An exploration of ways in which Waikato primary school principals address the multiple learning requirements of children with special educational needs

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master Educational Leadership
at
The University of Waikato
by
ROSEMARY SYMES

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2014

Abstract

Key words: Special needs, leadership, equity, social justice, moral purpose

Based on research evidence from New Zealand, England and the USA, it is likely that there could be an increasing number of students with special needs enrolling in New Zealand schools. This trend reinforces the need for an additional aspect to the usual leadership practices in New Zealand primary schools.

This research project focuses on the need for effective leadership that is socially just and equitable in addressing the requirements of learners with special needs. The thesis reports on a small scale research project that explored the responses of a number of primary school principals to the issues inherent in providing viable and equitable learning opportunities for students with special needs. The study identifies seven main themes which could aid school leaders in identifying learners with special needs and providing an equitable education.

These key themes include:

Fluidity of student need and a reluctance to categorise and label students; addressing special needs as a specific element of effective leadership; building capacity for change and development; data collection systems are essential for informing decisions; moral purpose and social justice are key drivers in special education; the best learning environment for student with special needs - withdrawal or full inclusion; and limited resourcing requires focused decision making.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank a number of people who have helped me in the completion of this thesis. First of all, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Mr Jeremy Kedian for his invaluable support and contribution, for keeping me on track and imparting words of wisdom and encouragement when needed. I am fortunate to have worked with such a well-respected educational leader and mentor. My sincere thanks also go to the principals and school leaders who made this study possible, sharing their time and knowledge with me so willingly. I congratulate them on their dedication to the education of students with special needs and hope this study inspires further greatness. To Mary Hodgson and Jenny Miller, thank you both for your support as proof readers. To the University of Waikato library and technical support staff, thank you so much for your support and assistance. A very special thank you to the University of Waikato for awarding the Masters Research Scholarship and to the Ministry of Education for awarding me study leave. The financial support has made my study possible.

Finally, I would like to extend a heart-felt thank you to my family, friends and colleagues who have supported and encouraged me. A very special thank you to my parents for instilling in my sister and me the value of education; and to my two children Joshua and Jessica who have been the inspiration behind this research project through their truly remarkable life journeys, overcoming challenges that only they can ever truly understand. Ignoring life's sceptics they continue to show the world the true meaning of 'living with visual impairment'. I am so proud of you both. Jess you were my inspiration to return to University study and complete my degree. Josh as my technical advisor and keeper of sanity, I could not have done this without you. Finally to my dear husband Geoff who has believed in me, encouraged and supported me every day, we have completed this journey together every step of the way, and it is ours to share. Thank you.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

Accelerated Learning in Maths (ALiM)

Assistant Principal (AP)

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Deputy Principal (DP)

Education Review Office (ERO)

English Language learners (ELL)

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Gifted and Talented (GAT)

Group Education Plan (GEP)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Individual Education Plans (IEP)

Learning disability (LD)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Ministry of Education (MOE)

National Administration Guidelines (NAGs)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS)

Perceptual Motor Programme (PMP)

Professional Learning and Development (PLD)

Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB)

Resource Teacher Literacy (RTLit)

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Social Workers in Schools (SWIS)

Special Education Grant (SEG)

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

Special Education Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)

Speech and Language Therapists (SLT)

Supplementary Learning and Support (SLS)

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Context / Background

There is an increasing number of students with special educational needs (SEN) enrolling in New Zealand schools. These students include a broad spectrum of learners, not only those that appear less able but also those that are gifted and talented (GAT). This trend reinforces the need for an additional dimension to the usual leadership practices in New Zealand primary schools. Principals are bound by a professional, ethical and legal requirement of the New Zealand National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) to ensure modified learning environments provide equitable educational opportunities for students identified with special needs (Ministry of Education, 2009b).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) review of special education in 2010, *Success for All – Every school, every child* set a target that by 2014, eighty percent of schools would be doing a good job and none would be doing a poor job of including students with special needs (MOE, 2010b). However, this report coincided with a Government restructure of special education in New Zealand schools in which responsibility for students with special needs was devolved to schools. This was accompanied by reduced resourcing and tightened criteria for accessing support, which has placed extra stress on principals and educators (Anderson, Bush, & Wise, 2001; MOE, 2012a; 2013c).

1.2. Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study is to examine how principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of students with special educational needs. To increase understanding, the terms special educational needs (SEN) and learning disability (LD) will be used synonymously throughout this thesis in recognition of terms used in literature.

Research by Graham-Matheson (2012a), Richards (2012) and Hall (1997) show that the term 'special needs' can lead to preconceptions of the learners' needs. These preconceptions often ignore the contextual issues of inappropriate leadership, teaching techniques and resourcing that exacerbate learning difficulties experienced by students with SEN. In 2012, three percent of the New Zealand's school aged population were recognised as having severe learning difficulties, and yet the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS), only provides funding for the one percent of the school population who have the highest need for special education. This leaves thousands of students with relatively high needs who fail to reach the ORRS threshold, competing for highly contested additional funding (MOE, 2004). The Special Education Grant (SEG), although intended to meet the needs of these students, is a finite amount of money and insufficient to meet their requirements (MOE, 2004). However, the Education Review Office (ERO) suggests that funding as a potential barrier to inclusion, is of secondary importance when compared with the influence of leadership and differentiated teaching for students with high needs (ERO, 2010).

Education has entered an achievement–oriented phase which requires a whole school approach to the professional responsibility of basing intervention on the analysis of performance data (Benjamin, 2002). A report by ERO identified a gap in knowledge concerning leadership practice which informs inclusive learning communities (ERO, 2010). "Approximately half of the 229 schools reviewed demonstrated mostly inclusive practice" while a "further 30 percent of schools" were found to demonstrate "pockets of inclusiveness" leading to less consistent inclusion for students with high needs (ERO, 2010, p. 1). The remaining "20 percent of schools were found to have few inclusive practices" leading to "significant forms of exclusion" for students with high needs (ERO, 2010, p. 26). ERO's findings confirm a report by Lloyd (2006) that disparity between policy rhetoric and practice failed to ensure genuine access to education for students with special needs, and in fact increased exclusionary practice. Chapman (1988) warns that mainstreaming of students with disabilities if not resourced adequately, will deteriorate into 'main dumping' and will severely impact on the learning of students with special needs.

It is anticipated that my research inquiry will help address these issues and will examine whether leadership decisions concerning equitable learning opportunities are influenced by considerations of equality and social justice or ethical, moral and legal guidelines.

It is my intention to gather data using an appropriate research method and sample which includes principals from various categories such as decile rating, composition, socio economic status and special character. The intent of this diverse sample is to ensure a breadth of opinion and does not in any way imply a comparative study. Please note that in New Zealand, nomenclature is changing from 'decile ratings' to 'deprivation indices', but the term decile, which refers to the socio economic status of the community in which the school is located, remains in common usage at the moment.

1.3. Personal background

I have been involved in education for more than thirty years. My focus for this inquiry has stemmed from my passion and experience in the field of special education, and through the identification of a growing need to advocate for children with special learning needs. My interest in special education stems not only from my experience as a classroom teacher and as Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO), eight years as reading recovery teacher, and as an accelerated learning in maths (ALiM) teacher, but also on a personal level. Over this period I have been dedicated to supporting the challenging and inspiring journey of my own two legally blind children through the primary, secondary and tertiary education systems, and into their respective professional careers as electrical engineer and primary school teacher. I have worked closely with support agencies and MOE in securing ORRS funding, and have continued to work alongside support agencies in seeking assistance for other students with special needs. I have found it increasingly difficult to access funding and support, and believe this is an area of national concern for principals, teachers, and parents of children with special needs.

While having experienced inspirational support from some educators, I have also witnessed limitations being imposed on my children as adults by the inability of others to visualise how they would cope in the same situation. Surprisingly, this exclusionary practice has generally come from educators who promote inclusivity. It is difficult to understand how a highly esteemed teacher training facility with policies encouraging inclusive education for students with disabilities would refuse to train a visually impaired graduate student on the grounds that she would not cope in a mainstream classroom due to her visual-impairment. Instead they would advise her to apply to a training institute with 'lower standards' which would allow her to teach in a 'special school'. What message does this send to students with special needs?

I believe that as educators it is our responsibility to increase our knowledge in leading inclusive learning communities, so that we can support students to achieve in an environment where they are competing for scarce resources. I value the opportunity to complete this research inquiry and consider my research will offer insight and guidance for others. It is my belief that attitudes must change.

1.4. Significance of study

This inquiry will potentially make a contribution to the field of special education by providing access to a comprehensive study of leadership practice and decision making employed by a group of primary school principals, in meeting the multiple learning requirements of students with special needs. It may impact on preparation for school leadership and policy development and assist leaders in identifying specific leadership needs. The study is likely to identify common challenges faced by principals and innovative ways in which challenges posed by insufficient resourcing may be overcome. It could also indicate how participants reconcile theories around ethics and morality of inclusive education (rhetoric) with current leadership practice and decision making, leading to improved special education policy.

The interview questions are likely to elicit information on the methods by which participants ensure habits, values, beliefs and expectations that inform cultural dynamics within their organisation are shaped and sustained. The literature suggests that leadership behaviours influence the culture of organisations, and that culture influences the decisions that are made (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hoy, 1990; Schein, 1992). In addition, the study will examine practices which influence school outcomes, student achievement and the effective allocation of resources (Davis, Darling-Hammond, La Pointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Rice, 2010). Various researchers (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Strike, 2007) suggest that effective principal leadership and teacher attitudes are crucial to the successful implementation of inclusive education. The authors further suggest that leaders contribute to student learning indirectly through their influence on their learning organisation. They propose that judgements made on limited information regarding students' needs may restrict and interfere with students' learning and can lead to reduced self-esteem.

In addition, it is anticipated that the inquiry could contribute to Government goals in special education, as stated in the following documents; Special Education 2000 policy guidelines (MOE, 2000c) '*Success for All – Every school, every child'* strategy (MOE, 2010b) and the Statement of Intent, 2010 –2015 (MOE, 2010a). These documents claim the Government's overall aim is to achieve a world class inclusive education system that provides learning opportunities of equal quality to all school students, and closes the gap between high performing and low performing students. This research project may help bring to the attention of the MOE, the ways in which limited funding for children with special needs is impacting on student learning in schools.

1.5. Focus of the investigation

This research will focus on how principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of students with SEN. This focus will include questions regarding leadership approaches and styles, and the effectiveness of distributed leadership,

as a number of these issues are addressed in schools by professionals other than the principal.

I anticipate that the literature review will form a theoretical basis and rationale for the questions that I develop. As part of the application for ethical approval, the following indicative questions were included. However, these may well change.

- On what basis do principals make decisions regarding the learning needs of students with special education needs?
- What guides decisions on the eligibility of students for special instructional planning?
- How do principals and/or staff identify each category of student need?
- How do principals make decisions about the delivery of effective instruction and the equitable allocation of funding, time and personnel resources with regard to academic learning, social growth and independent functioning of students with special needs?
- What key leadership behaviour influences the culture of their school as an organisation and therefore the decisions principals make?
- What is the role of the principal in the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of inclusive classroom practices and students' Individual Education Plans?
- How do principals build capacity for change and development within their organisation?
- What role if any does distributed leadership play in this?
- What strategies do principals employ for building relationships with parents of students with special educational needs and the wider community?

1.6. Research design

The thesis is divided into six sections. Chapter one explains that background to the research inquiry, my involvement in the research process and the significance

of the research. Chapter two reviews the literature in relation to individual leadership practice, the role of distributed leadership, and socially and morally just leadership practice in leading an equitable school. Chapter three discusses the methodology used in this research project for data collection and analysis, and examines issues of ethics and validity. Chapter four presents the findings followed by a discussion of the seven recurring themes in chapter five. Chapter six gives a conclusion, discusses limitations and contributions for the research, and offers areas for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Education of children and young people with special educational needs is now an established policy objective in many countries (Lindsay, 2007). The intent of this literature review is to gain a greater understanding of how primary school principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with SEN. A review of relevant literature from national and international sources will not only provide background information for the inquiry, but offers a framework for examining the principles that underpin inclusive education.

According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (1994), "regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society, and achieving an education for all" (p. ix). Although Hanson, Wolfberg, Zercher, Morgan, Gutlerrez, Barnwell and Beckman (1998) and Villa and Colker (2006) agree that the diverse environments of inclusive classrooms provide all children with a setting in which to grow, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) warn against assuming that the wisdom of inclusion is fully accepted.

While contending perspectives about inclusive education have never been resolved, multiple authors (Branson, Bezzina, & Burford, 2011; Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 2002; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Rice, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1992; Strike, 2007) identify commonalities of authentic leadership, belief and values, and the establishment of moral purpose, as key to providing an inclusive educational programme which is ethically sound and socially and morally 'just'. The authors recognise the influence that ethical leadership has on equitable allocation of highly contested funding, time and personnel resources for academic learning, social growth and independent functioning of students with SEN. Examination of this inherent dualism between leadership and SEN, and the ensuing tension

between the two, will enable school leaders to consider the practices associated with successful inclusive education in relation to their own context.

This literature review addresses six key themes. Firstly, the inclusionary process; and, secondly, the impacts that appropriate forms of leadership have on school ethos, culture and motivational climate, and how this influences school outcomes. Thirdly, it addresses the relationship between professional learning and standards-based reform with regard to students with SEN. Fourthly, it examines effective learning communities which aim to close "the gap of student achievement for all students regardless of their background" (Fullan, 2011, p. ix). It then discusses the impact that philosophical elements of equity, morality, social justice and ethics have over leadership decisions, before exploring how principals maximise the use of limited resources with regard to student learning.

Part 1. The Inclusionary Process

2.1.1. Special education needs

An important aspect of leadership is being conversant with SEN. The MOE (2000c) identify students with SEN as those experiencing either learning difficulties or communication, intellectual, emotional, behavioural, or physical impairment, or a combination of these, which to some degree impacts on their learning. In addition it includes those identified as GAT. Hanson et al. (1998), Villa and Colker (2006) and Winter and O'Raw (2010) confirm the types of children requiring additional support goes beyond those traditionally thought of as having SEN. They include immigrants for whom English is a second language as well as other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups identified by ERO as priority learners (ERO, 2012, August).

Although there are a raft of policies on inclusive education, Winter and O'Raw (2010) reveal that many countries are struggling with the management and implementation of education systems which cater for learning needs of this

diverse group of students. Bricker (1995) and Cullen (1999) state that social acceptance of students with SEN into mainstream settings is not enough to create meaningful learning opportunities. The SEN code of practice (English Department for Education and Skills, 2001) requires access to a broad, balanced, and relevant education, flexible enough to accommodate the diversity of learning styles and pace, within a main-stream school setting. Programmes should actively engage children in collaborative interaction which yields further learning opportunities (Education Act, 1996; United Kingdom Special Education Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)2001; Valentine, 2013).

2.1.2. New Zealand disability statistics

To understand the impact special education has on leadership decisions, it is important to locate the level of disability within New Zealand schools. Statistics New Zealand (2006), shows an estimated five percent of children aged 0-14years have SEN (41,000 children). This figure includes five percent (10,800) of Māori children and three percent (2,500) of Pacifica children. SEN is claimed by Statistics New Zealand as the most common form of disability, making up forty six percent of the total number of children with a disability.

Of all children with disability, forty one percent (36,600) were identified as having low support needs, forty five percent (40,600) had medium support needs and fourteen percent (12,800) had high support needs. Statistics New Zealand (2006) describes support levels for children as the "measure of support required for people with disability based on the need for assistance and/or special equipment relating to the disability" (p. 5).

2.1.3. Notions of disability

The Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) (2013) advises that as many as fifty to eighty percent of all learners have LD, whether identified or not, a fact which should have an important influence on leadership decisions concerning special education programming. According to the LDA there are many forms of learning

disability, but some seem to occur with higher frequency in the classroom, impeding in some way the learners' ability to progress. In a school context three common learning disabilities are most prevalent: Dyslexia (language-based disability), Dyscalculia (mathematical disability) and Dysgraphia (writing disability). Although other attention disorders such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and LD frequently occur at the same time, the two are not the same.

The LDA also confirm that learning difficulties can interfere with a student's higher order thinking such as time planning, organisational skills and abstract reasoning, which, Neilson (2000) believes affects students' self-esteem, "the most vulnerable aspect of many children with disabilities" (p. 23).

2.1.4. Debate over labelling

Authors such as Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, Howes, Gallannaugh, Smith, Farrel and Frankham (2006), Ballard (1993) and Jones (2004) report that the label 'special educational needs' engenders considerable debate. While, on the one hand, principals are working towards inclusive education, on the other hand, the term 'special educational needs' infers that some children are normal, while others are special. These authors suggest that categorisation of individuals or groups of children as 'special' can raise barriers to inclusion by inferring that they are not valued in mainstream education. They consider that principals and staff referring to students as SEN, or those who refer to themselves as 'special' do so without realizing the wider implications for how society views them. This debate is not new. Becker's Labelling Theory of 1963, raised concerns about the effect of labelling others, suggesting this led to stereotyping and stigma which could undermine their acceptance into society (Becker, 1963).

While Jones (2004), Lauchlan and Boyle (2007), and Deppeler, Loreman, and Harvey (2010) acknowledge that labels may be considered necessary to access appropriate support, resources and funding, they also indicate that the situation is more complex than that. SEN can arise from a complex interaction of many

factors and may not need a label in order to be recognised. Becker (1963), Booth and Ainscow (2002) and Richards (2012) posit that labels should not inhibit a child's potential, nor should educators' expectations impose limits on child achievement.

Principals' leadership decisions establish appropriate assessment procedures for students with SEN. However, the Audit Commission (2002) describes statutory assessment processes that identify students' SEN as a "costly and bureaucratic process, which may add little value in helping to meet a child's needs" (p. 3). The British Psychological Society (2005) goes as far as suggesting that statements of SEN create a barrier to inclusive practice though over-dependency on specialist resources. The United Kingdom (UK) Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (2010) proposes that many students are in fact wrongly diagnosed and under-achieve simply because mainstream teaching is not good enough, and that additional provision is needed to make up for poor classroom teaching.

2.1.5. Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Professor Barry Carpenter, British National Director of the Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) research project, and Associate Director (SEN) Specialist Schools and Academics Trust has written extensively on SEN. Carpenter (2010b) proposes that a new group of learners are entering schools, presenting complex learning difficulties and disabilities, creating a significant part of the 21st Century frontier for education. These students present multiple and profound difficulties and extreme behaviour patterns which have originated from either medical or social phenomena such as assisted conception, premature birth, maternal drug/alcohol abuse during pregnancy or medical/genetic advances. They place even further strain on staff and scant resources for special education. Even the most skilled practitioners in modifying and adapting curriculum may be unable to address the complex learning needs of these students who become cognitively disenfranchised, socially dysfunctional and emotionally disengaged (Carpenter, 2010a, 2010b). Principal lecturer and research psychologist of the UK Canterbury Christ Church University, Dr John Cornwall warns that a bureaucratic

and inflexible education system which has been created by competitive dictatorial frameworks in an effort to drive up standards, has made little or no difference to the results of these students (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2012; Cornwall, 2012).

Whitehead, Boschee, and Decker (2013) describe links between students' feelings of belonging and motivational, attitudinal, and behavioural factors. Multiple authors (Carpenter, 2010a, 2010b; Carpenter, Cockbill, Egerton, & English, 2010; Fergusson & Carpenter, 2010) concur that collaboration with families and working with a multidisciplinary team of specialists will help principals and educators learn about their students and deepen understanding of their learning styles. A review of the child's profile of need and patterns of engagement, using knowledge of their successful learning pathways, can be used to design a personalised wrap around curriculum. These students require curriculum delivery to be sharp, focused, meaningful, purposeful and balanced. By matching each strand of learning need, their personalised curriculum is likely to engage them in their learning programme (Carpenter, 2010b; Carpenter, Ashdown, & Bovair, 2002; Goswami, 2008; Hargreaves, 2006; Limbrick & Jirankowa-Limbrick, 2009; Wolke, 2009).

2.1.6. Gifted and talented students

Rogers (2002) claims that while identifying exceptional characteristics in each and every student in the classroom setting may seem like a daunting task, principals should be promoting programmes which meet the special educational needs of GAT students. This thinking is supported by multiple authors (Bevan-Brown, 1999b; ERO, 2008; MOE, 2000a; 2008, 2012b; Riley, 2000; Riley, 2004). Times' journalist John Cloud (2007, August 16) contends that the American 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) concept of public education which aims to lift everyone up to a minimum level, appears to have assumed more importance than allowing students to excel to their limit. Cloud argues that this should not be at the cost of facilitating a classroom environment that allows our high achieving students to flourish.

Conlon (2008) advises that enrichment models for GAT students should focus on building rigor, flexible scheduling and connecting enrichment programmes to students' interests. Conlon maintains that connecting enrichment to student interests promotes self-direction, creativity and an interest in career planning and entrepreneurship opportunities for GAT students, a view shared by Colangelo, Assouline, and Gross (2004) .

> "Students who are moved ahead tend to be more ambitious, and they earn graduate degrees at higher rates than other students.... Accelerated students feel academically challenged and socially accepted, and they do not fall prey to the boredom that plagues many highly capable students who are forced to follow the curriculum for their age-peers". (p. 53)

2.1.7. Policies on inclusion

Throughout the past two decades a series of working documents and numerous amendments to legislation on inclusion have impacted on leadership decisions. Of special note, the UK *Code of Practice* (English Department for Education, 1994) addressed the identification and assessment of pupils with SEN. The '*Schools' White Paper'* (English Department for Education, 2010) outlined the importance of teaching students with SEN, and the *'Green Paper'* (English Department for Education, 2011) offers a new approach to supporting SEN and disability (Armstrong, 2005). Similar reform of special education in New Zealand led to the Special Education 2000 policy (MOE, 2000c), which sought to address issues of inclusion through a wide range of strategies such as ongoing research, reflection and critical questioning (Greaves, 2003; Mitchell, 2005).

The English Department for Education and Skills (2004) and Hodkinson (2010) conclude that inclusive education is founded on three principles: setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

2.1.8. Inclusion in practice

The term ‘inclusion’ evokes powerful emotive reactions among school leaders. For every staunch supporter of blending special and general education, Ballard (1993) and Bargerhuff (2001) believe there will be an educator, parent or politician, equally as opposed to the practice. Graham-Matheson (2012a, 2012b) suggests that in the twenty-first century, the right to inclusive education for students with SEN has not only become an ethical assumption, but a legal requirement. The English Department for Education and Employment (1997) and the National Council for Special Education (2013) offer strong educational, social and moral ground for lifting the level and quality of inclusion within mainstream, by educating children with SEN with their peers while still providing specialist provision for those who need it, a view shared by Winter & O'Raw, (2010) and Lipsky and Gartner (1997). Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2007) agree that children should only be removed from regular educational environments when the severity of their handicap is such that education in regular classes cannot be achieved. However, Place (2011) reports some educators resist including all students in regular classrooms, believing that separation of students with SEN from mainstream is in the best interests of all.

Roaf (2004) and Lashley (2007) consider the era of public accountability for the educational performance of student with disabilities calls for changes in professional practice. They argue that entrenched beliefs about special education have blamed students for the lack of success and the social, educational, financial and emotional costs, rather than holding educators accountable for providing students with what they need to learn. Graham-Matheson (2012b) believes that such accountability exposes the fact that inappropriate teaching techniques and materials are exacerbating learning difficulties experienced by learners with SEN. This position confirms suggestions by Booth and Ainscow (2002) and Corbett (2001) that restructuring of school cultures, policies, and practices involves creating a pedagogy which relates to the diversity of individual needs. Providing resources which enable equitable participation for all reduces barriers to social and curricula opportunities in local schools.

Authors (Ainscow et al., 2006; Villa & Colker, 2006) suggest educators should be fully conversant with the over-all aim of intervention, in which deliberate strategies are designed to alleviate or remediate the 'at risk' factors. Evans and Lunt (2002) point out that inclusion is challenged by competing ideologies. On the one hand a politically motivated standards-based agenda focuses on league tables and standardised academic attainment, while on the other, a humanistic and socially motivated agenda focuses on individualised education programmes which are tailored to meet specific needs.

2.1.9. Individual education plans

Literature by Mitchell, Morton, and Hornby (2010) indicates that virtually every country implements special education programmes. The Kiwi Families Team (2013) and the MOE (2013a) confirm that the notion of students with SEN having access to the general curriculum has long been a feature of New Zealand special education policy. Key to this process is the development of 'Individual Education Plans' (IEP). They provide a tool for curriculum preparation, planning and evaluation of student programmes (MOE, 2013a).

The MOE recommend IEPs be implemented where barriers to learning have been identified but cannot be overcome by regular classroom strategies, or where regular classroom planning doesn't provide enough support for an individual student. IEPs may also address changes in the student's personal circumstances, such as deterioration in health, emotional trauma, or a substantial gain in skills. By utilising student strengths and circumventing their difficulties educators optimise student learning (MOE, 2013a).

The NCLB (2001) legislation has seen a shift in the role of principals towards instructional leadership. Principals hold overall responsibility for overseeing the work of the special education team (special education service providers, SENCO, classroom teacher and support staff) in developing, monitoring, and reviewing each student's IEP (Lashley, 2007; MOE, 2013c). Mitchell et al. (2010) confirm that principals are responsible for ensuring recommendations for special education

programs, support personnel and resources are taken into account when developing IEPs and that parents of the student are fully consulted. By signing an IEP, principals indicate their assurance that the plan is appropriate to the student's strengths and needs, and that it meets all the standards outlined in the Ministry IEP guidelines (MOE, 2000b; 2013a). Mitchell et al. (2010) describe the introduction of Group Education Plans (GEP) in the UK for students with similar needs as a way of reducing the number of IEPs.

Given the importance of IEPs, Valentine (2013) recommends teachers be trained in designing and implementing IEPs and monitoring student progress towards their goals. This helps inform leadership decisions. Where a principal determines that a student regularly requires an alternative programme for instructional or assessment purposes, students should be assessed on the basis of modified expectations (Ontario MOE, 2004; Ontario Principals' Council, 2012). Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) are available to provide support and guidance to students and staff, additional training supports teachers in working with service providers and parents (MOE, 2013e).

2.1.10. Student voice

Literature presented in Section 312 of the UK Education Act (Education Act, 1996), SENDA (2001), and Valentine (2013) recommend the views of students be sought and taken into account when designing IEPs. Gross (2002) suggests that pupils' insights and perspectives offer principals direction for school improvement and provide first-hand information to enhance learning, teaching and relationships. This suggestion has gained general acceptance (Ballard, 1993; Lewis & Lindsay, 2000; Lewis & Porter, 2007; Ontario Principals' Council, 2012; Ryan, 2006).

Rudduck and Futter (2004a, 2004b, 2004c) and Frederickson and Cline (2002) promote the transformational potential of consulting pupils in school decisions as leading to increased educational engagement and reduced risk of exclusion.

However, Noble (2003) contends that the opinion of students with SEN is rarely sought, and if consulted their views appear largely ignored.

2.1.11. The hidden curriculum

Literature shows that achievement of students with SEN can be impacted by a plethora of sources. Glathorn, Boschee, and Whitehead (2009) warn about the constraints of a 'hidden curriculum' which Glathorn (1987) describes as "those aspects of schooling, other than the intentional curriculum, that seem to produce changes in student values, perceptions and behaviours" (p. 20).

The influence a principal has over the school's social and cultural climate, and learning system may subtly influence school operations and affect the learning context for students with SEN. Development of relationships and the level of student participation in decision making can also be contributing factors (Glathorn et al., 2009). In addition, the flow of classroom discourse, content of classroom programmes and the degree of personalised and group learning, cooperation and competition may all influence student achievement (Deutsch, 2004).

2.1.12. Adaptive technology

Whitehead et al. (2013) suggest that in an era of digital-age leadership, many leadership solutions will relate to the use of technology, and that principals will play a critical role in determining how well technology can be integrated in special education programmes. Whitehead et al, recommend that leaders become better informed and trained in adaptive education practices to meet the changing face of special education.

For learners who have difficulty understanding the concepts and skills required of them, technology offers a catalyst for understanding by presenting the curriculum in a different way (de Graft-Hanson, 2006; Hasselbring & Williams Glaser, 2000; Rose, Hasselbring, Stahl, & Zabala, 2005; Whitehead et al., 2013). However, Blamires (2012) and Whitehead et al. (2013) indicate that some educators argue

that the use of technology is detrimental to inclusion by making students stand out from the rest of the class.

Part 2. Appropriate Forms of Leadership

2.2.1. Rethinking the role of leadership

Literature identifies an inherent relationship between leadership and special needs. Bargerhuff (2001) describes principal leadership of the twenty-first century as multifaceted and immersed in a globally interconnected world which incorporates leadership and collaboration, with a focus on individual student achievement. By bridging the gap between school initiatives and consequences for students with SEN, effective leaders provide direction and motivation for their school and its members (Bargerhuff, 2001; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013).

Senge (1990) describes a three-fold model for the role of principals: designer, teacher and steward. As a designer, principals require a workable familiarity with bureaucratic process, using prior experience and persuasive strategies to interpret situations and turn vision into policy. Development of a task oriented, collegial learning organisation requires principals as teachers to be decisive, dynamic and authoritative (but not authoritarian) while stewardship for the team they lead requires an awareness of the impact their decisions have on others.

2.2.2. Key leadership components

Servatius, Fellows, and Kelly (1992) recommend leaders of inclusive schools begin with a "personal belief that all children can learn, and a commitment to providing all children equal access to a rich core curriculum and quality instruction" (p. 269). Nevertheless, opinions differ when determining essential components of leadership which result in sustainable and systematic change, a critical element to developing effective learning communities. Fullan (2002) emphasises moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, and

making sense of knowledge which is created and shared. Bennis (2003) suggests engaging others through the creation of a shared vision, while Black, Harrison, Lee, and Wiliam (2003) promote effective questioning. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) insist that learning systems, the people and adapting leadership practice are the keys to good leadership.

Whitehead et al. (2013) believe that understanding the influence process from central administration down to community is the political currency of principals. To influence both internal and external forces (staff and community), successful leaders need to cultivate a consensus, targeting the right people for the right jobs, passing along information and gaining the approval of sceptics. By inspiring and leading new and challenging innovations, principals willingly and actively challenge the status quo (Whitehead et al., 2013).

The Wallace Foundation (2012) consider that effective principals should be visible, and demonstrate humanistic leadership qualities of care, recognition and empathy for others. This helps develop meaningful interaction within the educational community. Principals are expected to provide vision, guidance and leadership to educators, many of whom feel inadequately prepared for the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classes. By displacing themselves from their position of authority as the 'knower' and 'evaluator', principals are able to reflectively examine their own ideas and practices and the thoughts and actions of others (Ryan, 2006).

Whitehead et al. (2013) agree that real change must move beyond the walls of the principal's office and penetrate each classroom. Based on strong ideals and beliefs about inclusive schooling, effective principals set clear goals and establish a set of standard operating procedures (Wallace Foundation, 2012).

2.2.3. Sharing leadership responsibilities – Top down to collaboration

Special education reform (MOE, 2000c; 2002b, 2013c) has meant responsibility for leading special education programmes has devolved to school principals.

While Strike (2007) recommends those in formal leadership positions retain responsibility for building a shared vision for their organisation, Fullan (1991) believes the sharing of leadership is necessary to successfully develop the wide range of competencies necessary for implementing inclusive education programmes. "We no longer believe that one administrator can serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators" (Lambert, 2002, p. 37).

Research by Spillane (2006) determines that what is critical is not that leadership is distributed, but how it is distributed. Cultivating the leadership potential of every staff member, parent and student involved in a learning organisation, increases opportunities to tap into their collective capacity and capitalise on a range of individual professional strengths (Leithwood et al., 2004). Ryan (2006) and Strike (2007) confirm that leaders earn authority through personal, interpersonal and professional competencies rather than relying on their formal position. By sharing with others the theoretical, ethical and research based rationale for inclusive education, leaders are more likely to motivate staff to implement change and create a learning organisation which supports all students (Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Bush, 1986; Dempster, 2009; Fullan, 2003; Lee, 2011; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Place, 2011; Portin, Alejano, Knapp, & Marzolf, 2006; Ryan, 2006; Southworth, 2000). Cangelosi (2009) agrees that mobilising as many staff as possible towards meeting the goals, and engaging community support are powerful determinants of student learning (Bass, 1999; Kugelmass, 2003; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2004; Southworth, 2002). Lunenburg and Irby (2006), refer to these strategies as the reinforcing glue sustaining school improvement, providing adequate resources and funding, and removing barriers to achieving goals.

According to Fullan (1991) effective inclusive practice relies on careful planning which takes into consideration the unpredictable culture of special education. It requires monitoring and adjusting of approaches and attitudes by leaders to keep moving towards the school's vision**.** Although educators need pressure to change, they must also be allowed time to reflect, react and form their own position in

relation to new practices (Leithwood et al., 2004; Spillane, 2006). Through careful deliberation, knowledge is shared, criticised, refined and improved (Harris, 2008; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Strike, 2007).

Principals are challenged by striving to honour legislation while respecting the collective professional judgement of teachers and the voice of parents (Strike, 2007). Dynamic and successful principals realising the complexity of their position, frequently seek additional help by enrolling in professional development programmes, and training SENCOs. Principals may choose to work with other leaders to establish successful instructional initiatives, or enlist the help of service support agencies to assist students and their parents.

2.2.4. The role of SENCOs

Literature by Liasidou and Svensson (2012), Edmunds and Macmillan (2010), Rayner (2009) and Kugelmass (2003) stresses that leadership by knowledgeable and dedicated SENCOs is pivotal to inclusive education. SENCOs act as facilitators, counsellors, experts and collaborators in leading strategic policy and practice. They are responsible for developing a whole school action plan for meeting the individual needs of students with SEN (Liasidou & Svensson, 2012).

Cole (2005) and Liasidou and Svensson (2012) describe the role of SENCOs as complex and challenging, and not always compatible with a whole school approach to dealing with the diversity of learner needs. Ainscow (2005) and Ryan (2006) recognise SENCOs as agents of change. By working strategically, SENCOs develop an inclusive ethos and culture within their school which strives to remove barriers to learning, and ensures students with SEN participate fully and are provided with maximum educational opportunity.

