INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As more and more students from diverse backgrounds populate the twenty first century classrooms, efforts mount to identify effective methods to teach these students the need for effective assessment strategies to assess their strength, weaknesses and pedagogical approaches that are culturally responsive intensifies. To meet these challenges teachers should adopt modern methods of assessment, theoretically sound and culturally responsive pedagogy, and create a classroom environment where all students, regardless of their cultural and linguistic background, are welcomed and supported and provided with the best opportunity to learn.

Student diversity includes temperament, gender, range of language, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, differences in ability, cognitive styles, and learning preferences; and students with disabilities. Teachers will have to adapt effective teaching methods to reach every student. Each student will have an identity that is the product of his/her past experiences, abilities, personality, gender, social class, nationality, ethnicity and religion. Teachers need to understand and connect divergent student groups and use their expertise to help them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in our society. The teacher needs to provide students with numerous strategies that will examine: group differences, namely gender, culture, socio economic status, and language, individual differences like temperament, ability, cognitive styles, learning preferences and exceptionalities.

Group differences describes the ways in which one group of people differ from another group in certain aspects. Group differences include differences in culture, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status (SES), and gender. Individuals may belong to several groups at the same time. Group identification can give teachers very broad clues about their students’ thinking and behaviour. With awareness of group differences teachers can know how it affects students’ learning capacity and performance. Expert teachers view each student as a unique individual and use what they know about group differences, which help them to explain why students learn differently in school.
Learning preferences or learning styles are individuals’ approaches in studying and learning and differ from cognitive styles, in that there are conscious inclinations that may be subject specific (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2000). Proponents of learning preferences argue that students learn more when they study in their preferred conditions (Dunn and Dunn, 1987). The multiple learning preference model includes preferences about the classroom environment like amount of lighting, level of noise, sensory modality e.g., visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, the depth to which students prefer to study i.e. deep processing, surface processing, extroverted verses introverted styles, sensing verses intuition, thinking verses feeling, and judging verses perceiving (Biggs, 2001). The idea of learning styles reminds of diversity of learning approaches among students and the need to use variety of instructional methods in the classroom.

Cognitive styles are characteristic ways of processing information that develop unconsciously around underlying personality trends (Messick, 1994). Cognitive style that has been studied extensively is impulsivity/reflectivity (Kagan, 1965). Impulsive students tend to offer quick answers in problem-solving situations without carefully thinking about them; therefore they tend to make more errors than average students while processing information. In contrast, reflective students tend to consider several alternative solutions before offering an answer; therefore they tend to make fewer errors than average while processing information. Impulsive students are more likely to show lower achievement in classroom activities such as reading, problem solving and decision making (Smith and Caplan, 1998). Reflective modelling, instruction to delay responding, and self-regulation are the methods in which impulsive students are taught how to stop and reflect on alternative solutions before offering answers to problems, which can improve their performance significantly (Moreno and Duran, 2004).

Although in many cases the teachers will be able to adapt the instruction to the students’ unique characteristics an additional challenge in today’s classroom comes from the need to include the students with special needs within the context of general classroom activities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act gives all students with special needs the right to a free and appropriate education and requires that, to the extent possible they be provided with the least restrictive learning environment. The schools are also required by law to provide students with special needs with an
Individualised Education Programs which is a blueprint for the academic, social, physical and affective needs of each student. An important role for the general classroom teacher is to devise Individualised Education Programs for special children with the help of special education teachers, resource professionals, and parents as well as provide tailored instruction to alleviate some of the obstacles to learning of this group of students (Torgensen, 1996).

1.2 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO LEARNING

There are many contrasting and complementary theories about the ways in which young people and adults learn. These are constantly refined as new research is being carried out and reported on. Learning is not just a discrete, school based event. It occurs in different contexts but, as Wood (1998) argues, the school environment engenders new and distinct forms of learning: school based learning includes a series of ‘contrived encounters’ or social interactions that come about as a result of explicit educational goals’. Aspects of different theoretical perspectives informs about the classroom practices, teachers observe and begin to adopt for themselves.

