997:6; Marshall, Ralph & Palmer, 2002:212; Villa et al., 1996:11), classroom layout (Avramidis et al., 2000a:206), class size (Avramidis et al., 2000a:206), curriculum (D'Alonzo et al., 1997:6), as well as funding and time (Avramidis et al., 2000a:206; Marshall, Ralph & Palmer, 2002:212).

3.3 THE TEACHER OF THE CHILD WITH A HEARING LOSS

Despite the significant amount of research about teachers' attitudes and knowledge regarding inclusive education, studies rarely consider teachers' needs, knowledge and understandings of *specific learners*. Furthermore, when such studies have been carried out, they are usually restricted to a single school or pair of schools (Dockrell

& Lindsay, 2001:371). Research in this regard, based on the nature of the learners' needs, would help to understand the range of demands made on the teacher in the inclusive classroom.

One group of children who experience complex patterns of educational needs are those with a hearing loss (discussed in Chapter 2). They are particularly interesting as they bring together professionals from the fields of both health (audiologists, speech-language pathologists) and education (teachers). The audiologist and the speech and language therapist are trained to be aware of the unique needs of this population with regard to language, speech and communication, which are a result of not being able to hear adequately. On the other hand, most teachers receive very little or no training at all in the needs of learners with hearing loss. As a result such learners pose particular problems for teachers since their needs are not always obvious. Research in this field is necessary – not only into cooperation strategies between teachers, audiologists and speech and language therapists, but also into the knowledge and attitudes of teachers as a primary resource for addressing learners' needs.

3.3.1 Teachers knowledge of hearing loss and attitudes towards hearing loss

As indicated in Chapter 2, all over the world children with hearing loss are placed in inclusive education to an increasing extent. This makes huge demands on teachers, since "... classrooms teachers have the responsibility for assessing, counselling and educating these children and thus become a critical link in the effort to place these students into the mainstream" (Lass et al., 1985:211).

As is the case with all other learners with specific educational needs, this population also has certain needs that have to be addressed in the teaching structures (cf. Table 2.3). Research (Martin et al., 1988 in Luckner, 1992:26) reveals, however, that teachers believe they have not been sufficiently prepared for and are not able to cope with teaching children with hearing loss. "These teachers are well-prepared to fulfil the role of teacher for hearing students but may feel ill-prepared to meet the needs of hearing-impaired children" (Conway, 1990:131). They would feel more confident to teach such children only if specific support services, such as assistance of a qualified

teacher or audiologist and even in-service training were available. Most teachers have never even been in contact with children with hearing loss, nor have they had any suitable training to equip them to teach individuals with hearing loss (Bunch, 1987:256; Luckner, 1991:302; Ross, 1991:36).

A number of studies (Chorost, 1988:8; Luckner, 1991:302; Martin et al., 1988:94) show that teachers in inclusive education have mixed feelings at the thought of having a child with hearing loss in their classrooms. In spite of a generally positive attitude towards the idea of educational inclusion of the child with hearing loss, most teachers display a measure of opposition, fear and other negative emotions (Martin et al., 1988:94; Chorost, 1988:9. The latter stem from a feeling of inadequacy and a lack of knowledge when faced with this new situation in the classroom (Chorost, 1988:8). According to Chorost (1988:8) statements such as the following are typical of the mainstream teacher: "I felt extremely inadequate... since I hadn't any experience or training in this area. ... I was unsure of how (the child) and I would interact ... and concerned about my lack of knowledge."

It is clear that there is a close connection between a lack of knowledge and the teacher's attitude. Research shows that teachers' knowledge of a variety of aspects regarding loss of hearing is limited. Some of these are:

- The cause of hearing loss.
- The incidence of hearing loss.
- The effect of hearing loss on speech and language development.
- Intervention procedures geared towards the child with a hearing loss.
- The importance of amplification.
- The unique needs and problems of children with hearing loss in the classroom.

- The role of speech reading, etc.

Some teachers think that they have to neglect other learners in favour of the child with a hearing loss in order to provide the necessary assistance and support. At times this can lead to feelings of guilt and frustration. - "Be prepared to feel guilty about neglecting your other students... never being satisfied with your performance, and feeling extremely frustrated" (Chorost, 1988:9).

