THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS CHANGE:

How do the teachers of a special school in the Netherlands perceive the proposal of a new law about inclusion in 2010?

by

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DECLARATION

This thesis has been developed independently by the author, Arfang Dabo, for 2005-2006 Erasmus Mundus Special Education Needs Master Programme, at the Universities of Fontys, Tilburg, The Netherlands; Charles, Prague, Czech Republic; Roehampton, London, United Kingdom.

I declare that the thesis is entirely my own work. All references have been acknowledged and the thesis has not been submitted previously for any higher degree.

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The inclusion of students with learning disabilities in general education has been an issue of concern for the governments of the world. The Jomtien Declaration (1990), the Dakar Statement (2000), and the Salamanca Statement (1994) have set the objectives to reach. In September 2005, the government of the Netherlands, through its Minister of Education has, in conformity with the European Union’s directives, made a proposal of a new law, Herijking Van Zorg, to restructure the provision of education. The proposal, if adopted, will affect special schoolteachers in their roles and responsibilities. Their attitudes can have either a positive or a negative impact upon the implementation of a new law about inclusion.

This study has attempted to determine the current attitudes of the teachers of a special school towards the ideas of the proposal. Semi structured and unstructured interviews, observation and documents analysis were used to collect data.

The outcomes were analyzed using thick descriptions of the patterns and trends. It appeared that the teachers of the school have little knowledge of the proposal and their attitudes related to the following factors.

- The vision they have about inclusive education
- The way they see the future
- The students they work with
- The experience they have working in / with regular education
- The assumptions they have about change

In-service training was recognized as essential to provide the teachers with information about the proposal and prepare them for their future roles within the framework of the eventual new law.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, an increasing emphasis has been placed on how education is best provided for students with special needs. The policy of providing education and related services for a wide range of abilities and disabilities in the mainstream education class with appropriate in-class support has often been preferred and has gained in popularity and demand (Praisner, 2003). The movement of students from special education to regular education classrooms is one of the favourite trends. This new philosophy and vision for education is generally called inclusion. An inclusive education could be defined as the provision of appropriate instruction for the pupils with special needs in ordinary classrooms (Johnson, G.M, 1999; Meijer, C. J., S. J. Pijl and S. Hegarty, 1997).

In September 2005, the Ministry of education of the Netherlands issued a letter, ‘Reassessment Special Needs’ (appendix 1), proposing reforms in the provision of education to children with special needs. In 2009, the Parliament may vote a law institutionalizing the change about inclusive education and the government is now working on a plan for its implementation in 2010.

The objective, according to the letter, is to make the current situation in the provision of the care clearer not only for the parents who ‘cannot see the wood for the tree’ but also for the schools who ‘often don’t know the difference between the various systems’.
In addition to giving each child the possibility to go to school in their own neighborhoods, the proposal sets to solve situations such as the following:

- The unclear responsibility division
- Every care structure has its own referral system
- Sometimes schools refuse with referrals easily.

Nevertheless, the proposal is subject to a lot of questioning from many areas of education. There is a lot of argument on the side of education theoreticians, the school managers, the students’ parents and the teachers in mainstream as well as in special schools.

I consider that, if inclusion remains the main concern, then the view of the special schoolteacher should be considered. They have capitalized an amount of experience that should not be overlooked. The special schoolteacher can assume a leadership role and act as a change agent. In addition, because attitudes are inherent to change, and because of the relationship between attitudes and actions, it is of paramount importance to be informed of what the special schoolteacher knows and thinks about it. It is essential to understand their attitudes towards a new law about inclusion. According to Kennedy and Kennedy (1996), ‘when teacher assumes a stance on an educational issue, it is rendered in terms of an attitude’. Cook (2002) adds that the attitudes ‘can affect classroom and instructional practice which in turn affect student learning outcomes’.
It has been revealed that many educators have reservations about inclusion of students with special needs in general classrooms (Bradshaw and Mundia, 2006; 2004; 2003). The successful implementation of an inclusive policy is, in part, dependent on the attitude of teachers (Shade & Stewart, 2000). Teachers’ acceptance of the policy of inclusion is likely to affect their ownership of it, and commitment to implementing it.

My motivations to undertake this study stem from a variety reasons among which a personal interest. My interest in investigating change and attitudes to change began in Senegal, where I run in-service training activities, but participate also in the initiation and implementation of change.

Three other reasons motivated my choice of the topic.

First, I assumed after initial discussions with special schoolteachers that the extent to which the teachers received the ideas of the proposal of the Minister of education for a new law about inclusion was varied and inconsistent.

Secondly, in Senegal, the education of children with disabilities is most of the time catered for by specialized centers often run by institutions not really linked with education. I believe that this has to change. The attitudes of the special schoolteachers of the Netherlands, whose career may be impacted if the new law is passed, can be very comparable to those of the people presently working in the specialized centers in Senegal. Since reform is not putting into place the latest policy (Fullan, 2001), researching the case...
of the Netherlands’ teachers enables me to gain a more informed knowledge about change and attitudes to change.

Last but not least, the tremendous experiences I am going through in the programme (European Master Erasmus Mundus Special Education Needs), inevitably generate a flux of ideas that could be employed to assist the Ministry of education in improving the education of the children with special needs. In addition, in my job I work with teachers who according to Hargreaves (1998) have always been ‘engaged in educational change’.

Change and attitudes to change is the focus of the dissertation, which is organized in six chapters. Chapter two is a review of the literature about change and attitudes towards change. In chapter three, the methodology and the methods of collecting data are developed. The collected data is analyzed in chapter four and the outcomes are discussed, in relation to the literature, in chapter five. Chapter six draws the conclusions while revising the process of the study.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I revisit the literature about change in general and educational change in particular. In the first part, I look at change and the attitudes towards change. In the second part, I focus on the activities the teachers undertake to change, to adopt change, or to adapt to change.

2.2 Change and Attitudes to Change

The people whose lives may be impacted upon by change have always manifested diverse reactions. In other words, People have favourable or unfavourable attitudes toward the change. Mc Guire (1985) defines attitudes ‘as orientations that locate objects of thoughts...on dimensions of judgment’.

The literature has identified three components of attitudes (Mc Guire, 1985; Muller, D.J, 1986). The cognitive component of attitudes incorporates the beliefs, and ideas based on knowledge and experience. The affective component consists of the feelings of safety or uncertainty. Vash (2001) argues that ‘how we feel about a matter determines what we do with respect to it’, (p.38). In other words, attitude can guide behaviour (Brock and Shavitt, 1994). The behavioural component is about the predisposition of the person to act in one way or another toward the phenomenon of change.
2.2.1 A Context of global change

In Fullan (1992), a student is quoted as saying that ‘Everything must change at one time or another or else a static society will evolve’, (p. 3). Different perspectives or contexts improve knowledge and reforms are proposed and initiated. The world is experiencing an era of change comparable to the industrial revolution. In such a context characterized by globalization, which Dolon (1993) considers as ‘the diminishing of economic borders and the simultaneous increase of international exchange’ (p. 259), change is perceived as a constant, just like growth and progress. The terminologies of change, innovation and reform have become features and are, almost, synonymous with the proper management of education, (Dalin, 1983, p.10). Moreover, “Educators have always had to engage with educational change of one sort or another”, note Hargreaves et al. (1998, p. 2).

2.2.2 Resistance to change

A/ Fear for the change:

People have always resisted change when they consider that their fear for change outweighs the necessity for change, (Schein, 1992, p. 370). The sources of fear can be varied.

According to Gustavson (1955), we are ‘afraid of drastic innovations, partly because (we) prefer the familiar, and partly because the vested interests of most people are normally bound up with the existing set up’,(p. 72). The status quo is preferred to an adventurous journey into the unknown. Gustavson (1955) argues that ‘Added to the
weight against change is what might be called an institutional inertia, a proneness to keep the machinery running as in the past’, (p.72).

For Sarason (1971) fear is inherent to change because change has always to alter ‘or threaten to alter existing power relationships, especially if that process implies, as it almost always does, a reallocation of resources’ (p. 71). In other words, when the responsibilities of people shrink because of the change, they will be more likely to resist it.

Resistance can also originate from the new working conditions the change implies. A special schoolteacher, quoted by Williams and Gersch (2004), reports, “During my NTQ* year, I felt 100 times more stress working in a mainstream school. This due to the pressure of having 35 children in my class; no learning support assistant help; and not receiving sufficient support in school from either school colleagues or headteacher. I was off sick for half a term with stress and considered giving up completely. Working now in a special school is much nicer and less stressful’, (p.160). This teacher and some of their colleagues may question and reject a reform if this is to incorporate the possibility to operate in regular schools.

B/ Poor conception of the change:
‘The fear of the unknown’ can occur, according to Calabrese (2002, p. 73), when the reason for change is poorly conceptualized or is not clearly demonstrated. That is when the people involved feel uncertain about the change. In education, it means when it is not
obvious who will benefit from the change. In other words, what will the change achieve for all the people involved and especially for the students?

It is clear that when a project lacks clarity, it becomes complex and therefore, complete success is not easy to achieve. Consequently, there will be vicissitudes as far as attitudes towards the project are concerned. There is resistance when the system tries to manage the uncertainties by creating standardized ways of thinking about and acting on issues and problems (Levin, 2003).

Sometimes, the people seeking for change have very different objectives. Hargreaves (1994) believes that when the pursuit of the change initiators is more to suit the trend than to bring alternatives to real problems, ‘they will achieve little more than trivial change in practice’; the change will remain ‘just a top show’, in other words, it will be superficial, (p. 11). Cuban (1990), commenting on educational reform in The USA, argues that ‘much in education today is trendy and regrettably superficial...’ (p. 4).

C/ Resistance is inherent to change:
Achinstein and Ogawa (2006), citing Nemeth (1989) consider that resistance ‘can provide avenues for learning and for generating alternatives to problems’, (p.32). They announce an emerging study of research, which characterizes resistance as ‘good sense’. This point of view is shared by Miles, (in Hargreaves et al. (1998), who also see resistance as something inevitable and inherent to any change. For them, if conflict and
disagreement are not happening, it is likely that very little is being achieved. They suggest pushing on with reforms because it is impossible to please everyone.

Maybe we can avoid the pushing-on-strategy if we try to understand the different reasons why change in general and educational change in particular is so difficult. For instance, the many maxims that have been gleaned from research and applied to change include the following observations.

‘Change is a process, not an event’, (Fullan, 1991).

‘Practice changes before beliefs’, (Huberman and Miles, 1984).

‘It is better to think big, but start small’, (Fullan, 1988).

‘implementation strategies that integrate bottom-up strategies with top-down ones are more effective than top-down or bottom-up ones alone’, (Hopkins, 1992).

Then, we realize that it takes time for effective change to occur. Even for small-scale change, we have to be persistent because not everybody likes change. It is definitely a utopia to expect everybody to share and own the change. For Schon (1971), real change involves ‘passing through the zones of uncertainty’, when the participants see themselves in ‘the situation of being at sea, of being lost’, (p.120).

E/ Different contexts, different changes:

Change is always approached differently in different contexts. The desire to reach uniformity, by all means, sometimes represents an obstacle. Innovations need to be flexible enough for people to adapt them in their own circumstances, timing and contexts. I share with Dalin, 1997, that ‘the change process can only be understood in its context,
i.e. in the characteristics of the setting itself, the individuals involved in the process, and the political economic and educational conditions under which institutions operate’, (p. 126).

2.2.3 The process of change

Fullan (2001) recognizes some fundamental principles for understanding the effective introduction of change. He argues that the people involved in change need to be clarified about the why, the what and the how.

Fullan (2001) has identified three stages through which any effective change progresses are seriously taken into account. These are initiation, implementation and institutionalization.

At the initiation stage, the participants need to know the reason and the relevance of the proposed change. For this to be effective there should be some opportunities for them to be prepared for the change through advice, support and training.

The implementation phase necessitates careful preparation. Fullan (2001) warns that ‘a great majority of policies and innovations over the past twenty years did not get implemented even where implementation was desired’, (p. 69). He, furthermore, argues that change is ‘technically simple’ and ‘socially complex’. The problems have to be anticipated, clearly identified. There should be strategies of resolving difficulties in an amicable but effective way. Ross and Roberts (1999), talk about ‘the barking dogs’, ‘the
“sleeping dogs” and ‘the non-barking dogs’. They refer to the important urgent items as ‘the barking dogs’ and ‘non-barking dogs’ are the items that are of strategic importance, but which are not urgent. There always exist, within groups, issues no one is willing to talk about, but which, need to be tackled because avoiding them may block any enterprise in process. These are the ones they refer to as ‘the sleeping dogs’. The responsibilities have to be clearly set and defined. Participants should be clear about their roles and responsibilities. Successful implementation of change remains highly correlated with a sense of ownership of the ideas, the process and the solutions found. Everybody should be involved, but it is to be born in mind that the right person should always be at the right place. At this level, Fullan (2001) recommends to provide for opportunity for revision and correction through a combination of subtle support and pressure.

The last but not least important stage is the institutionalization of the change. If the two first phases are successfully completed then the institutionalization will occur easily. In other words, the change becomes an established part of the practice. For this to be achieved there needs to be a continued commitment and ownership, a large support of everybody involved in the reform, and the removal of competing priorities. Change incorporates so many complexities that the education system, even if all the schools are involved, cannot do it alone. Educational change is also social and institutional that is why it implies not only the changing of skills, but also the changing of attitudes, values and human relationships. The whole community, especially those upon whom the change will impact should be involved from the very start. Miles, in
Hargreaves et al. (1998), suggests that the ‘full participation of everyone involved in the change is essential’ (p.38).

The history of educational change confirms the view of Micklethwait and Wooldridge (1996), cited in Fullan (2001), for whom ‘the state is a blunt instrument; it gets hold of an overarching idea and imposes it’. Reformers have always relied on the use of political-administrative institutions or power strategy to enforce new rules. That is, according to Bennis et al. (1969), they ‘seek to mass the political and economic power behind the change goals’ (p. 53). However, Dalin and Rust (1983) have identified a major problem with the power coercive strategy. For them, ‘there is little mechanism for the participants inside the system itself to have a sense of ownership of the reform and they will usually resist it until they acquire such a sense’ (p. 9).

2.2.4 The attitudes of teachers are critical to change

Because the teachers, more than any others are the key elements in any educational reform, I agree with Wamae and Kang’ethe-Kamau (2004) that the favourable attitudes of the teachers, wherever they operate, are critical for the practice of inclusive education to succeed.

A study undertaken by Thomas (1985) cited in Jenkinson (1997), on the attitudes towards integration revealed ‘that negative attitudes were related to a perception that the special school educator held either a negative or a neutral attitude to integration’, (p.31). That means that to encourage a positive attitude to the proposal among other teachers and
parents, the special schoolteachers must be perceived to be positive, and not simply neutral. Jenkinson (1997) believes that ‘the importance of teachers’ attitudes cannot be over-estimated’. Similarly, it would make sense to add that inclusive education will remain unachievable if positive attitudes are not present among the stakeholders, especially those upon whom the quality of education hinges.

People resist when the new ideas do not match their mental model. That is, when it does not suit their beliefs and vision (Calabrese, 2002; Schein, 1992; Senge, 2003). Also, there is no commitment when the people involved do not share the new vision (Jutten, 2003).

A/ Shared vision:

Personal conviction of the importance of inclusion is considered as one of the foremost determiners of teachers’ attitudes.

In 1991, Semmel et al. (in Jenkinson, 1997, p. 30), reported that although special teachers supported education of the students with disabilities in regular classrooms in principle, ‘they also questioned assumptions underlying regular class placement, claiming that it would be unlikely to produce improvements in achievement’ of special class students. ‘It would not necessarily produce social benefits for students with mild disabilities’, they argued, pointing at the lack of adequate resources and support. Barton and Vlachou (1994), citing Hargreaves (1994), argue that financial reliance has become with ideological compliance the twin realities without which adherence to change is problematic.
Teachers who perceive the success of inclusion as dependent on adequate resources are more likely to hold negative attitudes. Whereas positive attitudes are more likely to be found in those teachers who have a conviction that inclusive education can be made to work. The latter group may even demonstrate readiness not only to support the project but also to fully contribute to its success.