According to behaviourists, learning is any relatively permanent change in our thoughts, feelings, or behaviour that results from experience. Learning can be conscious or unconscious (Destrebecqz and Peigneux, 2005). There are several prominent views about how children learn. These include behavioural, cognitive, socio-cognitive and constructivistic views of learning. The first view of learning, behaviourism was originated with the work of the American psychologist Watson (1913). He argued that psychology should be concerned with the study of human behaviour rather than with the study of human mind. According to behaviourism, learning is relatively enduring change in observable behaviour that results from experience. The focus of behavioural views of learning is on producing desirable behaviours or reducing undesirable behaviours, behavioural principles are most effective in classroom management (Martin and Pear, 2002). The careful use of behavioural learning techniques can help the teachers to address the student’s misbehaviour and social skill deficits (Bergan and Caldwell, 1995). Behavioural principles can be applied whenever a teacher is interested in promoting appropriate behaviour, skills or self-regulation, and discouraging inappropriate behaviour.
The Socio-cognitive Theory defines learning as relatively enduring change in the mental structure of a learner that creates the potential to demonstrate different behaviours (Hill, 2002). It focuses on learning that is the result of observing others or observing the consequences of the behaviours of others. The main contribution of socio-cognitive theory to education is the concepts of social learning, reciprocal causation, modelling and self regulation. Social learning occurs when people learn from observing the behaviours of others. Social learning also occurs from observing the environmental outcomes of the behaviour of others (Bandura, 2000). Reciprocal causation, (Bandura, 2006) refers to the interrelationship between the student’s environment, their personal beliefs and their behaviour. Modelling consists of the cognitive, affective and behavioural changes that result from observing other’s behaviour’s and explanations (Schunk, 2004). Self regulated learning can be defined as the ability to control all aspects of one’s learning, from advance planning to how one evaluates performance afterwards (Bruning et al., 2004).

When socio cognitive learning theories examine how people’s thinking and behaviour are affected by observing others, the constructivist learning theories extend socio cognitive theory by focusing not only on how people construct knowledge within themselves but also on how they co-construct knowledge with others. At the heart of constructivism is the idea that the students actively construct their knowledge from their personal experiences with others and the environment (Simpson, 2001).

The cognitivistic approaches to learning are characterized by their focus on the changes in thought that are involved in learning. They emphasize the mental processes underlying the processing of new information. Cognitive theory defines learning as relatively enduring change in mental structures that occurs as a result of the interaction of an individual with the environment. Cognitivism is currently the predominant perspective within which human learning is described and explained. Contemporary cognitivism emphasizes mental processes and proposes that many aspects of learning may be unique to the human species.

Cognition or intelligence is multi-faceted and reflected in the coordinated performance of numerous language and non-language tasks, including perception, memory, mental imagery, concept formation, problem solving, language learning,
academic achievement, and navigating everyday life (Sternberg, 1989). "Cognition" refers to "understanding" the ability to comprehend what we see and hear, and to infer information from social cues and body language. Neisser’s (1967) definition of "cognition" illustrates this well. According to him "cognition" refers to all processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used. It is concerned with these processes even when they operate in the absence of relevant stimulation, as in images and hallucinations.

The "cognitive revolution" was initiated by Noam Chomsky's 1959 critique of behaviourism and empiricism more generally. The origins of cognitive thinking such as computational theory of mind can be traced back as early as Descartes in the 17th century, and proceeding upto Alan Turing in the 1940s and 1950s. The cognitive approach was brought to prominence by Donald Broadbent's book ‘Perception and Communication’ in 1958. Since that time, the dominant paradigm in the area has been the information processing model of cognition that Broadbent (1958) put forward. This is a way of thinking and reasoning about mental processes, envisioning them as software running on the computer that is the brain.

The information processing model is the classic model used by cognitive psychologists to explain cognition and learning (Newell and Simon, 1972). This model focuses on how the mind processes information, which is a popular cognitive approach to understanding how people acquire, store, and recall new information. The human mind is analogous to a computer where new information can be input, processed, stored and later retrieved. Likewise, the human mind receives information from the environment i.e. the students listen to the explanation of the teacher, process the information, make sense of the explanation, stores the new information in memory, integrate the explanation with their prior knowledge and retrieves the information when needed while taking a test. The three memory systems involved in this are the sensory memory, working memory and long term memory that holds information and the cognitive processes i.e. attention, perception, storing and encoding are the mental activities that can be performed on new information.
1.3 THE PASS THEORY OF INTELLIGENCE

