

**THE PERSPECTIVE OF PARENTS OF LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES REGARDING
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN THE
WESTERN CAPE: A CASE STUDY**

by

ELIZE MARCELLA COTTERELL

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR C S GOUS-KEMP

OCTOBER 2015

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

Student number: 33923876

I declare that **The perspectives of parents of learners with learning disabilities regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in independent schools in the Western Cape: a case study** is my own work and that all the sources used have been acknowledged by means of a complete list of references.

23 August 2016

Signature

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks goes to my supervisor who was always willing to listen and provide knowledgeable guidance in so many different ways. Without her support and advice, this dissertation would not have been possible.

I express my sincere gratitude to those parents who shared their personal perceptions and granted me their time to be interviewed on numerous occasions.

I would also like to thank my husband and children who supported me in my endeavour.

ABSTRACT

Using a qualitative case study method, this study sought to understand parents' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education that their learning disabled children experienced at independent schools when compared to the guidelines for implementing inclusive education as provided for by the Department of Education's Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011. In line with universal human rights movements and South African law, the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities or learning barriers into mainstream classrooms is necessary to enable them to succeed. South Africa adopted a policy of Inclusive Education in 2001 with the policy document, 'The Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education'. This document paved the way for new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. To achieve the intentions of the Department of Education (DoE) the Department of Basic Education has published numerous guidelines for addressing inclusion in the classroom. This research focused on the most recent guideline entitled 'Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011' by focusing on curriculum differentiation and accommodation for learners with learning difficulties

Independent schools maintain that they are not obliged to follow the DoE's policy documents and guidelines because they are independent. The question is, do they have their own protocols in place to replace those of the DoE? However, the argument is that independent schools should be held accountable for the effective learning support of learners in their schools that experience barriers to learning by having the same or similar policies and guidelines as those of the DoE. The researcher used the guidelines provided by the DoE as a benchmark for the implementation of support measures in inclusive education to study the practices and specific support offered to learners experiencing learning problems in independent schools.

The research revealed that the absence of explicit guidelines at independent schools creates uncertainty among parents. The researcher concluded that when independent schools do not deliver the anticipated appropriate support, parents are powerless to demand more effective support for their children. The opinion of the parents was that the implementation of inclusive education at independent schools can be advanced by the adoption of guidelines that are similar to those in use at public schools.

Key terms:

Learning disabilities; Inclusive education; Independent schools; Western Cape; Parents of learners; Department of Education Guidelines; Learner diversity; Individualized assessment; Individualized support; Teaching strategies

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CDT	Critical Disability Theory
CSTL	Care and Support in Teaching and Learning
DBST	District-based Support Teams
DoE	Department of Education
DSM-IV-TR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
FSS	Full-Service School
ILST	Institution-Level Support Team
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa
K-W-L	Know, Want to Know, Learned
LTSM	Specialised Learning and Teaching Support Material
LURITS	Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
RTI	Response To Intervention (RTI)
SBST	School-based Support Team
SIAS	Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SLD	Specific Learning Disabilities
SSRC	Special School Resource Centre
The 2011 Guidelines	Republic of South Africa, Department of Basic Education, National Curriculum Statements, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, Grades R-12: 'Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011'
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Learning support undergone.....	53
Table 5.1	Summary of parents' answers regarding curriculum and assessment differentiation	91
Table 5.2	Suggested individualised support for Parent and Learner 1	94
Table 5.3	Suggested individualised support for Parent and Learner 2	98
Table 5.4	Suggested individualised support for Parent 3 and Learner 3	102

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Ecosystemic model layout.....	25
Figure 2.2	Differentiated Assessment Process	31

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	Ethical clearance certificate.....	121
APPENDIX C	Parent's informed consent form.....	123
APPENDIX D	General Interview questions	125

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM	3
1.3	THE PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.4	THE RESEARCH QUESTION	6
1.4.1	Secondary research questions	6
1.5	AIM OF THE RESEARCH	6
1.5.1	Research objectives	7
1.6	DEFINITION OF TERMS	7
1.6.1	Inclusive education	7
1.6.2	Learning disability	7
1.6.3	Independent school	8
1.6.4	Western Cape	8
1.7	RESEARCH DESIGN	9
1.7.1	Literature study	9
1.7.2	Empirical investigation	9
1.8	THE STUCTURE OF THE STUDY	10
1.8.1	Chapter 1	10
1.8.2	Chapter 2	10
1.8.3	Chapter 3	11
1.8.4	Chapter 4	11
1.8.5	Chapter 5	11
1.8.6	Chapter 6	11
1.9	CONCLUSION	12