In addition, a sense of personal control, the ability to make choices, and ownership of the change may be at least as important as the amount of resource and support available. The question is whether high quality support can compensate for lack of confidence, conviction and encourage positive attitudes.

B/ Commitment:

Commitment is essential for a new policy to be implemented. This is particularly fundamental in education where performance relies heavily on teachers’ own motivation. In this respect, there appears to be a strong connection between teachers’ beliefs and their degree of commitment to change. Kronick (1988) argues that a person’s beliefs would affect their commitment. If a person is highly committed to something, and believes that they understand the problem, then, they are more likely to exert considerable effort to ensure its success and actively seek out the resources to help cope with it. ‘Commitment to a policy of inclusion, which is a significant change in educational pedagogy, may be a reflection of an educator’s underlying beliefs about the philosophical base upon which

Real change only occur as a result of the commitments of the minds and the hearts of the whole community. Sergiovani (1994) warns that ‘changing our minds is always tough because of the connection between doing and affirmation’, (p. 9). To change implies challenging all the beliefs and practices that have always appeared sensible to us, and this represents a difficult task.

In educational change, the schools always play a role of paramount importance. No attempts to improve the education system can be successful if the people who actually work in the system lack commitment because relegated to the positions of executors. The changes are bound to fail if they are not directly involved in the different phases of the process.

2.3 The role of in-service training

2.3.1 ‘The times are a-changing’

If there is anything we are not confident about, it is the future. ‘The times are a-changing’ sings Bob Dylan. If the primary role of education remains to prepare the community to meet the challenges of the present and the future, therefore, those in charge of education should be the first to be ready. According to Andy Hargreaves (1994), since ‘the rules of the world are changing; it is time for the rules of teaching to change with them’.
This is even more judicious as the trends in approaches have shifted to learner centeredness; teaching is designed according to the needs, interests, and abilities and disabilities of the student. Teachers should not ask ‘what is wrong with this child?’, but rather they should try to find what is wrong with the way they are tackling her or his problems. ‘When teaching is centered on the learners’ own intellectual activity and skills, the training of the teacher upon which the quality of education hinges, should be given more importance and reexamined and redefined accordingly’, (Meirieu, 1993).

2.3.2 In-service Training

Because change in policy implies change in practice, Mittler et al. (1998) suggest that ‘If a whole approach to special needs is to be developed, all teachers in all schools will need to be involved’ (p.7). One way of involving all the teachers is to provide real opportunities for revision and adjustment of practice in relation to the change.

Opportunities to influence attitudes and adjust practice in relation to change can be provided through in-service teacher training. In-service training represents the strategies employed to meet the identified needs of the schools and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this, I incorporate both school-based inset and school oriented activities. School-based in-service training activities focus on the teacher’s needs to develop the curriculum and undertake research within a specific subject, a classroom or a school. School-oriented in-service represents those activities that take place outside the school setting. They focus on the problems of the schools too, but are generally initiated
by an external body and provide for practitioners opportunities to understand and adjust practice to educational change (Hargreaves, 1994).

2.3.3 In-service training to accompany change

Educational change necessitates special in-service training measures. For instance, in the context of educational change in the Netherlands, is it sure that the training provided to the special schoolteachers presently in the classrooms has prepared them to cope with the upcoming challenges of a new law of inclusive education in 2010? Even, there is no evidence that the teachers will be able to adapt to the changes in their roles and responsibilities. Perry (1977) suggested that ‘to ensure true implementation of change... we must work with teachers in the place and in the situation where change is taking place’.

The question, according to Mittler et al. (1998), is what the opportunities available to the teachers are in general and to the special needs teacher in particular to keep abreast of the innovations. Mittler et al. (1998) argue that ‘many people working with people with special needs are largely unaware of new developments which would help them to deliver a better service...’ (p.1) .They recommend training for all the people in special needs education, especially teachers. They argue that the teachers are all out of date in relation to the tasks awaiting them, and therefore, they should ‘be receiving continuous on the job updating’, which would be a duty as well as a right, rather than a privilege.
In-service training can empower teachers as change agents able to pass on to their peers the knowledge and skills they have developed in relation to innovation. Not only the teachers should lead change (rather than be led by change), but also it is of paramount importance that they be well informed about the meaning it has for them and their students. Change and reforms are of ‘little value if they do not take the teacher into account’ because, with Andy Hargreaves (1994), ‘we have come to realize in recent years that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement’.

Fullan (2001) warns that ‘there is much more about educational reform than most people realize’. He reminds us that reform is not just putting into place new policies; it also implies changing the cultures of the classroom and the schools. Among the many strategies to ascertain a better preparation for the teachers, Fullan suggests the implementation of a diverse and high quality approach to teacher in-service training that involves partnership and solid field experience and good support. He also advises teachers’ participation in high quality professional development so that they can improve their knowledge and practice in order to enhance the learning of all the students, (p.7).

The transition before the enforcement of the Netherlands’ new law in 2010 should also be used in effectively preparing special schoolteachers to work with regular students. Mittler et al. (1998) suggest that special schoolteachers should work with their colleagues in ordinary schools. They may teach and share experiences and techniques ‘supporting and advising each other to the extent that they wish and in response to the needs of the children they teach’, (p. 6). Therefore, it is dangerous to hold the belief that special
schoolteachers can easily adapt to a mainstream setting. ‘Whatever the pace of progress towards integration, the teachers now working in special schools and classes are also in need of retraining not only in relation to the needs of the children in their schools but also to prepare them to play a wider role in the community, with parents and colleagues in mainstream schools’, (Mittler et al., 1998, p.10).

It is also fundamental that they construct a more informed knowledge about curriculum development and implementation issues that are in practice in the ordinary schools. For this to be fulfilled, a lot of collaboration is required. It necessitates systematic programmes of exchange. special schoolteachers may observe or teach in an ordinary school, where they are likely to encounter several kinds of disorders, or welcome their ordinary school colleagues in their classrooms. In doing so, they will both act in an advisory capacity, exchange and share a lot of experience. According to Mittler (1988) et al., ‘teachers from special schools who are spending increasing amounts of time teaching in mainstream schools have a valuable experience and contribution to make in many fields’. (p. 10)

I share with Jenkinson (1997) that ‘changes in special education have had’, and will continue to have, ‘important implications for the training of the special school teachers. There has been a significant trend away from courses dealing with a single area of educational needs, and a move towards generic courses dealing with a range of disabilities’, (p. 172). The changing role of the special education teachers suggests that they need to achieve a better balance between the generalist knowledge and skills relating
to educational provision for all students and the specialist knowledge and skills that will continue to be required to deal with curriculum adaptation and modification in special education needs. Undertaking further training in a specific category of disability, especially one of low incidence, may reduce professional opportunities and hamper readiness to deal with secondary disabilities. Studies reviewed by Blachurst et al (1987) indicated that there was a lack of consensus on the teaching competences required. They showed disagreement on whether the competences required in special education differ, in any significant way, from those required in the mainstream. Zabel (1987) explains that it is of paramount importance for the teachers, who have, in their classes, students with different impairments, that they be equipped with additional ‘specific’ skills and competences that will enable them to give their students access to curriculum. Ponte (2004) argues that they ‘cannot carry this ‘burden’ if they are not properly ‘equipped’ to do so’.

2.3.4 Suitable in-service activities

‘Helping teachers of all schools to modify attitudes and practice to include the whole range of abilities and needs’ represents the only proper strategy for Mittler et al. (1998, p. 9). In-service training programmes should match the learning principles. Wiggins and McTighe (2006) argue that ‘if our learning principles are valid, they should apply not only to student learning but also to professional development of staff members’, (p. 29).

First, like Wiggins and McTighe (2006), it is essential to acknowledge that the most effective instructions are those that are personalized. In other words, when we honor the
learner’s interests, curiosity, strengths and value their contribution and prior knowledge, we make them feel that they are an important part of something larger than themselves.

Secondly, it is recognized that one of the key objectives of learning remains the fluent and flexible transfer, successfully reusing the acquired knowledge and skills on worthy tasks in relevant, realistic situations. The problem with many in-service programmes for teachers is that they neither personalize learning nor focus on the teachers’ needs eventually to transfer the acquired knowledge and skills. For Wiggins and McTighe (2006) many of the professional development activities are ‘mandatory one-size-fits-all ’sit’n’git’ in-service day whose agenda teachers have little say in’, (p.29).

For in-service activities to be more effective and efficient, it is essential, as suggested by Hopkins (1986), that the teachers ‘be centrally involved in both the planning and the implementation of the in service activities’, (p.16). Moreover, the emergency of the situation necessitates discussions and clear consensus positions on the knowledge and skills that are expected from all the teachers who will be working in the context of the new law in 2010. There is a need for coordination and harmonization of the education and the development of the teachers. The education of the special schoolteachers has been segregated for a long time from the training of the other teachers. Little will be achieved if too much training goes in little boxes, (Mittler et. al., 1998).
2.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to look at the stances in the literature as far as change in general and educational change in particular is concerned. What has been mentioned by the literature can be summed in the following words of Fullan ‘change is not an event, it is a process’.

The process of change incorporates three stages, initiation, implementation and institutionalization. Positive attitudes as well as negative attitudes are inherent to change and can be experienced at any stage.

To minimize the negative attitudes and enhance the positive attitudes, it is essential that those whose lives and careers may be impacted by the change be provided with opportunities to be informed and involved.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research is perceived as a combination of *experience and reasoning*. It is an approach undertaken to discover a truth. Mertens (1998) considers social research as ‘an inquiry that is designed to collect, analyze, interpret, and use data to understand, describe, predict, or control an educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such a context’. (p2)

Researchers look at, analyze and interpret the world from a viewpoint, a research paradigm. According to Carr (1986), “A *paradigm embodies the particular conceptual framework through which the community of researchers operates, and in terms of which, a particular interpretation of ‘reality’ is generated*”, (p. 72).

Each paradigm has a set of rules and standards, *agreed exemplars*, from which they build their understanding of the nature of the world. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) view a paradigm “as a set of basic beliefs ... that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holders, the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts...”(p107).
To research the attitudes special schoolteachers may have towards the proposal of a new law about inclusion in 2010 in NL, I need a paradigm, a theoretical framework within which I can undertake the study.

In this chapter, I critically explore positivism and the interpretive constructivist paradigm. Their methods and significance to educational research will be discussed in parallel with their relevance to educational practice. Then I will indicate the framework within which the research I am undertaking is going to conform.

### 3.2 Research paradigms

**3.2.1 Positivism**

A/ What is the view of positivism:

Positivism refers specifically to an approach to understanding the world based on science. This paradigm assumes that there exists an external reality that determines the way we behave and that the methods and strategies of the natural scientist can be utilized to investigate and understand social phenomena. ‘*Positivists utilize empirical methodologies borrowed from the natural sciences to investigate phenomena*’ (Berg, B.L. 20001).

Positivism is fundamentally based upon quantitative data collected using systematic rules and procedures. ‘*Quantitative strategies serve this positive-science ideal by providing*
rigorous, reliable, and verifiable large aggregates of data and statistical testing of empirical hypotheses.' (Berg, B.L, 2001).

Positivism advocates a detachment from the phenomena under study for the sake of objectivity. In educational research, Pring (2000) points out that, in their approaches, the positivists do not seek to influence the values in education, but instead their objective remains to try to separate the aims and values of education and separate the means of reaching these goals, (p95).

B/ The criticisms of positivism:

The application of positivism to social sciences has been the cause of disagreement among researchers. The positivists are attacked in two closely related aspects. “The first is the belief that the aims, concepts and methods of natural sciences are also applicable in social scientific inquiries. The second is the belief that the model of explanation employed in natural sciences provides the logical standards by which the explanation of social sciences can be assessed”. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p62).

Pring (2000) believes that “the world cannot be studied as an object of social science and observed as a thing itself” (P96). In the same line of ideas, Morse (1994) argues, “everyday life... cannot be contained in a test tube, started, stopped and manipulated, or washed down the sink”.
Educational decision-making, for instance, should not be based on an application of scientific measurements only because it would distort, totally, its character of arguments and contradictions. These contradictions then “would no longer be regarded as expressions of incompatible values, but as technical problems” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 67). Even if an application of scientific methods can help make decisions related to educational means, we must not forget that these are always ‘value laden’. Such decisions should not be taken in terms of instrumental methods alone because they always include attitudes towards a group.

Earlier, I have mentioned that the positivists argue that the researcher must keep a certain distance from the phenomena under study to guarantee objectivity. Robson (2002) challenges this argument when he states “facts’ and ‘value’ cannot be separated. He argues that the “characteristics and the perspective of the observer also have an effect” on the observed phenomena (p. 22). Robson’s assertion is in concordance with Anderson (1998) when he affirms that the positivist notion of detachment for neutrality is unrealistic because “observation is not value-free”. According to Anderson, what we observe, no matter how we observe it, “implies a set of values in the observer” (pg 5). T. Kuhn adopts a harsher stand towards the positivist concept of objective knowledge. For him, “this view is incoherent” and “is nothing more than a myth”.

The positivists’ attitudes towards ethic and deception are also attacked. The belief according to which part of our research motivations and objectives can remain unrevealed for the sake of some truth is strongly criticized. For instance, positivists support that
participants may not behave naturally if they know that the outcomes of the investigation affect them in a way they do not wish.

The consideration of all these criticisms undermines the positivists’ view, which regards the methodologies of natural science as the most relevant model to investigate social sciences in general and education in particular. The question is can statistical methodologies fully take account of the multiple effects that take place in the social settings?

C/ Relevance to educational research and practice:

‘But why must educational theory be subject to these same standards? And why must educational research be based on the methodology of natural sciences?’ (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 62).

The positivist paradigm is considered as one of the most established of the paradigms that guide educational inquiry. Nevertheless, that does not either answer the above mentioned questions, nor does it justify the application of scientific methodologies to educational research. Carr and Kemmis (1986) pose the questions and provide a justification. According to them, the methodologies of the natural sciences can tackle and resolve educational questions in relation to “establishing the most efficient use to be made of scarce resources- time, building, intelligence, teaching skills and so on”.(p. 69)
The positivist researchers advocate the use of the scientific methods to deal with educational problems because of their clarity and precision. Positivism treats the problems objectively and finds objective solutions using scientific methods, which can stand verification. This solid advantage confers to the scientific methods of positivism their significance to educational inquiry.

3.2.2 The interpretive constructivist paradigm

A/ The theory and practice:

Constructivism is a philosophical theory of cognition, which “reflects the belief that humans, individually or collectively construct reality”, (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 44). This paradigm is concerned with understanding the meaning the members of a society give to a particular situation. Our knowledge and truth are shaped by our perspective; that is to say that all truths are relative and have to be understood according to a context or perspective. This viewpoint is in concordance with that of Farmer, Buckmaster and Le Grand (1992), when they claim that ‘knowledge is created and made meaningful by the context in which it is acquired’ (p. 46). Knowledge exists only within the built constructs and not in some external environment.

Others’ mind is a central concept in the theory of the interpretive constructivists. The interaction between the subjective knowledge, the objective knowledge, and the intersubjective knowledge is the main concern. Intersubjectivity is the way things are interpreted by social members, others’ minds. In this process of understanding and reconstructing ‘the construction’ that the people, including the researcher, hold initially,
the aim remains a relative consensus as new interpretations can be validated as information enfolds and sophistication improves. The individual participant, instead of observing or passively acquiring, actively constructs knowledge “by integrating new information and experiences in what they have previously come to understand, revising and reinterpreting old knowledge in order to reconcile it with the new”, Billet (1996, p. 43).

The interpretive constructivist inquirer is regarded as a participant and exercises the role of a facilitator. For Carr and Kemmis (1986), a position like this expands the role of the researcher ‘beyond reasonable expectations of expertise and conjecture’. Immersion in the context of the investigation is largely preferred over detachment.

This paradigm employs meaning oriented methods rather than the measurements of the natural sciences. Their methods include interviewing, ethnography, interpretation, and description of cultures based on intimate knowledge and participation. Blumer (1969) affirms that the researchers adopt “orienting concepts which provide” them with a “general source of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances”, (p148).