The success of inclusive education for the child with a hearing loss depends to a large extent on the manner in which the teacher accepts the challenge. A positive mindset is directly related to the teacher's knowledge and capabilities when teaching a child with a hearing loss (Luckner, 1991:303). According to Gallagher (1985:64), the positive attitude and knowledge of the teacher can be developed by providing the necessary training in aspects such as dealing with the presence and specific needs of such a child in the classroom, behaviour-controlling techniques, teaching techniques, etc.

A lack of appropriate training, as well as negative attitudes and resistance on the part of the teacher usually leads to corresponding negative attitudes in the classroom and the school (Harrison, 1993:33). Thus teachers are often overwhelmed and exasperated – feeling defeated even before they started with the process (Kretschmer, 1997:400). As a result, when faced with these learners, the teachers feel compelled to alter their teaching styles and lower their expectations as they are at a loss as to where to begin.

3.3.2 Essential competencies for teaching children with hearing loss

The first obvious steps to consider when addressing the preceding problem are to determine what has to be changed in order to facilitate the implementation of an inclusive philosophy. As *institutional* and *systemic* change is a given fact in the process of inclusive education (as discussed in Chapter 2), the next subject of change appears to be the *teacher of the child with a hearing loss*. This, however, is more difficult and entails a reflective process of identifying and defining the responsibilities of the teacher in the inclusive classroom. Based on the 'vision' of inclusive education for the child with a hearing loss as well as the 'needs' of this population (refer to Par 2.5.2), the following

responsibilities of the teacher have been identified from relevant literature (Christensen & Luckner, 1995:30):

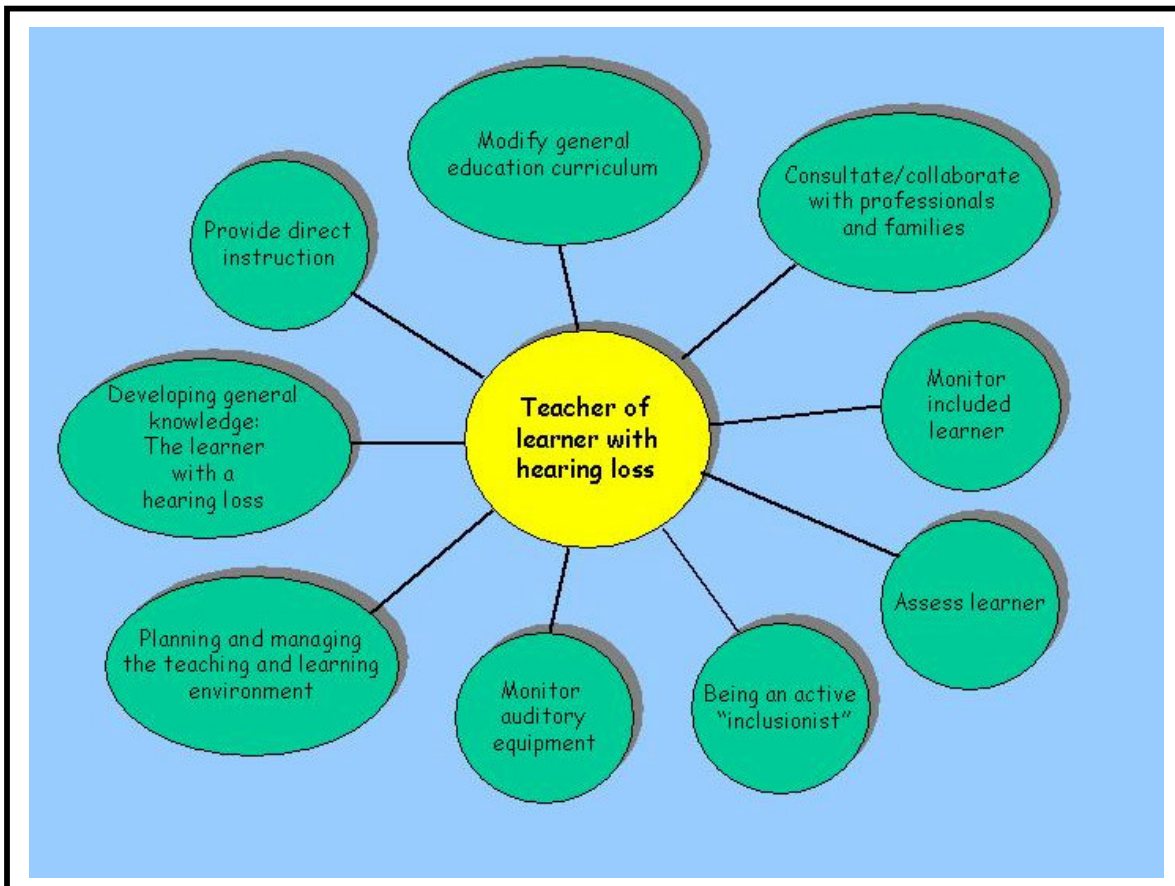


Figure 3.2 Responsibilities of the teacher of the child with a hearing loss in inclusive education

Based on these responsibilities (Fig 3.2), the following competencies were identified from relevant literature with regard to each responsibility.