Cole (2005), Ainscow (2005) and Ryan (2006) describe SENCOs as crucial in identifying and changing the deeply entrenched deficit view of difference. The process is undermined if SENCOs are unable to achieve a consensual approach to their shared vision. They face the challenging task of reconciling the differing

perspectives of stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and service providers) in their search for support and information. By working in partnership with pupils, their families and service providers, SENCOs develop effective support programmes for the diverse range of students in mainstream classrooms. In addition, Liasidou and Svensson (2012), Edmunds and Macmillan (2010), Rayner (2009) and Kugelmass (2003) recommend SENCOs take responsibility for coordinating provision of resources and personnel, as well as leading and supporting colleagues. However, Pearson (2010) acknowledges that the bureaucratic nature of SEN swamps SENCOs in an audit culture which undermines their ability to concentrate on strategic school development of policies, procedures and inclusive school reforms.

2.2.5. Challenges facing leaders

Patterson, Marshall, and Bowling (2000) confirm that devolvement of responsibility for special education to on-site principals has created new challenges. Patterson et al. (2000) suggest that principals frequently resent time consuming bureaucratic procedures and are becoming fearful of litigation resulting from the perceived or real failure of schools to meet the learning needs of students. It appears schools have become increasingly isolated from one another and from support services, reducing the sharing of knowledge about effective curriculum and pedagogy practices for students with SEN. Limited contact means teachers rely on principals and SENCOs to disseminate information, sometimes affecting the consistency of decisions concerning the delivery of support services and the allocation of resources (Patterson et al, 2000).

One of the key reasons for failure in implementing new strategic thinking is that principals as decision makers are unaware of the situation that their teachers are facing. Whitehead et al. (2013) confirm the importance of principals maintaining situational awareness and displaying flexibility in leadership behaviour according to the needs of the current situation. Whitehead et al. (2013) describe principals as the ‘lightning rod’ for complaints from teachers, pupils, parents, Boards of Trustees and media, concerning inclusive class arrangements, lack of assistance

for students with SEN or potential litigation proceedings. Principals need to feel comfortable with dissent and to be seen as an advocate and spokesperson for the school, protecting teachers from discipline issues and influences that would detract from their teaching focus (Whitehead et al., 2013).

As a catalyst for reform, a leader's ability to acknowledge potential for cognitive dissonance and discomfort with regard to exclusive practice can create a sense of urgency about inclusion (Gwynne-Atwater & Taylor, 2010; Protheroe, 2010). Insightful principals encourage critical consciousness and constructive criticism. They stop activities which impede progress and gather, organise and analyse data to target high-priority problems (Gronn, 2000, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2004; Protheroe, 2010; Spillane (in press); Spillane, 2006). Systematic review of current practice and the findings of practitioner researchers, helps teaching professionals to develop and sustain inclusive practice (Ekins, 2012; Hallett & Hallett, 2012; Patterson et al., 2000; Thompson, 2012; Voltz & Collins, 2010).

In addition, Lindsay (2007) cites overcrowding as a potential barrier to creating a safe and inclusive environment that supports learning. Lindsay recommends class sizes of less than twenty where students with SEN are included, and the provision of curriculum resources and additional personnel to assist teachers meet the complex needs of students with SEN.

2.2.6. Policy issues influence leadership

Although principals have historically been acknowledged as instructional leaders, it was not until recently that the true extent to which principals were responsible for the learning of students with disabilities became evident (Parker & Day, 1997). No longer is it acceptable for principals to ignore achievement gaps or defer matters involving students with SEN to special education administrators, as was the norm under the dual system of education prior to the implementation of inclusive education (Parker & Day, 1997).

New Leaders for New Schools (2010) report that principal and teacher quality accounts for nearly sixty percent of a school's total impact on student achievement and principals alone for twenty five percent. The impact is considered so significant because of the leadership action principals take in creating school-wide conditions that support student learning, and especially action which directly influences teacher effectiveness. For example, the USA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 requires schools to provide services for students with SEN in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (IDEA, 1997). However, Patterson et al. (2000) cite ambiguity about what constitutes a LRE. A 'one size fits all' model cannot be used for determining placement for students with disabilities. Individualised support and service should be offered through a continuum of alternative placement options (IDEA, 1997).

Patterson et al. (2000) conclude that "policy issues surrounding implementation of special education programs are multiple, complex, and ever-changing" resulting in a drastic shift in leadership roles (p. 9). Principals are expected to be mentor, team leader, data specialist and school administration manager (Whitehead et al., 2013). Keeping abreast of trends and changes in the field of special education is crucial to implementing new educational practice. Patterson et al. (2000, p. 18) posit that principals require access to "a body of knowledge that will enable them to provide effective leadership concerning the evolution of processes, programs, and services for student with disabilities", a view shared by Bargerhuff (2001) and Rice (2012).

2.2.7. Standards-based reform

Although inclusive education is driven by a moral imperative, Mitchell (2000) suggests that balancing school effectiveness with a standards-based agenda has given rise to a political neo-liberal influence over inclusive practice. It emphasizes economic growth, marketization of education and minimal government interference, which challenges leaders to provide cost effective learning opportunities for students (Armstrong, 2005; Dyson, Gallanaugh, &

Millward, 2009; Dyson, 2005; Mitchell, 2000; Thompson, 2012). Whitehead et al. (2013) propose that principals will need political courage, and solid research data to resist reform agendas and the anticipated political push-back. While much attention is directed at professional ineptitude, maladministration, and fiscal restraints, Barnes (1990) cites the current inequality in meeting SEN as becoming endemic within school systems and representative of our competitive and profit driven society.

Benjamin (2002) confirms that a drive for inclusion now accompanies a standards-based agenda which positions students as "units of production to which schools can, and must add value" (p. 136). Students with disabilities were historically excluded from participation in testing systems. However, in response to perceived inadequacies of a dual system of general and special education, current policy initiatives encourage students with disabilities to access standards-based curriculum and state-wide assessments (Lashley, 2007). Because publishing of results in a series of league tables allows school performance to be compared (Benjamin, 2002), Voltz and Collins (2010) predict concern by principals about educating students with SEN whose inadequate performance could lead to schools coming under regulatory sanction for poor performance.

2.2.8. How leadership influences student learning

As Leithwood et al. (2004) assert, school leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn. They indicate that direct and indirect effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of total school effect. Cornwall (2012) recommends collegial discussion supported by good research-based evidence, rather than accepting advice from a single authority, as a means of empowering teachers to experiment with and evaluate teaching approaches.

The *Inclusion in Action* model described by Ekins and Grimes (2009) offers a framework for developing strategic plans to meet the needs of students with SEN. Ekins and Grimes argue that many leaders and practitioners lose sight of the

central principles when faced with the vast array of approaches and systems on offer, resulting in meaningless paper-based actions rather than meaningful strategies for school development. Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) recommend that to make change occur, leaders should draw on their extensive repertoire of knowledge and connect with the environment particular to their students, school and school community. This allows educators to reflect and question their own practice and that of new initiatives and agendas. Only when principals have a critical mass of staff within their school setting willing to fully engage in professional discourse, will they achieve change (Cole, 2005; Fullan, 2006).

Although Farrell (2000) and Lindsay (2007) suggest that teachers are more positively disposed towards the inclusion of pupils with physical or sensory disabilities than those pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, effective leaders support the development of differentiated instructional programmes. By observing and interviewing students, educators can determine a student's learning and thinking style (auditory/visual/tactile/kinaesthetic and large/small group or individual) and choose appropriate content material based on curricular guidelines. Differentiated programmes offer incentives for students to challenge themselves in new ways and allow educators to create assessment criteria to determine the knowledge gained by each student (Smutny, 2003; Tomlinson, 1999).

Part 3. Professional Learning

2.3.1. Professional learning and development

Marshall and Oliva (2006), Place (2011) and Sergiovanni (1992) believe that for school leaders to make a difference, they must first be provided with opportunities to reflect on current practice and access professional learning and development programmes (PLD).

Whitehead et al. (2013) identify the timing and strength of PLD and allocation of resources as a major issue for principals. PLD on the philosophy of leadership

and strategies for facilitating school management of inclusive practice assists principals to provide a physically and emotionally safe school environment (IDEA, 1997). As a valued part of the school community, students with SEN should be included in appropriate activities alongside their peers (Patterson et al., 2000).

Prudent advance planning combined with strong knowledgeable leadership and a shared vision is needed to change existing educational systems to better meet the multiple learning requirements of students. Kaufman (1992) agrees that critical to any planning process, is the careful analysis of needs assessment which identifies gaps between what is and what should be. Principals require time and resources to collaborate with community based organisations and to collectively identify needs and concerns. The use of a management planning matrix such as that developed by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon, provides a useful tool for principals to assist with organisational and operational decisions (Whitehead et al., 2013). The planning matrix reconciles available personnel and resources, identifies leadership responsibilities, and ties learning objectives and measureable indicators to positive outcomes, professional development and school budget.

The introduction of the American NCLB Act (2001) aimed at minimizing achievement gaps between students with and without disabilities. However, Lashley (2007) notes the challenge of delivering school instructional programmes which meet the learning requirements of a diverse range of students with an even more diverse range of SEN. Voltz and Collins (2010) suggest that standards-based reform, which promotes standardized learning outcomes, frequently challenges the skills of principals, both as educators and as school leaders, to reach the same high standard for all students with LD. Voltz and Collins (2010) report many teachers feel inadequately prepared to meet state standards, a view shared by Ryan (2006) who confirms that resistance to change is generally born of fear.

Multiple authors (Burrelllo, Schrup, & Barnett, 1988; 1992; Clue, 1990; Van Horn, Burrello, & De Clue, 1992) recommend leaders become proficient in

additional tasks in order to be successful in administrating special education. Proficiency in data analysis allows principals to create new and more effective ways of determining measurable benefits to students, while monitoring staff performance and adherence to standards and shared goals allows principals to identify what additional staff-training is needed (Middlemas, 2012; Ryan, 2006; Whitehead et al., 2013).

2.3.2. Mentoring

"Inclusion is the most significant movement in special education in the past two decades" (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 2000, p. 58). As a consequence, Cutbirth and Benge (1997) recommend principals keep up to speed with the latest trends in special education as inadequate knowledge can lead to flawed decisions. They advise organising collaborative consultation between teachers and specialists as instrumental in supporting and retaining teachers. Supporting literature (Babione & Shea, 2005; Di Paola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Falvey, 1995; Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Westwood, 1997) indicates that there is more to be gained by working closely with other professionals than by relying on ready-made programmes for intervention from outside experts.

Provision of professional training, networking and structured peer-coaching as well as opportunities for staff to visit the classrooms of experienced teachers who demonstrate skills and strategies for meeting students' SEN, allows educators to immerse themselves in new ideas and programmes. This adds a new dimension and depth to the school and enriches the lives of the students (Whitehead et al., 2013). Team training in new initiatives helps develop collegiality. Adams (2006), Kennedy and Burnstein (2004) and Wasburn-Moses (2005) propose that training should be for everyone, not just teachers, and suggest that involvement of school leaders is the real test as to whether or not innovation will take hold.

To improve staff morale, effective principals promote open communication and visit teachers individually and informally about classroom programmes and/or

about student needs (Villani, 2002). Babione and Shea (2005) suggest this personalized contact helps teachers take risks and set higher professional goals. Whitehead et al. (2013) recommend that good leaders also take every opportunity to publically and personally celebrate student success, and acknowledge teachers' roles in developing successful programmes. This generates feeling of worthiness and value.

Principals' skill in building high-impact mentoring programs is important. Villani (2002) suggests four areas for critiquing mentor training theories and practices and strengthening reflective coaching strategies. These include the daily working of schools, cultural norms of the community, cultural proficiency regarding students and their families, and provision of emotional support and encouragement for educators, students and their families. Informed principals model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behaviour. At the same time they safeguard values of democracy, equity, diversity, integrity, and fairness (Whitehead et al., 2013).

2.3.3. Induction of new teachers

A survey of four hundred mainstream teachers revealed that less than half (37%) reported feeling prepared to teach students with disabilities (Goldstein, 2004). Research findings (Barton, 2003; Booth, Nes, & Stromstad, 2003; Garner, 2001; Jones, 2002) indicate that inclusion is inadequately addressed in teacher training, and that resistance to inclusion was less when practitioners had acquired special education qualifications in pre-service or in-service programmes. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) further contend that "without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with special educational needs, attempts to include these children in the mainstream would be difficult" (p. 139). Mittler (2000) proposes that ensuring newly qualified teachers have a basic understanding of inclusive teaching is the best investment that can be made. Appropriate and on-going teacher training will help alleviate teachers' apprehensions regarding inclusion.

Effective principals have a multi-faceted role in the induction of new teachers in special education and in creating a positive school environment. By serving as an instructional leader and supporting mentoring and peer coaching programmes, they can assist new teachers meet the complex and diverse needs of students with SEN (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2006; Billingsley, Carlson, & Klein, 2004; Correa & Wagner, 2011; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005; Whitaker, 2001). Authors report higher staff attrition rates where principals lack the background knowledge and experience to support teachers inexperienced in teaching special educational programmes (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2003).

2.3.4. Developing trust

Developing relationships of integrity and staff-trust requires principals to communicate a strong vision for the school, clearly define expectations, and allocate resources and responsibilities in a fair and consistent way (Sergiovanni, 2005a, 2005b). Brewster and Railsback (2003) identify the following common barriers to developing and maintaining trust between principals and staff. Top-down decision making is perceived as misinformed and not in the best interests of the school or the students, while other barriers include ineffective communication and lack of follow-through, teacher isolation, frequent turnover in school staff and leadership and limited resourcing.

Encouraging staff discussion without fear of retribution commands staff respect for the principal both as educator and administrator and demonstrates a belief in their ability and a willingness to fulfil their responsibilities and take risks to improve practice (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Seabring & Bryk, 2003; Strike, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

Part 4. Building Learning Communities

2.4.1. Professional learning communities

Schools pursue academic and operational excellence "through analysing, integrating and synthesizing professional learning communities" (Clifford, 2009, p. 1). Effective engagement with Senge's (1990) disciplines of personal mastery; shared vision, mental models, team learning and systems thinking, helps leaders facilitate critical learning within school communities. A truly inclusive learning environment encourages innovative learner-centred opportunities which lift students above their current perceived limitations (Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham, 1997; Bush, 1986; Clifford, 2009; Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Spady & Schwahn, 2010; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006; UNESCO, 2005; West-Burnham & O'Sullivan, 1998).

2.4.2. Partnership in intervention

Principals face the challenge of putting in place procedures for developing collaboration between the different sectors involved, and over-coming negative attitudes that work as a barrier to inclusive education (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001). An English report entitled *Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs* (English Department for Education and Employment, 1997) recommends increased training and support for educators and principals, along with the development of effective partnership and information exchange between service providers, local authorities, schools and families. Cullen and Carroll-Lind (2005) and Raab and Dunst (2004) concur that an inclusive culture which reaches beyond the school to engage the student's family and community in the learning process, both enhances the development of the child and better supports and strengthens their family.

Talay-Ongan (2001) believes that effective school leaders recognise parents as the child's first educator and the one constant in the child's life. As those who live with the outcomes of decisions made by educational organisations every day,

parents have the greatest vested interest in seeing their child learn. A range of studies (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Ballard, 1993; Cullen & Carroll-Lind, 2005; English Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Neilson, 2000; Odom, Teferra, & Kaul, 2004; Porter, 2002; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006) support families being fully informed of their options and included in the decision-making as to which setting best meets their child's needs, rather than decisions being solely centred on the child or professional. The authors suggest deliberation and participation in decision-making helps develop parents' insightfulness to future trends and changes in SEN policies, and will hopefully enhance pupils' academic performance and improve school attendance, behaviour and self-esteem.

Carpenter et al. (2010) affirm that together parents, teachers and professionals create learning pathways for children, using a combination of new information and previous knowledge and experience. However, despite the rhetoric of partnership, Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) indicate that many parents of pupils with LD still report relationships with school and support personnel as stressful, frustrating and alienating. At the same time, teachers report equal frustration in seeking collaborative relationships with parents.

2.4.3. Cultural perspective

Porter (2002) maintains that principals are instrumental in developing a culture of open and accessible communication between school and home, overcoming cultural and language barriers and ensuring parent concerns are addressed. Literature identifies contending perspectives concerning the reality of cultural sensitivity in inclusive educational programmes. Talay-Ongan (2001) claims the successful operation of educational programmes for students with SEN relies on a strong parent/whānau/teacher/principal partnership in a culturally sensitive environment, in which each member brings their own unique skills and knowledge of the child. Cullen and Bevan-Brown (1999) suggest that inclusive philosophies about cultural sensitivity are not always reflected in practice, reporting that two-thirds of parents of Māori children considered their Māori identity was not taken into account in their child's programme. Although this

literature has a focus on Māori culture, the same concept can be applied to other cultures.

Ballard (1993) and Cullen and Carroll-Lind (2005) report a disproportionately high number of Māori students have been removed from mainstream education and placed in special needs classes. A MOE initiative, dedicating some RTLB positions to the learning needs of Māori students, acknowledged the high number of Māori students experiencing learning and behaviour difficulties in regular New Zealand schools (Valentine, 2013).

Although Māori are a minority group within New Zealand's population, Ballard, Cullen and Carroll-Lind (2005) and MacFarlane (2004) believe it is important for principals to recognise the importance of their culture and to ensure adequate planning and research of LD is undertaken. The Māori education strategy (MOE, 2009a) and the Crippled Children Society Disability Action group (CCS Disability Action, 2011) encourages all staff to receive training and support in Tikanga and to identify practices which fit culturally with Māori. Bevan-Brown (1999a), proposes using Māori community members to develop and implement resources for students with SEN, which will help ensure teaching techniques are culturally appropriate, incorporate Māori values and provide best-practice for young Māori children.

2.4.4. From teaching to learning

Pounder (1999) believes the social architecture of schools help shape teacher attitudes towards new pedagogies, and that principals should lead the field in PLD by ensuring that they themselves are at all times professionally engaged, reflective and analytical. Application of effective teaching strategies requires sound knowledge of the contextual setting (Head, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1992). In order to be an astute leader, principals need to become skilful at asking the right questions and promote collective reflectivity of staff by providing opportunities to share and critique their understanding about effective teaching strategies (Head et al., 1992). The autonomy of classroom teachers, which traditionally featured as

the school norm appears to inhibit collective and collaborative thinking (Fullan, 1993; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Huberman, 1993; Lieberman, 1995; Peters, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992; Sirotnik, 1991; Sparks & Hirsch, 1997; Walker, 1999). Whitehead et al. (2013) claim "the function of a principal in a school is to create the conditions for the fullest release of creative talent on the part of individual staff members and the students" (p. 123).

2.4.5. From all students to every student

Babione and Shea (2005) believe the traditional blanket statement that 'all students can learn' has meant it has been hard to see the individual uniqueness of each student. By demanding a whole school approach to differentiation, principals individualise each child's education programme. They recognise the uniqueness of character, difference in learning styles and the individual's potential value to society. The challenge is for principals to develop a child-centred pedagogy which is capable of successfully educating all children, including those with disabilities (Babione & Shea, 2005). A range of approaches to student grouping and the development of a variety of meaningful and relevant lessons, increased use of resources and differing questioning styles will promote higher order thinking. Neither principal nor teachers should fall into the trap of placing their own limitations on students with SEN (Babione & Shea, 2005)

Part 5. The Philosophical Element

2.5.1. Moral authority as a basis of leadership

Any leader can learn a set of skills, but not all possess the vision, attitudes and values which will underpin their leadership practice and become the basis of leadership strategies and actions (Branson, 2009, October 19; Fullan, 2003; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013). The writers confirm that leadership takes many forms and although leaders should always lead, different circumstances require different approaches. Forceful, decisive leaders successfully manipulate events

and people so that vision becomes reality, whereas a form of stewardship provides morally based leadership which touches people differently, tapping emotion, appealing to values and responding to connections with other people (Branson, 2009, October 19; Fullan, 2003; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013). Although Branson (2009) suggests a lack of moral literacy exists for guiding educational leaders, he considers leaders need to commit to moral purpose and a belief in social justice. By committing to authentic leadership, and a system of beliefs and values, Branson believes principals can develop strategies which increase personal effectiveness, allowing them to become the best they can be.

Writers, Branson et al. (2011), Greenfield (1991), Johnson (1990) and Sergiovanni (1990, 1992) agree that rather than being motivated by bureaucratic mandates or directives, leaders should be motivated by a moral commitment to children, an awareness of their needs and a belief about the significance of their role as teacher in children's lives. By communicating high expectations of classroom leaders, principals can create a commitment to values which will emerge from a groundswell of moral authority (intuition). Sergiovanni (1990; 1992) predicts that schools will transform into organisations which inspire commitment, devotion and service to students with SEN. Although commonly recognised as best practice amongst school leaders, moral authority is yet to gain full support within an academic concept of management.

2.5.2. Leading for social justice

The moral nature of transformative leadership links intellectual activities that take place in schools to a broader social and cultural context, such as disability and the need for special education (Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Place, 2011). Leadership for social justice examines the policies and procedures that shape schools, as well as the school culture which lead to social inequalities and marginalisation due to disability. It confronts status quo, embraces difference, and challenges traditional leadership roles and stances. Marshall and Oliva (2006), Place (2011) and Sergiovanni (1992) believe that by moving educators from passive involvement to conscious, deliberate and pro-active educational practice that produces socially

just outcomes for all children, they create a caring society that is accepting of risk, rather than one that blames children and families for situations that place them at risk.

2.5.3. Leading with ethics and morality

Education is considered to be generally a moral enterprise, but the field of special education is wrought with ethical dilemmas and problems, especially when educators are called on to advocate for children with disabilities (Fiedler & VanHaren, 2009; Hallett & Hallett, 2012). It is crucial that leaders have a working knowledge of relevant ethical standards and the professional code of ethics (Fiedler & VanHaren, 2009). Hallett and Hallett (2012) encourage leaders to promote reflection and engagement in ethical research-led practice, rather than imposing their own knowledge and practice upon staff.

The Ethics of accountability is a reality in the lives of all school leaders. Strike (2007) defines the fundamental task of the school leader as creating competent, caring, collegial, and ethical learning communities which provide good education and responsible accountability. Leaders are guided by what Coster (1998) refers to as an 'ethical imperative', the ethical underpinning of organisations which promotes respect for dignity, justice and fairness in dealing with all people, and using authority to maintain what is right.

Strike (2007) describes the use of a 'moral compass' which guides contemporary leaders in maintaining perspective when faced with the complex and conflicting moral demands of creating an effective and deliberative learning community. It provides a guide for ethical decision-making and offers a clear understanding of one's own role and authority. Rather than avoiding the moral demands of leadership or imposing their own moral values, leaders balance the situational context of their learning organisation with their role as moral leader (Thompson, 2011).

While moral principles govern interaction within learning organisations, ethics is concerned with moral obligation, responsibility and social justice. It defines school practice and rules and informs responsible behaviour and decision-making (April, Peters, Locke, & Miambo, 2011; Bon & Bigbee, 2011; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Strike, 2007). Ethics is not only about morality and what is right and what is wrong, how social resources are to be justly distributed and how decisions are fairly made; but is central to the establishment of a good educational community (Strike, 2007).

Although educational policy promotes a culture of fair cooperation, freedom, equality and democracy, it is important to note that leaders do not get to make policy, but merely comply with it (Strike, 2007). Effective leaders work hard to address issues related to social justice with regard to the education of students with LD, paying special attention to performance and resource inequities in schools (Cherry-Holmes, 1988; Skrtic, 1991; Strike, 2007).

2.5.4. Leading an equitable school

A joint publication by the Ontario Principals' Council (2012) outlines the importance of engaging with the "moral imperative that is at the centre of issues such as equity, diversity and social justice", when examining disparity between students whose needs are being well met and those whose are not (p. 7). The basic requirement of a leader of an equitable school is an ability to apply critical consciousness. Ryan (2006) recommends leaders scrutinize their own practice for evidence of commitment to advocating for students with SEN. This should be reflected in curriculum, physical surroundings and an inclusive school climate in which diversity is honoured and individuals respected.

Ontario Principals' Council (2012) believes it is important for school leaders to understand how power (invisible or overt) operates within schools and the influence this has on goals for fully inclusive classroom programmes. Strategic commitment to inclusion of a whole school community needs principals to be explicit in their expectation that staff work collectively on issues of equity and inclusion, which includes equality of educational opportunity and resource

distribution (Strike, 2007). Ethical decision making is particularly challenging when meeting the multiple requirements of children with SEN, as it means reducing the resources available to others.

Strike (2007) believes that equality reflects the nature of a community in which all are deemed equal even though they are also different in many respects. Strike contends that the NCLB Act (2001) puts unfair pressure on educators of students with SEN. Although students receive the same input, a difference in ability leading to a difference in results, does not mean failure of equal opportunity. Instead, Strike believes the term equal opportunity should mean that schools ensure every student has the same chance to learn, rather than every student learning the same thing or the same amount. Nor should educators conclude that students with SEN are unable to learn, thereby responding with a lack of effort, or by using a child's alleged disability to excuse poor performance of either the student or teacher (Strike, 2007). Strike asserts that no matter the student's background, educators have a duty to do their best to ameliorate any negative effects on their achievement.

Having established that the programme a student receives should be determined by their needs rather than the needs of educators to produce higher scores, it is now time to explore how these decisions are made.

2.5.5. What guides decision making

Various authors see decision-making as a critical aspect of leadership, requiring deliberate thought and systematic enquiry using the best available data within the situational context, after which current educational practice is either retained, modified or abandoned (Argysis, 2002; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999; Yeo, 2006). The writers suggest that as changes are implemented and evaluated, organisational learning occurs. They recommend that leaders view decisions about instruction, curriculum and assessment not only as opportunities to focus on student learning, teacher accountability and improvement, but also as a key instrument of reform. This

requires leaders to be knowledgeable about current research to back up their leadership decisions.

The work of educational leaders is people intensive and involves continually engaging with others, and exposing themselves to dealing with both the eccentricities of organisations and potential conflict (Pfeffer, 1981). The logic behind decisions empowers leaders to make order out of what may be seen as organisational chaos (Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009). Marshall and Oliva (2006) and Strike (2007) maintain that both democratic and participative styles of leadership provide valuable tools for making decisions about school priorities and how they are to be pursued. By creating meaningful activities in which staff are involved, they become more participative and intrinsically motivated to engage in decision-making and increase personal effort (Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009).

Principals should be thoughtful listeners and be flexible and open to change (Patterson et al., 2000; Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008; Strike, 2007). An inventory of prior knowledge about decisions their schools have made concerning special education, teaching methodology and innovation provides structure and content for enhancing an organisation's learning process. Bad decisions can be avoided by being prepared, reflecting on actions and thinking carefully about how each decision contributes to the overall goal and vision of their organisation (Kruse, 2001; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Pounder, 1998, 1999).

MOE policies and their implication for the entire school inform decisions such as allocation of classroom space and eligibility of students for special educational programmes (MOE, 2009b, 2013c). Legitimate decisions are guided by legislation and address potentially legal and moral consequences. They promote social justice and ensure the needs of individual students inform all aspects of schooling (Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Strike, 2007).

Branson et al. (2011) speak of the process of moral purpose which allows leaders to be the very best they can be, introducing a subjective dimension to decision-making which requires leaders to own the outcome of their decisions. A

sociological perspective towards decision-making allows decisions to be guided by a set of values, whether driven by society, parents or politicians. By examining values and questioning the basic underlying assumptions and practices that govern behaviour and inform core decision making, organisations create new norms and values which will guide policy and practices (Argysis, 2002; Weik, 2001; Yeo, 2006).

2.5.6. Ethics of decision making

This section will look briefly at the ethics of decision-making and how decisions are guided by leaders demonstrating equal respect for others and maximising opportunities which benefit students. Ethical decisions are legitimate decisions which respect evidence and aim at worthy ends. Decisions are made as a result of deliberation by those who have the knowledge and experience to make them. They treat people fairly, respect their rights, and are transparent and open to debate (Strike, 2007). Ethical decisions create and sustain healthy and functional communities that teach students how to effectively participate in liberal, democratic societies (Beck & Murphy, 1996; Kallio, 2003; Strike, 2007).

The role of principal carries with it certain power and privilege, but a leader's ability to make use of this authority hinges on gaining staff trust in their judgement and integrity. If at any stage their moral authority is comprised through unethical decision-making, they will lose the trust of the staff and the sense of unity within their school community and will be forced to rely on formal 'positional authority' (Strike, 2007). The same applies to the relationship between principals and their Board of Trustees. If there is a lack of trust that principals will carry out their duties and implement policies in an ethical manner, the Board of Trustees may become more vigilant in enforcing regulations, leading to a less collegial relationship (Strike, 2007).

Although the determination of what is good is made by individuals, the ethics and morality of schools and school leaders remain guided by the mores of society such as the notion of social justice and demonstrating courtesy and respect for others

(Beck & Murphy, 1996; Kallio, 2003). Having examined the ethics of decision-making, the next question to be addressed is how leaders prioritise decisions.

2.5.7. Prioritising decisions

Creating a dichotomy between purpose for, and consequence of, decisions allows principals the insight to prioritise decisions (Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009; Yeo, 2006). Not all events which require decisions are equal. The outcome of some, hold greater significance than others. High-consequence decisions relate to long term attainment of organisational goals, values and vision, strategic planning and school-reform, but also have potential to affect short-term practices, goals and actions. Low-consequence decisions are more likely to be routine decisions concerning day to day activities. Good decision making is a balancing act between the competing pressures of long-term focus, short-term deadlines and crisis management. Effective school leaders who respond thoughtfully to each are more likely to experience greater success than those who do not (Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009; Yeo, 2006).

Although principals and Boards of Trustees are responsible for ensuring local community expectations and government legislation are met, principals are ultimately accountable for the effective implementation of special education programmes (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2002; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). By encouraging internal and collective responsibility for student academic growth, principals facilitate collaborative dialogue around student learning, before reaching a consensus about what constitutes best-practice (Jennings, 2013).

2.5.8. Making tough decisions

Special education is an area that lends itself to potential conflict and disagreement between educators, parents and service providers. Leadership knowledge of how to identify potential areas of dispute and conflict is useful (Cohen, 2003; Fisher &

Ury, 1981). Although leaders may draw on the combined knowledge of all involved, principals need to claim authority for decisions. Leadership based on this kind of moral authority is extended to the principal because they exemplify characteristics of experienced and professional educators (Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009; Strike, 2007). The logic behind decision-making requires principals to identify problems which need attention, recognise and evaluate alternative solutions, search for confirming or contrary evidence, and implement and review chosen solutions (Dewey, 1933, 1938; Kotter, 1996; Simon, 1993; Wallis, 2002).

Tough decisions are commonly conflict-laden and force leaders to dig deep for inspiration, information and ability. Problems are often fluid and change shape as they are tackled (Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009). Proactive leaders recognise issues and utilise a variety of overlapping strategies and skills, such as regular environmental scanning as part of habitual leadership practice and routine. By emphasising common ground and utilising negotiation skills when appropriate, leaders can ensure disputes do not escalate (Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009). Agreement should be based on objective criteria which focus on the topic of interest rather than personalities or position (Cohen, 2003; Fisher & Ury, 1981).

2.5.9. Response to intervention informs decision making

Demands for excellence and equity, inherent in current educational policies such as IDEA (1997) and NCLB (2001), provide principals with tools for addressing inequities that have previously hindered education for students with LD. IDEA (1997) requires principals to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in a least restrictive environment. One of the most prevalent of trends in adaptive education, 'response to intervention' (RTI) provides an intensive instruction framework for systematic reform, aimed at improving learning outcomes for all students. It offers evidence-based strategies for identifying special education needs for students with specific LD and improving students' levels of achievement, particularly for those who are behaviourally challenged (Bender & Shores, 2007; Lashley, 2007; Smith, Peters, Sanders, & Witz, 2010; Whitehead et al., 2013).

A three tiered approach for identifying students with learning challenges increases the intensity of intervention and monitoring at each tier. By the time students have been confirmed as having SEN at the third tier, the school is data-rich on pupil academics and behaviour (Batsche, Elliot, Graden, Grimes, Kovaleski, Prasse, Reschly, Schrag & Tilly, 2006). The use of the problem solving decision-making process, coupled with evidence-based assessment in the RTI framework provides school leaders with a positive and manageable alternative to traditional categorical assessment models. Traditional assessment models are reported as offering little information, when used to determine eligibility of students for additional support (Kvale & Forness, 1999; Reschly & Tilly, 1999; Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008). Literature by Batsche et al. (2006) and Smith et al. (2010) indicates that the RTI framework has led to more consistency in referral rates than traditional approaches. Although not a quick process, it has had positive effects for students and schools with respect to resource allocation.

Part 6. Maximising the Benefit of Resources

2.6.1. Funding

The MOE allocate and distribute funding and staffing for special education initiatives through the ORRS and SEG grants (MOE, 2004). While ORRS funding is allocated to meet the needs of students identified with very high needs, provision of limited additional funding through a highly contested SEG grant is based on school roll and decile rating. SEG funding provides staff training and extra teacher aide hours to support students with moderate levels of difficulty (learning, behaviour and/or social communication; vision, hearing, mobility or communication needs) to achieve within the New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2013b).

While acknowledging a shortfall in funding to meet the needs of all students, MOE (2013c) suggests that creative solutions using teaching skills and strategies relating to special education can provide for these students within the regular

school system with minimal adjustment. MOE (2013c) also requires principals to ensure adequate resourcing is available for professional development for staff and principals and requests frequent reporting to the Board of Trustees on special education. MOE special education spokesman Brian Coffey assured critics that despite educational reform, all those eligible will continue to get support. However, Winter and O'Raw (2010) question the ability of these students to access the curriculum without additional support.

Winter and O'Raw (2010) assure readers that inclusive education is not about placing students in mainstream classes to save money, but optimising learning environments which provide opportunities for all learners to be successful, a view shared by the MOE (2013c). However, Graham-Matheson (2012) believes that the inclusion of students with SEN is influenced by teacher confidence, and the demand for resourcing. UNESCO (2005) suggests a range of cost effective measures which can be used where resources are scarce. These include utilising a trainer-of-trainer model for PLD which links university students with schools, and converting special needs schools into resource centres to provide expertise and support to clusters of mainstream schools. They also suggest training parents, linking with community resources and utilising students themselves in peer support programmes.

Davison (2012), of the New Zealand Herald, reports that changes to the structure of New Zealand's special education in 2012/2013 places increasing strain on principals and their staff, with the scheduled closure of two specialised schools in the South Island and five special needs units at mainstream schools. More than one hundred and fifty special education teachers face uncertain futures with the discontinuation of the $13 million service, known as Supplementary Learning and Support (SLS) which has helped fifteen thousand New Zealand children with significant learning difficulties. Changes are the result of a review in 2010 led by former Association Education Minister Heather Roy, which recommended more emphasis on mainstream schools doing more for special education students (Davison, 2012).