B/ Relevance to educational research and practice:

Constructivism attempts to understand how education takes place and is experienced by the students. Constructivists hold the strong belief that the process of learning must be fitted into the student framework. Constructivist learning is based on the active participation of the student in the problem solving. When you know something, you
should be able to do it. In this process, knowledge is gained through learning-by-doing in contexts within which the subjects find the solutions of the problems. The approach views the participants as a critical thinker engaged in a learning activity that they find relevant to them. The participants construct an objective knowledge, which is their own by evaluating ideas and experiences based on a previously acquired knowledge, and applying them to the new context or situation and integrating the new knowledge. The knowledge the participants bring to the learning activity should be the first and foremost concern. Consequently, there are many implications in the way teaching is handled. This approach believes in the teacher as a facilitator or a co-learner in the process of knowledge construction.

The methodologies of this paradigm are used more and more to investigate educational issues. Education is a sector that incorporates a great deal of human interactions. The decisions that are taken always have impacts on different people differently. Johnson (1995, p 124), advises technology educators to engage in the form of investigation that probes for more profound meanings rather than evaluating superficial features.

C/ The criticisms of the interpretive constructivist paradigm:

One criticism made to the constructivist investigators is their impossibility ‘to escape’ subjectivity. The interactions between the experimenter and the experimental subject can become so informal that they affect the quality of the findings. Cohen et al. (2003) explain that ‘social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated’, (P. 19). Keeping aloof from the
phenomena under study is quite impossible for the researcher in this kind of interactive relationship.

The criteria of trustworthiness remain an issue of concern in this paradigm. Some criteria of reliability and validity applied to the natural sciences are said not to be pertinent to qualitative research. According to Morse (1999), this simply means denying qualitative research reliability and validity. He, furthermore, declares that since science and research must be ‘reliable and valid’, if those criteria are not applicable to any qualitative inquiry methodologies, therefore they ‘must not be sciences’.

Conscious of these criticisms, constructivists tend to use a combination of inquiry methods such as observation and interviews to triangulate. ‘Triangulation’ is regarded as a means to gain trustworthiness by diversifying the methods, the methodologies, or the perspectives.

Criticisms are also formulated as far as sampling is concerned. Even if generalization is not the purpose in a constructivist investigations, and that it is used only to test how far the findings can be replicable in other contexts, samplings are found to be too small. Tiny samplings can be prejudicial to the inquiry. The findings are sometimes specific due to the context in which the research is undertaken or the composition of the target group.
3.3 Choosing a methodology

‘The choice of methodologies is dependent upon both the subject of the research and the related aspects of the research design’, (Birley and Morland, 1998).

This study is of a nature that is qualitative. The research is interpretive, constructivist, exploratory and descriptive.

- It is interpretive, because my interest is to try to analyze the case from the participants’ perspectives. It is to understand the phenomena as interpreted by the participants themselves. In other words, the perceptions and meanings the participants have of the ideas of proposal of change regarding the education of the children with special needs in 2010. Cohen et al. (2005) explain that ‘social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated’, (P. 19).

- Qualitative research is often called constructivist because the emphasis is on the participants’ constructing the conceptualizations, (Creswell, 1994). My goal is to understand the participants’ perceptions of the phenomenon, their attitudes towards it. Understanding their attitudes will help construct new knowledge in order to better inform policy.
The research attempts to explore the phenomenon under study, which is the perceptions and the attitudes of the special school teachers towards the proposed new law. About their perceptions and attitudes, little is known and a lot is to be learnt. In addition, according to Yin (2003), a question like ‘what can be learned from the study?’ is ‘a justifiable rationale for conducting an exploratory case study, the goal being to develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry’, (p. 6).

The research is descriptive in the sense that I will attempt to describe a phenomenon. The meanings a new law about inclusive education conveys for the teachers of the school, and the factors that have an influence on their attitudes represent a field about which little is known.

The research is of a nature of a case study. For Yin (2003), case studies are the preferred strategy to find answers to ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions, ‘when the focus is on some contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context’, (p.1). Case studies are various and are not necessarily undertaken to research individuals alone. They can be undertaken to study a group, an institution, an innovation, or a decision, (Robson, 2002, p. 180; Yin, 2003, p. 12). Bell (1999) sees a case study as ‘an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited timescale’, (p. 10). This case study falls in Bell’s definition as it researches, mainly, the attitudes the teachers of a special school in the Netherlands have on the proposal of a new law about inclusion in 2010.
Can such a project be fully achieved with fixed designs? According to Robson (2002), fixed designs ‘cannot capture the subtleties and complexities of individual human behaviour,’ (p. 98). Similarly, Yin (2003) maintains that ‘case studies penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis’, (p.181). My purpose is not to give a judgmental view about an issue. It is rather about having a more informed understanding of a phenomenon through the eyes of the participants in order to better inform, and suggest recommendations, not only for further research, but also for an eventual conception and implementation of change. Therefore, I will try to remain scientific while acknowledging subjectivity for the research process.

Strauss and Corbin (1990), cited in Denzin and Lincoln (1994), argue that qualitative methods can be used, to not only improve understanding of things about which a lot is known, gain more in-depth information, but also to interpret perspectives and meanings on things about which little is known.

Agreeing with Strauss and Corbin (1990), I set out to investigate, for the following topic, the research questions below as the framework within which the study is going to be undertaken.

**THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS CHANGE AND REFORM:**

**How do the teachers of a special school in the Netherlands perceive the proposal of a new law about inclusion in 2010?**
Research questions:

1. How much do the teachers know about the ideas of the proposal, Herijking van zorg?

2. Are they taking any actions to be better informed about the ideas of the proposal?

3. What are their attitudes towards the proposal?

4. What explains their attitudes towards the proposal?

5. How do they think they can better be prepared for their future role in 2010?

6. Are they expecting any role for in-service training in their preparation?
3.3.1 Validity

According to Robson (2002), “Validity is concerned with whether the findings are ‘really’ about what they appear to be about”, (p.93). That is whether the inquiry measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe.

I consider that social sciences cannot be ‘value-free’. The phenomena researchers measure or describe are there in the minds of the people and their interpretations. Reality is always subjective in social science. Respondents are not objects but partners, whose views are sought, (Robson, 2002, p. 23).

Therefore, deciding to adopt a position of neutrality in order to achieve objectivity in social sciences is an illusion. ‘Standardization and distance do not guarantee objectivity’, according to Robson (2002, p.23).

Carr and Kemmis (1986) have already demonstrated that ‘objectivity can be achieved when participants reveal a willingness to make their views and preconceptions available for critical inspection and to engage in discussion and argument that is open and impartial’ (p.121).

I agree that, in social sciences criticism represents a major constructive source. Therefore, I was constantly verifying and judging the validity of the participants’ views, but I did not discard common sense in the process. Being aware of the risk of bias or misinterpretation, I kept asking myself whether what I was describing corresponded to the participants’
meanings or whether it was only reflecting my own impressions. I resorted to the following strategies to remaining objective and impartial as much as possible and not holding onto strong views.

a- Member checking

When I was collecting data, I made the promise to go back to the participants with the findings. The results of the study have been submitted to the participants, specially the teachers. They not only recognized them, but also invited me to make a presentation to all the school and discuss the actions to take.

b- Peer debriefing

Throughout the process of research, I have been sharing and discussing the developments with my colleague students. I also received comments and advice from other critical friends with an experience in the field of research. Among these, I can cite the Dutch Master students of Roehampton, the Purdue University students and the participants of the Fontys Oso study day at Helviort where I had the opportunity to expose my ideas to critic. Such exposure enabled me to realize that my initial project was too big. Then, being aware that ‘very few case studies will end up exactly as planned’, (Yin, 2003, p. 60), I narrowed it down shifting to the case study of the school.

The ‘validation session’ during which I was given the opportunity to defend my study in front of a committee of students and scholars represents one of the most valuable and helpful experience. The committee was composed of five people: my tutor, one fellow
student, a representative from the school where the study is undertaken, and two guest scholars from Fontys Oso. I had sent them the draft of the dissertation to all of them. After my presentation, I listened to their comments and criticism and answered their questions.

3.3.2 Data collection

A) The Methods:

I did a case study, which started with interviews. It developed into observations and I decided to include a documentary analysis to search for information about the proposal, and how the school’s vision incorporates inclusion and in-service training for the teachers. Along with the interviews, the documents also were analyzed for actions taken to inform the teachers about the proposal. The ‘*use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of the human behaviour*’ is what Cohen et al. (2003, p. 112) call triangulation. Through triangulation, the researcher provides not only rich data, but the data is described in different forms that can give a sense of confidence, (Hoepfl, 1997).

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews, also referred to as ‘*qualitative research interviews*’, (King, 1994), were conducted. For King (1994, pp. 16-17), interviews are the most appropriate when the focus of the study is on the meaning of a particular phenomena to the participants, as is this case. I used the interviews to look for answers for the research questions related to the teachers’ knowledge of the proposal, their attitudes and their expectations from in-service training. I am aware that interviews
incorporate shortcomings. They are time consuming that is why these happened in the form of homogeneous group interviewing whenever the circumstances allowed. Fearing that the dynamic of a group hampered access to personal matters, I checked whether participants wished to be interviewed alone or in a group. I also made sure they all got my contact in case they had something to add. Interviews also incorporate advantages; unlike questionnaires, the rate of return is high, they are a flexible and adaptable way of gathering data, and enable the researcher to clear up misunderstandings, (Robson, 2002, p.272). As a research procedure, interviews have the value of enabling parties, the inquirer and the interviewee, to explore the meaning the questions and the answers involved, (Brenner, Brown and Canter, 1985, p. 3; Barker and Johnson, 1998, p. 30). I, therefore, summarized every response to check with the interviewee whether my understanding of their meaning was correct.

Direct observations were conducted with the teachers. These, according to Yin (2003), can ‘range from formal to casual data collection activities’, (p. 92). I wanted to search the explanations to the teachers’ attitudes and see whether their statements in the interviews were reflected into classroom behaviours. ‘Saying is something; doing is another’, said the French philosopher, Montaigne. Darlington and Scott remind us that ‘The only way to find out what actually happens in a given situation is through observation’, (p. 51). The students they taught had different disabilities and came from different backgrounds. In what way the interactions that took place prelude of an inclusive teacher. For Cohen et al. (2003), ‘observation methods are powerful tools of

I also decided to include a documentary analysis to search for information about the proposal, and how the school’s vision incorporate inclusion and in-service training for the teachers. Along with the interviews, the documents also were analyzed for actions taken to inform the teachers about the proposal. The document included the school’s bulletin (appendix 8) and 2005 training plan (appendix 9). Even if these documents have not been produced for the purpose of the study, the advantage lies in the fact they represent an unobtrusive way of collecting data, and the documents can be reanalyzed if necessary.

B/ The Sampling:

I took seriously the advice of Yin (2003) according to which, ‘any finding or conclusion in case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information... ’ (p. 98).

The selection of participants, in research in general and qualitative research in particular, remains a central decision, which has an impact on the study. Polkinghorne (1989) suggests that the research participants have ‘the capacity to provide full and sensitive descriptions of the experience under study’, (p. 47). It is also essential to find some significant relationship between the participants and the phenomenon under study (Wertz and Zuuren, 1987, p. 11). Nevertheless, it is to be born in mind that it is not always easy to get the dream team of research participants.
The class teachers of different age groups, of different subjects and of different age and gender were chosen. I had to work with the school’s coordinator, the afdelingscoordinator leerweg 3, to select the teachers according to their availabilities, their level of English, and, more important, their willingness to participate to the study.

Three ambulante begeleiders or peripatetic teachers were interviewed including an internal and an external one. The choice of the peripatetic teachers was based on three aspects of their job. They seemed to be more aware of the proposed 2010 new law. They, as far as this reform is concerned, are supposed to play a role of change agents. In addition, most important, they work as advisors with the teachers in this special school but also with other teachers outside including regular school teachers. This, for me, has enabled them to have a broader perspective and a more informed knowledge of the proposal and of the realities of inclusion.

The principal of the school and the psychologist were also interviewed. The principal because he represents a central person in the school; the one who is supposed to distill information about the proposal; the one who is supposed to measure the receptivity of the given information; and the one who is supposed to impulse change by modeling it. As for the school psychologist, I have to confess that he was selected by mistake, but revealed a valuable source of information about the teachers’ attitudes towards the proposal and the factors that might have influenced them. I realized that not interviewing him would have been the mistake.
I also interviewed two teacher trainers from REC, Regional Expertise Centre. They also work with the teacher training institution of Fontys. One of the teachers belongs to a national commission in charge of collecting reactions to the proposal.

### 3.3.3 Generalization

Generalization remains an issue of concern with case study. According to Smith (1991), this criticism results from the sympathy case study has towards the interpretive paradigm, the fact of treating *particularities rather than regularities*, (p.375). Case studies confront the issue of respectability and legitimacy. However, Carr and Kemmis (1986) remind us that *what distinguishes scientific knowledge is not so much its logical status, as the fact that it is the outcome of a process of enquiry which is governed by critical norms and standards of rationality*, (P. 121). Cohen and Manion (2003), argue that the findings from social research generate *‘law’ and ‘law-like generalizations’* of the same kind as in the natural sciences, (p 8).

I am aware that case studies are criticized because of *‘the little basis for generalization’* they provide. It is true that generalization from a single case is not judicious; however, Yin (2003) reminds us that the same concern had been evoked about a scientific experiment, (p. 10). According to Creswell, 1994, *‘the intention of qualitative research is not to generalize findings, but to form a unique interpretation of events’* (p. 158-159). Generalization is used only to test how far the findings can be replicable in other
contexts. However, I checked with other class teachers of the other clusters, two ambulante begeleider or itinerant teachers from different schools and a principal whether they recognized the findings from this special school. I also compared my findings with those of a body commissioned by the Minister of Education to collect the reactions the proposed change has generated among the different components, which will be affected by the new law.

3.3.4 Ethical considerations

Undertaking a scientific investigation involves a certain number of considerations and attitudes to adopt. It is fundamentally required, among other criteria, for such a work to include ethical features. Ethically, there is a code of conduct to follow, not only within the framework of the chosen approach, but also towards the participants and the targeted audience.

Robson (2002) defines the ethical feature as “a code of conduct for the research which ensures that the interests and concerns of those taking part in, or possibly affected by, the research are safeguarded” (pg. 18).

Ethical issues have to be cleared from the very start of any study project, especially when the researcher works with vulnerable participants. ‘Researchers have to take care of the usual concerns for consent, confidentiality and respect for the participants’, (Robson, 2002, p 70).
The targeted participants in my project were teachers, peripatetic teachers and their principal and teacher trainers. Before I commenced the research, I explained them that the purpose remained purely scientific, and that the findings would not be used for any other purpose but for the improvement of knowledge in order to better act. I did not record any interview unless the interviewee consented and to guarantee confidentiality, I ensured them that only a fellow student and I would listen to the recordings. No one else will have access to the data. It is true that many people know the school where the research was undertaken; however, I made sure that the publication of the findings would in no way enable identifying individuals.

I referred to the principal, the psychologist and the ambulante begeleider in the quotes because they allowed it. Nevertheless, I chose not to mention the name of the school even if it may represent a form of publicity.
Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the results from the data collection. It draws together the data gathered from the different research methods, the interviews, the observations and the analysis of the documents. The chapter also incorporates tables and quotations and sometimes refers to the appendices.

The analysis of the interviews involves a literal reading of the data with tables; the analysis of the documents involves an interpretive reading of the data whereas the observations involve a reflective reading of the data, Mason (1996).

The study set out to find responses to the following research questions.

1. How much do the teachers know about the ideas of the proposal, herijking van zorg?

2. Are they taking any actions to be better informed about the ideas of the proposal?

3. What are their attitudes towards the proposal?

4. What explains their attitudes towards the proposal?

5. How do they think they can they better be prepared for their future role in 2010?

6. Are they expecting any role for in-service training in their preparation?
4.2 The Steps in analyzing the data

4.2.1 The interviews

I first transcribed the data collected from the interview questions. Then as suggested by Hycner (1985), I listened to the tapes and read the transcripts several times for meaning so that I could note any patterns, unexpected patterns, any inconsistencies or contradictions. I also had a colleague student listen to the recordings while reading my transcripts. The discussions that followed our sessions and the suggestions of my colleague enabled me to check my interpretations and make corrections.