Most of the popular theories of intelligence hold that the human intellectual functioning is best conceptualized as a single unitary quality that underlies all the cognitive processes. PASS (Planning, Attention, Simultaneous and Successive) theory has been offered as an alternative to general intelligence, and is based on the description of neuropsychological processes. The PASS model of processing first proposed in 1975 by Das et al. is described as an information processing theory based on Luria’s work and later as information integration theory and most recently as PASS theory elaborated by Das et al. (1994) and Das et al. (1996) challenges ‘g’ theory on the grounds that neuropsychological research has consistently demonstrated that brain is made up of interdependent, but separate, functional systems. These authors suggested that a unidimensional model with just intelligence fails to assist researchers and clinicians who study learning disabilities, disorders of attention, mental retardation, and interventions designed for special populations who face those challenges. Based on A.R. Luria’s (1996) seminal work on the modularization of brain function, and supported by decades of neuroimaging research the PASS theory divides intelligence into four interrelated cognitive processes, i.e., Planning, Attention, Simultaneous and Successive Processing.

The planning processes involve decision making, problem solving, and performing activities and requires goal setting and self-monitoring and it is associated with the frontal lobes of the brain. The attention/arousal component involves selectively attending to a particular stimulus, ignoring distractions, and maintaining vigilance. This is associated with the brain stem and thalamus where as higher processes are thought to be related with frontal lobe. Simultaneous processing involves the integration of stimuli into a group and requires the observation of relationships. The occipital and parietal lobes are thought to be important for this. Successive processing involves the integration of stimuli into serial order. This processing is believed to be related to frontal-temporal lobes functioning (Das, 2002).

The planning and attention/arousal component comes from structures located in the frontal lobe, and the simultaneous and successive processes come from structures located in the posterior region of the cortex. According to PASS theory, information first
arrives at the senses from external and internal sources, at which point the four cognitive processes activate to analyse its meaning within the context of the individual’s knowledge base. The PASS theory provides the theoretical framework for a measuring instrument called the Naglieri-Das Cognitive Assessment System (CAS), published in 1997. This test is designed to provide a nuanced assessment of the individual’s intellectual functioning, providing information about cognitive strengths and weaknesses in each of the four processes. This emphasis on processes rather than abilities makes it useful for differential diagnosis; unlike traditional full scale IQ tests. The CAS is capable of diagnosing learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder. It has been normed for use with children and adolescents from age 5 to 17.

1.4 DIVERSITY IN THE TWENTYFIRST CENTURY CLASSROOMS

Today’s classrooms have a wide array of cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity among students. Teachers need to understand that ethnicity cannot be judged on the basis of physical characteristic or birthplace alone but rather by learning about the extent to which students participate in various cultural and ethnic group activities (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003). Culture is a term that describes the knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviour which characterize a group of people. It can be thought of as a schema or blueprint that guides the thinking and behaviour of a group, including the ways to dress, work, play, and communicate verbally and nonverbally with others. Cultures are subject to change over time, especially when cultural groups come into contact with others (Rogoff, 2003). A major determinant of the culture in which people grow up is ethnicity, a term that refers to common place of origin. Ethnic groups share a sense of interdependence due to the fact that they are comprised of people of the same race, origin, or religious background (NCSS Task Force on Ethnic Studies Curriculum Guidelines, 1992). Ethnic groups are made up of subgroups with distinctive characteristics. Race is the category of people who share biologically transmitted traits such as skin color or hair texture (Macionis, 2006).

Depending on their background, students may participate actively in two or more cultures (Lopez, 2003b). The larger the difference between students’ home culture and the mainstream culture, the more likely they will experience some type of culture shock,
a term used to describe the anxiety and confusion felt when the people have to operate within an entirely different cultural and social environment, such as a foreign country. Culture shock can threaten students’ adjustment to school and achievement (Casanova, 1987). There is cultural mismatch between the teacher and the student, because teachers are likely to misinterpret ethnic minority behaviours by viewing the world from their own cultural frame of mind (Ogbu, 1992). Although this is understandable, it may lead teachers to judge unfairly students’ cultural practices as less desirable or inferior.