Table 3.1 Essential competencies for teaching children with hearing loss

Role of the teacher	Essential competencies
<p>Developing and implementing general knowledge: The child with a hearing loss</p>	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current educational definitions of learners with hearing loss, including identification criteria, labelling issues • The basic anatomy and physiology of the hearing system; audiometric testing measures and interpretation of results, as well as the aetiology of hearing • Characteristics/consequences of a hearing loss • Various theories and philosophic orientations regarding the teaching of the learner with hearing loss • Cultural aspects of being deaf • Various aetiologies that can result in additional sensory, motor and learning differences in learners with hearing loss • Effect of age of onset of hearing loss, identification of hearing loss, and provision of services for the development of the child with a hearing loss <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply understanding of theory (as above) to teaching of the learner with a hearing loss in the classroom
<p>Being an active 'inclusionist'</p>	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policies and legal regulations regarding human rights and the development of an inclusive education system <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show concern for the included learner • Have faith in himself/herself and the included learner
<p>Providing direct instruction</p>	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of specialised materials for learners with hearing loss • Linguistic and non-linguistic communication components used by learners with hearing loss • Procedures and technologies required for direct instruction • Information regarding existing communication modes (including Sign Language) used by learners with hearing loss • Techniques of residual hearing and supported instructional strategies that can be used for learners with hearing loss <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select, design and use appropriate media, materials and resources to teach the learner with a hearing loss • Modify instruction techniques to meet physical, cognitive, cultural and communication needs of child with a hearing loss • Facilitate independent communication behaviour
<p>Modifying general education curriculum</p>	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication features of learner with hearing loss, which are necessary to enhance cognitive, emotional and social development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to facilitate cognitive and communicative development in learners with hearing loss <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply understanding of theory (as above) in modifying the curriculum in order to meet the needs of the child with a hearing loss
Monitor included learner	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy regulations and guidelines regarding unbiased assessments for learners with hearing loss <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer appropriate assessment tools to identify the learner's strengths and limitations in the classroom
Consultation and collaboration (parents and professionals)	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effect and role of families in the overall development of learner with hearing loss Roles and responsibilities of teachers and support personnel in the education of the learner with a hearing loss Broader service provision to the learner with a hearing loss <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult and collaborate with support personnel and parents
Planning and managing the teaching and learning environment	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptual (visual, tactile, auditory) factors characteristic to the learner with hearing loss, which can be used to enhance learning Effects of sensory input on the development of language and cognition in learners with hearing loss Knowledge of the acoustic environment in the classroom and the factors which influence it <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an optimal listening environment Select, adapt and implement classroom management strategies, considering the unique needs of the learner with a hearing loss Design a teaching and learning environment that maximises the opportunities for visually-oriented and/or auditory learning
Monitoring auditory equipment	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of hearing aids technology, function and operation of hearing aids and amplifying systems <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the sound amplifying apparatus daily and use appropriately
Evaluating of and training in speech and language	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of normal language and speech development Effect of loss of sensory input on the development of language and cognition

	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the communication, speech and language of the child with a hearing loss• Interpret information obtained during evaluation, to formulate applicable objectives and aims to implement the necessary modifications in the teaching situation• Acquire knowledge of and skills in appropriate stimulation of speech and language in the teaching situation
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Compiled from: Easterbrooks & Radaszewski-Byrne (1995:23-26); Flexer (1992:29-34); Harrison (1993:32-33); Berg (1992:126); Grant (1983:91-101); Sass-Lehrer (1986:233); Grissom & Cochran (1986:269); Hudson & Glomb (1997:442-443); Berry (1992:29-34); Fields (1994:168); Weiner (2003:13).

These knowledge and skills statements for teachers of learners with hearing loss have far-reaching implications at all levels of professional development. Equipping teachers with the relevant knowledge and appropriate skills with regard to their different responsibilities (Figure 3.2) must be regarded as a crucial element of successful inclusive education (Wamae & Kang'ethe-Kamau, 2004:24). However, it is important that this list should undergo future changes in order to establish a credible resource in response to the changing needs of the profession in the South African context.