Secondly, I examined all the collected data in relation to my research questions. The value of going through this process is that it helped me to isolate the answers to the questions and eliminate irrelevant issues.

I transferred the relevant responses from the collected data into open codes. I used the following codes in relation to the research questions.

1-knowledge of the proposal
2- Actions (taken by teachers to be more informed)
3- Attitudes towards the proposal
4- Explanations of attitudes
5- Role of in-service training
### Table 1: Knowledge of the proposal

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sources</th>
<th>quotes</th>
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| From interview of Teachers, principal, Ambulante begeleider And psychologist | ‘frankly, I don’t know’  
I don’t know that much about it’  
‘I know about it but I am not up to date.’  
‘A letter came from the minister and the director told us about it.’  
‘I heard about it but I don’t know anything’  
‘Is it the same law that says students don’t have to come to our school?’  
‘Together to school?’  
‘Teachers know little’  
‘It also depends on the size of the school. Small schools, it is easier to inform everybody’  
‘No. It was not mentioned, or I completely missed it’. |
| From interview of Teacher trainers | ‘There are all kind of presentations throughout the country about the new law’  
‘Some schools ask for presentations for their staff, teachers, and all but a lot of schools are waiting’  
‘Teachers don’t know about the impact of the law on their future’ |
### Table 2: Action for more information

<table>
<thead>
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<th>source</th>
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| From interviews of Teachers, principal, ambulante begeleider, and psychologist | ‘No. I want to but I am very busy with my work. It is not a priority now’.  
‘Read something about it in the Journal of …’.  
‘And the principal has told us a little about it in meetings’. |
| From interviews of Teacher trainers | ‘They are curious but they will wait’.  
‘It is a thought of the minister. The proposal has to be discussed’.  
‘It is like a window frame without the glass’  
‘Some schools ask for presentations for their staff, teachers, and all but a lot of schools are waiting’ |
### Table 3: Attitudes towards the ideas of the new law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>source</th>
<th>quotes</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| From interviews of Teachers, principal, ambulante begeleider, and psychologist | ‘A bit skeptical and a bit positive’  
‘Not all positive but not all negative’  
‘There are people who want to go their own way and not change. But, there are others who say why not’.  
‘I don’t think it will work’  
‘So, I can say that I am not very into the changes’  
‘I am skeptical. I don think many students will leave for regular schools’.  
‘We may go back to the ancient law,’  
‘Some people represent a hard block, and don’t want to change’  
‘Well, in the meetings you hear them ask whether it is good for the child’.  
‘Most teachers are positive but if they see that, it can have an effect on their career it is another discussion’.  
‘In their hearts they say yes, but there are a lot of questions about it.  
‘Many special schools are like a golden bird case. Not good to prepare the child for society. Kids have to be together for better integration’  
‘We, special school teachers are more driven. We think that it is possible.  
‘Some children are here but, I think they shouldn’t be here. They should be in regular schools’  
‘There are children who need to be, but there are also children who don’t need to be here with some help they can be in regular education’  
‘on the one hand, I am positive attitude’  
‘It is good development to have the child go to a school in their neighborhoods. But here are limits’  
‘I always believe that it is possible to help all the children’ |
| From interviews of Teacher trainers | ‘special school teachers are more positive about it’  
‘Unlike the regular school teachers, most of the teachers in special education think it a good thing’. |
**Table 4: Explanations of attitudes towards the proposal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>source</th>
<th>quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| From interviews of Teachers, principal, ambulante begeleider and psychologist | ‘We will be hopping from one place to another like ambulante begeleiders’.
| | ‘We can also work as consultants for families’.
| | ‘We can be counselors for the parents, or tell the regular schools what is best for the child’.
| | ‘There are a lot of changes and quickly one after the other’
| | ‘I want to protect my profession so that it doesn’t change in a way’
| | ‘A lot of change. Before even people get familiar with the law, it is changed. That is negative. And there is also the problem of money. We are always late. In primary school, it is even worse’.
| | ‘Sometimes there are other motives for a change. Many teachers think it is only about money’
| | ‘Every four years something new comes’
| | ‘One change isn’t past when a new change comes’
| | ‘We will change, we will change, do this, do that’
| | ‘I don’t want it to change’
| | ‘I have a vision about my profession’
| | ‘I prefer to work in a special school because it corresponds to...’
my vision’
‘Good things and bad things depending on what kind of disabilities’
‘Sometimes we receive children from other schools who come here totally damaged psychologically’.
‘They see children with complex handicaps and they think they cannot go’.
‘They teachers who work with more complex disabilities are more pessimistic’.
‘Those against are in the older generation. Those for are more among the young generation’.
‘The level of help the students receive in regular school can also influence their attitudes’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From interviews of Teacher trainers</th>
<th>‘They see it as an improvement but they worry about their job’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘They don’t have a clear view of their own role in a new situation’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘They see the benefit for the child but the disadvantage for themselves’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘They think regular education teachers don have the expertise to, can give the children what they need’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘The children have to stay with us because we the one who have the expertise’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>source</td>
<td>quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| From interviews of Teachers, principal, ambulante, begeleider, and psychologist | ‘Everything that is not known can cause resistance.’
‘Special school teachers need less training than the regular school teachers’.
‘Yes, they should be trained. Always broaden knowledge’
‘necessary’
‘They have to see the schedule, the goals, the tempo (very high in regular education), working with a plan’
‘work with bigger groups’
‘not to put the less achieving students before the best achieving students’
‘We are used to giving all the attention to the low achieving students’.
‘They have to learn that they can make a plan’.
‘to manage a large class, to organize group work, to develop student’s autonomy, to give instructions, and differentiate’
‘They know a lot about the handicaps but they need more inclusive skills’.
‘They work with very few children’.
‘When they see what is happening in the regular schools, they say *oh this class is too big. And I have my assistant*’
‘To see the children who can work on their own’
‘Very important that the teachers go to regular schools and see how the teachers work. What is going on there? Otherwise, they will find it very difficult’.
‘to become an ambulante, we received a training’
‘to learn about the management of large class, how to differentiate bright children and children who have learning difficulties’.
| **From interviews of Teacher trainers** | ‘The most difficult group will stay so they will need more skills and knowledge’.

‘They also have to know what to do with normal children. Learn to teach other students’

‘Special school teachers focus on social elements more than on the didactical aspects’. ‘They are more social workers than educators’

‘Special teachers have to go to regular schools and work with the regular education teachers.’

‘Spec school teachers say ‘you cannot make a plan with our students’, ‘you cannot plan for half a year’

Some of them say ‘we know it all’ ‘we don’t need training’ but they can learn a lot from regular schoolteachers.

‘Special teachers are specialists but regular school teachers are also specialists. They have a lot to teach spec schoolteachers, regular courses’.

‘Special schoolteachers will need more training to work with regular students’.

‘In company training- between two schools, special and regular’.
4.2.2 The observations

In undertaking the observations, I searched for whether the explanations to the teachers’ attitudes were in the classroom. I also wanted to see how the school’s vision was reflected in the composition of the student population, and whether it was translated in the teachers’ instructional and classroom management strategies. I observed three teachers working with three different groups.

The following abbreviations stand for…

T= teacher; TA= teacher assistant; S= student(s); ST= student teacher

Table 6: observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>disabilities</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>instructional strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>-TA</td>
<td>Reading: T and TA help all students, but 2. Apparently, the 2 students achieve better than the rest. No group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-rows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-a schedule of S roles (housekeeping)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- T and TA walk around to check and help S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Multiple and severe (all S but 1 use wheelchairs)</td>
<td>-TA</td>
<td>Cooking: T, TA and S.T have to do students’ tasks. No group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-S sit in a semi-circle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 1 S (not on wheelchair) has more roles (help 1 classmate do the task)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Minor (no wheelchair-user)</td>
<td>-rows</td>
<td>Mathematics: No group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-S stay at their desks and T writes all on the board. T walk around to check and help S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T3 has replaced a colleague who is on sick leave.
4.2.3 The documents analysis

I looked at two documents: document 1 is the school’s bulletin (appendix 8) and document 2 is the 2005 Training Plan (appendix 9). In both, I tried to see whether the knowledge of the proposal was a treated issue. I also searched for explanations to the teachers’ attitudes in the vision of the school about inclusive education.

Table 7: documents analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The proposal</th>
<th>Indicators of vision</th>
<th>In-service training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doc. 1</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>Projects:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- the <em>Creatief en Competent</em> project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- The IIP (investors in People)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doc. 2</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>Topics of the study days:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- bespreekstructuur leerlingen (o.a. Kinderrap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- afhankelijk van het cluster of de leerweg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- LVS-Datacare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Individueel handelingsplan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Studiedagen sociaal emotionele ontwikkeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Curriculum voor leerlingen met ernstige meervoudige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Vaksectie bewegingsonderwijs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.4 The Patterns and trends

The pattern themes and trends, which emerged from all the methods, were re-examined in relation to the research questions.

A- The knowledge of the proposal:

As shown in the table 1, the teachers’ knowledge of the ideas of the proposed new law, herijking van zorg, is very little. When asked about their knowledge of the proposal, some hesitate and then ask for clarifications such as ‘is it the law that says that students don’t have to come to our school?’, or ‘Together to school?’. Others are more direct and they confess their ignorance of the ideas conveyed by the proposal. ‘frankly, I don’t know’, ‘I don’t know much about it’ are to be recurrent responses. In addition, the other interviewees do not differ with the teachers regarding the knowledge of the ideas of the proposal. They all agree that the teachers ‘know little about it’.

The question is whether they are taking any actions for more knowledge of the ideas of the proposal to form a better-informed point of view.

B-Actions taken by the teachers to be more informed

The ideas of the proposal have never been a central issue on the agenda of the studiedagen, study days, organized by the school to improve professional knowledge and practices. Nevertheless, the principal informed the staff about the letter of the Minister and the change it would imply. The problem is how the teachers considered the information. It was ‘not a priority’ said one teacher. Another teacher declared that ‘the
principal has told us a little about it in meetings’. Not all the teachers fully agreed, ‘No. It wasn’t mentioned; otherwise, I missed completely’.

Only one teacher declared to have ‘read something about it’ in an educational journal. The problem they put forward remains the lack of time. When I asked them whether they were trying to get more informed, one teacher replied ‘No. I want to but I am very busy with my work. It is not a priority now’.

Knowing about the proposal is not a priority for the teachers. Because, they consider that the passing of ‘the law is too far’, that ‘it is not a law yet’, ‘the teachers will wait’. ‘They are curious, but they will wait’ was a response from one teacher trainer. The same person declared that ‘the law is like a window frame without a glass’. In other words, the direction the proposal is taking is not clear. The teachers wait even though they do not know the impact it is going to have on their future.

C-Attitudes towards the proposal

Three categories of teachers emerged from the analysis of the data. The terms (pessimism, optimistic, ambivalent stance) I use here to refer to them are not quotes from the teachers.

The optimistic group represents those who share the vision carried by the proposal. They believe that the special schools do not prepare the child for community life. ‘Many special schools are like a golden bird case. Not good to prepare the child for society.
Kids have to be together for better integration’. According to one teacher, ‘Some children are here but, I think they shouldn’t be here. They should be in regular schools’. One of them declares, ‘I always believe that it is possible to help all the children’

One category of teachers has an ambivalent stance. They affirmed a positive attitude but recognize some reservations. That attitude is apparent in the following responses.

‘On the one hand I am positive but I want to protect my profession so that it doesn’t change in a way I don’t want it to change.’

‘I am a bit skeptical and a bit positive’.

The following statements from the principal give a good description of the attitudes of this category.

‘In their hearts they say yes, but there are a lot of questions about it’.

‘Well, in the meetings you hear them ask whether it is good for the child’.

The last category shows a lot of pessimism about a new law for more inclusion. ‘It is a good development to have children go to a school in their neighborhoods. But there are limits’, suggested one teacher. These teachers apparently prefer the status quo and are ‘not very much into the changes’. These teachers seem to be very skeptical. These people represent what an ambulante begeleider called the hard block who do not want to change.

‘I don’t think it will work’, declared one of them, anticipating an unsuccessful implementation. ‘I am skeptical. I don’t think many students will leave for regular schools’, argued another one who added ‘We may go back to the ancient law.’
D The explanations of the teachers’ attitudes:

D.1 The teachers’ perception of inclusion

According to their perception of inclusion, and their affirmed vision for education, the teachers accept or doubt about the ideas of the proposal. There are those who are for more inclusion. One teacher thinks that some children are in the school but they should not be there; ‘They should be in regular schools’. Agreeing with their colleague, another one adds ‘There are children who need to be, but there are also children who don’t need to be here with some help they can be in regular education’.

Experience with regular education has also been an explanation of the teachers’ attitudes. ‘When I was in regular school’, explains one teacher, ‘I thought handicapped children could not go to regular education. Now I know and think they can go to regular school but with a lot of work’.

The teachers also argue that the problem is not on their side. ‘We, special school teachers are more driven. We think that it is possible. We hope that our colleagues in regular schools think the same. They don’t have to quickly say oh no, no, no’.

D.2 The school vision

In chapter 2, I have mentioned that people need to share the vision for people to be committed. ‘This school wants to be ahead of things’, comments a teacher. ‘We want to be the first, show the world which school we are’, he explains. This appears clearly, when the principal talks about the school as an inclusive one: ‘Yes’, he explains, ‘because we
have a diversity of children. We receive children some other schools would not take’. ‘Ten years ago it was not possible for those students to go to school. Our school gives them the opportunity’.

The vision of the school also appears when the principal refers to the collaboration with other schools. ‘The ambulante begeleider’, he states, ‘take our expertise to other schools and regular schools’. ‘We have helped bring a lot of students with learning difficulties into regular education’.

**D.3 The students the teachers work with**

The proposal advocates the widespread placement of students with learning difficulties in regular education. Depending on the disabilities of the students they work with, the teachers believe that such an approach incorporates ‘Good things’ and ‘bad things’.

This is corroborated by the following response from the principal, ‘The teachers who work with more complex disabilities are more pessimistic, they see children with complex handicaps and they think they cannot go’. Additionally, they sometimes have bad experiences with children who have been placed in regular schools. ‘Sometimes we receive children from other schools who come here totally damaged psychologically the psychologist recognizes. Besides, an ambulante begeleider argues that ‘isolation in the class with your disability is not a good thing. To be the only one who needs care, for example. It is not easy for a child to be isolated’.
D.4 The way the teachers perceive their career within the framework of the proposal.

The way they perceive their career seems to be another factor influencing their receptivity of the ideas of the proposal. ‘They don’t have a clear view of their own role in a new situation’, affirmed a teacher trainer. ‘Most teachers are positive’, thinks the principal who immediately adds ‘but if they see that it can have an effect on their career it is another discussion’.

Some of the teachers see themselves promoted when the law is passed. These responses of the teachers provide an illustration:

‘I think we will be hopping from one place to another like ambulante begeleider and share our knowledge’.

‘We can also work as consultants for families’.

‘We can be counselors for the parents, or tell the regular schools what is best for the child’.

Another group has more worries. According to the teacher trainers, ‘They see it as an improvement but they worry about their job’. They explain that the teachers in general, including the special schoolteachers see the new law as a ‘benefit for the child but the disadvantage for themselves’. They hold the belief that since ‘the children with multiple and severe disabilities cannot go’, ‘the level of the children will go down because the best children will go to regular schools’ and their job will be much more difficult.
A consequence, they seem to fear from such a situation, can be the reduction of the demand for teachers in special education. In other words, some teachers will have to teach in regular education. According to the principal, ‘Some will have to go to teach in regular schools. They do not know about their future. I have told them about the possibility, but they do not realize it now. They will realize it’. The question is that they do not seem to like it much, ‘I prefer to work in a special school because it corresponds to my vision’. Confirming that feeling, an ambulante begeleider, talking about the visits they organize for special schoolteachers in regular education, argues that the teachers are often intimidated by the size of class.

D.5 The frequency and motives for reforms

The frequency of the new laws and reforms also represent a major issue. According to the teachers, there are ‘too many laws’, and ‘There are a lot of changes and quickly one after the other’. ‘We will change, we will change, do this, do that’, complains the teacher. The teachers also complain that ‘Every four years something new comes. One change isn’t past when a new change comes. And sometimes there is no continuation’. One teacher advises that ‘sometimes you just have to slow down and let things go’.