CHAPTER 2

LEARNING DISABILITIES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1	INTRODUCTION	13
2.2	LEARNING DISABILITY	13
2.2.1	Definition of learning disability	14
2.2.2	History of learning disability	15
2.2.3	Causes	16
2.2.4	Identification of Learning Disabilities by Schools	16
2.2.4.1	Formative assessment	17
2.2.5	Behaviours of learners with learning problems in the intermediate phase	18
2.2.5.1	Attention and memory	18
2.2.5.2	Thinking and reasoning	19
2.2.5.3	Metacognitive abilities	19
2.2.5.4	Social-emotional functioning	19
2.2.5.5	Spoken language	20

2.2.5.6	Reading	20
2.2.5.7	Written work	21
2.2.5.8	Mathematics	21
2.3	INTERMEDIATE PHASE.....	22
2.4	INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THEORIES	22
2.4.1	What is understood by the term <i>inclusive education</i> in South Africa	23
2.4.2	Theories influencing inclusive education	23
2.4.2.1	Critical Disability Theory.....	23
2.4.2.2	Systems Theory.....	24
2.5	INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY.....	26
2.5.1	Public schools	26
2.5.1.1	The National Education Policy.....	27
a)	Strategy for Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)	27
b)	Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning	29
c)	Guidelines for Responding to Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011	29
i.	Differentiating curriculum content	30
a.	The abstract level	30
b.	The complexity level	30
c.	The variety level	30
2.5.2	South African independent schools	33
2.5.2.1	ISASA's diversity and equity policy	34
a)	Extent and practice of inclusive education in independent schools	36
2.6	ROLE OF THE PARENT IN EDUCATION	37
2.6.1	International perspectives.....	37
2.6.1.1	South African public schools.....	38
2.7	CONCLUSION	40

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

3.1	INTRODUCTION	41
3.2	THE RESEARCH DESIGN.....	41
3.2.1	Quantitative paradigm	42
3.2.2	Qualitative paradigm.....	42
3.2.2.1	Characteristics of qualitative research	42
a)	Natural setting	43
b)	Context sensitivity	43
c)	Rich narrative description	43
d)	Direct data collection	43
e)	Inductive data analysis	43
f)	Emergent design	44
g)	Participants' perspectives	44
h)	Researcher as key instrument	44
3.3	RESEARCH METHODS	45
3.3.1	Case study	45

3.3.2	The research population and sample	46
3.3.3	Sampling technique	46
3.3.4	Data collection	47
3.3.4.1	Interviews	47
3.3.4.2	Documents.....	48
3.3.5	Data processing	48
3.4	MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS (VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY).....	49
3.4.1	Reliability	49
3.4.2	Validity	49
3.5	ETHICAL MEASURES	50
3.6	CONCLUSION	51

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1	INTRODUCTION	52
4.1.1	Description of parents	52
4.2	INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARENTS	53
4.2.1	Background information on parents and children.....	53
4.3	FINDINGS BASED ON THE INTERVIEWS.....	56
4.3.1	Awareness of inclusive education policy at the schools the learners attended	56
4.3.2	In what way are the 2011 Guidelines a positive step to inclusive education	57
4.3.3	Curriculum Differentiation.....	57
4.3.4	Curriculum content differentiation	58
4.3.5	Differentiation at the abstract level of a child's learning	59
4.3.6	Complexity of content differentiation	61
4.3.7	Differentiation at the level of variety	61
4.3.8	Using multilevel teaching	64
4.3.9	Differentiated learning environment.....	68
4.3.10	Physical environment	70
4.3.11	Social well-being.....	71
4.3.12	Differentiated teaching methods.....	71
4.3.13	Differentiated assessment.....	76
4.3.14	Alternate forms of assessment	85
4.4	CONCLUSION	88

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1	INTRODUCTION	89
5.2	INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA	89
5.2.1	Public schools and inclusive education	89
5.2.2	Independent schools and inclusive education	90
5.3	PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING HOW INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS IMPLEMENTED AT THEIR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL	91