3.4 THE UNIQUE SOUTH-AFRICAN CONTEXT: THE DEMANDS MADE ON THE TEACHER OF THE CHILD WITH A HEARING LOSS

It is clear from the discussion above that teachers, being the key to the implementation of an inclusive philosophy, are exposed to high levels of occupational stress, not only as a result of being expected to implement the philosophy, but also of being constantly under pressure from changes in society and new policies.

The unique South African context, characterised by ongoing change, poses various demands to teachers. Radical changes in the education system (as discussed in Chapter 2) are apt to take their toll on the well-being of teachers as all these changes bring about serious adjustment problems (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:7). Although legislation and conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education represents a major step forward in the transformation of the South African education system, it is often questioned whether teachers in the class will be able to implement inclusive education (Hay et al.,

2001:213). With the publication of the South African Schools Act in 1996, the demands facing teachers changed radically. Curriculum 2005 with its Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) has added to the challenges posed to the teachers to adjust themselves quickly and to shoulder greater responsibility in terms of aspects such as continuous assessment of learners' progress (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:7).

According to Hay et al. (2001:213), analogies are often drawn between the processes of the implementation of Curriculum 2005 and inclusive education. It is suggested that Curriculum 2005 was perhaps implemented too hastily and without adequate teacher training, leaving the teachers confused and insecure about their task. As a result of not being completely acquainted with the principles of OBE, teachers are faced with several barriers in their work situation. These include the following (Sethosa (2001) & Weeks (2000) in Prinsloo, 2001:345):

- Teachers experience difficulty in seeking and finding their own learning material that is expected to be relevant to the culture, interest and level of development of each learner.
- They struggle to involve parents and communities – a serious barrier to learning already discussed in Chapter 2.
- They are confronted with feelings of inadequacy when required to cope with large numbers of learners of so much diversity.
- As they are sometimes labelled lazy and not trustworthy, they suffer from a lack of self-respect and self-assurance.

In spite of the fact that a number of attempts have been made on government and department level to support and train teachers in this critical phase, they still feel threatened by new demands and experience a sense of powerlessness and of not being in control of their situation (Prinsloo, 2001:345; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:8).

It is feared that the same mistake may be made with the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa (Hay et al., 2001:213). It is not only the whole notion of change in the education system and an increase in responsibilities, but change-on-change beyond the control of most teachers that causes severe occupational stress (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:8). "It is difficult for teachers to regard themselves as having the power to transform, change or control their own practice when they are constantly being directed to implement yet another strategy, with yet another set of rules, under the constant threat that their performance in implementing the latest initiative will be measured..." (Lloyd, 2000: 147). Teachers need to understand the challenge and be empowered to accept the responsibility to act as agents of change in education and society.

However, Hay et al. (2001:214) suggest that the empowerment of teachers has once again been neglected in South African policies regarding inclusive education. Other aspects that are not fully addressed are the demands that teachers face in the performance of their roles in inclusive education as well as the variables that they report as stressful in inclusive education (Engelbrecht et al, 2001:82). Keeping in mind that many developed countries ascribe the problems of establishing an inclusive system to inadequate teacher training and support – even despite the provision of such training and support – it is obvious that serious consideration should be given to the proper training (in-service and pre-service) and support of teachers in the South African context.

In addition, aspects unique to the South-African context make certain demands on the teacher and were indicated by South African teachers as issues that could influence their attitudes (refer to Par 3.2.1.2). These issues include the following:

- Poor physical conditions such as overcrowding, inadequate equipment and inadequate facilities (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:8; Hay et al, 2001:218)
- Abolition of corporal punishment that leads to ineffective disciplinary measures to counteract misbehaviour (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:8)

- Limitation of existing support structures (Engelbrecht et al., 2001:81)
- Changing patterns of family and community life (Swart et al., 2002:185)

With specific reference to the child with a hearing loss in inclusive education, Chapter 2 earlier referred to a variety of stumbling blocks in the South African context that will specifically hinder the task of the teacher raise doubts about the viability of successful inclusion of these learners:

- Lack of necessary funding for teaching assistants who could help relieve the burden laid on the teacher.
- “The accurate transmission of acoustical information in a classroom is imperative for optimal academic achievement” (Crandell & Smaldino, 2000:362). However, communication in classrooms often occurs in less than ideal acoustic conditions. *Inadequate acoustical variables* in the classroom such as reverberation time of the enclosure, the overall level of background noise, the relationship between the level of the teacher’s voice and the background noise, and the distance from the teacher to the child, can result in an inadequate listening environment (Crandell & Smaldino, 2000:362; Nelson & Soli, 2000:356; Palmer, 1997:213). As children spend 45% of the school day engaged in listening activities, they need good, clear signals for speech perception (Berg, 1987 in Palmer, 1997:213). Inadequate acoustic surroundings can therefore encumber the teaching task, especially when teaching the child with a hearing loss. There is also no cost-effective way to improve the listening environment in the ordinary classroom without costly construction and/or class size reduction (Palmer, 1997:215).
- As discussed in Chapter 2, many questions arise regarding the issue of using Sign Language as a *mode of instruction* in inclusive education in the classroom. The fact that teachers in the South African context will most probably have no access to qualified interpreters but will still be expected to tailor their teaching to meet the needs of these learners, illustrates the complexity of the whole situation. A question that arises immediately is whether the teacher, already under

pressure of several educational changes, will have the motivation to learn a new language. A language that cannot, with a view to supporting the child with a hearing loss, help them to acquire parity with their hearing counterparts.

- Although conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of district - based support teams have been conceptualised (Department of Education, 2003:5), the low incidence of hearing loss might affect the appointment of educational audiologists on the team. Even though the literature suggests a ratio of one audiologist for every 75 children (Ross & Calvert, 1977 in Bess & McConell, 1981:205), the possibility exists that there will not be enough educational audiologists to provide the necessary support to the teachers of learners with a hearing loss.

3.5 CONCLUSION

If the practical application of inclusion is to be successful and provide meaningful learning experiences for learners with hearing loss, teachers and prospective teachers need to understand and recognise that they have the power, and the responsibility, to act as agents of change in education (Lloyd, 2000:147). However, inclusive practices involve substantial changes in both attitudes and educational approaches, and to achieve change is difficult. Therefore, it is important that the factors related to teachers' attitudes and their teaching practice, which are essential considerations for successful organisational change, must be taken into account. This chapter focused on these factors, which are now graphically represented in Figure 3.3.