2.6.2. Resource allocation

Strike (2007) suggests that principals not only face dilemmas in ensuring equitable opportunity, but also face issues of fairness and justice as students compete for scarce resources. The cost of resources means schools are unable to commit to fully realising the potential of all students with SEN, leading to difficult decisions about which student programme to support over others. Strike (2007) recommends leadership decisions about resource allocation should be made on programme quality and effectiveness, and be measured against school objectives (which are difficult to compare). Although it is challenging to know which resources will be more or less effective than others, priority should be given to objectives which are not adequately being met and could be better served by increasing resources. All students need to feel valued and supported if they are to learn, although Strike (2007) acknowledges that students with SEN require a disproportionately large set of resources to produce adequate educational gains.

2.6.3. Benefit maximisation

Strike (2007) discusses the principle of benefit maximisation. Principals are faced with a myriad of decisions when establishing what resources return the greatest good for the greatest number and how they are best distributed. Principals must decide whether investing in special education programmes is the best investment of a school's scarce resources, when the investment may only yield modest dividends (Strike, 2007). In relation to economic outcomes, an individualised programme for students with SEN may be seen as a poor investment. Instead the school may benefit more from resources being put elsewhere where they will have the biggest impact (Strike, 2007).

The MOE suggest that once a student's needs are established through an IEP and their desired capacities are determined, a resource package will be allocated to provide each student with a fair chance of achieving those goals (MOE, 2013a; 2013c). However, Strike (2007) suggests a more controversial approach to allocating resources based on a student's learning capacity and potential level of

functioning, given their current life situation. Although leaders can measure immediate gains to decide if the programme adds to the student's achievement, Strike (2007) questions how principals are to gauge long term effects of intervention, and at what point resource expenditure imposes an unreasonable burden on providers, or those students who receive less so that another can receive more.

Although MOE special education guidelines (MOE, 2013c) and legislation by NCLB (2001) and SENDA (2001) govern many of these decisions, some students may in fact succeed quite well without additional resources. Meanwhile, investing money into GAT education programmes for students with their own SEN could produce students who will make greater economic contribution to their nation. Collins (2001) suggests to "put your best people on your biggest opportunity, not your biggest problem" (p. 58). However, Strike (2007) questions the ethics of offering extension opportunities for GAT students, when compared to the benefits of investing in humane treatments for students with SEN, such as increased functionality, self-sufficiency, developing relationships and personal dignity. Advocates for special education, argue that as a long-term investment, helping children become self-sufficient is far less costly than providing life-time care. Investment into these students is on two different levels, and Strike (2007) believes that leaders should communicate a viewpoint that this is an investment in someone whose growth and success will benefit all - an investment in the community rather than a drain on resources. Professor John Hattie believes that teacher expectations have a profound effect on student achievement, and suggests that it is imperative that school politics or school systems are not at odds with ensuring what is best for students and that school resources are consistent with student need (Hattie, 2009, January 13).

Summary

Special education in the twenty-first century is fraught with issues regarding bureaucracy, time frames, expenditure, limitations, complicated procedures and

ethical and moral decision-making (Strike, 2007). Tension between competing political and social ideologies and a battle for resources (which are limited by political agendas), set the scene in which principals attempt to 'lead inclusion' (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2012). Whitehead et al. (2013) report claims by principals that it is not possible to develop inclusive educational systems without radical school reform or a complete transformation.

Devolvement of responsibility from special educational services to school principals has resulted in a fundamental change in a principal's role (Parker & Day, 1997; Sage & Burrello, 1994). This rapidly changing era of inclusion, standards-based reform and increased accountability exposes leadership values, and challenges the way schools and classrooms are organised. It influences relationships between principals, teachers and students, and impacts on decisions over PLD and equitable allocation of scarce resources (Ainscow et al., 2006; Dyson, Gallannaugh, & Millward, 2003; Ekins & Grimes, 2009; Wallace Foundation, 2012).

Thompson (2012) concurs that an inclusive school culture hinges on strong management and leadership which is ideologically in tune with inclusive practice. Authors such as Ainscow et al. (2006), Ekins (2012) and Whitehead et al. (2013), suggest replacing existing hierarchies between professionals and staff with a more collegial approach of distributed leadership. This requires a clearly articulated school-wide vision, harnessing individual skills, promoting critical thinking and involving staff in the leadership process. Fullan (2002), Marshall and Oliva (2006) suggest that a leader's moral authority and decisions concerning policies and procedures that shape a schools culture, should be guided by an ethical imperative which underpins dignity, justice and fairness in dealing with students with SEN.

"Students who have disabilities, challenge the educational status-quo and challenge principals to consider critically how a student might benefit from standardized approaches" (Lashley, 2007, p. 184). Carpenter (2010b) suggests that to allow for a new generation of children demonstrating complex needs and difficult behaviour to be included meaningfully, effectively and purposefully in

mainstream classrooms, a new generation pedagogy needs to evolve within the framework of existing practice.

Dr John Cornwall agrees that special education is complex, contentious and contradictory by nature. It calls for collaborative, explicit, and evidence-informed decision-making which respects cultural difference and the input of parents and the school community (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2012).

In conclusion, Bartlett (2012) states that the fundamental shifts in thinking and behaviour, necessary to keeping schools striving for excellence involves making paradigm shifts in attitudes and behaviours which are driven by research and proven practice. Whatever the style, the impact of leadership is greatest where the learning needs of students are most acute (Protheroe, 2010). Morally sound, enquiry-led practice helps overcome the disparity between a school's aspirations and its practice (Ainscow, 2002; Fullan, 1991; Lloyd, 1997, 2006; Thousand & Villa, 1992).

Having explored aspects of the literature in order to develop a theoretical understanding of the issues underlying the topic, the next chapter outlines an appropriate research method.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Introduction

Chapter three focuses on the nature and purpose of research, and then describes the thought progressions in establishing the most appropriate research methodology for meeting the intention of this limited study. It details the chronology of collection, analysis and interpretation of data that leads to logical conclusions about how a small group of experienced Waikato primary school principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with special educational needs (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). This chapter also acknowledges the advantages and limitations of using the chosen method (Cohen et al., 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Tuckman & Harper, 2012).

The review of literature revealed an inherent dualism between leadership and the development of an inclusive school culture, which is reflected in decisions that bridge the gap between school initiatives and the consequences for students with SEN (Bargerhuff, 2001; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013). With that in mind, core questions will establish the influence leadership behaviour has on the culture of organisations and therefore the decisions that are made about special education. Subsidiary questions will help establish how the organisational structure supports the instruction and learning of students with SEN (Fullan, 2007; Mayrowetz, 2008; MOE, 2000c).

3.1. Research paradigms, perspectives and methods

3.1.1. Notions of research

The notion of research stems from an inquiry which is classified into the three overlapping categories of experience, reasoning and research, none of which are

independent or mutually exclusive. Research is described by Tuckman and Harper (2012) as "a systematic attempt to provide answers to questions" (p. 3)**.** "Research is not just a highly moral and civilized search for knowledge… [but a] set of very human activities that reproduce particular social relations of power" (Donmoyer, 2006, p. 88). A valuable tool for advancing collective and individual understanding of a scholarly community, research involves engaging with a variety of research social theories, philosophical debates, methodology and research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

3.1.2. Research paradigms

The establishment of a hypothesis and inquiry design is determined by a researcher's previous experience, axiology (values), and their alignment with a research paradigm, the theoretical framework which guides the thinking of individual researchers or research community who think and work in a similar way (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schnelker, 2006). Paradigms are characterised by their ontology (philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality), epistemology (how we come to know new knowledge), and method of data collection and analysis (Bell B. (Producer), 2012, October 5; Cachia & Millward, 2011; Cresswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mentor, Elliot, Hulme, Lewin, & Lowden, 2011; Schnelker, 2006; Wilson, 2012).

When establishing new knowledge, consistency is critical. It is important to align the various aspects of a chosen paradigm, by selecting appropriate methods and methodology (nature in which research emerges), which correspond with one's ontological position. Researchers "must be able to live and work within a space that resonates spiritually, culturally and intellectually with one's work**"** (Dillard, 2006, p. 65).

3.1.3. Aligning ontology with a chosen paradigm

All paradigms are situated under two meta-paradigms. A modernist or positivist (scientific) paradigm combines realist ontology with an epistemology reflecting

reality as precise and rule dominated. This is generally adopted by quantitative researchers who exclude notions of choice, using conventional benchmarks of rigor, internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity, verifying hypotheses through experimental manipulation (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

Instead, my ontological position aligns with the contrasting meta-paradigm of social constructivism. This position is commonly adopted by educational researchers who use qualitative methods to understand and describe meaningful social action. Reality is viewed as the result of 'human construct'(Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Tuckman & Harper, 2012). "The strength of qualitative inquiry is in the integration of the research question, the data, and data analysis" (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 1).

Within the two meta-paradigms lie five key paradigms, commonly referred to in current research as positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, critical theory and participatory paradigms (Dillard, 2006; Lather, 2006; Lincoln et al., 2011; Schnelker, 2006). Complexity of research does not allow for neat division into these few categories but rather an interweaving of many viewpoints. Decisions on which research method to engage in are guided by inquiry aims, the nature of knowledge and the way it is accumulated, rigour and validity, values, ethics, and a need for providing responsible and reflective fieldwork (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln et al., 2011). Each paradigm is in intellectual and spiritual pursuit of the truth and has the capacity to value another's perspective (Bishop, 1997; Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Dillard, 2006; Donmoyer, 2001; Lather, 2006; Scheurich & Young, 1997). The meta-paradigms described in this section are especially important given the interpretive nature of my research, and require further exploration (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006; Cresswell et al., 2007).

3.2. Research approach: A series of case studies

3.2.1. Epistemology

Selecting an interpretive epistemology, the overall theoretical stance for this inquiry, allowed me to identify a research question which informed my approach to collecting and analysing data. I sought to examine experiences common between respondents, when exploring how principals meet the multiple learning requirements of students with SEN (Cresswell et al., 2007).

My research is framed by a paradigmatic mix of post-positivist constructivism and critical reasoning, in which the school community and I shared ownership of the research (Cresswell et al., 2007). A variant of grounded theory, the constructivist theory offers flexible guidelines for research. Throughout the research process decisions were required about what questions to ask. This encouraged reflexivity, emphasising personal values, beliefs, experiences and assumptions. Although allowing the gathering and analysis of rich data, conclusions remained suggestive and inconclusive (Charmaz, 2006). For this reason, the constructivist approach was balanced with a more purposeful and dynamic critical theory, often concerned with poorly represented marginal groups, examining what could be done to change the learning environment for students with SEN (Britzman, 1995; Jones, 2007). This approach reflects my ontological position which views reality as subjective and embedded in rhetorical and political power (Lather, 2006).

3.2.3. Choosing an appropriate paradigm and research method

Within each of the paradigms described, there are some options that could be useful to this project. I want to gather data which will assist me to explore leadership practices that impact on the development of school ethos, culture and motivational climate, and to establish what influences school outcomes, student achievement and motivation of teachers. Being a public policy field, effective allocation of educational resources, development of organisational structure to

support learning, and the emotional well-being of staff will also be explored and the findings shared with other practitioners (Davis et al., 2005; Rice, 2010).

Practitioner research used in qualitative inquiry has been described by Mentor et al. (2011) as a "systematic enquiry in an educational setting, carried out by someone working in that setting, the outcomes of which are shared with other practitioners" (p. 3). Therefore, it seemed to me that a qualitative approach, which is dialogic by nature, would be best. However, Onwuegbuzie, Bustamante, and Nelson (2010) warn of over reliance on any single research type. "All phenomena and all knowledge, simultaneously have quantitative and qualitative dimensions" (Ercikan & Roth, 2006, p. 22). For this reason, the project will make limited use of quantitative data gathering methods in the form of an initial survey. The survey was limited in its scope because it sought only to gather background information about the school and to investigate respondents' understanding of special needs.

It is important for researchers to demonstrate a balanced appreciation of research methods, examining strengths and limitations (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002). Within the qualitative paradigm there are multiple options for gathering data. I could use surveys or questionnaires. As I am working with a small sample neither of these are likely to provide sufficient data, and are therefore of limited use.

Another option is to use a series of case studies as a framework method, and then use interviews which are sensitive towards participants. There are three key types of interviews: unstructured, semi-structured and structured. Structured interviews present pre-determined questions in a standardised manner, a key research method for obtaining quantitative data and most commonly used in marketing research or political opinion polls (Bell, 2010; Mentor et al., 2011). On the other hand, unstructured or ethnographic interviews are loosely structured conversations which follow no set interview protocol or pre-determined script in the exploration of a participant's view-point. Because I do not want to waste respondent's time, I want to have interviews structured to some extent in order to keep respondents on track and focused on my research question. Therefore, within the interpretive

framework adopted, and in accordance with assumptions I have made, both implicit and explicit, concerning the nature of knowledge necessary to address the research question, I have chosen semi-structured interviews. They will draw on features from both structured and unstructured interviews (Bishop, 1997).

3.2.4. Semi-structured interviews

Consistent with the primary intention of qualitative research, interviews are a valuable research tool for generating educational and social research data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Bryman, 2008; Tuckman & Harper, 2012). They recognize the value of professional shared conversation, providing a "construction site of knowledge ..., an interchange of views between two persons (or more) conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (Kvale, 1996, p. 2). Interviews may be conducted in person, face to face, over the telephone or electronically (Bishop, 1997).

The semi-structured interviews follow a protocol more structured than informal conversations and commence with a broad open-ended question which is closely related to the research question, followed by more complex questions which are asked over a longer period (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Mentor et al., 2011; Mutch, 2005). Although the plan for semi-structured interviews is shaped by research objectives which define the area to be explored, it is open to reciprocal negotiation with interviewees. This produces culturally acceptable, valid and accurately presented data findings which portray the interviewee's voice and effectively addresses the research question (Bishop, 1997; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Careful preparation determines the effectiveness of data gathering, negating any difference in gender, race and ethnicity, and ensuring that where any cultural differences exist, they would be acknowledged and taken into consideration.

3.2.5. Contextuality

Contextual conditions are highly pertinent to the phenomenon of research (Mouly, 1978), and are of particular significance to this inquiry. Maguire (1996, cited in

Cresswell et.al 2007, p. 35) claims that organisational structure, processes and practice "shape and influence how people of unequal power and privilege are in relationship with each other".

Having no predetermined hypotheses, it was decided that a series of case studies would allow data about individualised school leadership practice to be gathered within the principals' own natural settings, which is consistent with interpretative research epistemology. A wide review of national and international literature, combined with my prior experience as teacher, SENCO and mother of two visually impaired children, ensured I was well informed about my interview topic. This allowed me to respond meaningfully to principals' responses and to ask probing questions to gain further insight into how they thought and acted, a key aim of qualitative research interview procedures.

3.3. Data gathering procedure

3.3.1. Using literature and initial surveys to establish understanding

An initial engagement with relevant national and international literature revealed a correlation between leadership and SEN and the ensuing tension between the two. Literature prompted a series of core questions, the first of which was addressed in a pre-interview survey (see Appendix D). This helped establish a shared understanding of various terms and concepts when researcher and participants met, and provided baseline information regarding students with LD who were enrolled at participants' schools. This formed the basis of the research.

Although relevant literature was used to provide background information for this research project, it was used reasonably, in a manner consistent with the methodological assumptions of qualitative research, so that it informed but did not necessarily direct the questions asked by the researcher (Cresswell, 1994; Yin, 2003).

3.3.2. Sampling: Selecting participants

There are a number of bases on which I could have selected principals. I could have used a random sample. However, due to the limited scope of this study, the sample was drawn from a smaller geographical region. Therefore, if not a random sample, I began to explore clusters, stratification, stratified clusters, and then, ultimately, because this is such a small sample and I wanted to maximise the opportunity of speaking to principals, I decided to use purposive sampling.

A criterion-based selection process provided a means to ensure that the best research participants, selected from primary schools in the Waikato which varied in decile rating, composition, socio economic status and special character, were used as part of a series of case studies. There was no intention of undertaking a comparative study but merely to provide a diversity of sample, valuable when in-depth information is needed about how people think about issues. The population was chosen from schools within Hamilton, as an easily accessible city (Oliver, 2004). This decision was guided by an assumption that this would provide the largest and most diverse student population within reasonable travelling distance, and therefore offer the highest population of students with SEN. Drawing on respondents from a large city also helped maintain anonymity of respondents.

Names of principals were sourced through the University of Waikato (UoW) Educational Leadership Centre. A list of principals suitable as potential participants was specifically selected based on their reputation in the Waikato school based educational community for being inclusive, and for demonstrating effective leadership within their school community. Initial contact was made with six prospective respondents, to whom I introduced myself as a Master of Educational Leadership research student affiliated with the University of Waikato a reputable research organisation. Having briefly outlined the purpose of my research, all six principals indicated interest in the study and were subsequently engaged as respondents, along with a SENCO from one of the respondent's schools, as the person who took full responsibility for their school's special education programme. Each principal had more than ten years, experience in

principalship. Coincidentally, several of the sample schools appear to be magnets for children with special needs and each had certain unique features which resulted in a broad range of research findings (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2010).

Although not aimed at providing generalized findings, the examination of principals' perceptions and attitudes helped understand why they thought or acted in certain ways and offered opportunity to understand social action and processes (Bell, 2010; Mentor et al., 2011; Mutch, 2005).

3.3.3. Chronological order of research stages

Because this research project involves working with people, it required ethical approval through the University of Waikato (UoW, 2008). Having received approval, my interview process began with purposive sampling to select participants. After seeking expressions of interest, potential participants were provided with a copy of my contact details and that of my supervisor and a formal letter of invitation (see appendix A), a detailed information sheet outlining the purpose of the research project (See appendix B), and an indication of time commitment expected of participants. This was accompanied by a copy of indicative questions (see appendix E). Initially these questions were indicative only and were only finalized once the literature review was completed. An initial survey (see appendix D) sent to respondents, gathered statistical data about school demographics prior to the interview and established shared understanding between researcher and participants about the population of students under consideration (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Yin, 2003), thus confirming that mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches enhances the richness of data. The survey was accompanied by an informed consent form (see appendix C) to be signed by respondents in accordance with the UoW Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations guidelines (UoW, 2008), as the University acts as ethical observer for this research project.

A facility and meeting time for conducting interviews were mutually agreed upon. The schedule for interviews was designed to be well paced and allowed time for

establishing rapport with participants before beginning. All interviews were digitally recorded and formally transcribed and analysed, bringing clarity and order to what was initially a chaotic collection of facts and information. The first task after completing the transcript was to read it and find out what the data was telling me, searching for emerging themes. A copy of the transcript was sent to respondents for verification (see appendix F), before release for formal analysis (see appendix G) (Beck & Manuel, 2008; Bell, 2010; Cachia & Millward, 2011; Mentor et al., 2011; Mutch, 2005; UoW, 2008). A good working relationship with my research supervisor ensured these processes and time constraints were met.

3.3.4. Interviews with principals

Semi-structured interviews generated knowledge of leadership practice employed by a group of primary school principals in supporting students with SEN. As interviewer, I was ultimately responsible for decisions made in conducting meaningful, trustworthy and valid method which would satisfy the research aim. Rather than simply a data collection exercise, these interviews were a social exercise in extracting data which would be analysed using a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cachia & Millward, 2011; Cresswell, 1994; Mentor et al., 2011; Reissman, 2005; Wilson, 2012).

A list of open-ended questions provided a guide rather than a script, ensuring some level of standardisation between interviewees, while allowing for flexibility and the freedom to pursue different lines of investigation that might arise during the interview. In this research, face to face interviews were digitally recorded, with supporting notes recorded as necessary. This complemented data gathered through initial surveys, eliciting maximum information in response to questions asked and producing data which accurately portrayed the respondents' voices (Bishop, 1997; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.4. Ethics

An awareness of ethics, guides research integrity and conscience (Bell, 2010; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Hurley & Underwood, 2002; Lincoln, 1995; UoW, 2008). Application for ethical approval for this project was prepared and accepted according to UoW regulation guidelines (UoW, 2008). This process is designed to scrutinize the ethical principles of protection, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity across the research design, that in turn provide new ways to justify and judge the integrity and quality of social research (Education Act, 1996; Mentor et al., 2011; Miller, Birch, Mauthner, & Jessop, 2012; Mutch, 2005; UoW, 2008; Wilkinson, 2001).

3.4.1. Informed consent

Explicit ethical guidelines and protocol required the full disclosure to participants of relevant information about the project and why I wished to interview them, in plain and appropriate language (Bell, 2010; Finch, 2005; Hurley & Underwood, 2002; Mentor et al., 2011; UoW, 2008; Wilkinson, 2001). The notion of informed consent continued throughout the interview process and subsequent transcript phase in a culturally and socially appropriate manner. Respondents were free to make their own decisions about becoming involved and at no time were subject to any form of coercion or manipulation to obtain agreement (Bell, 2010; Cohen et al., 2000; Finch, 2005; Lather, 2006; Mentor et al., 2011; Moss, 1996; The British Psychological Society, 2009; UoW, 2008; Wilkinson, 2010).

3.4.2. Confidentiality/ Anonymity

Researchers are obliged to comply with legislation applicable to the country of research, with respect to privacy and storage of personal information (UoW, 2008). Participants were informed that the interview was to be recorded and that every endeavour would be made to ensure confidentiality and the anonymity of participants and their school were maintained at all times (Bell, 2010; Mentor et al., 2011; Sapsford & Jupp, 1996). Participants were advised that only the

researcher's supervisor and the researcher would have access to the interview transcript and that in the actual report instead of their name, participants would be referred to as Principal A, Principal B, SENCO etc. (Bell, 2010; Mentor et al., 2011; Sapsford & Abbot, 1996).

3.4.3. Minimising harm to research participants

The general tenor of this research is positive which in itself began the process of minimizing potential harm. All research was considered from the standpoint of research participants. Every endeavour was made to protect participants and their organisation from professional, emotional, psychological, cultural and social harm and their reputation safe-guarded through their anonymity in the subsequent reporting of findings (The British Psychological Society, 2009; UoW, 2008).

Participants were advised that data obtained from the interviews was to be used as part of the research thesis for a Master of Educational Leadership. No relationships between the researcher and participants were exploited in this research project, and participants were advised that if through the course of the research process it became apparent that the risk of harm to them was greater than originally envisaged, I would inform the participant and re-evaluate the research procedure (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

3.4.4. Participants right to decline to participate or withdraw

Prior to signing consent, prospective participants were informed of all information relevant to their decision to participate, including their right to decline and the right to access and correct or withdraw information they have provided up until the analysis of data had commenced (Bell, 2010; UoW, 2008). All participants were able to withdraw from the research project by contacting either the researcher or supervisor at any time, without explanation, until they had confirmed accuracy of the transcript and released it for analysis. However, once participants had signed the release form, they were no longer able to withdraw from the study (Bell, 2010; UoW, 2008).

3.4.5. Time commitment of participants

Respondents participated in an initial conversation in which I was able to ascertain their interest in the project. Respondents were then required to read through the documentation explaining the project and complete a brief survey about the school demography, taking approximately thirty minutes to complete all documentation. Interviews lasted approximately ninety minutes. An additional hour was required to read through the written interview transcript in order to confirm its accuracy.

3.4.6. Cultural and social considerations

It is important in research to respect the cultural, social and language preferences and sensitivities of research participants at all times, and follow the guidelines set down in Section 15, UoW regulation guidelines (UoW, 2008). As researcher I was mindful of any social or cultural misunderstandings that might arise, which could distort the true meaning of participants' points of view (Bishop, 2005). Initial contact and gaining of informed consent offered the opportunity to address any cultural or social beliefs or concerns that participants thought I should be aware of. I was prepared to consult appropriately if the purposive sample was to include participants whose culture I was not familiar with (Lincoln et al., 2011; Mentor et al., 2011).

3.4.7. Conflicts of interest

Any potential conflict of interest must be declared between participants and the person whose consent is required (UoW, 2008). Although the information gained from this research is likely to influence my personal teaching behaviour and my role as SENCO, I made every attempt to ensure that there were no conflicts of interest. On-going reflection and critical thinking about the research experience and processes involved in gathering information for the research project helped ensure an open and honest approach towards conducting and reporting the research. I remained in regular contact with my supervisor to ensure that any

potential conflicts of interest or ethical issues that may have arisen were discussed and immediately addressed.

3.4.8. Procedure for resolution of disputes

In accordance with the UoW regulation guidelines (UoW, 2008), participants were consulted during the informed consent phase about procedures to follow should they have a concern regarding any aspect of the research (See Appendix B). At this point they were advised that should a dispute arise at any point during the research process, they would be encouraged to resolve any issues with the researcher in the first instance and then the supervisor if they could not be resolved. Attention was drawn to section 24 clauses 1-2 of the UoW regulation guidelines which would be followed should any disputes or complaints occur during the research (UoW, 2008).

3.5. Validity and Reliability

3.5.1. Creating and validating new knowledge

The aim of research is to create public knowledge which is not just new to researchers as individuals, but new to a research community. In all research, consensus within the research community establishes whether there is sufficient critical mass of data to draw conclusions about its validity. A filtering system in the form of adjudication, either through presentation of research findings at conferences, or publication in peer reviewed journals renowned for demonstrating rigour, evaluates the plausibility of educational claims and assesses the rigour of research projects. This manuscript has been presented as being of archival significance, contributes to a body of knowledge and is responsive to the intended purpose. It discusses procedures and research results in terms of contribution to theory, and clearly identifies and acknowledges limitations and speculations (Elliot, Fischer, & Rennie, 1994).

There are several aspects of research validity available for consideration, the choice of which is located within the research paradigm used. Whereas validity within quantitative research is based on 'certainty', qualitative research accepts that hidden variables may affect its validity (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006; Cresswell et al., 2007). Although Maxwell (1992) agrees with Cohen et al. (2011) that qualitative research generally cannot be replicated, Maxwell proposes that validity is based on five aspects of understanding. These five aspects, which have been carefully considered within this project, comprise descriptive validity (providing an objectively factual account), interpretive validity (interpretation of respondents meaning), theoretical validity (research explains phenomena), generalisability (internal/external validity) and evaluative validity (judgement based on critical/theoretical perspectives rather than researcher interpretation).

Of key importance is consideration of internal and external validity. Research quality and internal validity of data is strongly dependent on research design which "integrates research, critical reflection and action" (Lincoln, 1995, p. 281). Validity and quality of interview procedures call for as much transparency, clarity and explicitness as possible, free of coercion and bias (Cohen et al., 2007; Heshusius, 1992; Mentor et al., 2011). Content and face validity develops from interview questions based on sound theoretical framework.

Semi structured interviews encouraged reciprocal negotiation between interviewer and interviewee to accurately portray the interviewee's voice, thus providing credible conclusions which inform readers that the research data is trustworthy and accurately measures what it was supposed to measure (Bishop, 1997; Cohen et al., 2011). Purposeful sampling and careful preparation of interviews negated any bias of gender, race and ethnicity and ensured that culture and cultural differences were acknowledged and taken into consideration. To ensure there was no change in contextual situation which might impact on the validity of data, all interviews were conducted in participants' natural contextual setting (Cresswell, 1994; Mentor et al., 2011).

External validity requires research results to be generalised based on the procedures used, and be able to be applied to other research approaches (Cohen et

al., 2007). This report demonstrates a thorough understanding of methodology behind data collection and analysis, and provides sufficient thickness of descriptions for adjudicators to make informed judgment. The inclusion of a multitude of citations used in the literature review to support my research added credibility to findings. This provides readers with confidence that knowledgeable researchers have given due consideration to reliability and conclusiveness of previous research findings (Bell, 2005; Boote, 2008; Cohen et al., 2011; Yin, 2003).

Examination of interview recordings, observational notes and information from initial surveys permitted accurate interpretation and analysis of data, exposing dichotomies, examining silences, disruptions and contradictions (Yin, 2003, 2006). I have taken some resource documentation from the MOE and from school board meetings and used this in conjunction with literature and data gathered in interviews, and so that tends to triangulate. Data saturation and confirmatory triangulation ensured quality, reliability and authenticity of informed descriptions. This allows transferability of findings to other research which is essential for validation of new knowledge (Bell, 2008; Bell, 2005; Cohen et al., 2007; Cresswell, 1994; Desimone & Le Floch, 2004; Hernon & Schwartz, 2009; Heshusius, 1992; Koro-Ljungberg, 2010; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Lather, 2006; Maykut & Morehouse, 2001; Mentor et al., 2011; Sapsford & Jupp, 1996).

Finally, construct validity assesses how well an interviewer's thoughts match that of the interviewee. As interviewer I needed to be knowledgeable, skilled in communicating, listening and taking notes, sensitive and open to new ideas and flexible in steering an interview. It was important to be critical enough to challenge what was said, have the ability to remember what had previously been said, and to be good at interpreting information (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Mentor et al., 2011). Given the interpretive nature of interviews, I was aware that my prior experiences could shape the interpretation of data, and that I could influence and distort responses of participants with my personal bias, values and judgements. Therefore, every effort was made to minimise bias.

Misunderstanding between interviewer and interviewee such as seeking answers that supported preconceived notions, misperception on my part about what the respondent was saying, or misunderstandings by the respondent about what was being asked could have resulted in intended meaning being lost in the transfer from oral to written accounts. Other sources for bias could have arisen from nonverbal expressions or tone of voice which could create indirect information and influence the way research findings were interpreted. This may have included changes to wording of questions, poor or biased prompting or alteration to the sequence of questions (Cohen et al., 2007). Verification and confirmation of interview transcripts by respondents prior to release for publication provided opportunity for any bias to be addressed and helped ensure accuracy of data (Bishop, 1997; Cohen & Manion, 1989; Cohen et al., 2007; Cresswell, 1994; Lincoln et al., 2011; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006; Mentor et al., 2011).

3.5.2. What counts as evidence

Evidence stems from research built on "collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, mutually accountable relationships with those studied", and informs us whether or not to accept knowledge (Denzin et al., 2006, p. 776). The labelling of some research as evidence-based implies some research fails to provide evidence. Evidence included a formal framework of school records and documents, interview information, (formal transcribing and informal note taking) and information from the brief survey. Other forms of observation and collection of artefacts provide research evidence, but given the data collection methods used in this project, were not applicable (Bill, 2012).

Effective interview techniques and engagement in professional dialogue with principals combined with my experience as teacher, SENCO, and mother of two visually impaired children provided subjective evidence (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Maykut & Morehouse, 2001; Mutch, 2005). Gillham (2010) claims that different kinds of data sources reporting on the same issues commonly yield contradictory or discrepant results which may complicate the establishment of evidence. I am mindful that education is an activity that is undertaken for public good. Therefore,

despite Kvale's (1996) suggestions that semi structured interviews and other qualitative methods do not necessarily lend themselves to triangulation, I have attempted to ensure the validity of the data by drawing on multiple sources. These include text from interviews transcripts which clearly represented key findings, evidence gathered from national and international literature, as well as MOE and school board reports and surveys. Note taking recorded additional information during interviews such as body language and facial and hand gestures, adding meaning to the data gathering (Bell, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007; Stake, 2008; Yin, 2003). This report revealed strengths and weaknesses of the research, explored and clarified ambiguous findings and either qualified or contradicted findings, minimizing the chance of shutting out evidence due to theoretical notions (Bell, 2010; Ryan & Hood, 2006).

I was aware that that the role of power relationships in constructing knowledge claims could influence findings, rendering some evidence invalid (Cohen et al., 2000; Lather, 2006; Moss, 1996). In addition, data presented by respondents as evidence for meeting the learning requirements of students with SEN, was often gathered through standardized tests which may fail to accurately assess student progress. Gauging assessment of a student's achievement against National Standards relies on teacher overall judgment which could vary between teachers, resulting in evidence neither valid nor accurate when assessing whether their learning needs are being met (Nespor, 2006).

3.6. Analysing findings

The aim of analysing data gathered through interviews was to express ideas and viewpoints which represented the formal and professional voice of the respondents, while examination of their emotive voice reflected their experiences within their contextual situation. I needed to take into account principals' perceptions in relation to the original research intention and relevant literature. Readers need to be confident that there is evidence to support the interpretation (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001; Mentor et al., 2011; Mutch, 2005).

The key to making sense out of accumulated data was the quick and efficient transfer of raw data into a written narrative ready for analysis. As a researcher I was focused, organised and practiced reflexivity and subjectivity in data analysis (Bell, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007; Hernon & Schwartz, 2009; Lather, 2006, 2007; Mentor et al., 2011; Sapsford & Jupp, 2006; Yin, 2003). Effective strategies were required for collecting, collating, coding and analysing data before summarising and reporting interview findings. Although digital recording devices sometimes inhibit honest responses, this method was chosen to accurately record wording of statements and facilitate analysis of findings (Bell, 2010). Researcher perception, speculation on the significance of research findings and their relation to literature, were critical to effective and meaningful analysis, allowing multiple sources of evidence to be woven into a narrative account (Bill, 2012; Mutch, 2005). The challenge of data analysis meant the wording of interview questions was pivotal and as demanding as the interview itself (Bell, 2010).

Once digital recordings were transcribed and verified by the participants as an accurate record of the interview, the data was analysed using a thematic approach or constant comparative analysis which allowed me to systematically sort through data, compare findings and identify recurring themes. Identifying recurring themes, ideas and beliefs was the most intellectually challenging phase of data-analysis (Mutch, 2005). Within themes I then searched for sub themes common to respondents (Maykut & Morehouse, 2001). Although sub themes could be adjudicated on the basis of principals' passion, they still needed to be chosen within an interpretive framework. The thematic approach was supported by discourse analysis which focused on associated academic literature in their social, cultural, political and historical context. In addition, semiotic analysis examined the grammatical elements of interview transcripts, and visual analysis interpreted the images that were created (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Mutch, 2005).

3.7. Reporting back to research participants

A copy of the interview transcript was sent to participants for verification as an accurate record of the conversation before analysis and subsequent publishing of findings (Bell, 2010; Mentor et al., 2011; Mutch, 2005). All participants were advised that they were able to access a copy of the published thesis through the UoW Educational library: Research Commons, and were also offered their own digital copy (UoW, 2008).

3.8. Use of gathered information

In keeping with the aim of disseminating research findings, a digital copy of this inquiry will be lodged permanently in the UoW's digital repository, 'Research Commons' and be made available for public inspection (UoW, 2008). Information from the thesis may also be presented as an oral paper at conferences or published as part of educational journal articles or scholarly publications.