5.4	PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS AT INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS REGARDING THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 2011 GUIDELINES	91
5.5	THE POTENTIAL SUPPORT THAT THE LEARNERS COULD HAVE RECEIVED IF THE SUPPORT WAS BASED ON THE 2011 GUIDELINES.....	94
5.6	CONCLUSION	104

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1	INTRODUCTION	106
6.2	REVIEW OF FINDINGS	106
6.2.1	Major findings in respect of the secondary research questions	106
6.2.1.1	Question number one.....	106
6.2.1.2	Question number two.....	107
6.2.1.3	Question number three	108
6.2.1.4	Question number four	108
6.2.2	Major findings in respect of the main research question	109
6.3	RECOMMENDATIONS	109
6.4	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	110
6.5	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	110
6.6	IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY	110
6.7	CONCLUSION	111
	REFERENCES.....	113
	APPENDICES	122

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As an overall principle, it (inclusion education) should guide all education policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society.

Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education: UNESCO 2009:8

In line with universal human rights movements and South African law, the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities or learning barriers into mainstream classrooms is necessary to enable these learners to succeed. Inclusive education places a tremendous responsibility squarely on the shoulders of teachers. It can be defined as

...a dedication to building a more democratic society, a more equitable and quality education system, and a belief that extends the responsibility of regular schools to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners (Dyson 2001:17).

South Africa adopted a policy of Inclusive Education in 2001, outlined in the policy document, 'The Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education'. This document paved the way for new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. The aim of inclusive education policies and practices is to remove the barriers to teaching and learning that learners with disabilities experience, and to ensure that these learners have access to the school of their choice. Inclusive education also aims to allow learners to remain in a mainstream school after they have been diagnosed with a learning disability. The intention of the DoE is to have inclusive education implemented at all levels of the education system by 2020 (DoE 2001:43).

Learners with learning disabilities have specific requirements that need to be addressed by educators during their school years. Without addressing their needs, these learners will be prematurely excluded from the ordinary education system. Recognising this reality, the DoE has made it possible for teachers to differentiate and adapt the curriculum and assessment to the specific needs of learners with learning disabilities in public schools.

To achieve the DoE's intention, the Department of Basic Education has published various guidelines for addressing inclusion in the classroom. This research focuses on the most recent guidelines entitled 'Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, 2011' (DoE 2011). The aim of this guideline is to:

... provide teachers, principals, subject advisors, administrators, school governors and other personnel, parameters and strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classrooms through the curriculum (DoE 2011:2).

The publication is referred to as *the 2011 Guidelines* in this dissertation in order to distinguish it from the numerous other guidelines relating to inclusive education that are mentioned.

Most independent schools are members of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) and are not obliged to follow the Department of Education's policy documents and guidelines. According to Krüger and Yorke (2010:293):

In South Africa the emphasis given to the implementation of inclusive education varies considerably. Public schools clearly fall within the ambit of the vision of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education 2001) as they are state-controlled. Independent schools pursuing inclusion do so apart from a state mandate or resources (Walton 2006:i) as they are privately funded and governed. Independent schools which are members of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) are constrained by the Diversity and Equity Policy of this association. This policy encourages 'inclusivity of learners with special education needs, wherever feasible educationally' (ISASA 2002) and is congruent with both international and state drives towards inclusion.

In addition to the Diversity and Equity Policy, ISASA has conditions for membership that differentiate between requirements and principles of good practice as part of their conditions for membership. In terms of the requirements, members must 'Promote and nurture a commitment to a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights,' and 'Produce and publicly display a positive affirmation of its commitment to a non-discriminatory society and a diverse, just and equitable school community' (Lee 2015).

Even though independent schools are not obliged to follow the DoE's policy documents and guidelines, it might be worthwhile to investigate the possibility that independent schools can benefit from implementing selected guidelines such as the 2011 Guidelines which offer much guidance to teachers to help them to keep up with international trends in inclusive education.

Policies normally reflect the worldview of the time. Theories such as the ecosystemic (Landsberg *et al* 2010:12) and critical disability theories (Hosking 2008) underpin the paradigm of inclusivity. From the ecosystemic viewpoint, or social theory viewpoint, learners with specific disabilities will experience their impairment with twice the severity if systems (society, schools, learning environment or parents) cause further barriers to learning by contributing to their alienation from so-called 'normals' and thus to their poor academic achievement. The alienation could happen in schools when there are badly designed curricula, poorly trained teachers or inappropriate methods of instruction (Puri and Abraham 2004:42; UNESCO 2001:22).