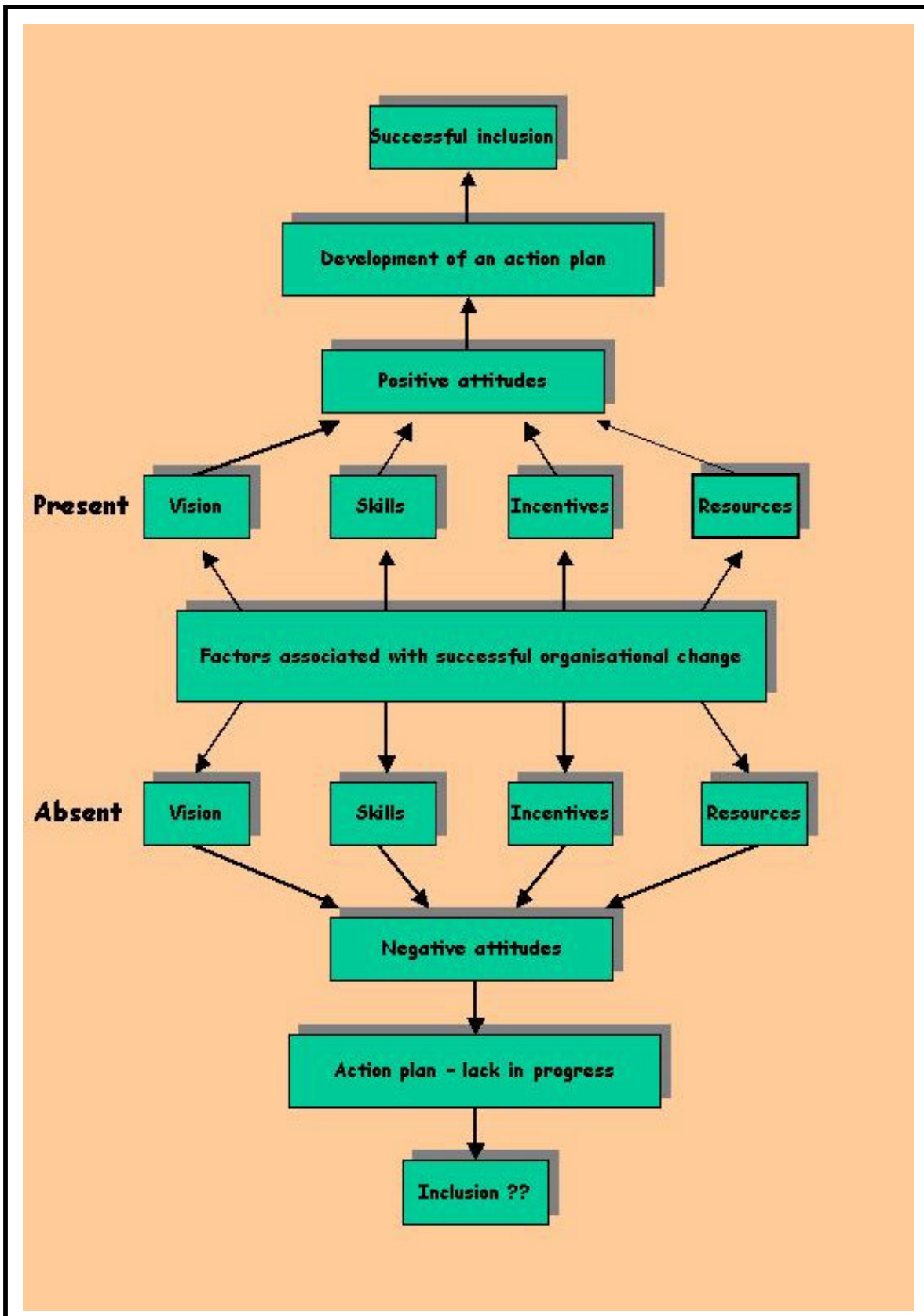


Figure 3.3 Factors associated with successful organisational change

Compiled from: Thousand & Villa, 1995:57-76

As Figure 3.3 illustrates, at least four variables regarding change – vision, skills, incentives and resources – have to be present to ensure successful implementation of the inclusive philosophy. If any of these four variables is left unattended, the result is something other than the desired outcome.

Firstly, “One of the greatest barriers in school reform is the lack of a clear and compelling vision” (Schlechty, 1990 in Thousand & Villa, 1995:57). It is important that a *vision* must be created and communicated in the form of a compelling picture of a desired future (Thousand & Villa, 1995:57) and that a commitment to the policy and desired outcomes be present throughout the system and the school (Graves & Tracy, 1998:222). A vision regarding inclusive education would be based on assumptions such as the following:

- *All* children are able to learn.
- *All* children have the right to be educated in their community’s schools.
- The school system is responsible for addressing the unique needs of *all* children (Thousand & Villa, 1995:59; Sands et al., 2000:31). “Teachers’ beliefs about and acceptance of the policy and philosophy of inclusive education have been identified as a significant predictor of the degree to which they carry out inclusive practices and the outcomes of such practices” (Opdal, Wormnaes & Habayeb, 2001:143).

Secondly, teachers and prospective teachers must be afforded planned opportunities to develop *knowledge* and *skills* that foster positive attitudes for meeting the demands of a changing educational landscape (Briggs et al., 2002:4).

Thirdly, *incentives* that are meaningful to each individual affected by the change must also be present. These include intangibles such as recognition of a teacher’s own increased effectiveness as evidenced by student performance and happiness, professional pride and sense of worth, as well as promotion and financial inducements. *Resources* refer to the provision of sufficient high-quality support

services as well as material resources (e.g. curriculum materials and concepts) and organisational resources (i.e. how the day, week, year and people within the school are organised) to support teachers in the challenge of implementing inclusive education (Thousand & Villa, 1995:66).

In the absence of any of these factors, attempts to implement an inclusive philosophy may result in anxiety, confusion, resistance, frustration and lack of progress in the development of an action plan (Graves & Tracy, 1998:223). The presence of the above four factors would foster positive attitudes, leading to coordinated planning for action and eventually resulting in successful inclusive practices.

“Change is difficult, but inevitable. It is guided first by vision, then by planning, then by action. No matter how much we want to hurry, change is methodical and slower than we might wish. But it does occur.” (Lilly, 1989, in Swart et al., 2002:187).

As remarked repeatedly before, ever-growing numbers of children with a hearing loss are currently being placed in mainstream education. "... classroom teachers have the responsibility for assessing, and counselling and educating these children and thus become a critical link in the effort to place these students into the mainstream" (Lass et al., 1985:211). Thus, the teacher of the child with a hearing loss plays a critically important role in the process of mainstream education.