The merit of this project is that it is relatable, rather than its generalisability. Generalisation of findings is not always possible unless a situational context is similar to another setting of its type. However, the findings in this study are sufficiently descriptive and appropriate for other principals working in similar situations, to relate the leadership decision making processes to their own situation (Denscombe, 2007).

3.9. Handling and storage of information

A systematic process of gathering and storing data was adhered to throughout the research process and ensured the confidentiality of data was maintained (Mutch, 2005). In accordance with UoW regulations all non-identifying data such as interview transcripts used for publication will be securely kept, long enough to allow for academic examination, challenge or peer review, normally a period of at least five years (UoW, 2008). Identifying data, such as consent forms and digital

recordings will be stored securely in a filing cabinet with a single key held by the researcher. Digital copies have been stored on a password protected laptop and backed up on a password protected external hard-drive.

Summary

While social research involves the systematic and scholarly examination of problems which concern people within their social contexts, educational research applies the same principles to problems encountered in teaching and learning within the formal educational framework. Much educational research has ceased to be open-ended pure research, instead becoming in nature more evaluative of given initiatives and examining relationships between school and society. It examines how power can be reproduced through education, what ideological interest this serves, and the examination of how schools perpetuate or reduce inequality (Donmoyer, 2006).

Education as an activity undertaken for public good, requires decision-making to be informed through research which balances a wide range of perspectives and options, some contrasting, and some incommensurable with others, but appropriate for particular situations and points in time (Donmoyer, 2006). Most researchers now appear to embrace an intellectual framework of thinking which reflects either constructivist or interpretive paradigms. However, Dillard (2006) suggests that the educational research community are struggling spiritually and intellectually with the proliferation of research discourses and a methodological revolution which has resulted in a range of paradigms operating simultaneously. These engender fundamentally different ways of thinking about both teaching and policy making and provide different options for research (Donmoyer, 2006).

Qualitative research examines teaching and learning through an 'interactionism' lens, which assumes that humans act on the basis of meanings they attribute to a situation. It is socially negotiated and re-negotiated in response to student voice and action. Also, Donmoyer (2006) reports that quantitative methods are less

successful than qualitative research in application to the complex study of human behaviour evident in the context of classrooms.

Semi-structured interviews provide an effective and flexible research method for collecting rich textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cachia & Millward, 2011; Clough & Nutbrown, 2002; Reissman, 2005). Through a reductive process of data analysis, I was able to record, simplify and explain findings, providing knowledge which can be built on by other researchers. This transmittable property is critical in extending knowledge and making decisions (Tuckman & Harper, 2012).

Chapter Four: Presentation of Research Findings.

Introduction

In this chapter, findings are presented using a thematic narrative approach. Data analysis began on a case by case basis in order to establish emerging themes. The data was organized into categories and reviewed repeatedly to establish commonalities, inconsistencies and contradictions. As referred to by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the process of categorising data was somewhat challenging as the semi-structured format produced a flow of conversation which differed between respondents, resulting in data which was initially jumbled. However, when interrogating the data, it became obvious that there were certain recurring themes.

There has been an emphasis on building a picture of six experienced principals in practice, to reveal how they cater for the multiple learning requirements of students with SEN thus addressing the research question. The findings provide a context in which to present key elements of leadership behaviours which have influenced organizational structure, school ethos and school culture, and therefore the decisions principals make concerning students with LD.

While seven emerging themes have been identified for ease of presentation, they are in fact interwoven. The themes include: fluidity of student needs and a reluctance to categorise and label students; addressing special needs as a specific element of effective leadership; building capacity for change and development; data collection systems are essential for informing decisions; moral purpose and social justice, key drivers in inclusive practice; the best learning environment for students with special needs – withdrawal or full inclusion; and limited resourcing requires focused decision making. Some of the sub-headings appear somewhat declamatory, but these are statements made by participants and are used

intentionally to remain true to the voice of participants. Quotations have been selected that best capture the essence of themes.

An important determinant appeared to be the culture of the school. However, this is not identified as a theme because it is all pervasive and influences all areas. Different schools clearly possess different organisational cultures, as one would expect. However, all schools demonstrated a culture of high trust rather than a need for micro-management. Data indicated that the organisational culture of each school was guided by a set of values, which was accepting of difference and appeared to determine the way in which people in their schools responded to the broad spectrum of SEN. An achievement culture of high expectation was present in all schools, although the level of achievement varied between schools according to the demographics of the student population.

The data did not include explicit reference to organisational culture, with only two of seven participants using the term 'moral purpose'. The respondents did not notice it because it is essentially the emic culture in which there are immersed. However, there is nonetheless a culture in each school that clearly supports learners with special needs. Beyond the matter of culture, the data suggest other findings which I have reported under seven categories.

4.1. Fluidity of student need and a reluctance to categorise and label students

Participants indicated a shared understanding of 'special educational needs'. However, the participants displayed different degrees of detail and explicitness in the categorisation of students' learning issues. The interviews also revealed a need for flexibility in special education programming in schools, given the fluid nature of student need and the high levels of transience experienced by some schools.

4.1.1. Lack of standardisation in defining special needs

All participants shared an understanding that the requirements of students with SEN would normally fall outside those of their mainstream peers, and that they would frequently be achieving well below the National Standards, with the exception of students in their first year of school. The following statements provide examples of how participants perceived SEN:

"Those students who have learning or behavioural difficulties that require support, to enable them to fully and successfully participate in the teaching and learning programmes in the classroom" (Principal A).

"Children who need significant adjustment in order to access learning at the same expected level as their peers" (Principal D).

Although respondents acknowledged that GAT students fell within the realm of special needs, as demonstrated in the following statement, not all included this group in their initial definition.

"That realm of learning that 'normal' teaching and learning practices don't fully meet [at] either end of the spectrum" (Principal F).

Two participants described clearly structured systems for categorising students with SEN, such as that used by principal E.

> "We categorise ranging from Category 5, Moderate special needs –short term, Category 4, Moderate to high, Category 3, very high – short term, and (Category 2) moderate to high, and then (Category 1) very high needs. Under those categories they (the staff) have got to say which category they believe they fit in".

However, most participants chose not to identify students individually.

> "I had to actually sit down and think about it. The only ones that I consider you know…like our ORRS kiddie. When they (senior leaders) came in, I said can you give me the names of our special needs kiddies please? We actually don't and I don't think we think about them as special needs either" (Principal D).

Regardless of categorisation, each participant had a clearly structured method for identifying students who require special programming, as demonstrated in the following statement by Principal A:

> "Oh I think we have a clear structure…. Quite often a teacher will say to us, you know this Mary Lou is just not keeping up with everybody else and so that creates a signal, an alarm bell and then we do some investigation" (Principal A).

It was clear that some teachers struggled to distinguish between SEN and what fell within the 'normal range of educational needs' a teacher would expect to find within a class of students.

"My understanding of special needs is anything that is really high, high ORRs and high health needs that require on-going support…anything that is mild to moderate is just part of our every-day learning programme" (Principal C).

4.1.2. Labelling of students is unnecessary and inappropriate

There was a unanimous feeling that labelling students as having 'special needs' was unnecessary and inappropriate. It was felt that singling them out as 'special' inferred that they were different and did not 'belong'.

> "We probably don't look (at it) quite like that, we are probably a bit more holistic in how we look at kids, and we just say they have a learning need or a behaviour need or a both need. We don't really single kids out" (Principal C).

> "They would end up being labelled…labelled, bullied, whereas the kids go that is just whoever.… It is just normal to the kids isn't it, we haven't said you can't be in this class and you can't do this.… Lots of our students perhaps could be classed as special needs in a different school. None of our kids are any the wiser, they just know that that person is that person" (Principal C).

"I don't look at a kid and think you have special needs you know. It is just another student in our school, who might need help with this, that or the other thing" (SENCO).

"Instead of labelling them, I think it is about celebrating those successes" (Principal A).

4.1.3. Fluidity of special educational needs

The term fluidity was used by a number of the participants, and in order to be true to their voice, I have made use of this term in discussing findings. Participants use it in the context of schools' SEN being changeable and uncertain. All participants identified a need for intervention programmes which were responsive to the flexible nature of student need within the school. This took into consideration students' responses to interventions and fluidity among groups particularly in those schools with a highly transient roll. Participants described the 'special needs' in their schools as:

"Very fluid and very much governed by needs of students who walk through the door - it never stays the same for long" (SENCO).

> "Lots of our kids might start off as mild, and when you dig down it becomes moderate or some of them will stay high because maybe their behaviour gets in the way. So you might start as a high, but once you start digging around and start to do things, it might drop down to a moderate or a mild" (Principal C).

4.1.4. Social issues challenge special education programmes

Respondents identified a variety of reasons for students making slow progress. Alongside more traditionally recognised special needs such as LD and auditory, visual and physical impairment, principals identified an increase in ELL, priority learners, high health needs, poor attendance, transience, children who lacked experiences and opportunities in their home environment and students with behavioural needs who were in need of special intervention (ERO, 2012, August). In addition several principals noted an increase in the number of students exhibiting signs of more complex learning difficulties as a result of Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Principals agreed that social issues needed addressing before learning programmes could become effective

> "The current way of thinking about education is there is a high degree of accountability for society's problems coming back to school. Well society's problems could be resolved if the parents were responsible…. We are a reactive system … although we try to be proactive through our education of children, and things like that, we invariably end up picking up the pieces" (Principal F).

> "It is a learning need, through lack of experience …. It is because they have lacked the experiences at home, so it is not that they are not teachable, they just haven't had the opportunities, so we don't see that as being a disability or a special need" (Principal C).

> "If we don't fix the behaviour, then their learning's not there.… Because if you are not coping socially, you are not usually coping with learning, and if you are not coping with learning that usually impacts on your social behaviour, so the two kind of go together" (Principal C).

Although social issues challenged special education programmes, respondents concurred that organisational structure and effective leadership practice were critical in catering for students' multiple learning requirements.

4.2. Addressing special needs: A specific element of effective leadership

Participants were all experienced in leadership, the majority of whom had in excess of twenty years leadership experience, although one was in their eleventh year as principal. Data indicated that all participants were not only widely read on the topic of school leadership but were experienced in leading large teams of staff and interpreting situations. Their prior experience allowed principals to recognize and capitalize on a range of individual professional strengths, in order to cultivate staff leadership potential.

In addition, participants were knowledgeable about special needs with several having held key leadership roles within the field of special education prior to principalship. They were experienced in developing an inclusive learning culture. Participants were familiar with legislative requirements and understood the process of accessing support for addressing students' needs.

All schools exhibited a hierarchical structure of leadership. However, there was a certain levelling of status or position amongst the school leaders, with participants indicating that the whole staff worked as a team to meet the learning requirements of students with SEN.

"None of us are very precious about the title and so if we have a view, we share that view and we talk about it because quite often, two or three heads or four heads are better than one" (Principal A).

4.2.1. Leadership - hierarchical in design, distributed in practice

Some participants referred to the need for a hierarchy in order to ensure appropriate decision making and information distribution. However, others did not refer to hierarchical structures at all. The observations suggest that even in schools where participants referred to the need for a hierarchy, there was, in practice, a distribution of authority and responsibility.

> "We are pretty hierarchical, but I would like to think that whilst it's hierarchical there is a certain levelling, if you like, of status. Although I am the principal and [I have] a DP (deputy principal), AP (assistant principal) and then syndicate leaders and then other leaders who might be leading curriculum …, certainly with that comes the fact that we are all in this together. I don't know everything, I'm not the boss" (Principal E).

One of the principals was clearly more committed to a hierarchical structure. This is reflected in the following statement.

"You have to have some sort up-ness and down-ness (structure). You have got to pay. I pay bonuses. They get four units each … [and] … have to earn them (Principal F).

Each participant's school was slightly different. The minor differences in organisational structure appear to have little significance, and are therefore not addressed further.

Findings confirmed that regardless of the organisational structure of schools, all principals retained responsibility as leader of their school. Nonetheless, demands placed on them in managing large organisations facilitated a need for distributing leadership responsibilities, which included that of special education. However, there were three obvious stages at which the principal became involved in decisions. Firstly, this occurred where decisions were going to impact on a principal's relationship with a family or school community, for example if there

was a need for 'that' conversation with parents who were unaware, or in denial, of their child's special educational or social needs. Secondly, when it came to staffing and resourcing, and thirdly, when decisions had resourcing implications. These decisions were usually made in consultation with their SENCO. However, some participants referred to the frustration felt by SENCOs when decisions were made, without full consultation by principals not actively involved in the school's special education programme.

Although participants acknowledged a need for on-going monitoring of intervention programmes, all indicated that their school culture was built on high levels of trust rather than a need for micro-management. This concept of trust was extended to schools' Boards of Trustees who had complete trust in their principals to carry out their responsibilities. All principals acknowledged the role of knowledgeable SENCOs in schools. They implied that once they trusted the SENCO, they would allow them to take control of the intervention. Principal F compared the learning culture of his school to West-Burnham's (2004) model for building leadership capacity:

"Moving from West-Burnham's, from shallower to deeper, to more profound levels of trust accompanied by a higher expectation from me that there is greater autonomy amongst those I give power to" (Principal F).

Several leaders felt that it was important for staff members to be seen in leadership roles. Principal F suggested that "*empowerment by delegation gives credibility' to staff members holding leadership roles"* which was reflective of the culture of their school. This was used as an effective tool to change the attitudes of some entrenched staff members who were resistant to interference in their classroom programmes. Principals also felt that the distribution of leadership required coaching and mentoring to reach a position of shared understanding between all parties concerning the development of a school-wide inclusive learning environment. They were confident that senior leaders fulfilled their roles competently and were reflective and understanding of the needs of students, staff and parents when dealing with issues concerning LD, which by nature are

frequently highly emotive. Principals were particular about whom they employed and endeavoured to surround themselves by a team of high quality personnel:

"I surround myself by people who are better than me…and I learn from them" (Principal E).

There was clear evidence of good structures for disseminating information within schools. Structured systems had been set up for teachers to report student progress and make referrals. Generally, a highly visible 'hands on' approach by principals was seen as advantageous in developing an inclusive school culture. This allowed the efficient transfer of information through conversation with staff, as well as through classroom and playground observation, which is demonstrated in the following statements made by two principals when asked about their involvement with special education programmes.

"Because the three of us (Principal, AP, DP) are [working] with the teams we're hearing names, we're hearing kids, and we also teach in two rooms every week as well" (Principal A).

> "I am quite a hands-on person …. If you ask me about any of those individual ORRs kids, I know every detail there is. I know as much as the teacher or whoever is working with them because that is just how we work around here. Everyone collectively shares the information" (Principal C).

However, findings reveal inconsistency between principals' practice. Some appeared more focused on fulfilling an 'administrative' or 'management' role, having devolved their leadership responsibility for students with SEN.

> "There is no need for me to be there (IEP meetings). I don't understand the context usually. I mean there are (a number of) kids, I have got enough to do managing this, you know. I have got a tight board of trustees, I have got [expletive deleted] Nova pay; all sorts of things" (Principal F).

4.2.2. Knowledgeable SENCOs facilitate informed decisions

While all schools exhibited similarities in the role of the SENCO, organisation varied between schools, with one school indicating such a commitment to meeting the needs of students that they had dedicated a whole team to special needs.

Participants referred to the specialist role SENCOs play in coordinating special needs programmes, and in developing a school-wide inclusive culture. Data indicates that SENCOs were seen as the expert, widely read, well informed and often better practiced in their role than their principals. SENCOs were responsible for equitable allocation of funding, time and classroom support, overseeing development of 'Individual Education Plans' (IEPs) and special programming. They also allocated behavioural support and arranged preschool transition meetings. Commonly, principals felt it appropriate that SENCO's were given latitude to use the staff they were provided with as they saw best.
One principal made the following comment:

"I don't know what those specific needs are, she does" (Principal F).

Principal E explained their involvement in processing special education referrals in the following way:

> "They (referrals) are all collected and aggregated, analysed by the SENCO, and then we decide what we are going to do. I don't normally have that kind of level of involvement at that point (categorising and analysing referrals). I am more the overseer. The SENCO just reports to me …. I operate at the end of what their recommendations are, by allocating either staffing and/or resourcing, equipment or whatever" (Principal E).

SENCOs were described by principals as responsive to parent, student and staff needs, and highly skilled at liaising with support agencies to assess student need and organise referrals. SENCOs were responsible for diffusing tension and reconciling different staff perspectives on best practice, making decisions that

were aimed at fitting ‘everybody’s needs’. This involved keeping staff happy while blending the entrenched practice of some teachers with newer and more inclusive programmes, and at the same time keeping parents and students happy.

“Teachers’ needs should be taken into consideration and it is important to have good relationships with staff to know who is genuine with their needs” (SENCO).

All respondents acknowledged a need to build capacity for change and development among the school community in order to improve inclusive practice. This was clearly an important theme and is addressed in the next section.

4.3. Building capacity for change and development

4.3.1. Collegial support - mentoring, professional reading and sharing of knowledge

Participants agreed that building leadership capacity in other people within the framework of school expectations requires careful organisational management, with careful placement of people in positions where they can demonstrate leadership and learn from it. Senior leadership teams were collegial in their understanding of the focus and direction of their school and provided all staff with opportunities for developing collaborative and collegial practice. This resulted in a well-informed and empowered staff that lifted their level of professional practice, literacy and knowledge of special education. Within this process, there was a desire to improve the quality of education for all, and to develop the capacity of staff to deal with students with SEN.

Professional reading featured as a key element in challenging thinking and developing professional capacity and knowledge. Although special training of teachers and teacher aides varied between schools, all respondents promote robust PLD and opportunity for on-going professional conversations. Commonly, participants believed the most effective PLD for teachers and teacher aides to be

whole school learning. However, some specialised training was sourced to meet identified needs, and as explained by Principal E, provided leaders with a context that was wider than 'just my school'.

> "When we were setting up the Perceptual Motor Programme (PMP) we sent a couple of teachers away to have a look because you have got to look outside. If you don't look outside you don't know what you don't know" (Principal A).

Funding and time constraints required much of the training to be conducted on site by leadership teams. Data did not include how well teacher training prepares beginning teachers for inclusive education, but it appeared that many beginning teachers felt unprepared for effectively integrating students with LD into their classes. New teachers were inducted into working with students with special needs, differentiating learning for specific students and responding to identified needs. All participants were focused on developing teachers skilled in special education, and encouraged enrolment by teachers in post graduate studies. Principal A considered it important to build that capacity in teacher assistants and teacher aides as well.

The data suggests that the co-construction of teacher guidelines empowered staff to take ownership of decisions made in consultation with senior leaders. There was an expectation that teachers take ownership of meeting the requirements of students with SEN, instead of referring them on, in order for someone else to address their learning needs. Principal E concurred that by tightening their school's criteria for registration of students with SEN, teachers were required to invest thought, time and expertise into applications for assistance, which had resulted in a reduction in the number of referrals.

SENCOs were largely responsible for coordinating teacher aide training. This was to ensure the maximum benefit accrued from teacher aides. With an increase in demand for teacher aides skilled in assisting special needs learners, schools willingly invested resources in their training. By providing targeted professional

learning for teacher aides, they became skilled in a range of curriculum areas. Their positions within schools became more attractive, thus increasing staff retention.

"Support staff work skilfully in the classroom in their learning areas…. The school taps into the expertise within the community to understand the best way to provide for learners, including those with special needs" (Principal B).

All respondents made use of comprehensive appraisal systems for regular monitoring of inclusive classroom practice, and to build staff capacity for change and development in identified areas of individual or school need. Principal D explained:

"You have to know that everyone has got talents and can learn, and it is finding and opening up doors for children and teachers that are having difficulty".

Responsibility for staff appraisals was delegated to school leaders at each leadership tier and principals were provided with a full report and copy of in-class observations which included evidence of student voice. Individual staff interviews were conducted by most principals who were also responsible for appraising senior leaders. Leadership teams examine appraisals to identify areas for review or change. In some instances learning was maximised by sharing outside appraisers between principals and senior leaders.

4.3.2. Principal cluster support

Regular principal cluster support groups provided a strongly collegial learning community, developing leadership skills and building capacity amongst principals through the sharing of professional knowledge. Professional reading on topics such as leadership capacity in schools and increasing knowledge about learning disorders and syndromes were a key focus of cluster meetings. The MOE were very supportive, assisting clusters address initiatives in relation to school management and administration, with a four year focus on developing fully

inclusive schools. Following their success, APs and DPs have formed their own cluster support groups.

4.3.3. The power of dialogue builds relationships and impacts on the inclusive culture and ethos of schools as learning communities

Just as principals were supported by principal clusters, so this relational and dialogic process flowed down to schools, frequently in the form of whole staff discussion and vertical cluster groups.

"The biggest thing that influences what you end up creating in a school is who you are as a person. You have to be real; you have to be approachable; you have to like children" (Principal D).

Humane and sensitive communication, active listening and empathy for parents were identified by participants as key elements to developing relationships with parents/whānau and developing shared goals and aspirations for students. Relationships built through the art of conversation and collaboration between school, family/whānau and specialist personnel were seen as key to developing inclusive learning communities. This was underpinned by leaders and staff exhibiting strong personal values, and being welcoming and passionate about what they do.

These attitudes were typified by statements such as:

> "The reason for doing this is not because we want to identify someone who has got a special need, but rather we want to find the best way to educate this young person to they can be a really good adult in the future. And so … I think it is about relationships" (Principal A).

"Teachers develop constructive and respectful relationships with learners and others involved in their learning" (Principal B).

*"*Parents feel they have been listened to…. It is about accepting and not judging" (Principal D).

It was evident that regular dialogue between SENCOs and their teaching teams included the use of reflective questioning, regarding how teachers differentiated their learning programmes. This helped establish classroom action plans which would best meet the learning needs of students. The welcoming culture whereby staff members were invited to ask questions and seek advice without fear of retribution was reflected in the following statement:

"People know that they can walk into any office and say look I have got a problem with a child and we will then talk about it" (Principal A).

In addition to regular and sensitive dialogue, respondents indicated that decisions concerning student programmes were underpinned by data, a concept which will be explored next.

4.4. Data collection systems are essential for informing decisions

Participants described a need for robust systems regarding self-review of inclusive practice, in order to improve and sustain outcomes for students with SEN. Data of high priority learners (special needs, Māori, Pacifica, low income) was carefully monitored and information on school inclusiveness analysed and reported to boards of trustees.

4.4.1. Effective systems for gathering and tracking evidence-based data

Leaders saw it as essential that schools employ comprehensive systems for regular review and reporting across all special programmes. Schools managed entry and exit data, and transitions through special needs tracking registers. School wide data management systems allowed SENCOs to oversee and monitor student progress, tagging those with low scores and pre-empting them slipping through

the learning system without receiving the necessary support. Several participants described the importance of operating individual learning portfolios to track student progress and detail any learning support attracted.

Respondents reported the importance of diagnostic and formative assessment for capturing learning progress and providing evidence-informed, outcome-based data which guided leadership decisions concerning special education programmes. Data was matched against National Standards to identify students at risk and those with special abilities, and to screen and select students for learning programmes. Although National Standards were used in all schools as a standardised measure of achievement, most participants expressed concern about whether this was the most appropriate measure, especially for students struggling to achieve Level 1. Most principals refused to use the terms 'below' or 'well below' when describing student achievement as they felt this had a negative impact on student self-esteem.

Data did not include how schools reported student progress using National Standards. However, several participants raised concerns about the validity of data given that student test results hinged on the consistency of school-wide testing methods and overall teacher judgement (OTJ). Accurate reporting of student progress was also reliant on teachers entering up-to-date test results into tracking registers. Some schools used identification systems based on Gardiner's multiple intelligence categories to identify GAT students, while videoing of evidence offered additional data. Conversations with parents clarified student strengths and needs for learning enhancement, while parent focus groups and school surveys offered feedback on inclusive practice.

In creating pathways for student learning, leaders gave consideration to student history, staff's ability to manage students within classrooms, budgetary allocation of hours delivered, and the selection of staff to be involved. This resulted, either in reconsideration of programmes or further referrals. All referrals were made to the SENCO for consideration. The research tells of re-assessments and robust discussions between SENCOs, classroom teachers and senior leaders/special need committee members before leadership decisions were made as to the best ways to

address identified needs. Programmes were then put in place and monitored on a term by term basis. Referrals to outside agencies were made where necessary.

4.4.2. Intervention in the first year of schooling influences student achievement and school outcomes

Literature generally refers to early intervention as predominantly birth to five years old. However, for the purpose of this research and to remain true to the voice of participants the term early intervention will be used to refer to intervention in the first year of schooling (Aldridge, 2011).

Leadership approaches described by the participants showed that good first learning was imperative. There was urgency in every school for identification of students' needs early within the first year of school, and an array of intervention programmes to be put in place to lift student achievement to the expected level for their age. A number of principals took the lead in introducing a Perceptual Motor Programme (PMP) into their schools to develop motor skills in five year olds.

"Five is an incredibly important time for sorting out … because if we get good first learning, then we can manage the rest" (Principal B).

"If we do it well from day one, we will be able to withdraw support earlier rather than later" (SENCO).

There was unanimous agreement between participants on the importance of addressing core curriculum areas, behavioural needs, establishing routines, expectations and consequences early in a student's schooling. Participants indicated that early intervention helped prevent schools from having to play 'catch up', as students slip further and further behind. For this reason most suggested that the biggest financial investment should be made in early intervention. This is reflected in the following statements.

"A lot of teacher aide time goes into my year one and two team, so by year three we have only got a tiny little group of kids left needing it (intervention), or those long haulers" (SENCO).

> "We know our kids by the time they turn six incredibly well. Our small reading groups are now being picked up at five and a half so that we can filter the genuine reading recovery kids and get those others to where they need to be with a bit of mileage by the time they turn six. They have been through our oral language and basic sight (word) groups. They have been referred to where they need to go.… The six year old survey throws no surprises" (SENCO).

A number of participants indicated that home/school partnerships, pre-school 'Kick Start' programmes and liaison with preschool intervention groups helped identify new entrants with LD. Additional intervention programmes are discussed in Chapter five.

4.5. Moral purpose and social justice are key drivers in special education

4.5.1. Moral purpose and social justice, ethics and equity

Respondents commonly agreed that people have a right to education, and that every child has the potential to learn and succeed. All schools exhibited a collaborative environment which reflected a collective responsibility for learners. Participants strove to ensure all students had fair access to a quality educational environment which would enable them to learn and participate in society. Principals regarded a sense of moral purpose and social justice as the key drivers in making ethically sound decisions about inclusive practice, which senior leaders endeavoured to model to their staff.

> "We try and model to our staff … making decisions with moral purpose. What is going to have the best impact on the student or on the teacher, or on the class, or on the community that's our school.… And social justice is the other that that's a very strong thing … amongst the three of us and so we very rarely would disagree on what's best for a kid" (Principal A).

It was apparent from the data gathered, that a strong sense of values and moral purpose underpinned schools' efforts in addressing the multiple requirements of children with SEN. A school-wide values system based on key competencies of participating and contributing, underpinned all that the participating schools did. One respondent referred to 'school values' as the *'moral compass'* which guides decisions about LD. The data demonstrated that schools fostered a culture of social inclusion and celebrated individuality, promoting personalised learning and an equitable education system which allowed children to be nurtured, and to thrive and succeed on their own terms. The following statement made by one SENCO captures this culture of social inclusion.

> "I have that philosophy that it is not 'is the child ready for us', it's 'is the school ready for the child?'…. It's what I use with parents when they come around visiting us.… Sadly I can't say it is every class teacher's philosophy" (SENCO).

Respondents confirmed that students were encouraged to become risk takers and to become as independent as possible within the scope of their impairment. There was evidence that students reflected on their own learning, celebrated their success and identified their next step towards independence.

> "Students achieve to their highest level when they feel safe, affirmed and valued, irrespective of their ability or disability. Strong positive relationships with all staff are based on mutual respect, high expectation, and a relevant and appropriate education delivered by effective teaching" (Principal A).

It was seen as a moral imperative that schools be receptive to a child's disability or behavioural need, and sensitive to parent emotions and pride. Schools recognised and fostered the identity, language and culture of all learners, developing partnerships with parents in the learning process and reflecting on goals and expectations for learners. They set realistic but high expectations for all learners. In some schools, MOE funded Social Workers in Schools (SWIS) and school chaplains provided moral support for students and parents.

*"*We believe that everyone…everybody can learn and everyone deserves the right to learn; and if we have to put things in place to do that, then we will" (Principal A).

Having established that evidence, moral purpose and social justice guide decisions regarding inclusive education the next section will examine what an inclusive school looks like.

4.5.2. The concept of inclusion

Participants shared a vision of a whole staff on a journey in the same direction, to establish a learning community which exhibits school wide cohesion, and co-ordination of inclusive programmes and culture. One principal described an expectation that school leaders and staff were the keepers of the culture.

> "It is about doing a good job for every kid and accepting every kid for who they are and where they are at, and what you have to do to move them forward – it is the same principle no matter what.… It is about individual needs, accepting them all and caring about their families" (Principal D).

It appears that all students were enrolled regardless of their circumstances. IEPs provided equitable inclusion and supported student learning within a caring and nurturing school culture. Special needs were identified, school environments adapted to meet special requirements, and staff assisted to develop their knowledge and skills. Teacher and teacher aide capabilities were matched to

students where possible and careful placement of students helped create the best conditions for success. Students with special learning needs were equitably supported in their learning and enabled to fully participate and contribute to the school and community environment.

Full inclusion, as described by a SENCO 'brings a real richness to the classroom' and allows all children to learn about working with differently abled people in the community.

Principal C made the following statement.

> "It is your mind-set. If you are talking special education, it is around your inclusiveness. ERO said that we are highly inclusive, so we don't sit kids aside or exclude them, or sit them aside and say you can't do this or put them in a box that says you are special needs, you need to go over there. We are very inclusive, so it is about everyone aiming for the same thing, whatever is best for the kids".

"An inclusive school has a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing environment which promotes learning for all" (Principal D).

Schools' strategic goals for inclusivity were linked to school charters. However, inconsistency exists over how much influence legislation should have over inclusive education and how programmes were best delivered. This will be addressed in the next section.

4.6 The best learning environment for students with special needs – withdrawal or full inclusion

Schools demonstrated different beliefs about the advantages and disadvantages of withdrawing students from classrooms. However, there was a general belief that

learning support was better targeted in the classroom and that not all students liked leaving the classroom to be part of withdrawal groups.

Participants recognised a shift in practice, away from withdrawing students for specialist support, although an exception was made for specialised one-to-one intervention such as reading recovery. Advocates of full inclusion did not want children with special needs to be given a special programme that excluded them from the whole class, or excluded them from the professional classroom teacher who was expected to know best. This thinking was demonstrated by the following statement.

> "I suppose one of the biggest shifts we have had in the past few years, because we are constantly trying to get better, better at what we do, is that we are now trying not to withdraw children from the room, but [instead] put the specialist person of support into the room" (Principal A).

It was felt that children were often stigmatized by being the person seen to go out of the room consistently for intervention. By withdrawing and keeping students away from others, Principal A considered that students were not learning to be inclusive.

"Schools need to model the fact that society has people who have got disabilities in one form or another and they can be just as good as most, as an able citizen, as anybody else" (Principal A).

One principal, who was a strong advocate of full-inclusion, considered that if students remained in the classroom for intervention, they had a sense of belonging rather than being special. Principal A suggested that this brought with it a sense of achievement. By developing their self-esteem, students felt that they could cope in their environment and succeed as learners in their own right.

> "They stay in the classroom so the child has a sense of belonging to the classroom, not being special. I don't have to go out of the room to get help and that for a lot of kids is the big issue around self-esteem, because one of the traps … that we believe, is that children get stigmatized by being the person who is always seen to go out of the room to somebody else. Kids are inclined to say "Oh yeah, that's because he is special" (Principal A).

> "Students need to feel that they belong to their classroom, which is as important as belonging to the school.… Feelings that I can make it by myself in this room are seen as really, really important. It is as inclusive as it can be" (Principal A).

In contrast, another participant while still promoting the value of inclusivity believed that withdrawing students with high needs for specialist intervention was essential. The respondent recognized teacher stress levels and acknowledged the 'challenging and exhausting' environment that accompanied teaching students with high needs.

> "[Students are withdrawn] because their teachers would go mad.… It is challenging all the time and they are not the only ones. Often the high needs children have got so much equipment and things and so many people who are poking into their programme.… Teachers need to remember that they have got another twenty odd children. Everyone is focusing on that child. It's unfair and so for sanity those children go out" (Principal B).

Principals determined whether or not a whole class environment was the best utilisation of a teacher aide. Some respondents believed withdrawal programmes offered specific directed teaching without the distraction of a busy mainstream class, especially for very young students or those easily distracted. All respondents indicated that any support programme risked students becoming dependent on their teacher aide. Although students were withdrawn for intensive

intervention, as a consequence of increased confidence they tolerated the gradual reduction of teacher aide support and the increase in independence.

"I think what is really important with children with special needs too, is that they develop their independence.… We should be aiming to get them to be as independent as they can for as much as they can" (Principal A).

Finding showed that some schools had trialled the withdrawal of GAT students for extension programmes, but found that their children disliked being withdrawn from class. Instead, one principal grouped GAT students together in a class and provided them with differentiated and challenging classroom programmes.

A leadership approach identified by respondents was to advocate the use of teacher aides to work within the classroom with individual students or groups with similar need. Teacher aides frequently supported class learning, while the teacher, being the most skilled person, worked with specific groups of need. It was evident that teachers were made fully aware that any withdrawal support for skilled teacher programmes was additional to the classroom programme. This was indicated in a statement by Principal D.

> "You are the teachers and so if the teacher aide is doing something, it must be on top of what you have taught that day as practice, or you work with the child and you get the teacher aide to do something with some other kiddies".

Research findings show that principals all acknowledge that intervention comes at a considerable financial cost to schools.

4.7. Limited resourcing requires focused decision making

Common to all participants was concern about inadequate Government funding, time and resources with which schools were provided to meet the requirements of

student with SEN. All respondents revealed that increased school costs and insufficient financial support has had the greatest impact on special need budgets and staffing, and required focused decision-making to maximise the benefits for student learning and schools. Principals recognised that careful allocation of funding was imperative in order to maximise the benefits gained from limited resourcing.