The increasing diversity in the classroom has become one of the most significant realities for teachers. While the percentage of language and cultural minority students is increasing rapidly. This disparity emphasizes the need for teachers to become knowledgeable about students’ background so that they can design instruction that is sensitive to their needs (Bennett, 2007). Effective teachers in today’s classroom serve as cultural mediators; they guide students to think critically about diversity, reduce bias, and promote acceptance among diverse students (Redman, 2007). Furthermore competent teachers reflect on their own biases, expectations and practices to work effectively with diverse students and take into consideration individual differences within groups to form hypothesis about what strategies are likely to be effective with each student (Pang, 2005).

Perhaps the most obvious cultural difference is the language background of the students. Respecting the student’s first language is essential for building a solid classroom community. Experts argue that it is very important to communicate effectively with students about when it is appropriate for them to use the Standard language or their first language. Teachers must communicate their expectations and their rationale (Pugach, 2006). Success in a mainstream society is facilitated when adults have good Standard language proficiency, ideally, students should be encouraged to develop and use both, depending on the communication context and purpose (Ogbu, 1999).

Regardless of the language used, different cultural and ethnic groups have diverse verbal and nonverbal communication practices. Teachers should be aware of these differences. In the classrooms the main emphasize is on individual performance, which leads to competition among students. Motivation experts discourage competitiveness in the classroom, which is found to detract students’ intrinsic motivation to learn (Wentzel, 1999).
In diverse cultures the children are taught the value of group rather than individual achievement; consequently, students feel comfortable working with others, helping one another on assignments, or sharing knowledge (Rogoff, 2003). Typical classroom also reflects time orientation by having a set schedule, with fixed time for each class, project, or activity, and establishing deadlines to turn in homework, papers, and other assignments. However for some cultures this view may be limiting, rigid, or even upsetting (Bennett, 1999).

Although most cultures value school achievement highly and the parents encourage their children to do well at school, for some cultural groups, family needs may take precedence over academic needs (Goldenberg, et al., 2001). Therefore it is not unusual to observe students in many communities to leave school when their family requires their assistance. Students may not only show differences in their behaviours but will have different beliefs and assumptions about the world.

Teaching language minority students to read and write well in First language is an urgent challenge because some language minority students are not faring well in schools. Many educators and policy makers feel that the language of instruction should be English only. On the other hand language minority parents feel strongly the need to instruct their children in their mother tongue/regional language as a way to maintain their cultural identity. A promising solution to help language minority students develop literacy in both their first and second language is bilingual education. Research in language development, shows that the more proficient students are in their first language, the easier it is to learn the second language (Bozzone, 1995), and that adding English to a well- developed first language can enhance thinking skills and metalinguistic skills, the ability to think about language itself (Bialystok, 2001). Researches on bilingualism say that bilingual education programs are effective in promoting academic achievement. There is diversity within language groups and that immigrant children will vary in their ability to learn second language, depending, on other factors, on their experiences with literacy and schooling in their first language (Lessow-Hurley, 2005). Children from low socio-economic backgrounds have more difficulty in developing second language proficiency than their
more well of counterparts (Rueda and Yaden, 2006). For these children, bilingual education programs may need to be longer and focused on a combination of effective teaching strategies and positive, warm encouragement (Goldenberg, 1996).

Apart from language, Socio Economic Status (SES) is also one of the most powerful factors influencing student achievement, often shadowing other group differences such as stemming from ethnic background or gender. At school, Socio Economic Status (SES) predicts students’ intelligence and achievement scores, grades, and dropout and suspension rates (Macionis, 2006). Low-Socio Economic Status families have less access to good prenatal and infant health care and nutrition and are more likely to have premature babies, and children in poverty are more likely to be exposed to legal and illegal drugs before birth. These factors are all associated with impairment in higher cognitive development and with lower school achievement (McLoyd, 1998). Low Socio Economic Status (SES) families have less access to high quality preschool care for their children, and this can place them at a disadvantage in intellectual and social development (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 2000). In addition, the schools that low Socio Economic Status (SES) children attend often have fewer resources than those in higher-income neighbourhoods (McLoyd, 2006).

Lack of emotional and cognitive stimulation at home can account for a half of low Socio Economic Status children’s academic disadvantages (Korenman et al., 1995). Higher Socio Economic Status parents are, on average, more involved in their children’s school activities than lower Socio Economic Status parents (Diamond and Gomez, 2004). This is partly because parents in low Socio Economic Status households need to work at two or more jobs (Weiss et al., 2003) and partly because many low Socio Economic Status parents had limited education themselves, so they are not capable of helping their children with school work (Finders and Lewis, 1994). Moreover the high Socio Economic Status group parents have higher expectations for their children than the low Socio Economic Status group.