The teachers also believe that sometimes the real motives for change are different from those put forward by the initiators of the change. ‘And there is also the problem of money’ one of them reminds.
D.6 Information and preparation

The teachers were informed of the letter of the Minister. The principal has evoked the issue of the proposal in meetings with the staff, even if teachers have different views about it. ‘We had these meetings and all blabla comes from the principal. He tells us what’s going on in the country. How far the law is and what will be implemented and prrrr’, declared one teacher in laughter. Another argued that the newspapers wrote about it ‘but, I am not following it’.

The principal recognized that the teachers know little about the proposal and reveals that ‘Next year in September 2006 we have a community which is going to start working on the proposal and the teachers will be informed and their views will be asked’.

D.7 The role of-in-service training:

‘Yes, they should be trained. Always broaden knowledge’. This response from a teacher trainer seemed to be echoed by all the participants. The principal, referring to the creative and competent project, confides ‘We also want to have a high standard of teaching for the students’. The school’s vision is translated in the education plan (appendix 9, scholingsplan 2005-2006) and the school’s bulletin (appendix 8, jaarverslag 2005, p. 2, and pp. 13-15). The principal also states that ‘we will have to have them work in regular schools for some years, gain experience and creativity, and then come back’.
For an ambulante begeleider, since ‘The most difficult group will stay so they will need more skills and knowledge’. Beside the information about the proposal in-service training can provide, the participants recognize and recommend a necessity for improvement in the following contents.

\[a\]- The management of large groups
\[b\]- The organization of group work
\[c\]- The development of student autonomy
\[d\]- The didactics
\[e\]- Working with ‘normal’ children

The teachers have to develop strategies to accommodate fast achieving students and try to target high expectations. To do so, they will have to work on the way they give instructions, argues a teacher trainer. One teacher affirms that they should learn ‘not to put the less achieving students before the best achieving students’. The reason for the necessity to learn to ‘include every learner’, and reach ‘optimal development for every learner’ is that ‘we are used to give all the attention to the low achieving students’, the teacher justifies.

For a teacher trainer, the reason is simple; ‘They are more social workers than educators’. The principal seems to agree when he recognizes that ‘they know a lot about the handicaps but they need more inclusive skills’. He adds that ‘We are preparing the
teachers in this school to teach children to be creative and competent, to be more independent learners’.

One teacher recognizes the necessity for training but declares that ‘special schoolteachers need less training than the regular schoolteachers do’, and deplores that ‘there is nothing yet’.

The teachers complain that in-service activities can be organized but they are not those who make the decision. ‘They don’t ask teachers’ opinion’, they complain. The complaint is not shared by an ambulante begeleider who deplores the ‘we know it all’ attitude of some special schoolteachers.
4.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to describe the information gathered in the field with the interviews, the observations and the analysis of the documents. The major responses to my research questions seem to be as follows.

**How much do the teachers know about the ideas of the proposal?**

It has appeared that the teachers of the school do not know much about the proposal of a new law about inclusive education in the Netherlands in 2010.

**Are they taking any actions to be better informed about the ideas of the proposal?**

The information they received was very little and they are not taking any significant action in order to have a more informed knowledge of the proposal.

Grouping the two interrelated questions **what are their attitudes towards the proposal?** along with **What explains their attitudes towards the proposal?**, their attitudes appear to be varied and inconsistent. Three categories seem to stand out clearly.

The optimists, even if their knowledge of the proposal is little, support it because of the following factors.

- their vision of inclusion,
- the drive and vision of the school,
- their experience with regular education,
- and the promotion the law might provide them.
The pessimists already anticipate an unsuccessful implementation of the new law if it is voted. Their attitudes seem to be influenced by the following factors.

- the rhythm of change is too much,
- the motive for change is unclear to them,
- their vision of inclusion is different,
- and the concerns they have for their career and profession.

The third group adopt a kind of wait-and-see attitude. Their attitudes are not negative but they also are not positive. They seem to be facing a dilemma. They want what is good for the child but have concerns about the impact the law will have on the child and on their career. The ambiguity of their stance translates the lack of information about the proposal among the teachers of the school.

The responses to the last two research questions (‘How do they think they can better be prepared for their future role in 2010?’ and ‘Are they expecting any role for in-service training, or professionalism in their preparation?’) demonstrate the pertinence of a role for in-service activities to accompany the initiation of the proposal. All the participants have responded in favour of it. They perceive in-service activities as a means not only to distil and spread a more informed knowledge of the proposal, but also to provide the teachers for opportunities to keep abreast of the new developments so as to adapt to a new working context.
Chapter 5

EVALUATION

5.1 Introduction

In this study, I have attempted to look at the attitudes the special education teachers might have toward the proposal of a new law about inclusion in 2010. The proposal, referred to as Reshuffling Special Education, in Dutch, Herijking van zorg, came from the Minister of Education in September 2005. I have particularly focused on the case of the teachers of a cluster 3 school in the Midden- Brabant province.

In this chapter, I will attempt to check how the resulting outcomes of this research relate existing knowledge of the subject. In the first part, I will discuss the teachers’ attitudes and the factors that seem to have influenced those attitudes. In the second part, I will examine whether the role the participants expect from in-service training match the literature.
5.2 Attitudes of teachers towards the proposal

The attitudes of the teachers towards the proposal and their are closely interrelated. That is why I will discuss them together in this section of the chapter. In chapter two, I have reviewed three characteristics of attitudes the literature has mentioned. Attitudes have the characteristics of being cognitive, affective, and behavioural (Mc Guire, 1985; Muller, D.J, 1986). The cognitive component of attitudes incorporates the beliefs, and ideas based on knowledge and experience. The affective component consists of the feelings of safety and those of uncertainty. The behavioural aspect of an attitude consists in the predisposition of the person to act.

Already in chapter four, three categories of the attitudes of the teachers towards the proposal have been mentioned. The optimistic group consists of the teachers who share the ideas of the proposal. The pessimistic group refers to those who believe that ‘it won’t work’. The third group is composed of the teachers who hold what I call a wait-and-see attitude. In this section, following Thomas (1985), I have decided to place the latter among the teachers holding negative attitudes towards the proposal. Thomas (1985) cited in Jenkinson (1997), revealed ‘that negative attitudes were related to a perception that the special school educator held either a negative or a neutral attitude to integration’, (p.31). A neutral stance is then perceived here as negative in the sense that like the pessimists, this category does not hold attitudes that are supportive to the proposal. In other words, their attitudes do not promote the ideas of the proposal.
The teachers of the school are, therefore, favourable or unfavourable to the ideas of the proposal. The following reasons explain their attitudes.

5.2.1 The teachers’ vision of inclusive education

When asked the reason why they have chosen to work in special education, all the teachers put forward their vision of society and education.

The teachers who are more enthusiastic perceive the ideas of the proposal compatible with their vision. This is in conformity with Jutten (2003) when he links shared vision and commitment. For the teachers many special schools are 'like a golden bird case' and do not prepare the child for in society. The school should be the laboratory where the community molds its citizens according to their values. When some of the teachers maintain that, many children of the school should be in regular schools, they agree with one principle of the proposal. The proposal supports that children should be given as much as possible the possibility to go to school in their neighborhoods. The argument is that inclusion tends to happen naturally when the children with disabilities play and work together with their able-bodied peers in their own environment.

I share with the teachers consider that inclusion in society should also start in the schools. Dalin and Rust (1983) warn that ‘the school itself must be a primary force or energy source for any genuine educational change’ (p. 1). Christie (1999) gives more credit to their views by suggesting that ‘Inclusion in work and employability begins with education’, (p. 53). The best thing by far mainstream education can achieve for disabled children is the opportunity to meet and make friends with people who are of their age and
who are not disabled. Christie (1999) argues ‘The key change in any move towards an inclusive future may be more determination in ensuring that primary and secondary schools are places where disabled and non-disabled pupils mix and learn to understand and accept each other’s differences and potential and to respect each other’s rights’, (p. 50).

5.2.2 The students the teachers work with

A widespread placement of the children with special needs in mainstream education does not make the unanimity. It incorporates ‘Good things’ and ‘bad things’ depending on the disabilities of students the teachers work with. The teachers stand in defense of the interests of the children they work with. Sachs (2002) argues that ‘professionals in special education facilities are expected to stand up for the interests of vulnerable students. Naturally, this means, in the first instance, the interests of the students they are dealing with on a daily basis’.

It has appeared, in this school, that the teachers working with children with more complex disabilities are more pessimistic. They believe that the children with complex disabilities cannot work in an inclusive setting. ‘there are limits’ because it does not serve the interests of the students with special needs when they are placed in regular classrooms. These teachers are comforted in their beliefs by the psychologist who reveals that sometimes the school receives ‘children from other schools who come here totally damaged psychologically’. Moreover, Hegarty (2001) explains that ‘parents send their children to be educated, not to be included’, (p. 247).
5.2.3 The way the teachers see the future

The future within the framework of the proposed change bears different promises for the teachers in the school. It is full of hope for some and full of uncertainties for others.

Most of the teachers who support the policy of a widespread placement of special needs children in mainstream education foresee a brighter future for their career. They consider that if the law is passed, regarding the expertise they have gained working in special education, they will be employed as peripatetic teachers or will exercise as consultants. These teachers develop a feeling of safety, which is an affective component of attitude (see chapter two). According to Sarason (1971), their attitudes can be explained by the ‘new power relationships’ the change may establish.

On the contrary, the teachers who are less enthusiastic about the proposal develop feelings of uncertainties about their careers. These feelings of uncertainties affect their attitudes toward the ideas of the proposal. They have two problems, which can be qualified as emotional and professional.

Emotionally the teachers are related to the students and I have already mentioned this above. They are also emotionally related to their profession in so far as that they like their job, which provides them with a meaning for their lives and a sense of achievement.

Professionally, they do not really appreciate a future in a regular school, which seems to be a possibility. The perspective of working in regular education appears as fear. According to Calabrese (2002), ‘the fear of the unknown’ can be a source of resistance.
The status quo is sometimes more comfortable. Change appears adventurous, especially when it is associated with more work; more stress. Working in regular education is reported to be more stressful, according to the experience of the teacher quote by William and Gersch (2004) in chapter two.

The feeling of adventure can also be detected in the duality senior teachers versus younger teachers. The older generation has witnessed more than one change of the laws about special education and they have not always been satisfied with those changes. A translation of their feeling could be ‘once beaten twice shy’. In other words, their experiences have caused them to be more conservative and to hold onto the negative assumptions about change.

**5.2.4 The assumptions the teachers hold about change and reform**

It is a fact that ‘resistance is inherent to change’ (Sarason, 1971) but the proposal of change seems to be affected by other factors of resistance.

The teachers have pointed at is the frequency of change. The leitmotiv seems to be change, change, and change. The rhythm of change does not benefit its credibility. In other words, the executors of the change get quickly tired and lose commitment; they need time to digest the change and master the working principles and guidelines that characterize it.
Such feelings of rejection are accentuated when the motives of the change are not clearly stated. Fullan (2001) warns that ‘participants need to understand why a change is being proposed, to see its relevance’. Rumors, speculations, and interpretations prejudice the change. For instance, there are teachers who believe that the motives have to be found elsewhere but not in the improvement of the quality of education for all. ‘Sometimes there are other motives for a change. Many teachers think it is only about money’. The argument the teachers put forward is that special needs education is very expensive and that the government finds in more inclusion a means to cutting down the budgets.

5.2.5 The lack of knowledge of the ideas of the proposal

Governments have always recognized that inclusive education is not only cheaper but it is also better for the children and society. If that is true, the authorities, as mentioned earlier, need to comply at least with two things.

They need to make clear the motives of the change to prevent any ambiguity and misinterpretations. The next thing is what Fullan (1992) calls the necessity to bring the information about the change to the teachers and provide them with opportunities to participate to its initiation.

The fact that the teachers’ knowledge of the proposal is very limited seems to have two main explanations at the level of the school.
A/ The proposal is recent and is at the phase of initiation

Neither the school’s education plan (appendix 9), nor the bulletin (appendix 8) incorporate a section for the proposal. An explanation could be that they both were prepared before September 2005 when the Minister made the proposal.

B/ The proposal is not the priority of the moment

The proposal was not an issue on the agenda of the studiedagen, the study days of the school because it was ‘not a priority’, as argued by one teacher. An argument brought by one of the teacher trainers, according to which the proposal is just ‘like a window frame without the glasses’, can explain why the school management has not yet provided the teachers with sufficient information. The letter of the Minister has not included clear directions for the change. In other words, the Minister has said let us change but has not given any directions. It is true that the proposal has to be discussed; however, the teachers need information that enables them to participate in the discussions.

5.2.6 The teachers’ experience with regular education

The experience of the teachers regarding regular education varies. Some of them have effectively worked in regular schools. For others their experience consists of their pre-service training. It is even sometimes non-existent for others. However, there exists an implicit learning from colleagues. This is corroborated by Zimbardo and Lieppe (1991) who attest that direct experience and implicit learning shape the attitudes of people toward a phenomenon.
It is important to notice that the experience the teachers of the school have gained working in regular education has produced different attitudes. These attitudes may be related to the culture and the vision the schools they have worked in held about inclusive education. Reservations about inclusion are mostly found in regular schools (Bradshaw, 2003; Bradshaw and Mundia, 2004; 2006). However, the schools with a culture of inclusion realize that they can do much more every day and their teachers are more likely to be favourable to a law advocating more inclusion.

There are teachers who have already anticipated an unsuccessful implementation for the new law if it is passed. The argument they put forward is the lack of support and resources in the regular schools. For them regular schools are not ready in the sense that they are not equipped to cater for the education of the children with special needs. They also support that regular schoolteachers do not have the expertise and, therefore, cannot handle the students with special needs. They claim that the children have to stay with them because they are the ones who have the expertise. They believe that the placement in regular schools cannot benefit the students with special needs.
5.3 The necessity for in-service training

‘Everything that is not known can cause resistance’.

This statement, quoted from an ambulante begeleider, explains the relevancy of in-service activities for the teachers to develop knowledge of the proposal and enhance positive attitudes and behaviours. Fullan (2001) suggests that there also has to be opportunities for participants to get ready for the change through advice, support and training. These opportunities will serve at least three main purposes.

5.3.1 To prepare the teachers to work in regular education

In the literature review, I have argued, in the section ‘the times are a-changing’, that if there is anything we are not confident about, it is the future. Therefore, the teachers of special schools must not sit on their laurels and hold onto a ‘we know it all’ attitude. Even if they have a lot of experience working with students with disabilities, they need to update their skills and knowledge for at least two reasons.

First, as argued by an ambulante begeleider, ‘the most difficult group will stay, so they will need more skills and knowledge’. Secondly, if because of the eventual change they have to teach in regular education, they will have to be teachers that are more inclusive.
The participants, including the teachers themselves, have identified that the following aspects of teaching have to be covered to equip the teachers to meet the community’s expectations if the law is passed in 2010.

A/ The management of large groups:

Unanimously, all the participants agree that one of the skills special schoolteachers will have to develop is the management of large groups. Like a leitmotiv, ‘Work with bigger groups’, ‘to manage a large class’ came as a response. This is understandable because, according to Martin and Sugarman (1993), classroom management involves those activities ‘that create more classroom climate within which effective teaching and learning can occur’, (p. 9).

The problem with special schoolteachers is that ‘They work with very few children’. One of the ambulante begeleiders reports that when taken to a regular classroom, any special schoolteacher will realize that the ‘class is too big’ and that the teacher does not have an assistant. This is to reaffirm that the teachers also need to improve knowledge and skills about how to design and ‘organize group work’.

B/ To be inclusive teachers:

The observations have revealed that the classes seem to be more homogeneous than heterogeneous. They appear to be organized according to the degree of disabilities. In other words, the teachers work with children whose disabilities tend to be similar in severity.
I have above mentioned that when they have to work in regular classrooms, they should become teachers that are more inclusive. This means that they should ‘not put the less achieving students before the best achieving students’. It is true that they are used to giving more attention to the less achieving students but the inclusion of the former should not mean the exclusion of the latter. Considering this, and referring to Mittler et al. (1999), it appears clear that special schoolteachers will need more training to work within the framework of the proposed new law.