> "Government continue to pull the purse strings tighter'…. I only got $500.00 more this year to run the school than last year. I mean electricity has gone up $4,500 you know. What a stupid Government. They are not in the real world" (Principal E).

Alongside this, principals indicated equal concern about the increasing demand on staff members' time, as schools experienced reduced access to external specialist support. Additionally, it was perceived by several participants that there was an increased focus by MOE on implementing National Standards, while demonstrating a lack of understanding of the current issues that face school leaders concerning special education.

4.7.1. Increased difficulty in accessing Ministry of Education funded support

The common response from respondents was that the challenge for schools is greater now than ever before, with reduced funding and an escalation in the number of students with complex needs. Moreover, respondents revealed that there was some inconsistency in accessing funding for students with similar needs, as indicated by Principal A.

> "The pot of gold for special needs seems to be shrinking [as is] the number of ORRS (funded) children. Two children with the same label and one gets funding and one doesn't you know, because they can do more than someone else. But at the end of the day we just have to get on and do the job, and celebrate the successes that we see in those children".

A number of participants clearly believe that state officialdom has lost credibility and is riddled with incompetence. Respondents shared a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the current Government and special needs service offered by the MOE. Several felt that MOE personnel were not in touch with the reality of classroom challenges, and were more focused on assessment and ranking students.

> "Real world? Most of them have never been in a class and been in front of 30 feral kids. I would say that most of them are so hell bound on getting a number to assess someone ... oh he is number 15 on that list, [that] they forget that a ranking system (National Standards) is subject to cheats.… How do you know that the overall teacher judgement is exactly what it is meant to be?" (Principal F).

Principals felt that the restructure and funding of external support agencies had resulted in a deteriorating service, with agencies less responsive and more bureaucratic in terms of their involvement with schools.

> "If you were to ask me, push me up against the wall and ask me what you think about the RTLB service, I would say the RTLB has deteriorated, markedly. It has become less responsive and more bureaucratic and I think in terms of some of the involvement that they are directed not to do. … takes the whole point of it away from it, from my point of view" (Principal E).

There was a feeling among respondents that although some MOE staff were supportive, they were bound by legislation, funding and time constraints. Below is an example of a conversation, (as reported by a SENCO) with a speech and language therapist concerning a child who did not meet the criteria for referral.

> "Next time you are in the school can you have a quick look at this child in this class and let me know what you think?" And she (Speech and Language therapist) will come through and she will say, "Yeah you need to refer him. These are the things you can mention" or "No you can't refer

him, he won't meet criteria. However, I will send you some programmes, some support and you can send it home and get parents to do it at home".

Findings confirm that ORRS and SEG funding, and additional external funding is provided on a case by case basis. Some respondents reported a long waiting list for accessing special support services, and that alternate school facilities had a very limited intake.

> "It is really hard to get kids into those schools (alternate school for behaviour needs). It's not that easy. So if you think we have two out of [school roll number deleted]. We know we could probably find at least two more kids that would fit in there if we wanted to. But you have to be in that top five percent. You have to be perhaps in the top one percent to get in" (Principal C).

Principals agreed that all possible avenues of in-school intervention would have to have been exhausted before referrals were considered by external support services. Applications were often deferred for reconsideration because they did not meet the tight criteria for acceptance, leaving schools to cater for students with a varying range of complex, through less severe, learning needs from school budgets.

"We also applied for Resource Teacher Literacy (RTLit), but we got declined this year. There are only two RTLits for the whole of Hamilton city, so we are on hold for next year" (Principal C).

"They (students) are not funded and they just sit, just below (National Standard) and they struggle with lots of additional help to stay in that place. We are not being able to accelerate them beyond that" (Principal B)

4.7.2. Effective allocation of school funds for special education needs comes at a cost

Although MOE funding is provided through the SEG, schools provided extra funding from their operations grant and staffing entitlement to fund the shortfall for special needs support programmes, and to provide staff over and above staffing entitlement to reduce class sizes and address student need (MOE, 2004).

> *"*We use our SEG funding quite extensively to support learners in the school and we have had a board that always says, if you go over on SEG funding don't worry, because we know it is going where it should be going" (Principal A).

Several respondents made the point that funding should be equitable, which does not necessarily mean equal, because the needs of successive cohorts of learners with special needs change. Data indicates that special needs budgets could therefore only ever be approximate. Participants reported that extra support was bought at considerable cost to the school, and demanded careful allocation and high levels of accountability for what Principal B referred to, as the *'equity part of the budget'*.

> "We always have a skilled teacher programme for intervention…. And so that has meant some compromises to staffing in other places to enable that to happen, because we don't magic that staffing, and it's not as if all of us aren't busy anyway"(Principal B).

> "If you give a bit there, you have to take a bit off here…because it's always a finite thing; a finite number of staff, a finite amount of money to do it, and basically a finite amount of time to do it as well" (Principal E).

Data indicates that several schools were reliant on fundraising and school levies to provide additional funding to meet student's needs, as shown in the statement by principal F.

> "Well the operations grant is always short.... I budget for it but I also budget for income from donations from parents like school fees and things like that…I budget for that, and I expect to get it, and I need it go get it to make my budget balance".

SENCOs were very strategic about who received intensive intervention programmes such as reading recovery.

> "I am very strategic about whom I put into reading recovery because I know that it is the oldest and the lowest, but there are some kids that are never going to make accelerated progress. You are wasting that resource. You can have two children through who are successful, and they (those who will not make accelerated progress) will still be sitting there being unsuccessful" (Principal C).

A focus on the best utilisation of funding saw schools searching for alternative programmes which better catered for larger number of students. Respondents claimed that reduced access to Government funded support meant some students sat 'just below' the National Standard and struggled even with additional help. These students were hard to accelerate beyond that point without specialist personnel support. Findings suggest that the length of time allocated for intervention programmes was flexible and could either be a brief intensive intervention programme, or a longer term intervention. However, without access to funding, respondents revealed that intervention went on for a prolonged time in an attempt to improve student's learning.

> "And some of those ones (students) that you have, that you don't get funding for, the intervention goes on for quite some time until you … see a glimmer of light that comes at the end of the tunnel. I suppose we have a fairly strong social justice issue, a feeling amongst our leadership team' (Principal A).

Findings revealed that although special educational programming needs to remain flexible, all decisions have a considerable financial and staffing implication for schools.

Summary

This chapter has traced seven emergent themes across the data. These themes capture leadership behaviour that influences the ethos and culture of schools as an organization and therefore the decisions about effective instruction and equitable allocation of funding, time and personnel. When considering how principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with SEN, participants have examined their current practice particularly in relation to the academic learning, social growth and independent functioning of students with LD.

Findings showed that all principals were committed to developing an 'inclusive school culture' which was responsive to the fluid nature of special needs within their schools, and the influence of social issues such as the lack of personal experiences and inappropriate behaviour. Rather than categorising and labelling students, participants were focused on providing equitable educational opportunities for all students. Early intervention was commonly agreed as being the key to effectively addressing student need.

Discussions with principals revealed a core connection between the distribution of leadership and addressing SEN. Participants were focused on building capacity for change and development amongst the staff to improve inclusive practice. Principals delegated responsibility for developing systems for monitoring and reporting student progress, and for making decisions about instructional programing. Decisions were informed by accumulated data and guided by ethical imperatives of moral purpose and social justice.

Limited Government funding and access to external specialist support were reported by all respondents as being a key influence over the effectiveness of

intervention programmes. Although all participants were in favour of developing an inclusive school culture, there remained some indecision over what constitutes the best learning environment for students with LD.

The next chapter will discuss these emerging themes in relation to existing literature and my own personal experiences with students with SEN.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter I shall discuss the findings and draw links to the literature review in chapter two. The research question was 'How do principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with special educational needs?' With that in mind, Chapter five examines how principals reconcile theories of ethics, social justice and morality of inclusive education with current practice. It provides insight into how principals perceive and address the matter of funding the learning requirements of students. The findings also address the influence that organisational structure and leadership behaviour had on developing the cultural dynamics and ethos of inclusive school communities, and therefore the decisions that were made.

Each of the participants responded to the notion of inclusivity differently. Principal A handed responsibility to the SENCO, but was kept abreast of inclusive practices, by remaining closely involved with classroom practice. Principal B devolved authority to the Deputy Principal as SENCO, but was closely involved at a managerial and MOE level, compiling school-wide registers, analysing students' progress and investigating trends in special education. Principal C shared SENCO responsibilities with another staff member, and was actively engaged in making referrals to support students with high needs. Principal D worked closely with the SENCO and senior leaders to meet the requirements of students with special needs. Principal E indicated a personal interest in special education, and although having devolved full responsibility to the SENCO for programming and budget allocation, still retained close involvement in daily practice. Principal F devolved all responsibility to the SENCO, describing a high level of trust in her capability, which allowed him to focus on the managerial requirements of a large school.

Only two out of seven participants used the term moral purpose. However, when describing what guided their decisions about special education, all schools demonstrated a culture that was caring and accepting of difference, and clearly supported learners with SEN. It appeared that each was guided by a set of school-wide values which influenced the vision and attitude of staff, and determined their school-wide action plan in response to students with LD, as suggested in the literature review (Branson, 2009; Fullan, 2003; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013).

Some principals appeared to have difficulty in distinguishing between 'special needs' and those students who were 'needy' for whatever reason. The context of each school presented its own need. Demographics of lower decile schools appeared to reflect a more transient population of high priority learners than their higher decile counterparts. This is congruent with opinions expressed by ERO publication (2012, August).

It appeared that in some schools social issues created a need, as described in Chapter four, which had to be addressed before special education programmes became fully effective. One school showed dissonance between a staff's focus on early intervention to address gaps in students' knowledge and a Board of Trustees' focus on developing GAT learners, in the belief that time spent pursuing the NCLB (2001) policy should not be to the detriment of students with special abilities, a view shared by Cloud (2007, August 16).

In addition, it appeared that ELL, although not primarily identified with LD, were considered by leaders as being very needy given their lack of English language and cultural difference. However, Principal B expressed concern that special learning needs were masked by their struggle to grasp the English language, thus excusing slow academic progress.

With that introduction, the balance of the chapter discusses the seven themes that emerged from the data.

5.1. Fluidity of student need and reluctance to categorise and label students

5.1.1. Lack of standardisation in defining special needs

While it was widely accepted by participants that students with SEN included a broad spectrum of learners as noted by MOE (2013c), the findings indicated that not all students fitted neatly into a special needs category. Findings also showed indecision amongst participants when determining what was perceived as special needs, and what fell into the range of student needs that a teacher would normally experience.

Respondents recognised high needs as generally being those students who attract ORRS funding, although one claimed "sometimes what we would call high at the particular time is only because of our ignorance and our lack of understanding of what that (particular need) is" (Principal A). Data showed uncertainty amongst respondents as to a nationally accepted differentiation between moderate and mild special needs. Nevertheless, principals agreed that the majority of student special needs could be described as mild and requiring short term intervention.

The findings revealed that while two principals operated clearly structured systems for categorising students, many felt this unnecessary and adding little value to catering for individual student need. Several appeared to agree with the Audit Commission (2002) that categorisation can be time consuming, costly and bureaucratic. However, regardless of categorisation systems, all participants described clearly-structured methods for identifying and tracking the progress of students who required special programming.

The fact that not every participant included GAT students in their initial description of students with 'special needs', reflected literature findings that there is no universally accepted definition of giftedness and talent (MOE, 2012b). Nonetheless, principals commonly recognised GAT learners as those with exceptional abilities compared to most other people, a view shared by McDonough and Rutherford (2005), and MOE (2012b).

Some participants utilised an identification system based on Gardiner's Multiple Intelligence categories, as a guide for selecting GAT students for enhancement programmes. The MOE Gifted and Talented Advisory Group and the New Zealand Working Party on Gifted Education (MOE, 2001), also offered a set of criteria that schools could use as a framework for developing definitions which reflected their individual communities (ERO, 2008; MOE, 2012b; Riley, 2004). Although data was did not include how schools specifically met the needs of GAT students, in accordance with Rogers (2002), Bevan-Brown (1999a) and MOE (2012b), all participants recognized the importance of creating enrichment programmes.

5.1.2. Labelling of students is unnecessary and inappropriate

Respondents suggested that the labelling of students was unnecessary and inappropriate. Participants felt that students did not require a label for educators to recognise their special needs. In addition, they suggested that labelling students as 'special needs' inferred that they were different and that they neither 'belonged', nor were valued in mainstream classrooms, reinforcing views proposed by Ainscow et al. (2006), Ballard (1993) and Jones (2004).

Participants confirmed reports by various authors (Becker, 1963; Benjamin, 2002; Corbett, 2001; Dyson, 1999; Goodley, 2001) that the stigma attached to a label could create barriers to inclusion. They warned that internalized negative labels of stupidity and incompetence could undermine student self-esteem and confidence, a view shared by Gerber, Ginsberg, and Reiff (1992) and Bargerhuff (2001).

Consistent with literature by Booth and Ainscow (2002) and Richards (2012), respondents agreed that labels should neither inhibit a student's potential nor reduce teacher expectation for student achievement. As noted by Jones (1986) and Brody and Mills (1997) as many as thirty three percent of students identified with LD are in fact gifted, and with proper recognition, intervention and hard work, could learn and succeed.

Although Jones (2004) and Lauchlan and Boyle (2007), suggested labelling might be necessary to support applications for additional support, data from respondents was silent on this. It appeared that reduced Government funding, tightened criteria for referrals, and inconsistency in acceptance meant that labels were no guarantee for targeted funding.

5.1.3. Fluidity of special educational needs

As explained in Chapter four, the term fluidity has been used by respondents to describe the constantly changing nature of learning needs within each school.

Participants revealed a variety of reasons for students making slow progress, as noted by the LDA (2013) and MOE (2000c). These included learning difficulties, communication, physical, intellectual, emotional or behavioural issues. Social issues which impact on student learning, along with an increase in ELL had created fluidity in special educational needs in each school. This required programming that was flexible and responsive to student need and rate of response to intervention, as noted by Fullan (1991). Term by term, changes to special education programmes were made by many of the responding schools in consultation with their SENCOs, in order to ensure students had a balanced and relevant education which accommodated the diversity of their learning styles and pace. This was consistent with the SEN Code of practice (SENDA, 2001) and section 312 of the Education Act (1996).

5.1.4. Social issues challenge special education programmes

In all of the respondents' schools, and especially those identified as low decile, data showed that social issues increasingly challenged special education programming. Of particular note was the influence that student transience and low socio economic levels of families had on the culture of schools (MOE, 2013c; ERO, 2012). Research participants confirmed that students requiring additional support went beyond that traditionally thought of as SEN, a view shared by Hanson et al. (1998), Villa and Colker (2006) and Winter and O'Raw (2010).

They included an increase in the number of ELL and vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Many of these students exhibited high health needs, or a lack of beneficial learning experiences at home as a result of social issues often related to high levels of poverty, triggering a rise in the level of student learning needs. In addition, one principal suggested that some fractured relationships and amalgamated families brought levels of vehemence and anger among partners which lead to children "being in severe need of psychological help" (Principal F).

Respondents reported an increased number of students presenting multiple and profound difficulties such as ADHD and Autism, or exhibiting extreme behaviour patterns as noted by the LDA (2013). This appeared consistent with the complex learning difficulties and disabilities described by Carpenter (2010a; 2010b), although there was no direct reference to this term. A silence with regard to this term may indicate a lack of awareness of future pressures to be faced by educators.

Respondents were unable to confirm whether this pattern had originated from either medical or social phenomena, but agreed with Carpenter that even the most skilled teachers struggled to address the learning needs of these students. Some of them had become socially dysfunctional and emotionally disengaged. Nevertheless, students' needs were matched carefully with personnel who were skilled in that domain, and were supported through specific programmes such as assertive discipline and restorative justice to address behavioural issues.

Research findings indicated that the constraints of this 'hidden curriculum' a term used by Glathorn (1987) to describe social influences had produced changes in students' values, perceptions and behaviour, and impacted on their learning. Participants reported that a principal's influence over their school's social and cultural climate helped create an inclusive school environment. Furthermore, participants valued student voice. It appeared that this not only influenced school operations, but affected the learning context for students with SEN, as suggested in literature by Glathorn et al. (2009), Valentine (2013) and SENDA (2001).

Participants were committed to supporting students' social growth, with some funding teacher aides in the playground to address behavioural and social issues centred on their impairment. This support was gradually withdrawn over a period of time as the student became more self-reliant. Data confirmed that rather than usurping the place of the family in teaching appropriate behavioural practice, respondents worked in partnership with families/whānau to support students and to develop a culture surrounding the child that values socially appropriate behaviour. The fact that schools provided extra funding to support students will be addressed in section seven of this chapter.

Lastly, data indicated that most respondents had initiated GAT education programmes for gifted students. However, demand for time and resources in addressing the increasingly diverse range of learning needs, spurred by a NCLB (2001) policy, meant that despite good intentions, practice did not always reflect the rhetoric. In some schools, the needs of some had created a barrier to the learning of others, reducing opportunities for creating a classroom environment where gifted and talented students could flourish.

5.2. Addressing special needs: A specific element of effective leadership

Part of the inquiry focused on how effective leadership behaviour influenced decisions. Participants showed that by carefully examining the purpose for, and consequences of, decisions concerning SEN they could prioritise these decisions.

Participants were mindful that effective leadership practice and decision making were reliant on their understanding of the local and national influences over inclusive education (Whitehead et al, 2013). Respondents showed awareness of their surroundings and described a clear vision for their organisation's special needs programmes, as suggested by Head et al. (1992).

Data showed evidence of thoughtful leadership practice by principals who appeared to possess the attitude and values necessary to make informed leadership decisions, as suggested by authors (Branson, 2009, October 19; Fullan, 2003; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013). Respondents were reflective and flexible in their response to special education initiatives and agendas particular to their school community, as well as at a national level, as suggested in literature (Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Place, 2011; Sergiovanni, 1992). Participants appeared receptive to the vast array of approaches and systems on offer for meeting the diverse requirements of students, and responded thoughtfully to high consequence decisions relating to long term attainment of goals, values and vision for their schools, as recommended by multiple authors (Ekins & Grimes, 2009; Johnson Jnr & Kruse, 2009; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995; Yeo, 2006).

Respondents were strong advocates for their school's special education policies and were comfortable in dealing with dissent over inclusive practices, which by nature lend themselves to conflict and disagreement between educators, parents and service providers, as noted by Cohen (2003) and Fisher and Ury (1981). It was evident that principals protected their teachers from issues that would potentially detract from allowing them to fulfil their responsibilities to students with SEN. By regular and perceptive environmental and contextual scanning, leaders were generally able to pre-empt many issues.

5.2.1. Leadership - hierarchical in design, distributed in practice

Special educational reform (MOE, 2000c, 2002b, 2013c) has resulted in responsibility for special education being devolved to school principals. As foreshadowed by Parker and Day (1997) principals confirmed that they could no longer defer matters to special education administrators. Nonetheless, they all appeared to lead successful learning organisations that provided effective special education learning programmes.

In light of this change, principals claimed their leadership role had become multi-faceted and was commonly regarded by participants as too demanding for any one

leader to be the instructional leader of an entire school without assistance from other educators, a view shared by Lambert (2002). Instead, data showed that principals deliberately and systematically created opportunities to develop the capacity of individuals to lead, as promoted by Fullan (1991) and West-Burnham (2004). As a consequence, all respondents described an organisational structure which was hierarchical in design, but one which embraced a philosophy of shared authority, the development of high levels of trust and empowerment of leaders, as literature suggests (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Portin et al., 2006).

Principals appeared to perceive top-down decision making as misinformed and not in the best interest of schools, a view shared by Brewster and Railsback (2003). They highlighted the importance of the way in which leadership was distributed, as noted by Spillane (2006). Rather than simply delegating tasks, principals devolved authority and leadership responsibility for decisions concerning special education to their SENCO. Data confirmed that by displacing themselves from their position of authority and as the source of all knowledge, participants cultivated leadership potential in others and capitalised on individual professional strengths as well as the collective capacity of an entire staff, as suggested by various authors (Champy & Nohria, 2000; Evans-Andris, 2010; Futrell, 1995; Gupton, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; West-Burnham, 2004).

Participants described strategic leadership behaviour which was focused on developing leadership capacity rather than individual leaders. This required the changing of organisational structures to create a 'learning culture' built on high levels of trust, described by West-Burnham (2004) as the social glue of effective organisations. "Morally and practically, the emphasis on the leader is inappropriate and needs to be replaced by recognition of leadership as a collective capacity that is reflected in structures, processes and relationships" (West-Burnham, 2004, p. 1). Each participant worked collaboratively with leadership teams, communicating a strong vision for their school and providing clearly defined expectations as discussed in literature (Bargerhuff, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2005a, 2005b; Strike, 2007; West-Burnham, 2004; Whitehead et al., 2013).

It appeared that the concept of high levels of trust was extended to schools' Boards of Trustees who had complete trust in their principals to carry out their responsibilities for special education programming and the allocation of budget resources. Participants confirmed that a lack of trust in principals to carry out their duties and implement policies in an ethical manner would result in Boards of Trustees becoming more vigilant in enforcing regulations and less collegial in their governance of schools. As noted in the literature (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Leithwood et al., 2002; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2004), participants confirmed that principals and Boards of Trustees were jointly responsible for ensuring local community expectations and those of government legislation concerning special education were met. However, as principals were ultimately accountable for the effective implementation of special education programmes, this called for thoughtful leadership decision making.

It appeared that principals' leadership behaviour reflected Senge's three-fold leadership model which describes principals as designer, teacher and steward (Senge, 1990). As designer of their learning community principals were familiar with legislative requirements and processes. At the same time principals drew on prior classroom experience and knowledge of special needs to interpret situations, as described in the literature review (Branson, 2009, October 19; Fullan, 2003; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013).

Principals were aware that any change in inclusive practice hinged on them gaining the commitment of all classroom teachers, as noted by Whitehead et al. (2013) and Wallace Foundation (2012). 'Hands on' leadership practice allowed principals to model stewardship for their leadership teams. Principals showed care and empathy for their staff and students, and seemed aware of the impact their decisions would have on their learning community. Such morally based leadership allowed principals to form connections with students, staff and the community, appealing to their values and using persuasive strategies to turn their vision into reality (Branson, 2009, October 19; Fullan, 2003; Strike, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2013).

Findings confirmed that special education is a potentially volatile and emotionally laden subject. Although leaders and SENCOs drew on their combined knowledge to identify areas of potential dispute and conflict, as suggested by Cohen (2003) and Fisher & Ury (1981), principals claimed authority for decisions. As confirmed by Johnson Jnr and Kruse (2009), Sergiovanni (1990) and Strike (2007) this level of moral authority was extended to principals because they exemplified experienced and professional educators. They were able to identify common ground and utilize their negotiation skills before evaluating and implementing alternative solutions, as noted in literature (Dewey, 1933, 1938; Kotter, 1996; Simon, 1993; Wallis, 2002).

Although schools provided guidance and support for staff, participants indicated that some teachers, particularly beginning teachers, felt apprehensive about implementing differentiated learning programmes in their classrooms. Data did not include how well teacher training prepared beginning teachers for inclusive education, as discussed in Chapter two (Barton, 2003; Booth et al., 2003; Garner, 2001; Goldstein, 2004). Principals generally devolved responsibility for the induction of beginning teachers to deputy and assistant principals, ensuring they received appropriate training and support as discussed by Mittler (2000) and Council for Exceptional Children (2003). Participants expected that team leaders would keep staff informed about students' specific needs and had an expectation for inclusive classroom practice, through continuous dialogue around school programmes and outcomes.

Principals retained overall responsibility for special needs programming and were answerable to the MOE and Board of Trustees. They were required to make the hard decisions concerning the employment of support personnel and establishing a special education budget (MOE, 2013c; and Lashley, 2007). However, common amongst all participants was a feeling that once they had established trust in a knowledgeable SENCO, principals devolved all responsibility for special education decisions to them. This thinking reflected literature by Edmunds and Macmillan (2010), Kugelmass (2003), Liasidou and Svensson (2012) and Rayner (2009).

5.2.2. Knowledgeable SENCOs facilitate informed decisions

Creating the SENCO position was seen by some principals as taking a risk, as illustrated by Principal F.

"To take a highly effective teacher from a classroom and put them in a position of dispensing and dispersing knowledge, skills and attitudes (to teachers and learning assistants)" requires careful consideration.

However, this leadership decision confirmed the view of Ainscow (2005) and Ryan (2006) that SENCOs are agents of change. The resulting empowerment of a team of teachers by a knowledgeable SENCO was recognized by respondents as being far more valuable than the contribution they would make to a single class of students. Findings showed that knowledgeable SENCOs understood the process of addressing student SEN and managing referrals. Therefore, as suggested by MOE (2000b, 2013a) they took responsibility for coordinating and overseeing special education teams and ensuring their recommendations were taken into account when developing IEPs. It appeared that the role of principals in developing student IEPs was subsidiary which was contrary to suggestions by Mitchell et al. (2010). However, there was an expectation that SENCOs would advise principals if decisions were going to have an impact on a student or on a principal's relationship with the family or learning community.

Principals were available to meet with parents if required, for example over placement of students with high needs in an appropriate classroom. Nonetheless, they reported that conversations were much easier when the parents raised issues with the school about their child's special needs first, rather than the school having to approach the parents to inform them that their child had an identified special learning need. In all cases principals indicated that they listened to and supported their SENCO, operating only after recommendations had been made. As stated by principal F, "*the SENCO informs*".

Respondents indicated that their trust in SENCOs meant they were commonly given free rein to allocate personnel and resources, as noted by Edmunds and Macmillan (2010); Kugelmass (2003); Liasidou and Svensson (2012) and Rayner (2009). Although the utilisation of teacher aides was largely the responsibility of classroom teachers, this also fell under the aegis of SENCOs.

Participants agreed with Cole (2005) and Liasidou and Svensson (2012) that overall the SENCO's role was complex and challenging. SENCOs were responsible for developing school-wide action plans and making decisions that met everybody's needs. In addition, participants acknowledged the effect that an increasingly bureaucratic and audit culture of special education had on the work load of the SENCO, as noted by Pearson (2010). However, principals suggested their allocation of management units went some way to rewarding the demands placed on them.

5.3. Building capacity for change and development

Data showed that respondents strategically tapped into the collective potential of their learning organisation, to secure their commitment and engagement in maximising student learning. In accordance with Ryan (2006), Strike (2007) and Whitehead et al. (2013) principals sought to appoint the right people for the right jobs, surrounding themselves with staff who had the appropriate knowledge, personal qualities and levels of skill in adaptive education practices to meet the changing face of special education, as reported in Chaper two. By developing a critical mass of staff willing to engage in professional discourse, respondents were able to effect a change in practice, a view shared by authors such as Cole (2005), Fullan (2006) and West-Burnham (2004).

Data showed that schools pursued academic and operational excellence "through analysing, integrating and synthesizing professional learning communities" (Clifford, 2009, p. 1). Participants reported that developing capacity for change and development meant giving individuals time to reflect on their position in

relation to current special education practice. They also provided opportunity to share and critique their understanding about effective teaching strategies as noted by Leithwood et al. (2004), Spillane (2006), and Head et al. (1992).

In addition, respondents emphasized the building of effective work relationships. Data showed that teaching teams shared a sense of purpose and demonstrated a clear focus on student learning, guided by an agreed set of values and protocols. Nevertheless, several participants acknowledged the challenge presented by staff members who were entrenched in their teaching practice and who appeared inadequately prepared to provide differentiated teaching programmes to meet the diverse needs of learners with SEN, as predicted by Ryan (2006). Data showed that mentoring programmes and PLD supported staff in a collegial and collaborative environment, helping move entrenched teachers away from practice that inhibited collaborative thinking. This helped overcome attitudes which created barriers to inclusive education, as suggested by multiple authors (Ballard, 1993; Fullan, 1993; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Huberman, 1993; Lieberman, 1995; Peters, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992; Sirotnik, 1991; Sparks & Hirsch, 1997; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001; Walker, 1999).

It appeared that allocation of classes was carefully thought out so as not to overload any one teacher. Participants suggested some teachers were better suited to students' particular learning needs and thinking styles than others. Therefore, a teacher's personality, interest, skills and levels of expertise were carefully matched with students, as recommended by Farrell (2000), Lindsay (2007) and Whitehead et al. (2013). "The function of a principal in a school is to create the conditions for the fullest release of creative talent on the part of individual staff members and the students" (Whitehead et al., 2013, p. 123).

Although interviews with participants did not specifically address key leadership practice that led to sustainable and systematic change, the practice of all principals reflected a need for 'moral purpose' and an understanding and acceptance of change, relationship building, and the critiquing and refining of knowledge, as

suggested by various theorists such as Fullan (2002), Harris (2008), Harris and Spillane (2008) and Strike (2007).

5.3.1. Collegial support - mentoring, professional reading and sharing of knowledge

Data revealed that the school policies of all participants reflected a desire to meet the learning requirements of all students regardless of their background, a view shared by Fullan (2011).

Respondents suggest this changing face of education has required them to adapt leadership practice and learning systems to meet the diverse needs of students. Principals have sought to keep abreast of trends and changes in the field of special education, indicating that inadequate knowledge and ill-preparation could lead to flawed decisions, as noted in the literature (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Boe et al., 2008; Cutbirth & Benge, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Kruse, 2001; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Patterson et al., 2000; Pounder, 1998, 1999; Whitehead et al., 2013). Participants took time to reflect on their personal practice and used their knowledge to empower staff to grow professionally, thereby minimising the attrition rate of inexperienced teachers who felt unprepared to meet the needs of students.

Each respondent described their learning community as one which shared a vision for inclusive education. All respondents reported a collegial and collaborative learning culture which developed strong learning teams bound by open sharing of professional ideas, as suggested by several writers (Bennis, 2003; Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham, 1997; Chambers, 2008; Kedian & Manners, n.d; Spady & Schwahn, 2010; West-Burnham & O'Sullivan, 1998). Data showed an expectation that all educators worked closely on issues of equity and inclusion to become better informed about adaptive learning programmes which catered for the complex and diverse needs of students (MOE, 2013a; Valentine, 2013; Whitehead, et al, 2013; Winter & O'Raw, 2010).

Respondents encouraged those experienced in special education to support staff and especially teacher aides who lacked the wider experience of trained classroom teachers. They were supported in their daily practice and in developing cultural proficiency regarding students, their families and community, as noted by Villani (2002). Teacher aides were empowered to take increased responsibility for student programmes and to work alongside teachers to support students, reporting back to classroom teachers or the SENCO about any concerns they had. Data showed that regular staff appraisal and feedback by leaders allowed for the monitoring of staff performance and identification of any additional staff training needed by individuals or groups, as noted by Middlemas (2012), and Ryan (2006). It appeared that not only were leaders and SENCOs focused on student learning, but also on teacher accountability and the prevention of practice which impeded the gathering and analysis of data.

Principals promoted coaching and mentoring programmes as a way of further developing inter-personal learning relationships, cultivating shared commitment to professional growth and increasing the standard of performance. Respondents reported that individual and group reflection on current practice, in relation to special education theory, clarified the learning process for individuals, teams and the learning organisation. This allowed leaders to prioritise school wide action, as predicted by several writers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Seabring & Bryk, 2003; Strike, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; West-Burnham, 2004). Data showed this process built staff morale and empowered teachers to take risks and set higher professional goals, a view shared by various authors (Babione & Shea, 2005; Villani, 2002; West-Burnham, 2004). In general, it appeared that respondents fulfilled a role of counsellor, offering emotional support and encouragement for educators, students and their families. One described their role as "providing resourcing, encouragement, praise, challenge, support, assistance and guidance".

Similarly, data showed that all participants were strong advocates of strategic PLD, the benefits of which were addressed in Chapter two (Evans-Andris, 2010; Futrell, 1995; Gupton, 2010; Heifetz et al., 2009; Scharmer, 2009). PLD was

directed from school policies and through advice and guidance programmes provided by syndicate leaders as part of their leadership responsibility. Data confirmed that principals and senior leadership staff shared responsibility for PLD, enlisting professional support from RTLB and Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) where necessary (MOE, 2013e). Generally, participants promoted whole school professional learning programmes as the most effective staff development, in keeping with literature by Adams (2006), Kennedy and Burnstein (2004) and Wasburn-Moses (2005). In conjunction with whole school PLD some utilised vertical discussion groups to keep staff fully informed and knowledgeable about what was happening throughout the school and to ensure teachers were clear about school wide platforms for action.

Finally, respondents promoted the value of professional reading for principals and staff as providing access to a body of knowledge concerning the processes, programmes and services for students with learning needs, as noted by Patterson et al. (2000). Readings, often personalised to specific needs, were shared and discussed in relation to inclusive practice. This kept all members of the school learning community up to date with the latest knowledge about complex learning disabilities and learning styles for students with SEN as suggested by Carpenter et al. (2002).

5.3.2. Principal cluster support

Rather than schools being traditionally focused solely on self-management, competition and roll growth as noted by (Bargerhuff, 2001), respondents reported the development of a learning community. Principals willingly met to provide collegial support for one another, indicating a sense of openness, cooperation and sharing. This is congruent with international practice as witnessed in Ontario and England and a number of European countries (Cornwall, 2012; Council for Exceptional Children, 2003; Ontario Principals' Council, 2012).

Principals described the sharing of charter documents, special needs data and budget constraints, as well as discussion around the role of their SENCOs and

improvements to systems which support special need practice. This practice appeared to exemplify the views of Fullan (2006), when describing practitioners as 'system thinkers in action' and encouraging leaders to "widen their sphere of engagement by interacting with other schools in a process we call lateral capacity building" (Fullan, 2006, p. 113). In addition, all principals contributed to the sourcing and sharing of professional readings concerning current topics. Respondents reported the value of collegial discussion supported by research-based evidence, rather than relying on ready-made intervention programmes from external experts, a view shared by authors such as Babione and Shea (2005); Di Paola and Walther-Thomas (2003); Falvey (1995); Lashley and Boscardin (2003) and Westwood (1997).

The success of the principals' cluster group had led to principals supporting senior leaders to form their own support group which met regularly to discuss leadership practice and inclusive practice.

5.3.3. The power of dialogue builds relationships and impacts on the inclusive culture and ethos of schools as learning communities

Data showed that participants had also each established learning communities within their schools which reflected a collaborative and collegial culture of professionalism based on dialogue, high trust and empathy for others, consistent with suggestions by Spady and Schwahn (2010). Through the sharing of personal knowledge, leaders appeared to have created what authors recognise as intellectual and social capital; the foundations of effective relationships with the community (Honigsfeld & Cohan, 2010; Spady & Schwahn, 2010).