Critical disability theory examines the sources of oppression within the legal system (Hosking 2008:13). By exposing this oppression critical disability theory tries to relieve disabled people of their marginalisation and social exclusion. Critical disability theory identifies the positive role of politics, policy and law, and seeks to create laws and social institutions which can assist disabled people in their struggle for freedom. Critical disability theory maintains that language

is not neutral and examines how language both reproduces and contests the social oppression of disabled people (Hosking 2008:13). Critical disability theory also recognises the potential of the disabled and requires that the courts recognise and advance their legal rights (Hosking 2008:16, 17).

South Africa has some of the most advanced policies on inclusive education in public schools. However, the question is whether these policies can be put into practice in classrooms of independent schools so that learners at independent schools can have the benefit of the true spirit of inclusive education and the opportunity to become the best they can be.

The present research aimed to make a contribution to knowledge of the practical application of inclusive education at independent schools in South Africa. This qualitative investigation explores in what way parents at independent schools considered the implementation of the 2011 Guidelines to be beneficial to their children.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

In 2007 the researcher had 25 learners in her Grade 2 class at an independent school. On the surface this group looked like a homogenous group of learners, but on the continuum of learning ability they were a very heterogeneous class. On the one end of the learning ability continuum, various psychologists had diagnosed the following: Learner 1 had low cognitive functioning, dyslexia and attention deficit disorder. Learner 2 had dysgraphia and learning difficulties. Learner 3 had specific learning difficulties. Learner 4 was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity and mild learning difficulties. Learner 5 was categorised as having attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity. At the other end of the learning continuum there were some extremely high cognitive functioning learners, while the rest of the class fell somewhere near middle to above the average of the continuum.

Five years later, in 2012, all mentioned learners who had been diagnosed as having learning disabilities by psychologists had not failed a grade and had passed their entrance examinations to their high school of choice. Their inclusion was made possible by South Africa's policy of inclusive education, particularly Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion (DoE 2002) and the willingness of the principal and teachers to implement this policy in their school.

The policy adopted in the Education White Paper 6 involved

... moving away from using segregation according to categories of disabilities as an organizing principle for institutions and basing the provision of education for learners with disabilities on the intensity of support needed to overcome the debilitating impact of those disabilities (DoE 2001).

The above mentioned school set about orientating management, staff and governing bodies towards the inclusive model. Classroom teachers were seen as the primary resource needed to form an inclusive system that would be fully implemented by 2021.

In the White Paper the DoE also recognises that the

... curriculum and education system had failed to respond to the needs of the learner population, resulting in drop-outs, push outs and failures (DoE 2001:5).

The White Paper 6 acknowledges that many children with learning disabilities were included in ordinary schools and classrooms by default and little was being done by classroom teachers to assist them.

The DoE sought to rectify the above situation through

developing an integrated system of education, infusing special needs and support services throughout the system and promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents, educators and learners (DoE 2001:6).

The DoE also recognised that many learners experienced problems for the following reasons:

- *Schools' and teachers' negative attitudes to stereotyping differences and to different learning ability among learners in classrooms;*
 - *An inflexible curriculum that did not cater for learners of different academic ability;*
 - *The learning and teaching of inappropriate languages for some learners;*
 - *inappropriate communication;*
 - *The non-recognition of parents and inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators*
- (DoE 2001:7).

To remedy the problems the DoE issued a number of crucial policy documents including the 'Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion' and the 2011 Guidelines. The guidelines suggest that barriers to learning should be addressed mainly through assessment activities. The needs of diverse learners can be accommodated through appropriate and diversified assessment activities. Another important way to accommodate learners is through curriculum adaptation.

One of the impairments that should be catered for through assessment activities is learning disabilities (or learning difficulties). For learners with learning difficulties alternative ways of assessment are provided. According to the 2011 Guidelines, indications of alternative ways are suggested as involving a reader, oral questioning by an examiner, audiotaped questions, the use of a personal computer with voice synthesiser, and additional time in which to complete assessment tasks. If the difficulty involves grammar or spelling problems that inhibit their ability to express themselves in written form, learners could be provided with additional time, a scribe, oral answers to the assessor, oral answers on an audiotape or Dictaphone, the

use of a personal computer with spelling and grammar checkers, dictionaries, thesauruses, special equipment, and multiple choice and short-answer questions instead of long-answer questions (RSA 2002:14). Learners who struggle with mathematics should be allowed to use calculators. Learners who are easily distracted by the movement and noise of others or who are highly anxious should be allowed to complete assessment tasks in a separate venue.