C/ To develop student’s autonomy:

It has been argued that the teachers will need to improve in building their students independence. I believe this can be achieved if the teachers improve in the way they ‘give instructions’, in the way they design the students’ tasks, and organize group work. One reproach addressed to special schools is that they tend to emphasize what their students cannot do rather than what they can do. The expectations are then low compared to regular schools where the students are expected to achieve high. ‘Special schoolteachers focus on social elements more than on the didactical aspects’ reproaches one of the teacher trainers.

More students’ autonomy can be achieved only if, in their classes, the teachers strive to give to each student tasks that are relevant, suitable and challenging. The Creatief en competent project of the school (appendix 8) is an example of how this can be fulfilled. ‘That development is very important’", the principal writes in the bulletin (appendix 9)
about the project. For Stenhouse (1975), ‘the most effective schools are those where teachers see themselves as learners, where the children and the teacher learn something new each day.’ The objective of the project is to form creative teachers so that they can trigger the students’ creativity. Such a project can help the special schoolteachers to be more inclusive.

5.3.2 To Share experience with regular schoolteachers

The special schoolteachers should not have a ‘we know it all’ attitudes as reported above. Regular schoolteachers can share a lot of their expertise with them. As suggested by Mittler et al. (1999) and mentioned in chapter two, the special schoolteachers have to work with the regular education colleagues. Such collaboration will enable them to grow and improve. For example, it has been recognized that they have to improve in working according a plan.

It is essential that the teachers work together with their colleagues in regular schools because by doing so they can gain a lot of confidence working with large groups (as it is the case in regular education), acquire skills and the pedagogy that facilitate the inclusion of all learners.

Special teachers are specialists working with children with disabilities but regular school teachers are also specialists in their field. Special schoolteachers need additional knowledge if they have to work in regular classrooms. ‘They know a lot about the handicaps but they need more inclusive skills’, admits the principal. It is important that
the type of collaboration, which exists with the work of the ambulate begeleider, is reinforced and the special schoolteachers encouraged to participate in it. Mittler et al. (1998) suggest that the collaboration between regular schoolteachers and special schoolteachers can modify attitudes and practice in order to include the whole range of learners. In the same line of ideas, Fullan (1995) requires teachers to be ‘experts’, not only in teaching and learning, in ‘continuous learning for themselves’, but also, in ‘collaboration’. He argues that ‘teachers must be committed to, skilled at, and involved in (indeed helping to create) collaborative work cultures inside and outside the school’ (p 233).

5.3.3 To be more informed about the proposal for sensible choices

The teachers do not seem to have a clear knowledge of the proposal. They do not have a clear view of how the new context will affect them. Such a situation is in contradiction with the argument of R. Rose, 1998, who believes that in a context of change, ‘All parties involved need to understand the role which they are expected to play, and need to have the confidence that their views will be fully considered and value’, (p.109).

Regarding their future roles, the most enthusiastic teachers about the proposal believe they will have to work as peripatetic teachers or consultants. These teachers seem to be expressing a wish, a hope. That wish or hope is apparently the reason why they hold a positive attitude towards the proposal. If that is the case, they may develop negative attitudes if the new law fails to fulfill their hopes of promotion.
To exercise as consultants or peripatetic teachers, they will need to go through some training, according to the ambulante begeleiders. Therefore, it is essential that the teachers be provided for opportunities to receive advice and to be more informed about the ideas of the new law in order to be able to make sensible and attainable projects. This will protect them from the many speculations about their eventual future roles within the framework of the new law in 2010.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have attempted to discuss the outcomes of the study in relation to the literature. The chapter has included two major themes. The first dealt with the attitudes and the factors influencing the attitudes towards the proposal. The second was about the necessity for in-service training activities to prepare the teachers not only for their future but also to provide them with advice and informed knowledge of the proposal so that they make sensible choices and opinions, and projections.

I feel that the attitudes of the teachers seem to have the following explanations.

- The way they perceive their future roles, in other words, the hopes and fears they hold about the proposed change.
- The vision they hold about education in general and the education of the child with special needs in particular.
- The experience they have gathered working, not only in regular education, but in also working with their present students.
One of the discoveries is also that the teachers in the school are hardly taking any action for a more informed knowledge of the proposal even though it is part of their responsibility to seek knowledge. Thus, unanimously, the participants recognize an essential role for in-service training to fill the information gap. Another role expected from in-service training consists in providing the teachers for opportunities to receive advice and share experience with their colleagues in the regular schools.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, my purpose is to evaluate the research and draw the conclusion. I start the evaluation by restating the study and reminding its motives and context. Then I display the major results. I also discuss deficiencies in the research design and suggest different approaches, which might have been more appropriate. The evaluation also includes recommendations, the implications for practice and further areas for study.

6.2 Evaluation of the study

I began this study with concerns about the attitudes the special schoolteachers might have towards the proposal by the government of the Netherlands of a new law about inclusive education in 2010.

I looked at it through the case of the teachers of a special school classified as a cluster 3.

Cluster 3 schools receive children who fit the description below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster 3:</th>
<th>Limitations that affect common daily life activities and independence limitations, specific therapy besides education is often necessary, often limitations related to skills, concentration, and attitude to work, often social-emotional problems.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physically and/or mentally challenged children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.1 The results

My aim in undertaking the study was to investigate the current attitudes of the teachers of a special school towards the proposal of a new law about inclusive education in 2010. The Minister of Education of the Netherlands made the proposal in September 2005. The outcomes translate the participants’ views and opinions. The research questions of the study have been answered as follows.

1- How much do the teachers know about the ideas of the proposal, Herijking van zorg?

2- Are they taking any actions to be better informed about the ideas of the proposal?

The teachers of the school know very little about the proposal. That situation is not an isolated phenomenon; it can be generalized to the majority of the special schools of the Netherlands. The teachers are not undertaking actions to be more informed about the proposal. Two explanations: first, the proposal is recent and the schools need time to know better about it before distilling information to their staff. Secondly, ‘it is not the priority of the moment’ for the teachers who are burdened with their daily tasks.
3- What are their attitudes towards the proposal?

4-What explains their attitudes towards the proposal?

At first, the teachers appear to be in general for inclusion. However, a lot of them do not conceive inclusion as defined by the proposal.

The teachers who are favourable seem to perceive in the proposal two major things.

- It suits their vision of education.

- It bears hopes for promotion.

The explanations of the less favourable attitudes of the teachers are as follows.

- It is incompatible with their vision of education.

- It bears uncertainties regarding their career and profession.

- It represents for them another law, or one more reform.

5- How do they think they can they better be prepared for their future role in 2010?

6-Are they expecting any role for in-service training in their preparation?

Interestingly, it was recognized that in-service training has an essential role to play to provide teachers not only for opportunities to receive information and advice about the proposal but also to share experience with their colleagues in regular education.
6.2.2 Recommendations

There seems to no better preparation than informing the teachers about the implications of a new law, the impact it have upon them and their students. By doing so, they will be given opportunities to discuss the proposal with a more informed knowledge and express clearly their stance.

“All parties involved need to understand the role which they are expected to play, and need to have the confidence that their views will be fully considered and value’, (R. Rose, 1998, p.109).

The proposal should not just be an issue of discussion for the top hierarchy (boards and directors). ‘Participation is the way to involve and energize the rank and file’, (Kanter, 1983, p. 243).

Knowledge about the proposal should be a central issue in the agenda of the studiedagen (study days). This could be a way of informing the teachers. They will then discuss it and make amendments and new suggestions to be incorporated in a report. The different reports from the different schools or districts could constitute a way of collecting reactions to the proposal.

Those reports will also include the teachers’ concerns and suggestions in how the transition could be managed. What I mean to say is that the teachers will have the opportunity to decide and propose the training activities they will necessitate to update their knowledge and skills in order to adapt to the new context.
Including children with special needs without excluding the other children could be a dilemma for special schoolteachers integrating regular classrooms. Dealing with differences requires special competences (Van Houten, 2005; Ponte, 2004). These competences can be partly mastered in advance, however, I believe that ‘practice makes perfect’. Therefore, it is essential that teachers engage in activities that enable them to develop and share good inclusive practices.

Therefore, one thing of paramount importance in the new context will be the collaboration between special schoolteachers and their colleagues in the mainstream. They have a lot to learn from each other. The former have a lot of experience working with the children with special needs and know a lot about their disabilities. The latter can offer their expertise in handling large classes, setting high expectations, and build up the learner’s autonomy. It is only through such collaboration that teaching will be effective and schools will be places ‘where teachers see themselves as learners, where the children and the teachers learn something new each day.’ (Stenhouse, 1975).

6.2.3 Implication for Practice

Undertaking the study has enabled me to construct a more informed knowledge about special education. I have grown professionally in so far as I have become more reflective and critical, not only on other people’s ideas but also on my ideas. Going through the process has also enabled me to improve as a researcher and as a writer. I am going home with the hope to undertake more research on issues related to education in general but also to special education in particular.
As a teacher advisor and trainer, I have realized that I need to take more seriously into account what the teachers believe, think and expect from reform. The study has made me reflect on the context of Senegal. It has made me think of ways I can assist the Ministry of education to improve the education of the children with special needs. I came to the programme knowing little about special education, I am going back ready to contribute in raising awareness about the education of children with special needs and inclusion in Senegal.

6.2.4 Limitations

I have to admit that because of the language barrier a lot of information was lost. Nevertheless, ‘necessity being the mother of invention’, I tried to go round the obstacle with some ideas.

The classroom interactions occurred in Dutch. However, to observe meaning to see, I designed an observation sheet that enabled me to capture what I could see. I also discussed and corresponded with the teachers to verify my interpretations and get more information.

In the interviews, the language represented a barrier as I do not speak Dutch and some of the participants struggled to express ideas in English. I had key terminologies translated in Dutch, or resorted to their Dutch equivalents (e.g. Professionalism for in-service training). I also asked those who could not express thoughts and ideas in English to speak
Dutch and I got that part of the interview translated. I resorted to the same procedure as far as the documents were concerned. The quality of those translations may still be subject to doubt.

Time represented a real problem in the sense that I had to move from my original topic, which many critical friends, and my tutor, found too broad. The shift to the new case took place when the school year was finishing. Therefore, I had to do with what the school could offer taking into account the factor of participants' availabilities.

6.2.5 If I had to do it again

Yet still, if I had to do it again, I believe that there is a lot I would do differently.

In evaluating the interviews as means of collecting data, I would make changes to my methods in the future. I realized that I could add questions to the interview to reach objectives more accurately.

I also realized that I could use a survey questionnaire to reach more people in the school. I would then extend the research to the parents, the students and the paramedical staff. The views of the first two are not often researched in Senegal. The case of the latter might be similar to the medical personnel running the specialized centres in Senegal.

The selection of participants (in the school) would be improved. It was a good thing for the school; regarding their internal policy to involve those, they think it was their turn.
However, I cannot tell how much the involvement of the school management influenced them in their responses.

This research looked at just one case of one special school. It would have been interesting, following the initial project, to examine other schools of other clusters in comparison. However, the research does provide valuable insights. The other teachers and principal from other clusters (2 and 4) recognize the outcomes of the study. I believe the knowledge gained from this is transferable. In spite of the small number of participants, the investigation yielded rich information.

**6.2.6 Further studies**

Further research could be undertaken to

- Search the opinion of the students,
- Study the opinion of the parents,
- Compare the attitudes of the special schoolteachers from different clusters,
- Investigate what really cause the special schoolteachers to lack time to seek information,
- Look closely at the areas of training to be covered so that teachers can better accommodate all learners.
6.3 Conclusion

Change and innovations are very difficult to handle. Fullan (2001) argues that ‘change is technically simple, but socially complex’. It incorporates connections with social actions and shared opinions. ‘We are not only dealing with a moving and changing target; we are also playing this out in social settings. Solutions must come through the development of shared meaning. The interface between individual and collective meaning and action in every day situations is where change stands or falls’, (Fullan, 2001, p. 9).

For change to be a success, the people involved in it have to be ready and willing to accept contradictions and inconsistency. Cherryholmes, in Hargreaves et al. (1998), believes change ‘is riddled with dilemmas, ambivalences, and paradoxes’. The writer explains that it comprises phases, which are apparently contradictory. To make it happen we need ‘to have a clear vision and be open-minded; to take initiative and empower others; to expect results and be patient and persistent; to have a plan and be flexible; to use top-down and bottom-up strategies; to experience uncertainty and satisfaction’ (p.350).

With Mitchell (2001), it is essential to realize that ‘special education has been, and undoubtedly will continue to be, an arena of change. Managing change, especially when it is occurring on so many fronts, is not easy, whether it be at the system, school or individual teacher or parent level, but that is the challenge if the quality of education for
students with special educational needs is to be improved as the 21st century evolves’, (p. 334).

Justice, common sense and the moral correctness of a position should prevail. It is important to meditate the words of Durkheim (quoted in Hargreaves, 1982, p. 107). He teaches that ‘Everything which is a source of solidarity is moral, everything which forces man to take account of other men is moral, everything which forces him to regulate his conduct through something other than the striving of his ego is moral, and morality is as solid as these ties are numerous and strong’.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

The letter of the Minister

Memorandum: Modernization of the Care Structures in Primary Education

Date: 30-05-05
Author: Minister M. van der Hoeven

Introduction
In this memorandum, I will outline the modernization of the care pathways in primary and secondary education. In January 2005, we have, after a lot of deliberation, concluded that we can improve the present organization of educating pupils with SEN (pupils with special educational needs). This accounts for the three separate structures:
- Going to School Together project (WSNS)
- Pupil Bound Budget (LGF)
- Learning support/Practical training (LWOO/PRO)

That is why, I promised the government to take a close look at the various structures and find out if we can make the organization of care structures more effective.

What goes wrong?
Over the last century, a wide choice of special schools has been established in the Netherlands for children who need extra care because of their handicap, disorder, learning or behavioural problems. These special schools have their own target groups and funding regulations. The last 15 years, we have tried to include these pupils with SEN, as many as possible, in primary and secondary education. That is why the programmes Weer Samen Naar School (WSNS) (Going to School Together) and Leerlinggebonden financiering (LGF) (Pupil Bound Budget) have been established. The law knows an extended regulations system by now that tries to do justice to both the interests of schools and the wishes of parents and children. The outcome is a complex regulations system for care for pupils with SEN. Although this system meets the needs of many pupils, there are too many who are feeling out of place or have difficulties feeling at home due to all the regulations. Parents cannot see the wood for the trees. In addition, it appears that schools often don’t know the difference between the various systems either. In the current procedures, they first check if the pupils fit best in the WSNS pathway, the LWOO/PRO pathway, or (secondary) special education. Then a referral has to be given. Studies will have to be conducted and things have to be placed on file. If it turns out that they are in the wrong pathway, parents can start all over again. If the referral is arranged, parents can finally look for a school. And this is often not so easy as well: some schools don’t accept pupils with referrals, others accept the pupils but can’t offer a teaching programme that has the right level, etc. This needs better organization. There are not only ‘cylinders’ in the educational system: the co-ordination with care for instance (youth care and pupil bound budget) should be improved as well. It is difficult for schools to work with various separate systems next to each other. We are trying to improve co-ordination in the ‘Jong-pathway’. I have informed you about this pathway in the memorandum of April.
The main problems we have to solve are:

- Unclear and complicated responsibility division. Because of this, pupils fall between two stools and have to stay at home.
- Referral. Not only bureaucracy around referral LGF is an important problem, but also the fact that every care structure (LGF, WSNS, and LWOO/PRO) has its own referral system. Parents are sent from pillar to post this way.
- The transition from primary to secondary education is often very difficult for pupils with SEN.
- Parents have, due to the introduction of LGF, the right to register their indicated children in mainstream education. In practice they have problems with the registration policy of schools. Sometimes, schools refuse pupils with referrals too easily.
- Schools that for instance want to develop teaching methods between mainstream and special education, such as the Novalis College in Eindhoven in the Netherlands, are hampered by these regulations. Some special schools have expertise to teach autistic pupils, but can’t do that because of the current regulations.