Respondents recognised the power of communication as crucial to establishing an inclusive culture and school ethos, as suggested by Kedian (2011). Data showed that respondents were authentic and thoughtful listeners who were flexible and open to change. Their collegial examination of current practice provided structures for enhancing their school's learning processes, and the development of a pedagogy which related to the diversity of individual needs, as described in

literature (Argysis, 2002; Patterson et al., 2000; Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008; Strike, 2007). While 'hands on' principals kept in touch with what was happening in the classroom, those in less contact were kept informed by senior leaders. This, coupled with robust staff appraisal systems, allowed for quick identification of any gaps in staff knowledge or professional performance.

Data showed that staff was supported through a process of continuous research and reflection, consistent with recommendations by Greaves (2003) and Mitchell (2005). Participants encouraged dialogue and reflective questioning between SENCOs and classroom teachers, such as "Tell me about what is happening with this child?" or "Have you tried…?" In addition, respondents proposed that open and accessible communication between home, school, and multi-disciplinary teams of specialists, was necessary to help educators understand student learning styles and create differentiated educational programmes, as discussed by various authors (Carpenter, 2010a, 2010b; Carpenter et al., 2010; Fergusson & Carpenter, 2010; Whitehead et al., 2013).

Contrary to findings by Cullen and Bevan-Brown (1999) which suggested that inclusive philosophies did not reflect cultural sensitivity, data showed schools to be culturally responsive environments, as discussed by Lewis and Hilgendorf (2010). Participants suggested that successful educational programmes hinged on the development of a strong parent/school partnership. They considered that each member brought with them their own unique skills and knowledge of the child, and that together they were best able to create learning pathways for children. This is consistent with literature by Carpenter et al. (2010). Respondents promoted families being fully informed about their child's intervention programme, ensuring any negative attitudes which might provide barriers to inclusive education were overcome, as suggested by multiple authors (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Ballard, 1993; Cullen & Carroll-Lind, 2005; English Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Neilson, 2000; Odom et al., 2004; Porter, 2002; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001).

While some participants outlined to parents the purpose, timeframe and expectation of learning programmes, another had implemented an initiative whereby new students with severe learning needs and their parents, were introduced to the staff in a question and answer session and to the community via newsletter. Data showed this to be a powerful initiative. Deliberate communication had improved understanding for all involved, as predicted by Kedian (2011) and Poulakos (1974). This prevented misinformed judgements by staff and community members and helped create a collegial environment of acceptance and understanding of difference. Respondents reported that the parents felt supported and welcomed, and assured that their child was accepted and valued by the school and community. These findings were consistent with data gathered from parent surveys undertaken by another respondent, but contrary to findings by Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) who reported relationships between schools and parents as stressful, frustrating and alienating.

An additional component of inclusive learning communities was the active engagement by respondents of community support to help with cultural activities and volunteer reading programmes, as suggested in Chapter two (Kugelmass, 2003; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2004; Porter, 2002; Southworth, 2002). Respondents' experiences confirmed the view expressed by Lunenburg and Irby (2006) that community support was crucial to sustaining school improvement.

5.4. Data collection systems are essential for informing decisions

5.4.1. Effective systems for gathering and tracking evidence-based data

Participants agreed with Babione and Shea (2005) that by encouraging a whole school approach to differentiated learning, school leaders could individualise each child's learning programme to suit their unique character and difference in learning styles. However, as noted in the literature review (Argysis, 2002; Leithwood & Louis, 1998; Scribner et al., 1999; Yeo, 2006) decisions concerning

special education programmes were reliant on the best available data. The specificity of evaluations allowed SENCOs and principals to determine measurable benefits of intervention programmes, as asserted by Whitehead et al. (2013). The analysis of results determined whether current practice would be retained, modified or abandoned, as multiple authors suggest (Gronn, 2000, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2004; Protheroe, 2010; Spillane, 2006). Data on specific language and cultural needs of ELL students were also taken into consideration when planning and evaluating support programmes. Participants ensured programmes reflected students' particular learning needs, as noted by Bevan-Brown (1999b).

Respondents agreed with Kaufman (1992) as to the necessity for structured systems for monitoring and tracking student progress, which allowed careful analysis of needs assessment. Data showed that principals had reluctantly accepted National Standards as an enforced legislation for measuring and reporting student progress (MOE, 2013b, 2013d). Although respondents agreed that it offered a standardised framework for measuring student achievement, most felt that the system was flawed. Principals expressed unanimity in their dissatisfaction at the inflexibility of National Standards in fairly assessing progress of students with special needs, a view shared by Anderson et al. (2001), and in particular, students struggling to achieve Level 1. In agreement with Lashley (2007), respondents felt there was an unrealistic expectation that students undertake state-wide assessments to gauge their performance against their peers. As a result, most respondents resisted the rigidity of reporting requirements, refusing to report students as achieving below or well below the national standard (MOE, 2013b; 2013d).

"If I could chuck this out I would… I think this is nonsense [National Standards as a measure of student achievement] to tell you the honest truth" (Principal E).

While data showed that all principals promoted divergence in teaching strategies to accommodate the diverse range of learning needs, they appeared realistic that many students with SEN would not achieve standardised learning outcomes. In

addition, respondents reported that the testing conditions were not standardised, and that achievement results relied heavily on individual teacher's over-all teacher judgement. The literature review demonstrates these issues as a primary concern for principals (Burrelllo et al., 1988; Burrello et al., 1992; Clue, 1990; Van Horn et al., 1992). Although data was silent on alternative assessments for measuring student progress, all participants indicated that differentiated programmes for student instruction were often assessed by teachers on the basis of modified expectations, in keeping with literature by Ontario Principals' Council (2012).

Over-all, respondents felt that National Standards was indicative of a bureaucratic and inflexible education system which provides a dictatorial framework aimed at driving up standards, while making little or no difference to student results. This supports findings by Cornwall (2012) of Canterbury Christ Church University (2012). According to participants, the politically motivated standards-based agenda which stresses standardised academic attainment appeared to be at odds with the humanistic and socially motivated focus of differentiated programmes. Data inferred that students with special needs had become units of production within schools, to which teachers were expected to 'add value', as suggested by Benjamin (2002).

Although data showed that structured systems were already in place for gathering and tracking data, all respondents sought to improve approaches to developing and sustaining evidence-based inclusive practice, consistent with suggestions by multiple authors (Ekins & Grimes, 2012; Hallett & Hallett, 2012; Patterson et al., 2000; Thompson, 2012; Voltz & Collins, 2010). Respondents stated that up-to-date monitoring of student's progress was reliant on teachers uploading the latest testing results. They also acknowledged that the time and effort involved in meeting this requirement had a serious impact on staff work load and stress level, as well as financial implications for schools in providing classroom release time.

Contrary to literature (Kvale & Forness, 1999; Reschly & Tilly, 1999; Stoiber & Vanderwood, 2008) which suggested that traditional assessment models offered little information to determine the eligibility of a student for additional support, it

appeared that all schools used traditional categorical assessment models. However, in addition, some reported the use of a three tiered process of increased intensity of intervention, which provided leaders with an evidence-based framework for improving learning outcomes for students. By the time students were confirmed as having SEN, educators had gathered detailed data with regards to student's academic achievement and behaviour, as suggested in literature (Batsche et al., 2006; Bender & Shores, 2007; Lashley, 2007; Smith et al., 2010; Whitehead et al., 2013). This method reflected the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework described by Batsche et al., (2006) although this term was not used by respondents to describe the intervention. The RTI framework will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

Research were silent on the subject of public accountability, and the risk of schools coming under regulatory sanction as the result of public reporting of performance results of all students, as suggested by Lashley (2007), MOE (2013d) and Voltz and Collins (2010). The ethics of accountability was a reality for all respondents in their creation of a caring, collegial and ethical learning community which provided a good education for students with special needs, as foreshadowed by Strike (2007). However, respondents were concerned that the release of New Zealand National Standards results had created a national system more interested in directly comparing and ranking individual school performance, than providing information about an individual school or children, and the progress that has been made, a view shared by Ofsted (2010). It appeared that participants would prefer a focus on designing strategies to remediate the 'at risk factors' as noted by Ainscow et al. (2006), Benjamin (2002) and Villa and Colker (2006).

Over-all, data showed that all respondents had created a positive school culture which provided evidence-based best practice through effective instructional programmes, consistent with suggestions by authors such as Andrews et al. (2006); Billingsley et al. (2004); Correa and Wagner (2011); Schlichte et al. (2005), and Whitaker (2001). Data confirmed that respondents were adamant that no educator should place their own limitations on the achievement of a student with SEN, a view shared by Babione & Shea, (2005). Careful monitoring of student progress

and increased educator accountability for providing differentiated programmes, exposed any inappropriate teaching techniques, as discussed in literature (Graham-Matheson, 2012b; Gronn, 2000, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2004; Pfeffer, 1981; Protheroe, 2010; Spillane (in press); Spillane, 2006). As a result, data showed that rather than blaming students for lack of progress, educators were held responsible for providing differentiated programmes as predicted by Roaf (2004) and Lashley (2007). As a result, participants reported the number of students wrongly diagnosed as underachieving due to special learning needs, rather than as a result of poor classroom teaching had lessened, and as predicted by Ofsted (2010) and Deutsch (2004), the number of referrals for intervention reduced.

5.4.2. Intervention in the first year of schooling influences student achievement and school outcomes

Intervention in the first year of schooling emerged as a core theme and throughout the interviews there was absolute unanimity of the essential value and functionality of intervention in the first year of schooling.

Participants acknowledged the urgency for identifying students' needs early within the first year of school, and putting intervention in place. Participants claimed that early intervention influenced student achievement and school outcomes as noted by Adey, Robertson, and Venville (2002). As a result, most reported that regular assessments were conducted after one month, six months and at the end of one year of school. Students with special learning needs were then identified through the tracking of results, anecdotal evidence and referrals made either through school leaders being directly involved with teaching teams, or through teacher referrals to the SENCO. This allowed gaps in knowledge to be addressed, the earlier the better. Data confirmed that the early gathering of evidence-based knowledge of students' successful learning pathways allowed educators to design personalised wrap around curricula through IEPs. The aim was to improve their daily functioning and well-being, as literature suggests (Carpenter, 2010a; Carpenter et al., 2002; Goswami, 2008; Hargreaves, 2006; Limbrick & Jirankowa-Limbrick, 2009; MOE, 2013a; Wolke, 2009).

As presented in the previous section, intervention in the first year of schooling appeared to be modelled around the RTI framework, providing educators with evidence-based strategies for identifying students with specific learning disabilities. As foreshadowed by various authors (Batsche et al., 2006; Bender & Shores, 2007; Lashley, 2007; Smith et al., 2010; Whitehead et al., 2013), respondents noted improved levels of achievement, particularly for those students who were behaviourally challenged or had significant gaps in numeracy and literacy.

Respondents indicated that a growing diversity and complexity of student need, coupled with a lack of resources had led to an increased array of early intervention programmes, as noted by Bruder (2010). In particular, respondents appeared focused on identifying students with low oral language skills, or gaps in their knowledge of number, basic sight words and alphabet. Learning programmes were based on an increased intensity and monitoring of intervention at each level. Data showed that initially students were supported within the class by a teacher aide. Where gaps in their knowledge were identified, those with a similar need were placed in small intervention groups and withdrawn for intensive support. Consistent with literature by Bargerhuff (2001), data showed that although most learning took place in the classroom, young students were frequently withdrawn from the distractions of a busy classroom in order to receive focused small group intervention. Individualised intervention programmes were then begun for students with identified SEN, as suggested by Batsche et al. (2006). Respondents suggested that although this model of intervention was not quick, it was thorough and helped educators ensure year one students were achieving appropriately before entering year two.

In addition, principals described the introduction of a Perceptual Motor Programme (PMP) into their new entrant classes as being most valuable. The skills developed in the programme were transferrable to the classroom and helped with student mobility and fine motor skills.

Early childhood service providers played a critical role in the successful transition of students with SEN into a mainstream school setting, a view shared by Talay-Ongan (2001). Respondents claimed that some preschool students identified with complex learning needs, received support through alternate learning facilities while still enrolled in a kindergarten or playcentre. Data showed that these students were then carefully supported in their transition into their first year of mainstream schooling. Respondents explained that through close liaison with preschool facilities and special education personnel, SENCOs were aware of upcoming school enrolments of students with SEN, and could make appropriate arrangements for their placement, special programming and teacher assistant timetabling. One SENCO claimed to support five year olds with special needs quite heavily initially, through the use of school funded teacher aides to reduce teacher, student and parent anxiety, and to provide 'another pair of eyes' on the student for gathering and reporting anecdotal data.

As predicted by Aldridge (2011) and Talay-Ongan (2001) respondents valued the input by parents especially in the first year of schooling, as the person who knew the student best and the one who had the greatest vested interest in their future. Participants indicated that supporting transition of students to school through preschool 'visit days' and by providing on-going parent/teacher/SENCO reflection meetings once a child began school, was as much about reassuring parents that the transition from home or preschool centres to school was going to happen smoothly, as it was about supporting the child.

5.5. Moral purpose and social justice are key drivers in special education

This section discusses the impact that equity, morality, social justice and ethics has on leadership decisions and the development of student self-esteem, as shown in data presented in Chapter four. These elements appear reflective of international practice (Cherry-Holmes, 1988; Ontario Principals' Council, 2012; Skrtic, 1991; Strike, 2007). Respondents suggested that inclusive education was

driven by a moral imperative which required leaders to balance the effectiveness of special education practices with a standards-based agenda, and simultaneously address issues of inequity of special educational resourcing, a view shared by Mitchell (2000).

5.5.1. Moral purpose and social justice, ethics and equity

Participants shared a common belief that all children could learn. Therefore, educating students with SEN had become an established policy objective in all schools, as foreshadowed by Lindsay (2007) and Corbett (2001).

The establishment of moral purpose, moral responsibility and social justice appeared to govern respondents' actions, and gave basis to informed responsible behaviour and decision making. This, coupled with authentic leadership, helped ensure inclusive educational programmes were ethically sound and socially and morally just, as suggested in the literature review (Branson, 2009, October 19; Davis et al., 2005; Farrell, 2004; Fullan, 2002; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Rice, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1992; Strike, 2007).

Although participants indicated that decisions were largely guided by legislation and potentially legal and moral consequences, they were committed to creating and sustaining healthy communities that would teach students how to participate effectively in a democratic society. Consequently, respondents reported the ethics of school communities and their leaders were guided by the mores of society as predicted by Beck and Murphy (1996), Kallio (2003) and Strike (2007).

As a result, data showed that leadership practice in schools was underpinned by ethical guidelines which respected dignity, justice and fairness, described by Coster (1998) as an ethical imperative. At the same time it appeared that leaders used their authority to maintain what was right. School leaders ensured habits, values, beliefs and expectations that formed the cultural dynamics of their learning community were shaped and sustained through school-wide values programmes and a strong sense of social justice, as noted by Glathorn (1987) and

Glathorn et al. (2009). Participants confirmed the use of highly visible displays of each school's values, as providing a moral compass that guided ethical decisions. These helped influence student and staff perceptions and behaviour, and reinforced deliberate and purposeful acts of teaching, as noted by several authors (Argysis, 2002; Strike, 2007; Thompson, 2011; Weik, 2001; Yeo, 2006).

Participants appeared to treat students fairly, respected their rights and were open to discussion and debate over maximising opportunities which would benefit students (Strike, 2007). Each participant described a deliberate focus within their schools to move educators from passive to proactive involvement in special education. This allowed them to achieve socially just outcomes for all students with SEN, rather than blaming students and their parents for their learning needs. Data showed that participants were motivated by a moral commitment to provide all students equal access to quality instruction. This was a primary concern for principals, as predicted by several authors (Branson et al., 2011; Greenfield, 1991; Johnson, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1990, 1992; Servatius et al., 1992).

Data also revealed that respondents addressed the difference between equal and equitable learning opportunities. Respondents commonly suggested that rather than focusing on equality whereby students learnt the same thing, differentiated learning programmes provided equitable opportunities for students to learn through IEPs. Respondents supported the view of Strike (2007) that difference in student ability which results in difference in results does not constitute failure of equal opportunity.

Over-all, data confirmed that the field of special education was wrought with ethical dilemmas, particularly evident where respondents had been involved in providing advocacy for students with disabilities (Fiedler & VanHaren, 2009; Hallett & Hallett, 2012). Respondents appeared knowledgeable about research-based special education practice, and had a sound working knowledge of ethical standards and professional codes of practice which they were able to share with their staff, as recommended in literature (April et al., 2011; Bon & Bigbee, 2011; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Strike, 2007).

Although various authors (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Gross, 2002; Rudduck & Flutter, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c), promote the transformational potential of consulting pupils in decisions concerning differentiated programmes, data showed inconsistency between respondents. While some referred to the gaining of student voice, data was silent in other schools, suggesting that the opinion and perspective of students was not always sought, as predicted by Noble (2003).

5.5.2. The concept of inclusion

All participants recognised that the concept of inclusion was the most significant change in special education over the past two decades, as reported in Chapter two by Kirk et al. (2000). Respondents perceived an inclusive school as everyone being on the same journey towards creating a teaching environment which placed students at the centre of learning. They implied that inclusive education was not only a legal requirement, but an ethical assumption (Graham-Matheson, 2012a, 2012b). Data showed that respondents did not view disability or learning impairment from a deficit perspective, but were accepting and responsive to pupils' diverse learning needs, as recommended by Neilson (2000) and Ballard (1993). Respondents agreed that an important part of the process was getting to know students in order to facilitate IEPs which addressed their individual LD, some of which could have been previously undetected, as suggested by the LDA (2013). This practice appears to reflect the view of Benjamin (2002) that the practice of inclusion requires "sustained intellectual and practical engagement with the micro-politics of difference" (p. 142).

In accordance with Greaves (2003), Lindsay (2003) and Oliver (1990) data suggested that rather than placing limitations on learning and participation of students, respondents provided an inclusive learning environment which lifted students above their current level of perceived limitations. This is consistent with literature by multiple authors (Bowring-Carr & West-Burnham, 1997; Bush, 1986; Clifford, 2009; Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Spady & Schwahn, 2010; Sullivan & Glanz, 2006; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, 2005; West-Burnham & O'Sullivan, 1998). Students were encouraged

to participate in all learning activities with as much independence as their impairment would allow, with classroom and playground learning environments adapted where necessary.

Although literature does not indicate the most effective approach to teaching those learners with SEN, respondents indicated that they were provided with equitable educational opportunities in age appropriate classrooms. Respondents agreed with Bricker (1995) and Cullen (1999) that placement of students with SEN into mainstream settings, and their social acceptance alone, did not constitute inclusion and nor did it create meaningful learning opportunities. Respondents viewed special needs in relation to curriculum and school requirements as noted by Sullivan and Munford (2005). They confirmed that it was about optimising learning environments to provide opportunities for all learners to be successful, a view shared by Winter and O'Raw (2010). Participants also suggested that a key influence over successful inclusion of student with SEN was teacher confidence and availability of resourcing, as suggested by Graham-Matheson (2012b). This will be further addressed later in the chapter.

Some respondents reported having integrated the use of technology in order to fully include students in classroom programmes. It appeared that adaptive programming allowed students to access the curriculum in different and more engaging ways, and reinforced class curriculum teaching as suggested in Chapter two (de Graft-Hanson, 2006; Hasselbring & Williams Glaser, 2000; Rose et al., 2005; Whitehead et al., 2013). In addition, some respondents incorporated the use of digital devices to record evidence of student achievement and share student learning.

Data also showed that participants had reached beyond the school to engage families and community in the child's learning process, which as Cullen and Carroll-Lind (2005) and Raab and Dunst (2004) suggest, enhanced student development and helped support and strengthen families. Additional support for families in lower decile schools was provided through the services of a Social Worker in Schools (SWIS) and school chaplain.

5.6. The best learning environment for students with special needs – withdrawal or full inclusion

All participants promoted an inclusive environment which provided special provision for those who needed it, as the best learning environment for students, and the most effective means of combatting discriminatory attitudes, as noted by UNESCO (1994). They agreed that inclusive programmes should actively engage children in collaborative interaction which would yield further learning opportunities. This reflects recommendations by the National Council for Special Education (2013) and Winter & O'Raw (2010). Special educational practice of most schools was based on three inclusionary principles; responsiveness to pupils' diverse learning needs, overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for students, and setting suitable learning challenges, as suggested by the English Department for Education and Skills (2004) and Hodkinson (2010).

Respondents suggested that the diverse environments of inclusive classrooms provided all children with a setting in which to grow, a view shared by Hanson et al. (1998), and Villa and Colker (2006). Nonetheless, most reported that inclusive education did not demand all instruction take place in the student's home classroom all the time, consistent with recommendations by Lipsky and Gartner (1997) and Place (2011). Data showed that in the best interests of all, there were times when it was more appropriate to withdraw students to receive support in an alternative setting. Some participants believed withdrawal programmes offered specific directed teaching without distraction, especially suited to young students or those who struggled to focus in a busy classroom environment. Respondents concluded however, that inclusion meant that the primary placement should be the general class.

Although all respondents promoted school policies of inclusion, data revealed some disparity between rhetoric and practice. In some instances, practice which saw students with SEN removed from mainstream classroom settings could have been construed as exclusionary. One participant stated that the attention given to students with high needs was unfair to other class members, and that assistive technology not only drew extra attention to students, but was obtrusive in

classrooms as discussed by Blamires (2012) and Whitehead, et al., (2013). Consistent with suggestions by Avramidis and Norwich (2002) another respondent reported that some teachers remained unconvinced that a mainstream classroom was the best learning environment for students with high needs. Respondents inferred that this may stem from a lack of confidence in dealing with a child's LD.

In contrast, respondents who were advocates of full inclusion argued that it was important to retain students in their home classroom environment for intervention programmes, in order to reduce barriers to social and curricular opportunities. All intervention occurred within the context of the classroom, other than individualised intervention programmes such as reading recovery. Respondents felt that students needed to feel that they were not seen as special, and that they belonged and could achieve in a mainstream environment, a view shared by Bargerhuff (2001) and Neilson (2000). This was seen as crucial to developing their self-esteem which Neilson describes as "the most vulnerable aspect of many children with disabilities" (p. 23). Respondents reported that the content of classroom programmes, flow of dialogue within a classroom, and the degree of personalised and group learning, cooperation and competition positively impacted on student achievement, as noted by Deutsch (2004). Nevertheless, Principal A reported that students were strategically placed in classrooms, and those with very high needs were sometimes moved to a new class part way through their first year of school, in recognition of the impact they had on their class and teacher. This practice desisted as the child adapted to the classroom environment.

Regardless of the setting, all respondents acknowledged that teaching students with high needs was exhausting. Principals were mindful of the impact that the diversity of special needs, and in particular very high needs, had on the work load and stress levels of classroom teachers, consistent with literature by Lloyd (1997). However, all respondents were committed to providing the least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with special needs, as recommended by IDEA (1997). Data showed that individualised support was offered through a range of alternative options, although the classroom teacher retained overall responsibility

for the students, as suggested by Lipsky and Gartner (1997). Differentiated instructional programmes were determined around student learning and thinking styles (auditory, visual, tactile or kinaesthetic), whether large or small group or individual programmes would best meet the needs of individual students, and whether in-class support or withdrawal was most appropriate, as discussed by Smutny (2003) and Tomlinson (1999).

Respondents were aware of the danger of students becoming over-dependent on any one particular teacher or teacher aide. In order to minimise dependency, all teacher aides were encouraged to give students space to become independent risk takers. Nonetheless, respondents suggested that initial high levels of support in class and the playground were necessary, before students with very high needs would tolerate its gradual reduction. Otherwise, as suggested by some respondents, they may not survive in a mainstream environment.

Data showed that respondents were also well informed about GAT identified students and were responsive to their needs, as consistent with literature by Conlon (2008) and Colangelo et al. (2004). Contrary to the idea of withdrawing GAT students for extension, data showed that students preferred not to be withdrawn from home classrooms, and instead were engaged in enrichment programmes within the classroom setting with students of similar ability. Enrichment models were based on building rigour, flexible scheduling and connecting enrichment to student need, as recommended by Rogers (2002), Riley (2000) and Conlon (2008). Findings reflected MOE (2002a) guidelines which state that "gifted and talented learners should be offered a curriculum that has been expanded in breadth, depth, and pace to match their learning needs" (p. 3). Respondents reported that programmes ensured students were academically challenged and socially accepted, reducing the chance of boredom.

In concluding this section, findings showed that all students were welcomed into schools. However, respondents confirmed than in isolated instances, the severity and complexity of students' needs could require parents to consider an alternate school as the best learning environment for their child. Data showed that a

decision would only be reached after every effort to successfully include the student in a mainstream class and all referrals for extra support had been exhausted. Decisions followed careful deliberation and agreement between parents and principals that an alternate schooling facility would be in the best interests of the child.

5.7. Limited resourcing requires focused decision making

It is extraordinarily difficult to estimate the number of students who require funding but do not get it, because so many principals and SENCOs have given up trying to get funding after being turned down the first time. In similar case histories, respondents often did not bother with an application because they knew it was going to be turned down. However, the statistical data presented in previous chapters provides a context in which to discuss the findings. Remember that although Statistics New Zealand (2006) reveal that five percent of children aged 0-14 years have special needs, and Davison (2012) reports three percent of New Zealand's school aged students in 2012, as having severe learning difficulties, ORRS only provides funding for one percent of the school population who have the highest need for special education (MOE, 2004). Thousands of students with learning difficulties who fail to meet the ORRS threshold are left competing for highly contested resourcing (MOE, 2004).

With this in mind, data showed respondents' decisions concerning student eligibility for special educational programming were informed by MOE special education policies (MOE, 2009b, 2013c). Respondents confirmed that the MOE allocated and distributed funding and staffing for special education initiatives (MOE, 2004, 2013c). Additional funding to support students with moderate levels of difficulty (learning, behaviour and/or social communication, vision, hearing, mobility or communication) was provided by the SEG based on school roll and decile rating (MOE, 2013c). All participants indicated that this level of funding was grossly inadequate, contrary to assurances by MOE special education spokesman, Brian Coffey, following special education reform that all those

eligible would continue to get support. Instead, data showed that the criteria for targeted funding has been tightened, thereby reducing the level of funding.

Respondents confirmed that leadership decisions concerning allocation of funding were severely impacted by changes to the structure of New Zealand's special education which requires mainstream schools to do more to support students with SEN (Davison, 2012; MOE, 2013c). Principals unanimously agreed that the restructuring had placed increased strain on principals and educators in accessing resourcing and alternative schooling facilities. They confirmed that changes had coincided with the restructuring of the SLS service designed to support children with significant learning difficulties (MOE, 2012a). The pending closure of special needs units in mainstream school and two specialised schools had added further pressure on respondents to meet students' complex learning needs in-school, as noted by Davison, (2012). Respondents agreed with Strike (2007) that changes required focused decision making as to the equitable distribution of scarce resources in order to maximise the benefits for students and schools.

Respondents concurred that changes to special education had resulted from a Government driven policy which has influenced the manner in which schools provide for students with special needs, as discussed in the literature (Apple, 2004; Armstrong, 2005; Dyson et al., 2009; Dyson, 2005; Mitchell, 2000; Olssen & Matthews, 1997; Thompson, 2012). Although no explicit reference was made to the implementation of a Neo-liberal policy, all participants reported education policy as reflecting a current political view-point which emphasises economic viability and growth of schools, reduced resourcing, and the devolvement of responsibility for special education to school leaders (Apple, 2004; Hursh, 2001; Treaner, 2005). Respondents concluded that the inequality in meeting SEN within the current schooling system was clearly representative of a competitive, profit driven society, a view shared by Barnes (1990).

Despite these challenges, data showed that leadership decisions appeared to be guided by international education policies such as IDEA (1997) and NCLB (2001). They ensured students with SEN received free and appropriate public

education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and that any inequities were addressed.

5.7.1. Increased difficulty in accessing Ministry of Education funded support

Participants all voiced concern about an inept government regime which had restructured special education, resulting in reduced resourcing for children with special needs, a view shared by Anderson et al. (2001). The following statement was indicative of the frustration exhibited by principals:

> "It's tight as now. The Ministry just…there is no money. Well get rid of some of the personnel. They have got 3,200 advisers in the Ministry. Why don't they give one to each school to open the [expletive deleted] mail and sort through the stuff. […]. It's going to get worse. This present regime… in fact I don't think Labour will be any better to be perfectly honest" (Principal F).

Respondents were concerned that mainstreaming of students with special learning needs without adequate funding would severely impact on their learning, and as noted by Chapman (1988), result in mainstream dumping. Consequently, all respondents reported the allocation of substantial school funds to support additional intervention programmes and resourcing for students with SEN.

In particular, participants identified overcrowding as a potential barrier to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. All respondents were committed to allocating school funds to employ personnel over and above staffing entitlement to reduce class numbers, a view shared by Lindsay (2007).

Data showed that the MOE confirmed a funding shortfall, suggesting that provision for these students could be made within the regular school system with minimal adjustment (MOE, 2013c). Several schools were reliant on fundraising and school levies to fund the shortfall. All participants reported being challenged

to manage and implement education systems which provided cost effective and equitable learning opportunities for students with diverse needs, as predicted by Winter & O'Raw (2010). Respondents reported the training of parents and linking with community resource personnel provided additional support for students, which is consistent with the range of cost effective measures proposed by UNESCO (2005).

Respondents claimed that SENCOs and school leaders had also been forced to find innovative ways to circumvent the slow and frustrating process of gaining assistance from external agencies. One respondent initiated dialogue with SLTs and RTLB concerning the likelihood of referrals meeting MOE's strict criteria, prior to referrals being made. This meant they avoided unnecessary paper work and time spent waiting for support which may not be forthcoming (MOE, 2013e). Instead, they were able to implement a more speedy arrangement for alternate, school funded intervention.

All respondents were strong advocates of early intervention, which resulted in positive effects for both students and schools with respect to long term resource allocation. However, they all reported that school funded intervention came at a financial cost to learning organisations, given the schools' finite budget, finite number of personnel and limited access to resources.

5.7.2. Effective allocation of school funds for special education comes at a cost

Commonalities in the behaviour of principals, revealed a close relationship between effective leadership decision making and allocation of highly contested funding, time and personnel resources. All respondents sought to achieve maximum benefit for students and the school in relation to money spent. In particular, data showed respondents were focused on the strategic allocation of funds which supported the academic learning, social growth and independent functioning of students with SEN, as noted in the literature (Branson et al., 2011;

Davis et al., 2005; Fullan, 2002; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Rice, 2010; Strike, 2007).

In order to provide extra support for an increasing number of students with complex learning disabilities, ELL, behavioural and social needs, while keeping within budgetary constrictions, respondents were forced to utilise teacher aides instead of skilled teachers and specialist help. Respondents suggested however, that the support from teacher aides did not achieve the accelerated progress required by the large number of students needing specialist intervention. Data showed that short intense intervention by knowledgeable teachers or specialist support staff was more desirable than investing in prolonged intervention by less skilled support staff.

Legislation by MOE (2013c), NCLB (2001) and SENDA (2001) governed many funding decisions. However, respondents reported that reduced Government funding and increased cost of resourcing meant that schools were unable to commit to fully realising the potential of every student. Respondents faced the dilemma of ensuring equitable educational opportunity for students with SEN, as well as issues of fairness and justice as students compete for scarce resources, as noted by Strike (2007). A particular challenge for respondents was the ethical decisions required, where funding the requirements of SEN students meant other students received reduced resourcing. They agreed with Strike (2007) that this could be construed as reverse discrimination. Nevertheless, respondents considered this reflected the nature of an inclusive school in which all were deemed equal, even though they were different in many respects, a view shared by Strike (2007). Respondents concluded that the aim of inclusion was to give each child a fair chance to succeed, as recommended by MOE (2013c).

Due to scarce funding, respondents were forced to decide which student programmes were to be supported over others, and which students were to receive intervention. Data showed that this often demanded decision about a student's learning capacity to make accelerated progress through individualised intervention such as reading recovery. Respondents agreed that in some circumstances this

was construed as a poor financial investment for the school. Respondents also referred to isolated incidents in which they based decisions on a student's level of functioning given their current life circumstances, as noted by Strike (2007). Data showed that at times, investing resources elsewhere had the biggest impact on a greater number of students. For example small group intervention using a GEP and allocation of resources to students with similar need, allowed educators to address behavioural issues and speech and communication, numeracy and literacy needs more effectively, as foreshadowed by Mitchell et al. (2010).

Findings also revealed that the timing and strength of PLD and allocation of special educational resources was critical, as noted by Whitehead et al. (2013). SENCOs, having attended meetings (IEP, team or staff) generally approached principals with a special education plan and request for finance for training or resources. One respondent reported that applications for support were not necessarily because of the seriousness of the case, but sometimes because it was one they may not know enough about. Data showed that decisions were made collaboratively as to whether funding could be budgeted for within school, or whether student need was sufficient to require referral to RTLB or MOE special education for targeted support (MOE, 2004, 2013c, 2013e).

Although most discussion was centred on meeting the requirements of students with LD, some respondents suggested resources should be made available for investment in GAT programmes. Data showed some participants to be particularly strong advocates of GAT programming. This resonates with Collins'(2001) recommendation to "put your best people on your biggest opportunity, not your biggest problem" (p. 58). Findings suggested that investing in GAT students could potentially produce citizens who would make the greater economic contribution to their nation, a view which aligns with the Government's Neo-Liberal economic policy. Nevertheless, most participants questioned the ethics of investing in extension opportunities while other students were in severe need of help to address behaviour management issues, increase their self-sufficiency and to develop relationships and personal dignity, as indicated by Strike (2007). Participants appeared to agree that while investment in GAT

students was a worthy goal, immediate intervention for students with severe need would benefit the whole community long term, rather than being seen as a drain on resources.

Respondents agreed with Strike (2007) that systematic tracking of student progress and engagement in regular dialogue with their SENCOs triggered the allocation of resources according to programme quality and effectiveness. Data was silent on how leaders measured the long term effects of intervention, and at what point they would gauge resource expenditure as imposing an unreasonable burden on the school or on those students who received less so another could receive more. However, all participants were adamant that the politics of schools must not detract from ensuring that school resourcing is consistent with student need, a view shared by Hattie (2009, January 13). Nevertheless, respondents confirmed that students with SEN required a disproportionately high level of resourcing to produce adequate educational gains, as measured against National Standards (MOE, 2013b, 2013d).