The above provisions create the conditions for schools and teachers to enable learners to succeed in their ordinary, local school, irrespective of whether it is a traditional, independent school or traditional public school. Learners who require alternative assessment would typically include those labelled as dyslexic, aphasic or suffering from concentration issues (ADD/ADHD) or dyscalculia, among others. Before 2001, learners suffering from the aforementioned conditions would have been sent to independent or public 'remedial' or 'special' schools. However the Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion made provision for these learners to be included in 'normal' public schools. Unfortunately, in the absence of adequate monitoring, implementation was dependent on teachers and schools.

In 2012 the DoE introduced The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (RSA 2012). CAPS (RSA 2012) is 'a single, comprehensive and concise policy document, which replaces the current Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (DoE 2012)'. The CAPS (RSA 2012) document incorporates inclusive principles in all curriculum assessment and policy statements.

The 2011 Guidelines state that the curriculum is the most important barrier to learning. Therefore the 2011 Guidelines provide teachers, principals, institution level support teams, district based support teams and other personnel with parameters and strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classrooms through the curriculum. The intention is to allow learners who need low levels of support to remain in their 'normal' classrooms after a learning disability or difficulty has been identified.

All the DoE documents advise teachers, like the researcher, that no learner needs to be left behind, nor do unreasonable demands need to be placed on learners. This led the researcher to question whether parents at independent schools were aware of the 2011 Guidelines and whether they were of the opinion that the 2011 Guidelines could assist with the implementation of inclusive education support that their learning disabled children received at independent schools.

1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem is that independent schools either utilize the 2011 Guidelines distributed by the DoE or use an effective alternative for these supporting documents in order for parents and learners at independent schools to benefit from inclusive education policy. Without effective

alternatives for learners, independent schools might not receive effective support. Learners with learning disabilities who are not supported carefully and in a scientific way as described in the DoE documents, might not achieve their potential. This could lead to learners being sent to an independent 'remedial' school which, in turn, could result in their premature dropping out of the education system.

The problem is that independent schools should be held accountable to parents whose children experience learning difficulties by having in place the same or similar policies and guidelines as those of the DoE. It seemed that when independent schools did not deliver the anticipated support in accordance with appropriate policies and guidelines, parents were powerless to request more effective support for their children.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question that guided this study was: *what are parents' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education that their learning disabled children experienced at independent schools when compared to the guidelines for implementing inclusive education as provided for by the 2011 Guidelines?*

1.4.1 Secondary research questions

In order to investigate the issue as outlined above, it was necessary to find answers to the following secondary questions implied by the research question:

- What is understood by the term 'inclusive education' in public and independent schools in South Africa, from the literature review and the perspective of parents?
- What are the perceptions of parents whose children are at independent schools regarding how inclusive education is implemented at their independent school?
- What are the perceptions of parents at independent schools regarding their understanding and effectiveness of the 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements?
- What potential support could such learners have received if the support had been based on the 2011 Guidelines?

1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to explore and describe in what way parents considered the inclusive education support that their children with learning disabilities received at independent schools to have been adequate when compared against the 2011 Guidelines.

1.5.1 Research objectives

The following secondary objectives were necessary for the researcher to realise this aim:

- To determine by means of a literature review what is understood by the term 'inclusive education' in public and independent schools in South Africa;
- To determine the perceptions of parents whose children attend independent schools regarding how inclusive education was implemented at their schools;
- To determine the perceptions of parents whose children attend independent schools regarding their understanding and the effectiveness of the 2011 Guidelines;
- To determine the potential support that those learners could have received if the support had been based on the 2011 Guidelines in order to create guidelines for stakeholders/policy makers and schools.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following definitions of terms are provided to clarify and form key concepts.

1.6.1 Inclusive education

In South Africa, inclusive education is defined (Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System 2001:6) as:

- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners due to disabilities;
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners;
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning (DoE 2001:6).

Many independent schools belong to the Independent Schools' Association of Southern Africa. ISASA does not appear to have a formal document defining its understanding of inclusive education, but its Diversity and Equity Policy encourages members to include learners with special education needs 'wherever feasible educationally' (Walton 2006:52).