Need for different regulations

The past months, we have examined how we can improve the outlined situation. We did this in three sub-pathways:

- The organizations of boards, management and staff have jointly explored the possibilities of a deregulated care system. The outcome is outlined in the memorandum ‘Frameworks Towards Flexible Pupil Care’
- We discussed with parents and parents’ organizations their place in the various care pathways.
- A project group of civil servants of OCW (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) and Justitie (Ministry of Justice) has explored if deregulated legislation based upon the duty of care is possible for the pathway: Bruikbare rechtsorde (Usable system of laws). This implies that certain legal provisions oblige people involved (in general terms) to take care of a certain group of people. Important for the duty of care is that the person who is responsible for it is responsible for the interpretation of the care. This person can exercise the duty of care based upon vision and specific circumstances. Additional regulations on preconditions are possible here.

The findings of these pathways are enclosed in this memorandum.

Both the educational organizations and the project group conclude that additional regulations in the current system are no solution. In practice, it so happens that these regulations don’t give enough room to schools to provide custom work. They both propose further development of the possibilities of the duty of care. Important outcome of the discussions with parents is that they want unequivocal legal regulations on the registration of pupils with SEN.

How can we improve things?

I share the idea that new regulations in the current system don’t help solving the problems in special education. The legal system would become ever more complex. Many regulations that should provide a solution for the problems of today are often the cause for new problems tomorrow. As an example I take the regulation that parents are responsible for the LGF recommendation of their children. This regulation has been introduced to provide parents with as much freedom as possible in the choice for mainstream or special education. However, a number of parents don’t take this responsibility, with the result that their children don’t receive the care they need. The need for (special) care of pupils is so different that it is almost impossible to develop nationally arranged educational provision that justifies all these differences. That is why we should better opt in favour of different regulations that provide room and responsibility for schools to develop their own provision that justifies development possibilities of the pupils. The government will have to lay down the responsibilities of the schools clearly and plainly in a duty of care.
in order to make sure that pupils with SEN receive proper education. The starting points for these new regulations are in keeping with the policy memorandum Governance that was sent to the Dutch government in July 2005. This memorandum says that the government provides institutions with as much space as possible in order to allow them to fulfill their responsibilities regarding education. The government formulates the necessary quality demands for this, provides sufficient financial means, and monitors the outcome that is achieved. It is also important for balanced regulations that parents are good conversation partners for schools. Their personal experiences with their children should influence the organization of education. The Governance memorandum speaks in this connection about ‘horizontal responsibility’. In the follow up of this memorandum, I’ll further develop the new regulations.

Quality education for all pupils
In order to solve the problems mentioned at the beginning, things must change. We have to switch from a predominantly educational provision structure to a system that is focused on pupils. Instead of fitting in pupils in a structure, the curriculum becomes flexible and varied in a way that justifies the possibilities and development of each pupil.

In reality it goes like this:
- Parents register their children in a school of their preference. Then this school is obliged to offer a special educational arrangement. It is possible that their first-choice school is not able to (fully) organize the educational programme. In the special educational arrangement is mentioned which school does provide education for this pupil. This other school should place this pupil, so parents can’t be sent from pillar to post anymore.
- When disagreement occurs regarding the education of children between parents and school boards, they can make an appeal to dispute resolution. In order to support parents with the assessment of educational provision, regional centres will be established. These centres will include educational counselors as well.
- Pupils with SEN can get a referral based upon an objective system. There is one referral system for all pupils. When pupils with referrals register, the school receives more funding. This enables the school to exercise the duty of care. Not all pupils with SEN need to have a referral. After all, dyslexia and behavioural problems appear in all schools. If all these pupils should need referrals, this would lead to unnecessary bureaucracy. Schools receive for these kind of smaller problems a basic budget, which is based upon the total amount of pupils in the school.
- Provisional funding in the current system will disappear almost entirely. The differences between funding of pupils with referrals in special schools and in mainstream schools will disappear. Therefore, the amount of funding can’t influence the place where pupils are educated anymore.
- The vertical supervising by the inspectorate is geared towards the new situation. Schools are not obliged to offer educational provision to all registered pupils. This means that in the new situation the inspectorate checks if educational provision is offered to all pupils. Then the inspectorate checks if the quality is sufficient of the educational provision and of the outcome that is achieved. The duty of care is a fundamental condition for funding. If schools don’t meet this condition, sanctions will follow.

Varied and flexible educational programmes
The outcome should be that the educational system is more focused on pupils’ needs and parents’ wishes. The legal division between mainstream education and special education can be cancelled with the introduction of the duty of care. The provisions that are still needed will be in our legislation for primary and secondary education. Legally speaking, all schools are mainstream schools for primary or secondary education. The more or less pupils are registered; the more or less special these schools are in their educational provision. The number of registered pupils determines the amounts of money schools receive. This doesn’t imply that special (secondary) schools have to disappear. After all, many parents opt for this
provision. It is important for pupils with SEN that schools for special (secondary) education keep their expertise and develop this further. The amount of knowledge and experience they have with specific educational programmes for all kinds of handicaps and disorders will benefit more in the new situation. Various forms of integrated education can be developed with the use of the expertise of special provisions. For instance for:

- Educating autistic pupils at havo/vwo level (senior general secondary education and pre-university education)
- Collective employment-oriented training of VSO/PRO (Schools for Practical Training) and parts of VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education)
- Arrangements where pupils follow a part in special education and a part in mainstream education
- Arrangements with short periods of intensive ambulant counseling from special education
- Arrangements with structural ambulant counseling, but only a few times a year
- Special classes in mainstream education where pupils with various handicaps are welcome

The above-mentioned doesn’t account for the expertise of special (secondary) education alone, but also for schools for special education and practical training. Their expertise in the field of educational programmes for pupils with dyslexia, ADHD, highly gifted pupils, and employment-oriented training can be used to make proper arrangements for all pupils. Keeping an existing provision is also possible here. The intended changes to the planning of provisions for secondary education offer co-operating schools in the region more possibilities to gear their educational provision to their own region. This also implies that all schools for secondary education get the opportunity to organize practical training. Not every school must develop expertise for all pupils now, but expertise in special education, special primary education and in practical training will become more efficient and will provide extended services.

Most pupils can be offered an educational provision the way it is described above. However, there are specialisms that are so specific and of which the target group is so small that schools can’t be expected to be able to provide this in co-operation with other schools. Think for instance of visually challenged and hearing challenged pupils. This provision will be maintained through aanbodsfinanciering (funding based on the number of these kind of pupils).

Experience with different forms of integration can serve as an example by developing a flexible and varied educational system. A good example is the experiment ‘Gewoon Anders’ (Ordinary Special) in Almere that gained experience from primary and secondary education. In Almere were no schools for special education. The school boards then decided to develop their own structure for special educational provision, which was mainly based on mainstream education. They work with a number of models (child in group, group in school, group related to school). The choice of parents is important here. The Gewoon Anders Association supports parents and schools during the execution of education. The funding comes from the Experimentenwet (Law on Experimental Education). Meanwhile the experiment has been evaluated and extended due to success. This example shows that when school boards co-operate well they can realize an extended educational provision.

**What is the impact of these changes?**
This memorandum suggests radical changes. An important question is: what is the impact of these changes on both pupils and parents? In other words, does it benefit them? And what is the impact on schools and their boards, the inspectorate and the government?

**Pupils and parents**
Pupils, who used to be referred from one school to another and who passed through various referral pathways, now get a place in one school. If the school can’t provide the educational provision itself, they have to take care of educational provision in another school. Parents can’t be sent from pillar to post anymore. This doesn’t imply that registration is absolutely guaranteed. But it does offer parents a placement guarantee for their children. Parents don’t have to look for themselves for an appropriate school: this is an improvement, especially for parents who have problems finding their way and who are therefore in a vulnerable position. From now on, pupils have to attend only one referral pathway. I’m convinced that pupils achieve better due to flexible arrangements. Because of this, more pupils will be qualified in the end.

As soon as parents register their child, they have a placement guarantee for their daughter or son. For parents who have questions on educational provision and also to help parents judging the arrangement they receive, I want to establish regional support centres. Besides, I think it important that also the less independent parents can go to these centres for information and advice on school choice, referral, etc. These centres will include educational counsellors as well. When the school and the parents disagree, they can go to an independent commission on dispute resolution. In this context will be checked in which way such a commission is related with the introduction of the ‘Wet gelijke behandeling chronische zieken en gehandicapten’ (Act on Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Handicap or Chronic Illness). We must prevent that different procedures are developed next to each other. The essence is an adequate commission on dispute resolution. We have to find out if the Act on Equal Treatment on the Grounds of Handicap or Chronic Illness can play a part in this.

**Schools and school boards**

Many things change for parents, schools, school boards, the inspectorate and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Schools and their boards have to make the biggest change. They are responsible for the interpretation of the duty of care. Schools don’t have to do everything themselves. The multi-school management together with the school board play a part of vital importance. They make appointments with schools in the region about co-operation so that all pupils get an educational programme that will meet their needs. Co-operation is particular important for governing bodies serving one school and small school boards. The difference with the current situation is that school boards will be able to choose with whom they want to co-operate, in which fields and with which intensity?

In ‘Frameworks Towards Flexible Pupil Care’ school boards have declared to be prepared to take this responsibility. The co-operation that has already been reached here and there in the Netherlands and the search for solutions for all pupils, strengthen my belief that schools and school boards can make this change. I am convinced that this is not easy for everyone. I think that the challenge for the organized educational field lays in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) on how they can both stimulate and support all school boards to execute their responsibilities. The last few years, OCW has gained a lot of experience with the introduction of policy pathways, which gives schools and boards not only extra space, but also more responsibility. We are on our way to prepare school boards for the introduction of lump sum in primary education. And the Taakgroep Vernieuwing Basisvorming (task group modernization basic secondary school curriculum) has organized, in co-operation with the education world, the modernization of the first stage of secondary education. It is my intention to realize a national introduction of the duty of care in a time span of approximately 5 years. This combined with the adjustments that are proposed in the field of funding, the position of the parents and supervision. Professionals in the schools will provide education: they have to exercise the duty of care every school day. Multi-school co-operation must create conditions in which teachers and school management can actively exercise the duty of care.

**Inspectorate**
The introduction of a duty of care takes adjustment of the inspectorate supervision. The inspectorate shall have to monitor if every pupil (also pupils with SEN) receives education and if this is quality education. The main thing here is if special educational programmes are offered to all pupils. Is the placement guaranteed, in other words, are there no children at home anymore? Apart from exercising a duty of care, the quality is important. Relevant questions: are the special educational programmes being implemented, and what results do the pupils achieve? Are all pupils sufficiently being stimulated and challenged to learn, and are they using the qualities of all pupils? As we supposed before, the duty of care is a condition for funding. This implies that sanctions follow if a school doesn’t live up to the care of duty.

Government
The government is responsible for the accessibility, the quality and continuation of education. It’s also the government’s task to provide adequate funding. This is not going to change with the introduction of the duty of care. But things do change regarding the way of funding. Instead of drawing up rules, the government leaves the organization of education to the professionals in the education world. The government provide funding and set out demands for the quality standards schools have to meet. The main targets in primary education and the examination requirements in secondary education are examples of frameworks where the government keeps an eye on the quality of education. Specific to a duty of care is that the person who is responsible for it can exercise it the way he or she wants. That is why school boards look for an interpretation that is focused on their vision, the environment and the possibilities. This is not only the task of the school board, but also of the parents and various schools in the region. The inspectorate monitors if the chosen approach reaches the desired outcome: a placement that meets the needs of each pupil. If the education system functions insufficiently, the government shall correct this.

Where do we go from here?
In this memorandum, the main points are outlined of the re-evaluation of the special needs support structure in primary and secondary education (that I wish to explore further). I know that my proposals have far-reaching consequences for the organization of education. Therefore, the development is very important. Before I start, I would like to discuss the main points with you. If you agree with the main points, I will develop these further in the next six months. It is not the content alone that is important, the cultural shift is just as important to the successful introduction of the changes. Then, based upon the developed proposals, a final decision making can take place on the introduction.

The basis of the further development is the formulation of the duty of care, the additional provisions that are necessary and the qualitative preconditions that are necessary to switch to legislation in accordance with the regulation principal of a duty of care. Meanwhile, I want to design the deregulation of the current legal framework. Switching to a new system, like every modernization, causes unsecurity. I have experienced that people involved in this kind of new situations want guarantees. I understand that, but we can’t guarantee everything. It is an art to find a balance between guarantees for exercising a duty of care and creating space for school boards to actual execute a duty of care.

The position of parents is changing. While I develop my proposals on this issue, I start from the fact that schools and parents are in this together in the interest of pupils: not opposite each other but side by side. Not only the group of independent parents, but also the less independent parents have to be part of this modernized system. An approachable regional support structure can play an important role here. Furthermore, in order to give both parents and schools clarity, it is important to keep the procedures short for establishment of the commission on dispute resolution.
Next the funding. It is a precondition that the funding of the system is manageable and does not cost extra money. With respect to content, we have to find out how we can increase funding for pupils with SEN and how we can cut back the funding of the schools as much as possible. This implies, for instance, that research is necessary on how the so-called 2% regulation for the project Going to School Together (WSNS) can become pupil bound. This does not imply that all pupils with SEN need referrals in the future. We must prevent that an enormous ‘referral circus’ is established for rather small problems and, moreover, which effects all schools. Therefore, all schools receive a basic budget based upon the total amount of registered pupils. Furthermore, I will examine how we can fund: pupil care in havo and vwo, the specific expertise that is present in special secondary education, and the parent structure.

Schools and school boards cannot all give immediately shape to the duty of care. This is not necessary. For this reason, we are developing an introduction strategy in consultation with the educational organizations. This strategy starts from the current situation. Then we work inch by inch towards modernization, to improvement. It is certainly not the intention to throw away the existing structures. After all, many things are successful in the current situation. Schools that are already able to exercise a duty of care should, preceding the extended introduction, get the opportunity to do so. This is possible by offering school boards the possibility to switch to the new system. Which clearly means:

- School boards in primary education and secondary education are co-operating within a region for the benefit of a sound educational provision. Starting point here is that all existing forms of co-operation within primary education and secondary education (WSNS, regional expertise centre or REC, LWOO) remain.
- When school boards develop a sound initiative that results in an appropriate educational provision for all pupils that register at any of the involved schools, they can receive one or more legal exemptions. The way parents are involved in this should be fairly clear. OCW examines the alternative partnerships. Parents will be asked for advice in this judgement.

The combined educational organizations support this principle of ‘deserved autonomy’, which enables the school boards to anticipate to the new situation.

Many things still need to be done. In the development schedule enclosed with this memorandum are all the points that still need developing. In this schedule are questions formulated that we have to answer in brief in the next months. Based upon these answers, the definitive decision process can take place on the manner of organizing and funding pupil care. All in all, it is obvious that the changes are not implemented tomorrow. I aim for a five-year plan in which the new system will be implemented. The improvements in the current system, as they were pointed out in the development memorandum of April, can go on too, because they are also important for the new situation. This also accounts for the referral and the ‘map of the Netherlands’ (geared to co-operation in the regions).

Translation: Mariëlle Thorissen
Appendix 2

Interview of the teachers of the school

1- How long have you been teaching?
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............................................................................................................................................................
2- How long have you been teaching in a special school?
3- Why did you choose to teach in a special school?

4- How do you define inclusive education?

5- Do you see advantages in an inclusive education?

If yes,
What advantages do you see?

6- Do you think there are disadvantages in an inclusive education?

If yes,
What disadvantages do you see in an inclusive education for all?

7- Do you think all the students of the school can go in regular education?

If yes,
Why do you think so?

If no,
Which students, do you think, cannot fit in regular education?

Why do you think they cannot fit in regular education?

8- The Minister of Education has made a proposal for a new law for more inclusion in 2010. Do you know about it?

If yes,
How did you come to know about it?

9- Are you trying to know more about it?

If yes,
10- How are you trying to know more about it?
If no. why are you not trying to know more about it?

11- Which students do you work with?

12- Have ever worked with students with less or more severe disabilities?

13- Do you have any experience of collaboration with a regular school?

If yes,

14- How has that influenced your opinion about inclusion?

15- How do you see the future of the special schools?