Summary

This chapter has provided discussion of research findings which reflects congruence between the voices of experienced principals and literature in most areas, while highlighting some divergence in others. Discussion has also noted any silences in data.

Having established that organisational culture differs between schools, this chapter has discussed seven key themes in relation to individualized leadership practice. Participants' explanations of how they cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with SEN, shows that inclusive education does not demand that all instruction take place in the student's home classroom all the time. There are times when it is more appropriate to provide services in settings other than the classroom, a view shared by Lipsky & Gartner (1997).

Participants indicated absolute unanimity on the question of the essential value and functionality of intervention in the first year of schooling. They described systems for gathering and tracking data in order to develop and sustain evidence-based differentiated learning programmes. Child centred programmes were flexible enough to accommodate the diversity of learning needs and lifted students above the level of currently perceived limitations, as suggested by Babione and Shea, (2005).

Leaders confirmed that increased social issues, leadership decisions and teacher practice influences SEN programmes and student learning, a view shared by Carpenter (2010a), MOE (2013c) and ERO (2012). Participants identified a culture of distributed authority and responsibility, accompanied by high levels of trust that empowered educators to develop leadership capacity and take ownership for sustained improvement in school-wide teaching practice. They discussed leadership practice in relation to social justice and morality of special education, and the ethics of decision-making concerning the provision of equitable learning opportunities. This resonates with literature that identifies moral purpose and the ethics of moral obligation, responsibility and social justice as being most influential in guiding leadership practice, defining inclusive learning communities and informing responsible behaviour and decisions (Branson, 2009, October 19). School-wide values programmes were identified as influential over leaders' practice and beliefs and that of their educators' and students' (Glathorn et al., 2009).

Participants were united in their concern over an inept government regime which has devolved all responsibility for special education to school leaders. This has led to increased stress levels as a result of reduced resourcing, restructuring of special support agencies and tightening of criteria for accessing specialist support (MOE, 2000c, 2002b, 2013c). All leaders were unanimous in their moral commitment to providing students with equitable access to a rich core curriculum and quality instruction, rather than being controlled by a standards-driven education policy which emphasises economic viability of schools.

In almost all instances research findings were congruent with literature. However, one of the critical areas of divergence concerned the assumption that the diverse environment of inclusive classrooms provided all children with the best setting in which to grow (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). Another concerned the continued use of traditional assessment methods for determining student eligibility for additional support despite literature questioning their effectiveness. However, participants confirmed that these methods were supported with alternative assessment measures. Further divergence concerned literature which claimed a lack of cultural sensitivity, whereas participants described strong whanau partnerships (Cullen & Bevan-Brown, 1999; Talay-Ongan, 2001). The final area of divergence concerned changes in national education policy which, contrary to recommendations by the NCLB policy, had forced participants to make resourcing decisions based on investments which gained the greatest good for the greatest number of students. This led to some students being selected for intervention based on their capacity to make accelerated progress.

There were silences in data concerning public accountability and sanctions imposed as a result of reporting poor school performance results as addressed by Roaf (2004) and Lashley (2007). Data was also notably silent concerning the long term effects of intervention, and how participants determined at what point resource expenditure became a burden on the school and those students receiving less in order to support students with SEN (Cullen & Bevan-Brown, 1999).

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Introduction

This research inquiry sought to identify 'how principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of students with special education needs'. The inquiry set out to examine the leadership behaviour which influenced the processes and therefore the decisions that were made. It sought to identify innovative ways in which a group of experienced Waikato primary principals dealt with the demand for scarce resources and the pressure to provide equitable learning opportunities that maximised educational potential for their students. Particular focus was on academic learning, social growth and independent functioning of students with SEN. This research inquiry not only offered a chance for principals to reflect on their own leadership practice with regard to special education, but it is anticipated that this will inspire improved quality of inclusive practice in primary schools.

6.1. Summary of findings

This limited study has explored the research topic in a small number of Waikato urban primary schools. Semi-structured interviews offered flexibility for the inquiry and allowed scrutiny of principals' leadership behaviour and relationships within their own situational context, and in some cases exposing leadership hierarchies. It offered an opportunity for communication about challenges facing school leaders when endeavouring to meet the multiple learning requirements of students with SEN, which was highly pertinent to this research.

Findings endorsed current leadership practice and highlighted the aspects which respondents recognised as influencing decisions. It was evident that distributed authority and responsibility, accompanied by high levels of trust, empowered leadership capacity. Leaders were driven by moral purpose and a sense of social justice which defined inclusive learning communities and supported responsible

behaviour and decision-making. Evidence of appropriate habits, values, beliefs and expectations that created, shaped and sustained cultural dynamics within learning organisations were reflected in the development and implementation of a shared vision, 'fit for purpose' communication, and a focus on staff development of new skills in the area of special education.

Findings showed that participants were guided by humanistic leadership behaviour that connected them to the learning needs of their students, and led to sustained improvement in teaching practice throughout schools. They were committed to providing equitable access to quality instruction, enabled through structured systems for gathering and tracking evidence-based data. Differentiated learning programmes matched students' need and individual learning styles (Babione and Shea, 2005). Findings revealed contrasting viewpoints about whether fully inclusive practice offered the best learning environment for students with special learning needs. However, there was absolute unanimity among respondents as to the importance of intervention in a child's first year of schooling.

In conclusion, the inquiry identified a significant gap between a No Child Left Behind policy and a New Zealand special educational policy which devolved responsibility to schools, tightened criteria for referrals, and resulted in a funding shortfall (MOE, 2013c; NCLB, 2001).

6.2. Strengths of the research method

Interviews achieve a relatively high response rate, providing a wide and easily accessible sample (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, & McKinney, 2012). They offer researchers more control over questioning than, for example, written surveys and suit participants who are reluctant to complete questionnaires (Mutch, 2005). The interactive nature of face to face interviews elicit a vast amount of information through in-depth conversations, containing richness unachievable by any other means of data gathering (Mutch, 2005). Their adaptability and flexibility allows a skilled interviewer to adapt questions to suit responses and investigate the

interviewee's unique experiences, their motives and feelings (Bell, 2005; Cachia & Millward, 2011; Cresswell, 1994).

6.3. Contribution of the research

I believe that this research has contributed in a modest way to the development of decision-making in special education. The inquiry encouraged reflexivity, emphasising personal values, beliefs, experiences and assumptions. It allowed the accessing of perceptions and experiences which may normally have remained invisible (Charmaz, 2006; Gubrium et al., 2012). The sharing of viewpoints and co-construction of findings throughout the interviews demonstrated that the researcher and school community shared ownership for this research. The inquiry offered principals time to reflect upon their individual practice and by using the interview as a chance to show-case their leadership practice within their own school context, they could contribute suggestions towards answering the research question under discussion.

In addition to highlighting the utmost importance of early intervention, it exposes a need for principals to ensure inappropriate teaching practice, a negative attitude or imposed limitations on students' ability does not impede their learning.

6.4. Limitations of the research

The nature and scope of this study was limited by the restrictions of a 40,000 word Masters' thesis. Another limitation of the study is that much of the data is not generalisable because of the small research sample. The research methodology, sample size and demographic information resulted in this inquiry forming a snap-shot of a small group of primary school principals based in urban Waikato. As the sample only included urban principals, a further limitation is that the study does not necessarily represent rural principals' perspectives. Finally, the study only included primary schools and does not represent the views of

secondary school principals. For these reasons the findings cannot lead to generalisations of national or international trends in special educational practice.

6.5. Suggestions for further research

Firstly this research inquiry could be extended to further research on what percentage of children with special needs should be funded and are not: An analysis of Government policy. It is currently extraordinarily difficult to estimate the number of students who require funding but do not get it due to changes in special education policy, reduced funding and tightening of criteria to access support service.

To increase the scope of this research and gain a more in-depth understanding, data could have been gathered from a larger sample of urban and rural principals from multiple decile schools and from a wider geographic region which included primary and secondary schools. A longitudinal study could also be beneficial as this may offer additional data.

Another area for research concerns the impact that the closure of specialised educational facilities will have on students with very high needs and the increasing number of students identified with complex learning disabilities. Finally, the current study has identified a gap between the NCLB policy and Government changes to special educational policy. Further research could look at how this can be addressed.

Summary

By coming to an understanding of the complexities of special educational needs and the impact that morally and ethically based leadership decisions have on the development of school culture and ethos, we may be able to better understand the significance or essence of inclusivity. This is an important focus for research

which will potentially make a significant contribution to the field of special education.

These research findings have confirmed that inclusive education does not demand all instruction take place in the students home classroom all the time and that there are times when it is more appropriate to provide support services in settings other than the classroom. An increasing number of learners are presenting complex learning difficulties and disabilities, which require an added dimension to the usual leadership practice in order to prevent these students from becoming socially, emotionally and cognitively disenfranchised. Differentiated learning programmes, should meet individual student need and be offered in the appropriate learning style and environment. In addition to these findings, literature substantiates the unanimity of respondents as to the value and functionality of intervention early in the first year of a student's schooling.

This research inquiry has revealed that changes to the structure of New Zealand's special education, the devolution of responsibility to schools, severely reduced resourcing for children with special needs, the restructuring of special support agencies and the tightening of criteria for accessing specialist support, has placed increased strain on principals and educators. Rather than attempting to attain the goals of a No Child Left Behind Policy (NCLB, 2001) a degree of collaboration and consultation is needed to create flexibility in school systems that allows for the best utilisation of limited resources in order to maximise student outcomes.

In conclusion, it is likely that any changes to leadership practice that impact on students' learning outcomes rely on the construction of a framework for improved academic, social and independent functioning of students with special needs, along with a change in government policy which addresses issues of inadequate funding and support for students with special educational needs.

Bibliography

Adams, C. (2006). The new realities of special needs. *Scholastic Administrator, 5*(8), 41-46.

Adams, C. M., & Forsyth, P. B. (2006. *Promoting a culture of parent collaboration and trust.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Research Association, San Fransisco, CA

Adey, P., Robertson, A., & Venville, G. (2002). Effects of a cognitive acceleration programme on Year 1 pupils *British Journal of Educational Psychology 72*, 1-25.

Ainscow, M. (2002). *Understanding the development of inclusive schools. (Studies in inclusive education)*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Ainscow, M. (2005). Understanding the development of inclusive education system. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology, 7*(3), 5-20.

Ainscow, M., Booth, T., Dyson, A., Howes, A., Gallannaugh, F., Smith, R. …& Frankham, J. (2006). *Improving schools: Developing inclusion*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Aldridge, J. (2011). Early childhood intervention: A promise to children and families for their future. *Childhood Education, 87*(3), 214.

Anderson, L., Bush, T., & Wise, C. (2001). Is funding fair?: Perceptions and experiences from foundation schools. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 29* (4), 397-409.

Andrews, D., & Lewis, M. (2004). Building sustainable futures: Emerging understandings of the significant contribution of the professional learning community. *Improving Schools, 7*(2), 129-150.

Andrews, S., Gilbert, L., & Martin, E. (2006). The first years of teaching: Disparities in perceptions of support. *Action in Teacher Education, 28*(4), 4-13.

Apple, M. W. (2004). Creating difference: Neo-Liberalism, Neo-conservatism and the politics of educational reform. *Educational Policy, 18*(12), 12-44.

April, K., Peters, K., Locke, K., & Miambo, C. (2011). Leading ethically: What helps and what hinders. In C. Millar & E. Poole (Eds.), *Ethical leadership: Global challenges and perspectives*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave, Macmillan.

Argysis, C. (2002). Double loop learning, teaching and research. *Journal of Management Learning and Education, 1*(2), 206-218.

Armstrong, D. (2005). Reinventing inclusion: New Labour and the cultural politics of special education. *Oxford Review of Education, 31*(1), 206-218.

Atkinson, P., & Delamont, S. (2006). In the roiling smoke: Qualitative inquiry and contested fields. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 19*(6), 747-755.

Audit Commission. (2002). *Statutory assessment and statements of SEN: in need of review?* Retrieved from www.audit-commission.gov.uk.

Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17*(2), 129-147.

Babione, C., & Shea, C. (2005). Special education mentoring within the context of rural schools. *Rural Special Education Quarterly: Spring 2005: Proquest Educational Journals, 3*(10)

Ballard, K. (1993). A socio-political perspective on disability: Research and institutional approaches to early intervention for young children with special needs and their families. *Young Children, 59*(6), 38-43.

Bargerhuff, M. E. (2001). Inclusive elementary schools and those who lead them. *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education, 1*(5)

Barnes, C. (1990). *Cabbage syndrome: The social construction of dependence*. London, United Kingdom: Falmer Press.

Bartlett, J. C. (2012). Attitudes for excellence. *Principal Leadership, September 2012*

Barton, L. (2003). *Inclusive education and teacher education: A basis for hope or a discourse of delusion?* London, United Kingdom: Institute of Education.

Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, 8*(1), 9-32.

Batsche, G., Elliott, J., Graden, J. L., Grimes, J., Kovaleski, J. F., Prasse, D., …& Tilly, W.D. (2006). *Response to intervention: Policy considerations and implementation*. Alexandria, VA: The National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

Beck, L. G., & Murphy, J. (1996). *Ethics in educational leadership programmes: Emerging models*. Columbia, MO: University Council for Educational Administration.

Beck, S., & Manuel, K. (2008). *Practical research methods for librarians and information professionals*. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman.

Becker, H. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Bell, B. (2008). *Research Methods, DSOE557 12B. Surveys: Key ideas [Lecture notes]*. Hamilton, New Zealand. University of Waikato: Centre for Science & Technology Education research.

Bell B. (Producer). (2012, October 5). *Audio introduction to the nature of research [Audio podcast]*.

Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science* (5th ed.). Buckingham, England: Open University Press.

Bell, J. (2010). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science*. New York, NY: Open University Press.

Bender, W. N., & Shores, C. (2007). *Response to intervention: A practical guide for every teacher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press & Council for Exceptional Children.

Benjamin, S. (2002). *The micropolitics of inclusive education*. Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.

Bennis, W. (2003). *On becoming a leader*. New York, NY: New York Basic Books.

Bevan-Brown, J. (1999a). *SE2000: Kura Kaupapa Māori Report: Phase one report to the Ministry of Education* Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

Bevan-Brown, J. (1999b). Special abilities: A Māori perspective. Implications for catering for gifted children from minority cultures. *Gifted Education International, 14*(92-102)

Bill, G. (2012). *Case study research methods*. London, United Kingdom: Continuum International Publishing.

Billingsley, B., Carlson, E., & Klein, S. (2004). The working conditions and induction support of early career special educators. *Exceptional Children, 70*, 333-347.

Billingsley, B. S., & Cross, L. H. (1991). Teachers' decisions to transfer from special to general education. *The Journal of Special Education, 24*(4), 496-511.

Bishop, R. (1997). Interviewing as collaborative storying. *Educational Research and Perspectives, 24*(1), 28-46.

Bishop, R. (2005). Freeing ourselves from neocolonial domination in research: A Kaupapa Maori aproach to creating knowledge. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. New York, NY: Open University Press.

Blamires, M. (2012). Dilemmas of enablement. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: Dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Boe, E. E., Cook, L. H., & Sunderland, R. J. (2008). Teacher turnover: Examining exit attrition, teaching area transfer, and school migration. *Exceptional Children, 75*(1), 7-31.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2006). *Qualitative research in education* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bon, S. C., & Bigbee, A. J. (2011). Special education leadership: Integrating profesional and personal codes of ethics to serve the best interests of the child. *Journal of School Leadership, 21*(1), 324-359.

Boote, D. (2008). Notes towards a naturalistic study of education research methodology. *Interchange, 39*(3), 303-325.

Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (2002). *Index for inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools*. Bristol, United Kingdom: Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education.

Booth, T., Nes, K., & Stromstad, M. (2003). Developing inclusive teacher education? Introducing the book. In T. Booth, K. Nes & M. Stromstad (Eds.), *Devloping inclusive teacher education*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge/Falmer.

Bowring-Carr, C., & West-Burnham, J. (1997). *Effective learning in schools: How to integrate learning and leadership for a successful school*. Great Britain: Pearson Education.

Branson, C., Bezzina, M., & Burford, C. (2011. *Moral purpose: A blind spot in leading for learning?* Paper presented at the The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Annual Convention, Pittsburgh, PA

Branson, C. M. (2009. *Clarifying the role of reflection in the leadership of educational change*. Paper presented at the AARE Conference,

Branson, C. M. (Producer). (2009, October 19). Authentic leadership and moral literacy. *"Exploring the meta-values of authentic leadership: Moral literacy in action"*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwVYqwjU8JA

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). "Using thematic analysis in psychology". *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Brewerton, P. M., & Millward, L. J. (2001). *Organizational research methods: A guide for students and researchers*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Brewster, C., & Railsback, J. (2003). *Building trusting relationships for school improvement: Implications for principals and teachers*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Bricker, D. (1995). The challenge of inclusion. *Journal of Early Intervention, 19*(3), 179-194.

Britzman, D. (1995). Is there a queer pedagogy? Or stop reading straight. *Educational Theory, 42*(5), 151-165.

Brody, L. E., & Mills, C. J. (1997). Gifted Children with Learning Disabilities: A review of the issues. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 30*(3), 382-296.

Bruder, M. B. (2010). A Promise to children and families for their future. *Exceptional Children, 76*(3), 339-355.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 40-45.

Bryman, A. (2008). The end of the paradigm wars. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman & J. Brannen (Eds.), *The sage handbok of social research methods*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Burrelllo, L., Schrup, M., & Barnett, B. (1988). *The principal's blue book on special education. Part II: Principal instructional leadership and supervisory practices in special education programs*. Bloomimgton, IN: CASE Research Committee.

Burrello, L. C., Schrup, M. G., & Barnett, B. G. (1992). *The principal as the special education instructional leader*: CASE Research Committee, Indiana University, School of Education, Smith research center-100A. ED 358 641.

Bush, T. (1986). *Theories of educational management: Management models in schools (as organisations)*. London, United Kingdom: Paul Chapman.

Cachia, M., & Millward, L. (2011). "The telephone medium and semi-structured interviews: A complementary fit". *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An international Journal, 6*(3), 265-277.

Cangelosi, B. J. (2009). Shared leadership: Lessons learned. *Principal 88*(4), 18-21.

Canterbury Christ Church University. (2012). *University academic represents England in international project for inclusive education.* Retrieved from http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/news/newsRelease.asp?newsPk=2022

Carpenter, B. (2010a). *Curriculum reconciliation and children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities*. London, United Kingdom: Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (now The Schools Network).

Carpenter, B. (2010b). Disadvantaged, deprived and disabled. *Special Children, 193*(1), 42-45.

Carpenter, B., Ashdown, R., & Bovair, K. (2002). *Enabling access: Effective teaching and learning for children with learning difficulties* (2nd ed.). London, United Kingdom: David Fulton.

Carpenter, B., Cockbill, B., Egerton, J., & English, J. (2010). Children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities: devleoping meaningful pathways to personalised learning. *The...experience. SpecialEdNZTrustinitiative*

CCS Disability Action. (2011). *CCS Disability Action.* Retrieved from http://www.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz/

Chambers, C. (2008, December). Education challenges: Isolation and lack of administrative support can challenge special ed teachers. *District Administration*. Retrieved from http://www.districtadministration.com/article/special-education%E2%80%99s-challenges

Champy, J., & Nohria, N. (2000). *The arc of ambition: Defining the leadership journey*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Chapman, J. W. (1988). Learning disabled children's self-concepts. *Review of Educational Research, 58*(3), 347-371.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructive grounded theory*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Cherry-Holmes, C. (1988). *Power and courage: Poststructural investigations in education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Clifford, R. (2009). Goals and measures - 2009-2010: The fundamental purpose of schools is learning, not teaching. Retrieved from www.westcarrollton.school.com/pdf/SuptGoald07-07.pdf

Cloud, J. (2007, August 16). Are we failing our geniuses? *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1653653,00.html

Clough, P., & Nutbrown, C. (2002). *A students guide to methodology: Justifying enquiry*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Clue, L. J. D. (1990). *The principal's role in managing special education at the elementary level*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Bloomington.

Cohen, H. (2003). *Navigate this*. New York, NY: Warner Business Books.

Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1989). *Research methods in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). Chapter 1: The nature of inquiry. In L. Cohen & L. Manion (Eds.), *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London, United Kingdom: Routledge Falmer.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2010). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). London, United Kingdom: Routledge Falmer.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). London, United Kingdom: Routledge Falmer.

Colangelo, N., Assouline, S. G., & Gross, M. U. M. (2004). *A nation deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students: Volume 1* (Vol. 1). Iowa City, IA: The University of Iowa.

Cole, B. A. (2005). Mission impossible? Special educational needs, inclusion and the re-conceptualisation of the role of the SENCO in England and Wales. *European Journal of Special educational Needs, 20*(3), 287-307.

Collins, J. (2001). The education of gifted children: Inquiry into the education of gifted children *Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee* (Canberra, ACT:

Conlon, L. (2008). Why we run our school like a gifted program. *Educational Leadership, 66*(2), 38-42.
Corbett, J. (2001). *Supporting inclusive education: A connective pedagogy*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge Falmer.
Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Cornwall, J. (2012). Leading on inclusion: The sum of the parts is not the whole story... In J. Conwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Deilemma, debates and new perspectives*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
Correa, V. I., & Wagner, J. Y. (2011). Principals' roles in supporting the induction of special education teachers. *Journal of Special Educational Leadership, 24*(1), 17-25.
Coster, J. D. (1998). *The ethical imperative: Why moral leadership is good business*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
Council for Exceptional Children. (2003). *What every special educator must know: The international standards for the preparation and certification of special education teachers*. Atlington, VA: Author.
Cresswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Cresswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Plano Clark, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counselling Psychologist, 35*(2), 226-264.
Cullen, J., & Bevan-Brown, J. (1999). *Resourcing special education in earlychildhood: Database and best practice validation*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
Cullen, J., & Carroll-Lind, J. (2005). An inclusive approach to early intervention. In I. D. Fraser, R. Moltzen & K. Ryba (Eds.), *Learners with special needs in Aotearoa, New Zealand* (3rd ed., pp. 220-243). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
Cullen, J. L. (1999). Learning opportunities for young children with special needs. *Early Education, 21*(1), 5-10.
Cutbirth, D., & Benge, B. (1997). *Using Q methodological studies to investigate attitudes of educators and of students with disabilities toward inclusion*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education.
Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Archives, 8*(1)
Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 6-13.
Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., La Pointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). *School leadership study: Developing successful principals*: The Wallace Foundation.
Davison, I. (2012, November 28). Special-needs plan a cruel change. *New Zealand Herald*. Retrieved from Newztext Plus database.
de Graft-Hanson, C. (2006). Interactive sensory teaching and learning. *Closing the gap October/November 2006, 25*(4), 23-26.
Dempster, N. (2009). What do we know about leadership? In J. MacBeath & N. Dempster (Eds.), *Connecting leadership and learning: Principles for practice*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good reaseearch guide for small-scale social research projects*. Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open Universiaty Press.
Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Giardina, M. D. (2006). Disciplining qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 19*(6), 769-782.
Deppeler, J., Loreman, T., & Harvey, D. (2010). *Inclusive education: A practical guide to supporting diversity in the classroom* (2nd ed.). Crows Nest, New South Wales, Australia: Routledge.
Desimone, L. M., & Le Floch, K. C. (2004). Are we asking the right questions? Using cognitive interviews to improve surveys in education research. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26*(1), 1-22.
Deutsch, N. (2004). *Hidden curiculum paper*. Retrieved from http://www.nelliemuller.com/HiddenCurricuulm.doc
Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think a restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the education process*. Boston, DC: Heath & Co.
Dewey, J. (1938). *Logic, the theory of inquiry*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Di Paola, M. F., & Walther-Thomas, C. (2003). *Principals and special education: The critical role of school leaders (COPPSE Document No. IB-7)*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida.
Dillard, B. (2006). When the music changes, so should the dance: Cultural and spiritual considerations in paradigm prolifieration *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 19*(1), 59-65.
Donmoyer, R. (2001). The problem - and potential - of paradigm proliferation. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: AERA.
Donmoyer, R. (2006). Take my paradigm please! The legacy of Kuhn's construct in educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 19*(1), 11-34.
Dyson, A. (1999). Inclusion and inclusions: theories and discourses in inclusive education. In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds.), *World Yearbook of Education 1999: Inclusive Education*. London, United Kingdom: Kogan Page.
Dyson, A., Gallanaugh, F., & Millward, A. (2009). Making space in the standards agenda: developing inclusive practices in schools. In P. Hck & G. Thomas (Eds.), *Inclusion and diversity in England.* London, United Kingdom: Sage.
Dyson, A., Gallannaugh, F., & Millward, A. (2003). 'Making space in the standards agenda: developing inclusive practices in schools'. *European Educational Research Journal, 2*(2), 228-244.
Dyson, D. (2005). "Special education as the way to equity: an alternative approach?". In J. Rix, K. Simmons, M. Mind & K. Sheehy (Eds.), *Policy and power in inclusive education*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
Edmunds, A. L., & Macmillan, R. B. (2010). *Leadership for inclusion: A practical guide*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.
Education Act (1996): P.A. 1996: c.56
Education Review Office. (2008). *Schools' Provisions for Gifted and Talented Students: Good Practice*. Wellington: Education Evaluation Reports. Retrieved from www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/(year)/2008.

Education Review Office. (2010). *Including Students with High Needs*. Wellington: Education Review Office.
Education Review Office. (2012, August). *Evaluation at a Glance: Priority Learners in New Zealand Schools*. Wellington: Education Review Office.
Ekins, A. (2012). The importance of a whole school culture of inclusion. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: Dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Ekins, A., & Grimes, P. (2009). *Inclusion: Developing an effective whole school approach*. Maidenhead, United Kingdom: Open University Press.
Ekins, A., & Grimes, P. (2012). *Inclusion: Developing an effective whole school approach*. Maidenhead, United Kingdom: Open University Press.
Elliot, R., Fischer, C., & Rennie, D. (1994). *Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies*. Unpublished manuscript.
English Department for Education. (1994). *Code of practice on the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs*. London, United Kingdom: Author.
English Department for Education. (2010). *The importance of teaching - The schools white paper 2010*. London, United Kingdom: Author.
English Department for Education. (2011). *Support and aspiration: A new aproach to special educational needs and disability: Green paper*. Norwich, United Kingdom: TSPO.
English Department for Education and Employment. (1997). *Excellence for all children: Meeting special educational needs*. London, United Kingdom: Author.
English Department for Education and Skills. (2001). *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*. United Kingdom.
English Department for Education and Skills. (2004). *Removing barriers in achievement: The Government's strategy for SEN*. Annesley, United Kingdom: Author.
Ercikan, K., & Roth, W. M. (2006). What good is polarizing research into qualitative and quantitative? *Educational Researcher, 35*(5), 14-23.
Evans-Andris, M. (2010). *Changing for good: Sustaining school improvement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Evans, J., & Lunt, I. (2002). Inclusive education: are there limits? *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17*(1), 1-14.
Falvey, M. (1995). *Inclusive and heterogeneous schooling*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes.
Farrell, M. (2004). *Inclusion at the crossroads: Special education - concepts and values*. London, United Kingdom: David Fulton.
Farrell, P. (2000). The impact of research on developments in inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 4*(2), 153–162.
Fergusson, A., & Carpenter, B. (2010). *Professional learning and building a wider workforce*. London, United Kingdom: SSAT.
Fiedler, C. R., & VanHaren, B. (2009). A comparison of 'special education administrators' and teachers 'knowledge and application of ethics and professional standards. *The Journal of Special Education, 43*(3), 160-173.
Finch, B. (2005). Considering pedagogies for consent in research with children. *Waikato Journal of Education, 11*, 61-71.
Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1981). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Frederickson, N., & Cline, T. (2002). *Special educational needs inclusion and diversity: A textbook*. Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.
Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. New York, NY: Falmer Press.
Fullan, M. (2002). Beyond instructional leadership: The change leader. *Educational Leadership, 59*(3), 16-21.
Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Fullan, M. (2006). The future of educational change: system thinkers in action. *Journal of Educational Change, 7*(3), 113-122.
Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Fullan, M. (2011). *The moral imperative realized*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press.
Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1996). *What's worth fighting for in your schools?* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
Futrell, M. H. (1995). *Empowering teachers as learners and leaders: Readings on leadership in education: From the archives of Phi Delta Kappa International* Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
Garner, P. (2001). "Goodbye Mr Chips: Special needs, inclusive education and the deceit of initial teacher training". In T. O'Brien (Ed.), *Enabling inclusion: Blue skies...dark clouds?* London, United Kingdom: The Stationery Office.
Gerber, P. J., Ginsberg, R., & Reiff, H. B. (1992). Identifying alterable patterns in employment success for highly successful adults with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 25*(8), 475-487.
Gillham, B. (2010). *Case study research methods*. London, United Kingdom: Continuum International.
Glathorn, A. A. (1987). *Curriculum leadership*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
Glathorn, A. A., Boschee, F., & Whitehead, B. M. (2009). *Curriculum leadership: Strategies for development for development and implementation* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Goldstein, L. (2004, January 8). Highly qualified? Teaching students with disaiblities to high standards will depend on the skills of their teachers. *Education Week,* 62-67.
Goodley, D. A. (2001). 'Learning difficulties', the social model of disability and impairment: Challenging epistemologies". *Disability and Society, 16*(2), 207-231. doi:10.1080/09687590120035816
Goswami, U. (2008). Principles of learning, implications for teaching: A cognitive neuroscience perspective. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 42*(1), 381–399. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9752.2008.00639.x
Graham-Matheson, L. (2012a). How did we get here? A brief history of inclusion and special educational needs. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
Graham-Matheson, L. (2012b). Introduction: Leading on inclusion. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Greaves, A. (2003). Special Education 2000: Rhetoric or reform? *Ace Papers, Issue 12*

Greenfield, W. (1991. *"The micropolitics of leadership in an urban elementary school"*. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Il

Gronn, P. (2000). Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 28*(3), 317-338.

Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership. In K. Leithwood, P. Hallinger, K. Seashore-Louis, G. Furman-Brown, P. Gronn, W. Mulford & K. Riley (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic.

Gross, J. (2002). *Special education needs in the primary school: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A. B., & McKinney, K. D. (2012). *The sage handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and 'ethically important moments' in research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(2), 261-280.

Gupton, S. L. (2010). *The instructional leadership toolbox: A handbook for improving practice* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Gwynne-Atwater, A., & Taylor, P. (2010). Surviving and thriving with change. *Principal, 89*(3), 41.

Hall, J. T. (1997). *Social devaluation and special education: The right to full mainstream inclusion and an honest statement*. London, United Kingdom: Jessica Kingsley.

Hallett, F., & Hallett, G. (2012). Inclusivity and ethical research. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: Dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 9*, 157-191.

Hanson, M., Wolfberg, P., Zercher, C., Morgan, M., Gutlerrez, S., Barnwell, D., & Beckman, P. (1998). The culture of inclusion: Recognizing diversity at multiple levels. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 13*(1), 185-209.

Hargreaves, D. H. (2006). *A new shape for schooling*. London, United Kingdom: SSAT.

Harris, A. (2008). *Distributed leadership in schools: Developing the leaders of tomorrow*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge, Farmer.

Harris, A., & Spillane, J. (2008). 'Distributed leadership through the looking glass'. *Management in Education, 22*(1), 31-34.

Hasselbring, T. S., & Williams Glaser, C., H. (2000). Use of computer technology to help students with special needs. *The Future of Children: Children and Computer Technology, 10*(2)

Hattie, J. (2009, January 13). Making learning visible [Blog entry]. Retrieved from http://leading-learning.blogspot.co.nz/2009/01/making-learning-visible-john-hattie.html

Head, F., Reiman, A., & Thies-Sprinthall, L. (1992). The reality of mentoring: Complexity in its process and function. In T. Bey & C. T. Holmes (Eds.), *Mentoring: Contemporary principles and issues*. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for hanging our organization and the world*. Boston, MA: Harward Business Press.

Hernon, P., & Schwartz, C. (2009). Reliability and validity. *Library and Information Science Research, 31*(2), 73-74.

Heshusius, C. (1992). Freeing ourselves from objectivity: Managing subjectivity or turning toward a participatory mode of consciousness? *Educational Researcher, 23*(3), 15-22.

Hodkinson, A. (2010). Inclusive and special education: Inclusive and special education in the English educational system: Historical perspectives, recent developments and future challenges. *British Journal of Special Education, 37*(2), 1-67. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8578.2010.00462.x

Honigsfeld, A., & Cohan, A. (2010). *Breaking the mold of school instruction and organization: Innovative and successful practices for the twenty-first century*. Langham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Hoy, W. K. (1990). Organizational climate and culture: A conceptual analysis of the school workplace. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 1*(2), 149-168.

Huberman, M. (1993). The model of the independent artisan in teachers' professional relations. In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues and contexts*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Hurley, J. C., & Underwood, M. K. (2002). Children's understanding of their research rights before and after debriefing: Informed assent, confidentiality and stopping participation. *Child Development, 73*(1), 132-143.

Hursh, D. (2001). Neoliberalsim and the control of teachers, students and learning: The rise of standards, standardization and accountability. *Cultural Logic, 4*(1)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 : PL 105–17—JUNE 4, 1997

Jennings, J. (2013, April 16). Reflective, collaborative dialogue and aciton around effective teaching and learning. Retrieved from http://blog.discoveryeducation.com/blog/2013/04/16/reflective-collaborative-dialogue-and-action-around-effective-teaching-and-learning/

Johnson Jnr, B. L., & Kruse, S. D. (2009). *Decision making for educational leaders*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Johnson, S. M. (1990). *Teachers at work: Achieving success in our schools*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Jones, C. (2004). *Supporting inclusion in the early years*. Maidenhead, United Kingdom: Open University Press.

Jones, H. B. (1986). The Gifted Dyslexic. *Annals of Dyslexia, 36*, 301-317.

Jones, M. M. (2007). An ethnographic exploration of narrative methodologies to promote the voice of students with disabilities. *Journal of Ethnographic and Qualitative Research, 2*(1), 32-40.

Jones, P. (2002). Promoting inclusive practices in primary initial teacher training: Influencing hearts as well as minds. *Support for Learning, 17*(20), 58-63.