In low income neighbourhoods, middle-Socio Economic Status (SES) teachers are likely to have low expectations for these learners and fail to provide sufficient stimulation to promote the development of high-order thinking skills (Spring, 2006). Children from
disadvantaged homes are less likely to have good nutrition, access to good health care, and opportunities to learn outside the school and at the school. They are also typically held to lower expectations and live in impoverished neighbourhood where crime prevails and positive role models are absent (Vernez, 1998). These factors place students at risk of failing to complete their education with the skills necessary to succeed in today’s society. In this case teachers can reach out to families and community members, encourage and support students’ learning and motivation in a variety of ways.

The strong evidence in favour of both nature and nurture as a source of gender differences has led most experts to conclude that they are the result of the interaction between heredity and the environment (Jones and Dindia, 2004). Regardless of their origin, teachers should understand gender differences that may have an impact in the classroom. Girls report to have more intense emotions than boys; yet females are able to self-regulate their emotions and behaviour than males (Eisenberg et al., 2004). Females engage in more pro-social behaviour than males, such as demonstrating kindness, empathy, and consideration for others (Eisenberg et al., 2006). In the classroom, males are more likely to participate in learning activities, ask questions, and be verbally aggressive than females (Brophy, 2004). From a very young age, boys are more active than girls. Therefore in the classroom, boys have a greater tendency not to pay attention, move around the room, and pose discipline problems (Ruble et al., 2006).

Although a large number of studies have found no gender differences in intelligence, certain differences are found when examining different abilities within the intelligence tests (Halpern, 2000). On average, the females score higher than males on tests of verbal ability, such as those of assessing reading, vocabulary, spelling, grammar and comprehension (Hyde and Mckinley, 1997). In contrast, on average, males score higher than females on tests of visuo-spatial abilities, such as tasks where they have to mentally rotate objects, judge the velocity of moving objects, track movement through three dimensional space, and aim at a moving or stationary target (Ruble et al., 2006). Males tend to outperform females on standardised achievement tests, but girls tend to get higher maths grades at school than boys (Halpern, 2000). Therefore teachers should not have different expectations for girls and boys for different subjects.
The general agreement among experts is that gender difference in achievement is the result of the gender bias at home and school environments (Meece and Scantlebury, 2006). The differential treatment of boys and girls at home and in the classroom can have a strong impact on students’ identity and academic development. Thus as reflective practitioners, teachers should make special efforts to think about their expectations and biases to ensure equal treatment of both sexes. Although boys and girls have distinctive characteristics, teachers need to make sure that they give them the same academic opportunities and encouragement.

Individual differences are the result of combination of nature and nurturing factors. Environment plays a significant role in student’s thinking and behaviour. General intelligence test scores are strong predictors of academic achievement and moderately predict work performance (Lubinski, 2000). The most common response to ability differences in the classroom is called ability grouping, a method whereby students of similar abilities are placed into groups so that instruction can be matched to the group needs (Lou et al., 2000).

The different type of ability grouping include between class grouping, within class grouping, Joplin plan and multi-age grouping. Within class grouping presents the following challenges: first the teacher must plan and monitor independent activities for some students while working in a group with others (Oakes, 1992). Second, the teacher needs to provide differentiated instruction, learning environments that are sensitive to individual levels of readiness (Benjamin, 2005). Third the teacher needs to plan activities that are manageable in terms of student behaviour, which creates the risk of overemphasizing the use of extensive drill and practice especially for students with lower ability levels, to keep the classroom under control (Newman and Schwager, 1992). When carefully planned and not overused, some form of temporary ability grouping can have significant effects on student’s achievement, especially in the areas of mathematics and reading (Tieso, 2003).

Temperament is an individual’s typical style of responding to environmental stimuli and events. Children display different temperaments from a very early age, and most experts agree that temperamental differences are biologically based (Keogh, 2003). Eventually the interaction of nature and nurture contribute to the development of personality,
individual’s distinctive way of thinking, feeling, and behaviour (Fox et al., 2001). Students’ personality will affect how they interact and engage in classroom activities, which in turn can have an effect on their academic achievement (Keogh, 2003). Research also shows that children are more likely to succeed in environments where their personalities match teacher expectations, such as the case of quiet, introverted children doing better when the teacher emphasizes independent seatwork and energetic, extroverted children doing better when teachers emphasize participation in group work and classroom discussions (Keogh, 2003). Therefore it is important to adapt instruction and classroom management strategies to accommodate a diverse range of student personalities.