16- What role do you think special schoolteachers will play in 2010?

17- Do you think you will need additional training to adapt to the context of the new law?

18- Do you think in-service training or professionalism can play a role in preparing the teachers for their future role?

If yes,

What role can in-service training play in it?

19- What was on in the agenda of the last in-service training or studiedag you attended?

Appendix 3

Interview of the Principal

Work experience:
-Explanation of choice for special education
-length of experience at the head of the school

About the school:
- Cluster (students of the school)
- The school’s vision
- the teachers of the school
- Collaboration with other schools

**Inclusive education:**
- Advantages
- Disadvantages

**The proposal for the new law in 2010:**
- Personal knowledge of the proposal
- Teachers’ knowledge of the proposal

**Future of special schools:**
- Advantages of the new law for the school
- Disadvantage of the new for the school

**Future of special school teachers:**
- Advantages of the new law for the teachers of school
- Disadvantage of the new for the teachers of the school

**Attitudes of the teachers towards the proposal:**
- Reactions
- Factors

**Measures to ensure correct information of teachers:**
- The role for in-service training
- Other measures

**Measures for successful preparation of teachers for 2010:**
- The role for in-service teacher training

**Anything else to add**
- About the proposal/ inclusive education/ the teachers of the school

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**Appendix 4**

**Interview of the ambulante begeleider (peripatetic teachers)**

1. How long have you been acting as an ambulante begeleider?
2- What is your definition of an inclusive education?

3- Do you see in all the teachers of the school have an inclusive behaviour?

4- In 2010, there will be a new law about inclusive education. Do you know about it?

   If yes, 
   Do you think all the teachers of the school know about it?

   If yes, 
   What in their behaviour make you say they are inclusive teachers?

   If no, 
   How can that affect their attitudes towards the ideas of the new law?

5- Do you think all cluster 3 students can go in a mainstream education?

   If no, 
   Which students of cluster 3 cannot go in a mainstream school?

6- Do you think that can have an influence on the special schoolteacher’s attitudes towards the ideas of the new law?

   If yes, 
   How can such a situation influence the teacher’s opinion?

7- What other effects do you think that can have an influence on their attitudes towards the ideas of the new law?

8- How do you think the new law if enforced will impact on the special schoolteacher?

9- Do you think the special schoolteachers know the impact the new law will have on their career?
10- Do you think the special schoolteachers need additional training if the proposal is voted?

If yes, What kind of training would they necessitate?

11- Do you think a role for in-service training for a better preparation of the special schoolteachers?

If yes, What role do you think in-service training could play?

12- What was on the agenda of the last in-service training or studiedagen (study days) you attended?

Appendix 5

Interview of the teacher trainers

1- How long have you been in teacher training?

2- Tell me about a major educational change or reform you have witnessed.

3- What was your attitude towards that change?
4- Were there any presentations, courses, workshop provided in relation to that change?

5- There is a proposal for a new law about inclusive education in 2010. Do you know about it?

6- What do you think will be the major changes in the educational system when the new law is implemented in 2010?

7- What do you think should be the role of in-service training in relation to attitudes towards the new law?

8- To what extent do think the teachers in general and special schoolteachers know about the proposal?

9- How do you think the special schoolteachers perceive the proposal?

10- How do you see the future of the special schoolteacher within the framework of the new law?

11- Do you think they will need additional in-service training to adapt to the new context of the new law?

12- What do you think in-service training can do for their preparation in the context of the new law?
Appendix 6

Interview of the psychologist

**Work Experience:**
- First place of work
- reason for work in special schools
- other work places

**The school:**
- experience in the school
- the school’s vision
- collaboration with teachers

**Inclusive education:**
- definition of inclusive education
- comparison with school’s vision

**The proposal of a new law in about inclusion in 2010:**
- knowledge of the proposal
- discussion of proposal

**Role of special teachers:**
- future of special schools
- future of special schoolteachers

**Attitudes of the teachers of the school towards the proposal:**
- teachers’ knowledge of the proposal
- teachers’ reactions

**Measures to ensure correct information of teachers:**
- the role for In-service training
- other measures

**Measures for successful implementation of law of the law if voted:**
- the role for in-service teacher training

**Anything else to add**
- about the proposal
- about inclusive education
- about the teachers of the school
Appendix 7

Observation sheet

About Teacher:

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<td>Age</td>
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1- Diversity:

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2- **Layout**

3- **Formal interactions**

Students’ needs
- Did the Teacher have a task for every student?
  Yes
  No
  - Did the Teacher have different tasks according to student needs?
    Yes
    No
  - Did all the students have enough to carry out tasks?
    Yes
    No
  - Did students have other roles?
    • help peer student:
    • give out books:
    • write on board:
    • other:

Involvement of T Assistant
- What tasks did the Teacher Assistant do?

4- Informal interactions teacher/students

  • Jokes:
  • Sanctions:
  • Encouragement:
Appendix 8
Appendix 8: The bulletin of the school

EXTERNE DIENSTVERLENING

Inspelen, anticiperen op vragen vanuit het regulier onderwijs. Dat is een van de hoofd taken van de Externe Dienstverlening van het REC Midden-Brabant waarvan de Ambulante Begeleiding van de deel uitmaakt. De cursus 'Leren kijken naar Motoriek' is een goed voorbeeld van de manier waarop deze doelstelling wordt vertaald.

Aanleiding voor de opzet van een cursus, specifiek gericht op motorische problemen bij kinderen, waren de geluiden uit het regulier basisonderwijs. dat, als intern begeleider werkzaam op openbare basisschool De , herinnert zich de vragen van zichzelf en van zijn collega's nog wel. "Je ziet vaak wel dat er 'iets' met een kind aan de hand is, alleen is het soms moeilijk om dat 'iets' concrete te maken. Er was dus duidelijk behoefte aan een cursus, een handvat, iets dat je helpt bij het gericht kijken naar kinderen.

'Ver kijken nu anders, beter'

Als je sneller en beter kunt signaleren wat er met een kind aan de hand is, kun je ook sneller hulp bieden of hulp zoeken." De signalen uit het veld werden enkele jaren geleden opgepikt door de medewerkers van de Externe Dienst. Naar aanleiding van die geluiden werd een cursus ontwikkeld. was een van de eerste deelnemers. "Centraal stond hoe je motorische problemen bij kinderen het beste kunt signaleren. Daarvoor is een Kijkwijzer gemaakt die je helpt om het probleem van het kind nauwkeuriger in beeld te krijgen. Met de resultaten uit de Kijkwijzer ga je vervolgens naar de Besle boom; daar beantwoord je de vraag of en zo ja hoe je deze leerling het beste kunt helpen. Mogelijk komt daar ook uit dat je specifieke hulp mogelijk moet inroepen."

In de cursus werden ook workshops gegeven rondom de thema's: Schrijven en zitting, Fijnmotorische vaardigheden en Lateralisatie.

Luisteren naar de praktijk

De cursus werd zeer positief ontvangen. Wel kwamen er in de afgelopen jaren signalen dat er vragen bleven liggen op een aantal vlakken. Zo waren er vragen op het gebied van DCD -kinderen met bewegingssturingsproblemen- en op het gebied van het handelingsinzicht. Het leidde ertoe dat door de Ambulante Begeleiding een tweede cursus werd ontwikkeld: Leren kijken naar Motoriek 2. eveneens leerkracht aan volgde de nieuwe cursus. "Er is duidelijk geluidst er naar de vragen uit de praktijk", zegt ze. "Er zijn nu ook workshops over de grove motoriek/bewegingsonderwijs, DCD, de zintuiglijke prikkelverwerking en praxis vraagstukken. Heel interessant, zeker omdat ik nu merk dat er in de opleiding in de Pabo toch maar erg weinig aandacht is voor dit soort aspecten."

Volgens voorziet de cursus in een behoefte. "Absoluut", onderstrept hij. "We merken in de dagelijks praktijk dat we, door de kennis die we hebben opgedaan, er beter in slagen om signalen goed te interpreteren en dus ook meteen dichter bij de juiste diagnose komen. We kijken anders, beter, ja."
Creatief en Competent. Het zijn tegelijkertijd twee belangrijke pijlers onder de toekomstvisie van onze school, onze speciale school. Want we kunnen in naam dan wel een school voor speciaal onderwijs zijn, zeker in het veranderende onderwijsveld zullen we steeds meer duidelijk moeten maken wat de term 'speciaal' nu precies inhoudt. Waarom zijn wij speciaal, wat maakt ons zo bijzonder, waar ligt onze specifieke kennis en op welke gebieden zijn wij van toegevoegde waarde in het totale Nederlandse onderwijsbestel?

De vraag hierboven is niet retorisch bedoeld. Ik vind namelijk dat we aan onze omgeving verplicht zijn om ons speciale karakter duidelijk voor het voellicht te brengen. Die vraag moeten we dus beantwoorden. Dat doen we bijvoorbeeld in dit jaarverslag. Een jaarverslag dat niet de intentie heeft een compleet beeld te schetsen van wat we op school doen, maar dat wel aangeeft welke koers we varen, waar onze accenten liggen en hoe we ons in de komende jaren willen ontwikkelen.

Die ontwikkeling is van groot belang. De school is een dynamische en innovatieve onderwijsinstelling. Dat is het altijd geweest en dat wil het altijd blijven. Maar dat gaat niet zomaar. Dat vergt creativiteit en flexibiliteit, zowel van de organisatie als geheel als van elke afzonderlijke medewerker.

In dit jaarverslag wordt weer eens duidelijk welke omslag de school in de afgelopen jaren heeft gemaakt, welke ontwikkeling de school al heeft doorgemaakt. De omvorming van een aanbodgerichte school naar een veel meer vraaggestuurde installatie, waarbij de hulpvraag van de leerling centraal staat, gaat volgens de weg der geleidelijkheid. Maar dat die weg voortvarend wordt gevolgd, dat mag duidelijk zijn. En waar zelfsturing een steeds belangrijker sleutelwoord wordt in de begeleiding van onze leerlingen, wordt het ook een leidend motief in de ontwikkeling van onze medewerkers. Professionals die op onze school werken, zullen immers dagelijks invulling moeten geven aan die dynamische en innovatieve organisatie die we willen zijn. Dat betekent dus ook dat die professionals zelf in beweging moeten blijven; met oog voor de omgeving, met de wil om nieuwe kennis en vaardigheden te verwerven en te delen met anderen en met de intentie om concreet invulling te geven aan dat speciale karakter van onze school.

Het speciale karakter dat extra kracht als mensen blijvend op zoek gaan naar nieuwe mogelijkheden, gaan vorsen, experimenteren en situaties creëren waarin nieuwe ideeën ontstaan. Nieuwe ideeën die uiteindelijk tot doel hebben om een hoger rendement van ons speciale onderwijs te bewerkstelligen.

Dat moeten we en dat willen we; ook omdat we merken dat de hulpvraag van onze doelgroep verandert en steeds complexer wordt.

Bij een jaarverslag kijken we terug op een jaar. Daarnaast richten we ook altijd onze blik op de toekomst. Hoe die eruit ziet blijft uitdagend genoeg. Met de voorgenomen herinvulling van de zorg ontstaan er mogelijkheden en kansen. Bijvoorbeeld een andere invulling van ambulante zorg. Nog meer vaag-gericht werken dus. Ook in dat kader blijft het belangrijk om het speciale karakter van de school: het interdisciplinair werken en de daaraan gekoppelde expertise, te blijven ontwikkelen en te communiceren. Daarbij vind ik de combinatie van zorg en onderwijs die wij samen met Revalidatiecentrum bieden een duidelijke meerwaarde van onze locatie. De geïntegreerde aanpak van therapie en onderwijs, de mogelijkheid om activiteiten naadloos op elkaar aan te laten sluiten en in elkaar te verweven, biedt enorme mogelijkheden.

Ik ben van mening dat we oog moeten blijven houden voor de enorme kracht van dit interdisciplinair werken.

De school is creatief en competent. Daar ben ik van overtuigd. Het voorliggende jaarverslag toont daarvan slechts enkele voorbeelden. Het is aan ons om onze creativiteit op een dusdanige manier te gebruiken dat we uiteindelijk ook tot in lengte van jaren competent blijven. En dat kan alleen als we daar samen keihard aan werken. Dat kan de school als organisatie niet alleen, dat kan een individuele leerkracht, klas-sensassistent of therapeut niet alleen. De school is een simpele optelsom van alle mensen die er werken, samen met onze leerlingen en hun ouders.

De school is een ontwikkeling, die bij uitstek een omgeving die bruist van creativiteit. Dat zit 'm in het samenspel van mensen. Creativiteit is niet iets wat kan ontstaan en bestaan bij een eenling, dat komt alleen aan de oppervlakte als je op een goede manier met mensen samenwerkt. Luister maar eens naar een orkest. Dat klinkt ook alleen maar mooi door het samenspel, nooit door de kwaliteit van de individuele muzikanten, hoe goed ze muischien ook zijn. Creatief en competent heeft pas daadwerkelijk effect als je het met elkaar bent. Dat zijn we en dat willen we blijven.
Investeren in de ontwikkeling van medewerkers

stand gekomen door de input van een aantal bijeenkomsten die in het voorjaar van 2005 gehouden zijn.

Actieplan
Het actieplan laat zien op welke terreinen in het komende jaar de accenten liggen. De aard van die accenten varieert van heel praktisch (klassen- of werkbezoek door de afdelings-coördinator en het opstarten van een pilot rond intervisie) tot puur beleidsmatig (vormgeven van een bottom-up proces bij het vaststellen van strategische doelstellingen en het realiseren van resultaatverantwoordelijke teams).

De vraag dringt zich daarbij op of het allemaal soms niet wat te veel wordt voor de medewerkers van de school. Paul Janssen: “We zijn een drukke school. Dat komt ook omdat hier veel enthousiaste mensen werken. Toch is het goed om af en toe eens in de spiegel te kijken, te reflecteren. Dat doe je al bij individuele kinderen, dat doe je in je groep, binnen je leerweg, maar dat moet ook op schoolniveau en persoonlijk niveau. Waar staan we als school, in welke richting bewegen we ons en wat betekent dat voor mijn eigen ontwikkeling?”

Bekwaam zijn en bekwaam blijven
In de leerende organisatie die de school is, is het van groot belang om inzichtelijk te maken welke specifieke kwaliteiten binnen de schoolmuren al voorhanden zijn. Wie is waar heel goed in?

Een breed aamengesteide werkgroep heeft zich in 2005 gebogen over de vraag hoe de verschillende bekwaamheden het best in kaart gebracht kunnen worden. Gekezen is voor een digitaal bekwaamheidsdossier. “Het bekwaamheidsdossier is geen duel op zich, het is een hulpmiddel”, zegt Paul Janssen. “Het is voor ons als Mytyschool Tilburg enorm belangrijk om te
Appendix 9

The school’s education plan (Scholingplan 2005-2006)

S: verplichte scholing aangeboden door de school  
D: deskundigheidsbevordering (naar eigen keuze deelnemen door invulling te geven aan  
scholing op basis van eigen professionaliteit)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Datum</th>
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<th>S</th>
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### Doelgroep: (VAK)LEERKRACHTEN

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• Gebruik Powerpoint | X |   |       |      |
| Nader te bepalen | Personeel van de technische dienst:  
• Cursus BHV | X |   | Nader te bepalen | |
| Nader te bepalen | Psycholoog / orthopedagoog:  
• Handelingsgerichte diagnostiek | X |   | Nader te bepalen | |

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Voor onderstaande scholing gelden aparte afspraken (zie hiervoor de regeling bijscholing assistenten REC Midden-Brabant).

### Doelgroep: KLASSENASSISTENTEN

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Vastgesteld in overleg met de medezeggenschapsraad d.d. 31 oktober 2005
Notes

i In Dutch, Herijking van zorg
ii NTQ = National Teacher Qualification, a teaching certificate in the UK.
iii Kuhn, T. cited in Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 71
iv Morse (1999), cited in Robson, 2002, p. 170
v Opbrengsten veldlijn Passend, concept 270506, Den Haag, may 2006
vi ‘Die ontwikkeling is van groote belang’, p. 2, 2005 issue of the school’s bulletin
vii Generic Competences by De Bruine et al. (2004)