Kallio, B. R. (2003). School administrators and ethical decision making in rural communities. *The Rural Educator, 25*(1), 26-29.
Kaufman, R. (1992). *Strategic planning plus: An organizational guide*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Kedian, J. (2011). *The power of communicaiton: The basis of leadershp: PROF500 [Power point slides]*. University of Waikato, School of Education. Hamilton, New Zealand.
Kedian, J., & Manners, D. (n.d). *Organisational development: Systems theory and its application to New Zealand schools: [Handout]*. University of Waikato, School of Education. Hamilton, New Zealand.
Kennedy, V., & Burnstein, N. (2004). An induction program for special education teachers. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 27*(4), 444-447.
Kirk, S., Gallagher, J., & Anastasiow, N. (2000). *Educating exceptional children*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
Kiwi Families Team. (2013). *School Age: Education: Special Education Independent education plans (IEP).* Retrieved from http://www.kiwifamilies.co.nz/articles/independent-education-plans-iep/
Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2010). Validity, responsibility, and aporia. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(8), 603-610.
Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
Kruse, S. D. (2001). Creating communities of reform: Images of continuous improvement planning teams. *Journal of Educational Administration, 39*(4), 359-383.
Kugelmass, J. W. (2003). *Inclusive leadership: Leadership for inclusion*. New York, NY: New York State University.
Kugelmass, J. W., & Ainscow, M. (2004). Leadership for inclusion: a comparison of international practices. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 4*(3), 133-141.
Kvale, K., & Forness, S. R. (1999). Effectiveness of special education. In C. R. Reynolds & T. B. Gutkin (Eds.), *The handbook of school psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 984-1024). New York, NY: WIley.
Kvale, S. (1996). *Inter views: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Inter views* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Lambert, L. (2002). A framework for shared leadership. *Educational Leadership, 59*(8), 37-40.
Langley, N., & Jacobs, M. (2006). *Essential skills for school leaders: Moving from good to great* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
Lashley, C. (2007). Principal leadership for special education: An ethical framework. Exceptionallity. *A Special Education Journal, 15*(3), 177-187.
Lashley, C., & Boscardin, M. L. (2003). *Special education administration at a crossroads: Availablity, licensure, and preparation of special education administrators (COPSSE Document No. IB-8)*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education.
Lather, P. (2006). Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: Teaching research in education as a wide profusion. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 19*(1), 35-37.
Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a double(d) science*. Albany: NY: SUNY Press.

Lauchlan, F., & Boyle, C. (2007). 'Is the use of labels in special education helpful?' *Support for Learning, 22*(1), 36-42.
Learning Disabilities Association. (2013). *Learning Disability Association of America.* Retrieved from http://www.ldanatl.org
Lee, V. S. (2011). The power of inquiry as a way of learning. *Innovative Higher Education, 36*(3), 149-160.
Leithwood, K., & Louis, K. S. (1998). Organisational learning in schools: An introduction. In K. Leithwood & K. S. Louis (Eds.), *Organisation learning in schools* (pp. 1-14). Lisse, The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.
Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). Review of research: How leadership influences student learning. University of Minnesota.: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. *The Wallace Foundation*
Leithwood, K., & Steinbach, R. (1995). *Expert problem solving: Evidence from schools and district leaders*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
Leithwood, K., Steinbach, R., & Jantzi, D. (2002). *Expert problem solving evidence from school and district leaders*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Lewis, A., & Lindsay, G. (2000). *Researching children's perspectives*. Buckingham, United Kingdom: Open University Press.
Lewis, A., & Porter, J. (2007). Research and pupil voice. In L. Florian (Ed.), *The sage handbook of special education* (pp. 223-234). London, United Kingdom: Sage Publications Ltd.
Lewis, J., & Hilgendorf, A. (2010). The Centrality of trust in positve school change: Create a culturally responsive environment conference. Retrieved from http://www.createwisconsin.net/Lewis1Trust_CREATE_handout.pdf
Liasidou, A., & Svensson, C. (2012). Theorizing educational change within the context of inclusion. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: Dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Lieberman, A. (1995). Practices that support teacher development *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(8), 591–596.
Limbrick, P., & Jirankowa-Limbrick, M. (2009). *TAC for the 21st century: Nine essays on team around the child Clifford*: Interconnnections.
Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1*(3), 275-289.
Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
Lindsay, G. (2003). Inclusive education: a critical perspective. *British Journal of Special Education, 30*(1), 3-12. doi:10.1111/1467-8527.00275
Lindsay, G. (2007). Educational psychology and the effectiveness of inclusive education/mainstreaming. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77*(1), 1-24.
Lipsky, D. K., & Gartner, A. G. (1997). *Inclusion and school reform: Transforming America's classrooms*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes.
Lloyd, C. (1997). Inclusive education for children with special educational needs in the early years. In S. Wolfendale (Ed.), *Meeting special needs in the early years*. London, United Kingdom: David Fulton.

Lloyd, C. (2006). Removing barriers to achievement: A strategy for inclusion or exclusion? *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 12*(2), 221-236.
Lodico, M., Spaulding, D., & Voegtle, K. (2006). *Methods in educational research: from theory to practice*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Louis, K. S., & Kruse, S. D. (1995). *Professionalism and community: Perspectives on reforming urban schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B. J. (2006). *The principalship: Vision in action*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
MacFarlane, A. H. (2004). *Kia hiwa ra! Listen to culture - Maori students' plea to educators*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Reasearch.
Marshall, C., & Oliva, M. (2006). *Leadership in social justice: Making revolutions in education*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
Maxwell, J. A. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. In A. M. Huberman & M. B. Miles (Eds.), *The qualitative researcher's companion* (pp. 37-64). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (2001). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophical and practical guide*. London, United Kingdom: Falmer Press.
Mayrowetz, D. (2008). Making sense of distributed leadership: exploring the multiple usages of the concept in the field. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(3), 424-435.
McDonough, E., & Rutherford, J. (2005). New Zealand's gifted and talented education policy. *Apex: The New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education, 14*(1)
Mentor, I., Elliot, D., Hulme, M., Lewin, J., & Lowden, K. (2011). *A guide to practitioner research in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Middlemas, B. (2012). Learning and teaching in inclusive classrooms. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: Dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M., & Jessop, J. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
Ministry of Education. (2000a). *Gifted and talented students: Meeting their needs in New Zealand schools*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
Ministry of Education. (2000b). *The IEP guidelines. Planning for students with special eduation needs*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
Ministry of Education. (2000c). *Special education policy*. Retrieved from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/SpecialEducationPolicy.aspx
Ministry of Education. (2001). *Ministry of Education Working Party on Gifted Education Retrieved*. Report to the Minister of Education Retrieved from http://www.executive.govt.nz/minister/mallard/gifted_education/index.html.
Ministry of Education. (2002a). *Initiatives for gifted and talented learners*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education Retrieved from www.tki.org.nz/r/gifted/initiatives_e.php.
Ministry of Education. (2002b). *New Zealand Trade Consortium: Education reform: the New Zealand experience*. Wellington, New Zealand: School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington.

Ministry of Education. (2004). *The Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme guidelines*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
Ministry of Education. (2008). *Nurturing Gifted and Talented Children: A Parent–Teacher Partnership*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media Retrieved from http://gifted.tki.org.nz/For-parents-and-whanau.
Ministry of Education. (2009a). *Ka Hikitia: Mangaging for success: Maori education strategy 2008-2012*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
Ministry of Education. (2009b). *The National Administration Guidelines*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
Ministry of Education. (2010a). *Statement of intent 2010 - 2015*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
Ministry of Education. (2010b). *Success for all - Every school, every child*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.
Ministry of Education. (2012a). *Amalgamating the supplementary learning support (SLS) and resource teacher: Learning and behaviour (RTLB) services – a discussion document.*
Ministry of Education. (2012b). *Gifted and talents students: Meeting their needs in New Zealand schools.* Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.
Ministry of Education. (2013a). *Individual education plans (IEP)*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author Retrieved from http://minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/ServicesAndSupport/IndividualEducationPlans.aspx.
Ministry of Education. (2013b). *The Ministry: Education initiatives: National Standards*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education Retrieved from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/NationalStandards.aspx.
Ministry of Education. (2013c). *New Zealand education: Special education*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author Retrieved from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation.aspx.
Ministry of Education. (2013d). *Reporting National Standards*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education Retrieved from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/YourChild/ProgressAndAchievement/NationalStandards/PublicAchievementInformation.aspx.
Ministry of Education. (2013e). *Resource teacher: Learning and behaviour*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author Retrieved from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/ServicesAndSupport/ResourceTeacherLearningAndBehaviour.aspx.
Mitchell, D. (2000). Policies and systems for students with special education needs. In D. Fraser, R. Moltzen & K. Ryba (Eds.), *Learners with special needs in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2nd ed., pp. 29-50). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
Mitchell, D. (2005). *Contextualizing inclusive education, evaluating old and new international paradigms*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
Mitchell, D., Morton, M., & Hornby, G. (2010). *"Review of the literature on individual education plans: Report to the New Zealand Ministry of Education" [External website]*. Christchurch, New Zealand: College of Education, University of Canterbury

Mittler, P. (2000). *Working towards inclusive education: Social context*. London, United Kingdom: Fulton.
Moss, P. (1996). Enlarging the dialogue in educational measurement: Voices from interpretive research traditions. *Educational Researcher, January-February, 25*(1), 20-28, 43.
Mouly, G. J. (1978). *Educational research: The arts and science of investigation*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon Inc.
Mutch, C. (2005). *Doing educational research: A practitioners guide to getting started*. Wellington, New Zealand: NCER Press.
National Council for Special Education. (2013). *Supporting students with special educational needs in schools.* Retrieved from http://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Agencies/National-Council-for-Special-Education-NCSE-.html
Neilson, W. (2000). Disability: Attitudes, history and discourses. In D. Fraser, R. Moltzen & K. Ryba (Eds.), *Learners with special needs in Aotearoa, New Zealand* (2nd ed., pp. 13-27). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press.
Nespor, J. (2006). Morphologies of inquiry: The uses and spaces of paradigm proliferation. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 19*(1), 115-128.
New Leaders for New Schools. (2010). *Balancing accountability with professional growth*. New York, NY: New Leaders.
No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Public Law (P.L)
Noble, K. (2003). Personal reflection on experiences of special and mainstream education. In M. Shevlin & R. Rose (Eds.), *Encouraging voices: Respecting the insights of young people who have been marginalised*. Dublin, Ireland: National Disability Authority.
Odom, S., Teferra, T., & Kaul, S. (2004). An overview of international approaches to early intervention for young children with special needs and their families. *Young Children, 59*(5), 38-43.
Ofsted. (2010). *The special educational needs and disability review: A statement is not enough.* Retrieved from http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/news/statement-not-enough-ofsted-review-of-special-educational-needs-and-disability-0
Oliver, M. (1990). *The politics of disablement*. London, United Kingdom: Macmillan Education Ltd.
Oliver, P. (2004). *Writing your thesis*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.
Olssen, M., & Matthews, K. M. (1997). *Education policy in New Zealand: The 1990s and beyond*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: The Dunmore Press.
Ontario Ministry of Education. (2004). The individual education plan (IEP) Resource guide. Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.
Ontario Principals' Council. (2012). *The principal as leader of the equitable school*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Bustamante, R. M., & Nelson, J. A. (2010). Mixed research as a tool for devleoping quantitative instruments. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 4*(1), 56-78.
Parker, S. A., & Day, V. P. (1997). Promoting inclusion through instructional leadership: The roles of the secondary school principal. *NASSP Bulletin, 81*(587), 83-89.

Patterson, J., Marshall, C., & Bowling, D. (2000). Are principals prepared to manage special education dilimmas? *National Association of Secondary School Principals. NASSP Bulletin, Feb 2000, 84*(1), 613.
Pearson, S. (2010). The role of special eductional needs co-ordinators (SENCOs): "To be or not to be". *The Psychology of Educational Review, 34*(2), 30-38.
Peters, J. (1997). Reflections on action research. In B. A. Quiley & W. Kuhne (Eds.), *Creating practical knowledge through action research*. San Fransisco, CA Jossey-Bass.
Pfeffer, J. (1981). *Power in organisations*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman.
Place, A. W. (2011). *Principals who dare to care*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.
Porter, L. (2002). *Educating young children with special needs*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.
Portin, B. S., Alejano, C. R., Knapp, M. S., & Marzolf, E. (2006). *Redefining leadership roles: Redefining roles, responsibilities, and authority of school leaders*. Washington, DC: University of Washington
Poulakos, J. (1974). The components of dialogue. *Western Speech, 38*, 199-212.
Pounder, D. G. (1998). *Restructuring schools for collaboration: Promises and pitfalls*. Albany, NY: University of New York Press.
Pounder, D. G. (1999). Teacher teams: Exploring job characteristics and work-related outcomes of work group enhancement. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*(3), 317-348.
Protheroe, N. (2010). Jump-start substantial school change. *Principal, 89*(3), 26-31.
Raab, M., & Dunst, C. (2004). Early intervention practitioner approaches to natural environment interventions. *Journal of Early Intervention, 27*(1), 15-26.
Rayner, S. (2009). 'Educational diversity and learning leadership: a proposition, some principles and a model of inclusive leadership'. *Educational Review, 61*(4), 433-477.
Reissman, C. K. (2005). "Narrative analysis". In N. Kelly, C. Horrocks, K. Milnes, B. Roberts & D. Robinson (Eds.), *Narrative, memory & everyday life* (pp. 1-7). Huddersfield, United Kingdom: University of Huddersfield.
Reschly, D. J., & Tilly, W. D. (1999). Reform trends and system design alternatives. In D. Reschly, W. Tilly & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Special education in transition* (pp. 19–48.). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.
Rice, J. K. (2010). *Principal effectiveness and leadershp in an era of accountability: What research says. CALDER Brief 8*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute
Rice, J. K. (2012). *Principal effectiveness and leadership in an era of accountability. CALDER, Brief 8*
Richards, G. (2012). Perspectives on special educational needs and inclusive practice: whose views count? In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: Dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2013). *Readme first for a user's guide to: Qualitative methods* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
Riley, T. L. (2000, 9-11 August). *And Monday's back to the chalkface? A guide for programme development*. Paper presented at the Marlborough Principal's Association Conference, Marlborough, New Zealand

Riley, T. L. (2004). Qualitative Differentiation for Gifted and Talented Students In D. MacAlpine & R. Moltzen. (Eds.), *Gifted and Talented: New Zealand Perspectives*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Kanuka Grove Press.

Roaf, C. (2004). Support for Learning. *British Journal of Learning Support, 20*(1), 2. doi:10.1111/j.0268-2141.2005.00351.x

Rogers, K. B. (2002). *Re-forming gifted education: How parents and teachers can match the program to the child* Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Rose, D. H., Hasselbring, T. S., Stahl, S., & Zabala, J. (2005). Assistive technology and universal design for Learning: Two sides of the same coin. In D. Edyburn, K. Higgins & R. Boone (Eds.), *Handbook of special education technology research and practice* (pp. 507-518). Whitefish Bay, WI: : Knowledge by Design.

Rudduck, J., & Flutter, J. (2004a). *The challenge of year 8: Sustaining pupils' engagement with learning*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Pearson Publishing.

Rudduck, J., & Flutter, J. (2004b). *Consulting Pupils: What's in it for schools?* London, United Kingdom: Routledge Falmer.

Rudduck, J., & Flutter, J. (2004c). *How to improve your school: Giving pupils a voice*. London, United Kingdom: Continuum Press.

Ryan, J. (2006). Inclusive leadership and social justice in schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 5*(1), 3-17.

Ryan, K. E., & Hood, L. K. (2006). Guarding the castle and opening the gates. In N. K. Denzin & M. D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry and the conservative challenge*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Sage, D. D., & Burrello, L. C. (1994). *Leadership in educational reform: An administrator's guide to changes in special education*. Baltmore, MD: Paul H Brookes.

Sapsford, R., & Jupp, V. (1996). *Data collection and analysis*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Sapsford, R., & Jupp, V. (2006). Validating evidence. In R. Sapsford & V. Jupp (Eds.), *Data collection and aalysis* (2nd ed.). London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Sapsford, R. J., & Abbot, P. (1996). Ethics, politics and research. In R. Sapsford & V. Jupp (Eds.), *Data collection and analysis*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Scharmer, C. (2009. *Leadership development is not about filling a gap but about igniting a field of inspired conection and action: Ten propositions on transforming the curent leadership development praradim. Draft 1.1*. Paper presented at the Round Table Meeting on Leadership for Development Impact, Washington, DC. Retrieved from www.ottoscharmer.com,/docs/articles/2009_FieldBasedLeadDev.pdf

Schein, E. H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Scheurich, J. J., & Young, M. D. (1997). Coloring epistemologies: Are our research epistemologies racially biased? *Educational Researcher, 26*(4), 4-16.

Schlichte, J., Yssel, N., & Merbler, J. (2005). Pathways to burnout: Case studies in teacher isolation and alienation. *Preventing School Failure, 50*(1), 35-40.

Schnelker, L. D. (2006). The student-as-bricoleur: Making sense of research paradigms. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*(1), 42-57.
Scribner, J. P., Cockrell, K. S., Cockrell, D. H., & Valentine, J. W. (1999). Creating professional communities in schools through organizational learning: An evaluation of a school improvement process. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*(1), 130-160.
Seabring, P., & Bryk, A. (2003). School leadership and the bottom line in Chicago. *Phi Delta Kappen, 81*(6), 440-445.
Senge, P. (1990). The leader's new work: Building learning organizations. *Sloan Managment Review, 32*(1), 7-23.
Sergiovanni, T. J. (1990). Adding value to leadership gets extraordinary results: When moral authority transcends bureaucratic leadership in a school, the outcome in terms of commitment and performance far exceed expectations. In T. J. Sergiovanni (Ed.), *Value-added leadership: How to get extraordinary performance in schools* (pp. 39-40). New York, NY: Harcocurt Brace Jovanovich.
Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). Why we should seek substitutes for leadership. *Educational Leadership, 49*(1), 41-45.
Sergiovanni, T. J. (2005a). *Strengthening the heartbeat*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
Sergiovanni, T. J. (2005b). The virtues of leadership. *The Educational Forum, 69*(2), 112-123.
Servatius, J. D., Fellows, M., & Kelly, D. (1992). Preparing leaders for inclusive schools. In R. A. Villa, J. S. Thousand & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools* (pp. 267-284). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
Shapiro, J., & Stefkovich, J. (2005). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
Simon, H. (1993). Decision-making: Rational, nonrational and irrational. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 29*(3), 392-411.
Sirotnik, K. (1991). Critical inquiry: A paradigm for praxis. In E. C. Short (Ed.), *Forms of curriculum inquiry*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
Skrtic, T. (1991). *Behind special education: A critical analysis of professional culture and school organization*. Denver, CO: Love.
Smith, S. L., Peters, M., Sanders, M., & Witz, K. (2010). Applying a response to intervention: Framework for noncategorical special education identification. *Communique, 38*(8), 9-11.
Smutny, J. (2003). Differentiated instruction. *Phi Delta Kappen Fastbacks, 506,* 7-47.
Southworth, G. (2000). How primary schools learn. *Research Papers in Education, 15*(3)
Southworth, G. (2002). "Instructional leadership in schools: Reflections and empirical evidence". *School Leadership and Management, 22*(1), 73-91.
Spady, W. G., & Schwahn, C. J. (2010). *Learning communities 2.0: Educating in the age of empowerment*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Sparks, D., & Hirsch, S. (1997). *A new vision for staff development*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and National Staff Development Council.
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). (2001). Retrieved from http://www.drgavinreid.com/articles/SENDA%202001%20UK.pdf.
Spillane (in press). *Distributed leadership*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publisher.
Spillane, J. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Stake, R. (2008). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 119-149). Lons Angeles, CA: Sage.
Statistics New Zealand. (2006). *Disability survey*. Retrieved from http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey2006_HOTP06/Commentary.aspx.
Stoiber, K., & Vanderwood, M. (2008). Traditional assessment, consultation and intervention practices: Urban school psychologists' use, importance, and competence ratings. *Journal of Educational Psychological, 18*(3), 264-292.
Strike, K. A. (2007). *Ethical leadership in schools: Creating community in an environment of accountability*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Sullivan, M., & Munford, R. (2005). Disability and support: The interface between disability theory and support - an individual challenge. In P. O'Brien & M. Sullivan (Eds.), *Allies in emancipation: Shifting from providing service to being of support*. Victoria, Australia: Thompson, Dumnmore Press.
Sullivan, S., & Glanz, J. (2006). *Building effective learning communities: Strategies for leadership, learning, & collaboration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Sweetland, S., & Hoy, W. (2000). School characteristics and educational outcomes. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 26*(4), 703-729.
Talay-Ongan, A. (2001). Early intervention: Critical roles of early childhood service providers. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 9*(3), 221-228.
The British Psychological Society. (2005. *Developmental Psychology Section Annual Conference*. Paper presented at the Developmental Psychology Section Annual Conference, 2–5 September 2004., Leeds Metropolitan University,
The British Psychological Society. (2009). *The British Psychological Society: Code of Ethics and Conduct* Retrieved from http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/documents/code_of_ethics_and_conduct.pdf
Thompson, D. (2012). Whole school development, inclusion with SEN. In J. Cornwall & L. Graham-Matheson (Eds.), *Leading on inclusion: Dilemmas, debates and new perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Thompson, L. J. (2011). A moral compass for the global leadership labyrinth. In C. Miller & E. Poole (Eds.), *Ethical leadership: Global challenges and perspectives*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave, Macmillan.
Thousand, J. S., & Villa, R. A. (1992). Collaborative teams: A powerful tool in restructuring. In R. A. Villa, J. S. Thousand, W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Restructuring for caring and effecive education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous school* (pp. 73-108).

Tomlinson, C. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
Treaner, P. (2005). Neoliberalism: Origins, theory, definition. Retrieved from http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treanor/neoliberalism.html
Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004). *Trust matters*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, W. (1998). Trust in schools: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Educational Administration, 36*(3/4), 334-352.
Tuckman, B. W., & Harper, B. E. (2012). *Conducting educational research* (6th ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.
Turnbull, A., & Turnbull, R. (2001). *Families, professionals and exceptionality*. New Jersey, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
Ubben, G. C., Hughes, L. W., & Norris, C. J. (2007). *The Principal: Creative leadership for excellence in schools*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (1994. *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*. Paper presented at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access And Quality, Paris, France
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO. (2005). *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all*. Paris, France: Author.
University of Waikato. (2008). *Ethical conduct in human research and related activities regulations*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Waikato University Press
Valentine, K. (2013). Special education review. Retrieved 18 April 2013 http://www.kiwifamilies.co.nz/articles/special-education-overview/
Van Horn, G. P., Burrello, L. C., & De Clue, L. (1992). An instructional leadership framework: The principal's leadership role in special education. *Special Education Leadership Review, 1*(1), 41-54.
Villa, J., & Colker, L. (2006). A personal story: Making inclusion work. *Young Children, 61*(1), 96-100.
Villani, S. (2002). *Mentoring programs for new teachers: Models of induction and support.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
Voltz, D. L., & Collins, L. (2010). Preparing special education administrators for inclusion in diverse, standards-based contexts: Beyond the council for exceptional children and the interstate school leaders licensure consortium. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 33*(1)
Walker, W. (1999). 'Collaboration: the faint of heart need not apply' *Peabody Journal of Education, 74*(3 & 4), 300-305.
Wallace Foundation. (2012). *The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning.* Retrieved from www.wallacefoundation.org
Wallis, J. (2002). Drawing on revisionist economics to explain the inspirational dimension of leadership. *Journal of Socio-economics, 31*(1), 59-74.
Wasburn-Moses, L. (2005). How to keep your special education teachers. *Principal Leadership, 5*(5), 35-38.
Weik, K. (2001). *Making sense of the organization*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
West-Burnham, J. (2004). Building leadership capacity: Helping leaders learn. *National College for School Leaders,*

West-Burnham, J., & O'Sullivan, F. (1998). *Leadership and professional development in schools. How to promote techniques for effective professional learning*. London, United Kingdom: Pearson Education.
Westwood, P. (1997). *Commonsense methods for children with special needs*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.
Whitaker, S. (2001). Supporting beginning special education teachers. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 34*(4), 1-18.
Whitehead, B. M., Boschee, F., & Decker, R. H. (2013). *The principal: Leadership for a global society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Wilkinson, T. M. (2001). The core ideas of ethics research. In M. Tolich (Ed.), *Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 13-24). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education.
Wilkinson, T. M. (2010). The core ideas of ethics research. In M. Tolich (Ed.), *Research ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand concepts, practice, critique* (pp. 13-24). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education.
Wilson, V. (2012). Research methods: Interviews. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, May 2012, 7*(2)
Winter, E., & O'Raw, P. (2010). *"Literature review of the principles and practices relating to inclusive education for children with special educational needs"*. Trim, Northern Ireland: National Council for Special Education.
Wolke, D. (2009. *Long term outcomes of extremely pre-term children: Implications for early childhood intervention* Paper presented at the Early Intervention Conference, Madrid, Spain
Yeo, R. K. (2006). Learning institution to learning organisation: Kudos to reflective practitioners. *Journal of European Industrial Training, 30*(5), 396-419.
Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Yin, R. (2006). Case study methods. In J. Green, G. Camelli & P. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter to Principal Participants

Date:_____

To: Name of Principal_____

School _____

Address _____

City/Town, _____ Postcode_____

Dear _____,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss my proposed research on (insert date). This letter provides a formal invitation to you to participate in my research. Details of the research methodology and an initial research survey are included in this letter.

The purpose of my research is to investigate how principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with special education needs who do not attract Government funding. Principals' decision making is guided by an integration of personal and professional codes of ethics, legal compliance pressures and administrative policy directives which require Boards of Trustees through the principal and staff, to ensure that teaching and learning strategies address the needs of students who are identified as having special needs. My research will therefore examine leadership behaviours and decision making critical to developing effective schools, influencing school outcomes and teacher motivation and morale regarding learners with special needs.

Participation in this research is voluntary. In agreeing to participate you would be expected to:

- Indicate your acceptance of the invitation to participate by completing the consent form. You also have the option of discussing my research before consenting to being involved.
- Determine how we will communicate to arrange a time to conduct the interview.
- Participate in a semi-structured interview at a time and location that is mutually acceptable. The interview will have set questions and there will be

flexibility to further discuss your ideas around the questions. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes.

- Agree that the interview may be digitally recorded, while I will also take notes during the interview.
- Review the interview transcript. This should take around 30-60 minutes. You have the option of making changes, declining the use of this data for analysis or consenting to this data being analysed and used as part of my research thesis.
- You may decide to withdraw from the research without providing a reason.
- If you agree to data being analysed, you will confirm the accuracy of the interview transcript and sign the transcript release form.

Please note that by signing the agreement to continue, you will no longer be able to withdraw from my research as data is collated from multiple cases and it will be impossible to extract information from the collated data.

If you have any questions you would like to discuss before consenting to participation in my research, please feel free to contact me. My contact details are included in the information sheet attached with this letter. Please feel free to contact my supervisor, Jeremy Kedian, if you feel more comfortable asking him any questions you may have. His contact details are also on the information sheet.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in my research.

Yours sincerely,

Rose Symes

Researcher

Ph. 07 8724885; Mob. 0292500042

Email: geoff.rose@farmside.co.nz

Appendix B: Information Sheet

The following information sheet provides a detailed description of my proposed research

Title of the Project: An exploration of how principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with special educational needs who do not attract Government funding.

Background: I have spent the last two years completing my Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership as part-time study while teaching full-time. I have been awarded study leave this year to complete my research thesis through the University of Waikato's Faculty of Education to fulfil the requirements of the Master of Educational Leadership programme.

Mr Jeremy Kedian, Senior lecturer in Department of Professional Studies and Leadership Centre will be my supervisor. Our contact details are included below.

Research Question: 'How do you cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with special educational needs who do not attract Government funding?'

Although this is my guiding question, I feel it is important to address aspects of this topic which will form the basis of further questions. Please find a list of these questions attached to this information sheet.

Method: The semi-structured interview method will be used to gather data. This interview will take place at your school or any other venue that is mutually agreeable. While it is anticipated that interviews will last approximately 90 minutes, this interview approach also allows further questioning and clarification by either you or me. Consequently there is a possibility that the interview could be slightly longer.

Principals' Involvement: After the completion of the interview I will complete a transcript of the conversation. You will subsequently be sent this transcript to review, after which you will be asked to confirm its accuracy.

Please be assured that involvement in this research is voluntary. Your final point of involvement ends when you confirm the accuracy of your interview transcript and consent to it being used as data in the research process.

Participant's Rights: I must inform you of all information relevant to the decision to participate, including:

i. Your right to decline to participate in the research and/or related activities or any portion or any part of these.
ii. Your right to withdraw any information you have provided up until analysis has commenced on your data.

Confidentiality: Every endeavour will be made to ensure the identity of you and your school will remain confidential throughout the entire research project. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the interview transcript. A pseudonym name will be used in the actual report instead of your name. Your school will be referred to as School A, School B etc. You are able to go to the following link, which provides further information regarding protection of your confidentiality.

http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/archive/2010/assessment/ethicalConduct.html

Archiving of data, privacy, storage, and destruction of data:

A systematic process of gathering and storing data will be adhered to throughout the entire research process. This will ensure the credibility and confidentiality of data is maintained. At the conclusion of the interview the data will be stored on a password protected laptop and backed up on a password protected external hard drive. The audio file will then be removed from the digital recording device. All non-identifying data used for publication will be securely kept for at least five years, consistent with agreement made under section 9(4) (a) of the University of Waikato Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations, 2008.

Use of information: Data obtained from the interviews will be used as part of my thesis. This thesis will fulfil the requirements of the Master of Educational Leadership programme and may also be used in journal articles, presentations or scholarly publications.

Research Findings: A thesis, once accepted, will be published. An electronic version will be made widely available as the University of Waikato requires that a digital copy of Masters theses will be lodged permanently in the university's digital repository. The thesis may also be used as part of future journal articles, presentations, or scholarly presentations. A digital copy of the thesis will be sent to you if you so wish.

Concerns: You are encouraged to contact my supervisor, Jeremy Kedian, if you have any concerns regarding my ethical conduct during this research project. For further information, refer to the following link:

http://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/archive/2010/assessment/ethical Conduct.html

Contact Details:

Researcher
Rose Symes
1639 Waipapa Rd, Arohena,
RD. 7 Te Awamutu. 3877.
Ph. 07-8724885 Mob. 0292500042
Email: geoff.rose@farmside.co.nz

Supervisor
Jeremy Kedian
Faculty of Education
The University of Waikato
Hamilton.
Ph. 07-8384466 ext. 6192.
Email: kedian@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Informed Consent

Participant: _____

School: _____

Preferred Contact Details:

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____ Mobile: _____

Dear Rose,

I have carefully considered your offer to participate in your research, which will focus on 'How principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with special educational needs, who do not attract Government funding'.

I agree to participate

Or

I have decided to decline your offer.

(Please circle the statement with which you agree)

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Initial Survey

Date: _____

The following survey is intended to assist us to establish a shared understanding of various terms and concepts when we meet. It focuses on the meaning of the term 'children with special educational needs', which will form the basis of the research and will provide me with some background information about the students with special needs who are enrolled at your school.

Please answer the following questions, based on students currently enrolled in your school.

Name of Participant: _____

School: _____

What is your school's current total roll? _____

What percentage of students enrolled in your school are defined as having special needs? _____

Of the students defined as having special needs, please indicate the percentage of students identified as having:

High special needs: _____

Moderate special needs: _____

Mild special needs: _____

Percentage of school students with special needs who attract funding (ORRS). _____

Percentage of school students with special needs who do not attract Government funding _____

Please define or describe your understanding of special needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey.

Please return it to me in the stamped self-addressed envelope.

Rose Symes.

Appendix E: Indicative Interview Questions

The following interview questions give an indication of the type which will be used during the semi-interview process. However, these questions may change once I have completed my literature review.

To begin with I will ask questions which will help us develop a mutual understanding of the research topic and establish some background information. This will include general questions about your history in leadership and a description of your current school.

List of indicative questions

These questions are indicative only, as I have yet to complete the literature review and it is my assumption that most of my questions will emerge from the literature review.

My core question guiding my research:

'*How do principals cater for the multiple learning requirements of children with special educational needs?*

Subsidiary questions.

1. On what basis do you make decisions regarding the learning needs of students with special education needs?

2. What guides your decisions on the eligibility of students for special instructional planning?

3. How do you and/or your staff identify each category of student need (high/moderate/mild special needs)?

4. How do you make decisions about the delivery of effective instruction and the equitable allocation of funding, time and personnel resources with regard to academic learning of students with special needs?

5. How do you make decisions about the delivery of effective instruction and the equitable allocation of funding, time and personnel resources with regard to social growth of students with special needs?

6. How do you make decisions about the delivery of effective instruction and the equitable allocation of funding, time and personnel resources with regard to independent functioning of students with special needs?

7. What key leadership behaviours influence the culture of a school as an organization and therefore decisions?

8. What is your role in the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of inclusive classroom practices and student's Individual Education Plans?

9. How do you build capacity for change and development within your organisation what role if any does distributed leadership play in this?

10. What strategies do you employ for building relationships with parents of students with special educational needs and the wider community?

Appendix F: Transcripts

(For Participant to view before providing continued consent)

Date _____

To: Name of Principal: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

City/Town. Postcode: _____

Dear _____,

Interview date: (insert date)

Location: (insert location)

Time: (insert tine)

Completed transcript: (insert date)

Enclosed is a copy of our interview transcript.

Please read through the transcript to confirm its accuracy. You may make alterations to ensure its accuracy.

After reading through the transcript you will need to confirm that you consent to this data being used in the study. Once you have given your consent, you will no longer be able to withdraw the data from my research.

It would be appreciated if you could return the completed transcript release form and transcript to me by (insert date). If I have not heard from you by this time, I will contact you to clarify whether you consent for me to use this transcript.

Once again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in my research.

Yours Sincerely,

Rose Symes

Researcher

Appendix G: Transcript Release Form.

(Consent by Participants to use transcripts for continued research.)

Applicant's name: _____

I have carefully read through the transcript of the interview. I can confirm that (please tick one of the boxes)

□ The transcript is an accurate account of our interview on (insert date).
I have not made any changes and consent to this information being used for the intended research.

□ After reading through the transcript, I have made some alterations to the transcript of our interview. I have initialled each change to confirm that I made these changes. I accept that once I sign this consent form no further alterations may be made. I also understand that by signing this consent, I agree to the transcript being used for the original research.

□ After reading through the interview transcript, I have decided to withdraw from this research project. I would like all data related to our interview to be destroyed.

Participant: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____