1.5 ROLE OF COGNITION AND SELF PERCEPTION IN LEARNING

In recent years the area that received more intense focus in the study of cognition has been the assessment of neuropsychological functioning in children and adolescence. The field of neuropsychology has emerged as the investigation of brain-behaviour relations. Although neuropsychological assessment has been studied extensively in adults, empirical work with children has been slower to develop. In his classic studies, Luria (1980) proposed that three major brain regions are the most useful for understanding intelligence: (1) a unit in the brain stem and midbrain structures that relates to arousal; (2) a unit comprised of the temporal, parietal and occipital lobes that relate to sensory input; and (3) the frontal cortex, which relates to organization and planning. Whether or not one believes that the components of these systems are linked to structural regions of the brain, these neurobehavioral or neuropsychological models of cognition can be used to evaluate cognitive, linguistic and sensorimotor functions (Lezak, 1995).

While our knowledge about the cognitive and social components of learning disabilities continues to grow, little is known about children’s self-perceptions of their learning disabilities. Clinical observations suggest that both children and adults are more likely to experience academic success and emotional growth when they can better understand and interpret factors related to their learning disabilities (Cohen, 1985). Still, it appears that students are often given insufficient information and support in this area. Severity of a disability will be related to self-perception of a learning disability, but that severity will not account for all of the variance in self-perception.
Rosenholtz and Simpson (1984) points out that, a number of classroom process factors are involved in students' ability perceptions. Where all students tend to work on similar tasks, with a small number of different materials, taught by teachers holding beliefs in the salience of a limited range of "basic" academic skills, students are confined to a narrow basis on which to develop an academic identity. This basis, usually reflecting a unidimensional view by teachers of student ability (Marshall and Weinstein, 1984), tends to reinforce negative self-perceptions of ability on the part of low achieving students. Comparisons of performance among students tend to be more frequent where classroom processes are unidimensional (Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1984). Also, when students work as a whole class or in clearly defined ability groups, comparisons are relatively easy to make and interpret. For Learning Disabled students, such classroom organizational processes will likely mean that self-perceptions are defined in terms of the basic skills like reading, writing, arithmetic etc. which set them apart from their peers in the first place.

The factor that affects students’ perception of their learning disability is the severity of the disability, that is, the level of the child’s discrepancy, and the number of areas in which he or she experiences academic discrepancies, may accurately affect perceptions of their disability (Rothman and Cosden, 1995). It is expected that students’ perceptions of their disability is correlated with the severity of their disability, that is, students who have lower achievement scores will accurately perceive their skills as lower and report more pervasive problems. Students with a less negative perception of their learning disability would perceive greater competence in non-academic areas than students with a negative view of their disability. Students with a less negative view of their learning disability were predicted to perceive higher levels of support from their parents, teachers, friends, and classmates (Rothman and Cosden, 1995).

Achievement in school is more closely related to self-perception of ability than to general self-concept (Byrne, 1986), also decline in ability perceptions occur for most children around ages 7 and 8 (Eshel and Klein, 1981), but are more marked for children experiencing frequent academic failure during the early school years (Dweck and Bempechat, 1983). Typical decline in ability perceptions occur (a) after initial overestimate of abilities and achievement expectations (Stipek, 1984) and (b) in response
to information about performances provided by teachers and peers (Rosenholtz and Simpson, 1984). Persistent information that implies low ability on the part of Learning Disabled students is likely to lead to earlier and more negative decrements in ability perceptions.

1.6 SUMMARY

In the light of the above aspects the investigator was interested in finding out the role of cognition in learning i.e. how cognitive processing in elementary inclusive school children affects their achievement and also in knowing how children consider themselves and their capabilities. This is an area that most researchers neglect i.e. perception of academic abilities and disabilities, the affective domain. If cognition has to take place in a child he or she should have interest in it, a good attitude to do it, and a feeling towards completing the task i.e., it should include the affective domain also. Present study proposes to know how cognitive processing and self-perception of learning disabilities among normal and special groups affects their academic achievement.