1.6.2 Learning disability

A learning disability is defined as:

... a range of difficulties with receiving, processing, expressing or retrieving information, which affects the person's ability to function effectively in one or more areas such as spelling, grammar, following directions, spatial relations and numbers (DoE 2002: 13).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) use the term “specific learning disabilities” (SLD). According to DSM-5, SLD is a clinical diagnosis that is not necessarily synonymous with “learning disabilities”, but rather refers to a disorder that impacts the ability to learn or use specific academic skills, for example reading, writing or maths, which is the basis for other academic learning. A SLD is diagnosed using “specifiers” to characterise the specific manifestations of learning difficulties at the time of assessment in three major academic domains, namely reading, writing and maths (Tannock 2014:1).

Closely linked to learning disabilities and inclusive education is the term *barriers to learning*. The term ‘barriers to learning’ refers to difficulties that arise from within the education system as a whole: the learning site and/or within the learner himself/herself which prevent access to learning and development for learners (DoE 2008:7).

1.6.3 Independent school

This research involved parents whose children attended three independent schools in the Western Cape. Two of the schools were single sex schools and the third was a coeducational school.

In terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (84 of 1996) (‘the South African Schools Act’), an ‘independent school’ is one that is registered or deemed to be registered in terms of Section 46 of the Act. Reference to ‘school’ in terms of the Act not only refers to public schools but also refers to independent schools which enrol learners in one or more grades from Grade R (Reception) to Grade 12.

The Act states that an independent school must be registered with the Department of Education. The independent school must maintain standards that are not inferior to the standards in comparable public schools.

Most independent schools belong to ISASA. According to ISASA, there are approximately 700 member schools in South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Angola and ISASA member schools employ 12 500 teachers and educate more than 154 000 pupils (ISASA, 2012).

1.6.4 Western Cape

The sample of parents interviewed were all located in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.

The Western Cape Education Department is responsible for implementing the legislative framework, policies, strategies and guidelines provided by the Department of Basic Education. It also has a responsibility to implement inclusion policies and programmes at district and school level and report to the Department of Basic Education.

The Western Cape Education Department divides the Western Cape into eight education districts. The site where the research was done falls into the Metro South and Metro Central (Western Cape Education Department 2012). The Metro South and Metro Central districts are situated in developed urban areas with established public and independent schools.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design was of a qualitative nature and combined two research methods. The first was a literature study and the second an empirical investigation, conducted by means of interviews (MacMillan and Schumacher 2010:96).

1.7.1 Literature study

The purpose of a literature study is to gather specific information related to the research problem (Macmillan and Schumacher 2010: 73). In this study the literature study examined and compared various definitions, types and causes of learning disabilities to understand the nature of the problems that the parents of the children experienced

Research was conducted into the various educational accommodations for learners with learning difficulties as suggested by authors. The accommodations discussed in the literature study were compared with the findings of the empirical research.

The literature study was integrated into the analysis of the results and the drawing of conclusions (Macmillan and Schumacher 2010:96). The theoretical Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion and the 2011 Guidelines were compared and integrated with the data flowing from the parents' perspectives on how they deemed that there were benefits to implementing the 2011 Guidelines at independent schools.

1.7.2 Empirical investigation

An understanding of parents' perceptions of inclusive education at an independent school was obtained by analysing parents' responses to questions based on the 2011 Guidelines. By conducting the research within a qualitative paradigm, an attempt was made to gain insight into the problem that independent schools either utilize the 2011 Guidelines distributed by the DoE or use an effective alternative for these supporting documents in order for parents and learners at independent schools to benefit from inclusive education policy. This was achieved by exploring parents' knowledge and perceptions of the research problem.

An interpretative paradigm was also used for data analysis. When using this paradigm the researcher attempts to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Bashir, Afzal and Azeem 2008:36). Neuman (2006:70) states that 'interpretative research is rooted in empathetic understanding of everyday lived experience of people in specific historical settings'. Bashir *et al.* (2008:36) further state that the qualitative researcher goes to the site of the participants. In this research these sites were the parents' homes. This was done to enable the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individuals' everyday ordinary environment.

According to Bashir *et al.* (2008:44), research methods such as interviews and observations are dominant in the interpretative paradigm. Informal interviews with parents were regarded as the most appropriate tools to use to collect data and to understand the context of parents whose children had learning disabilities and their perceptions of inclusive education. This was done to understand the setting and to build a rapport with the parents (Cohen July 2006. <http://www.qualres.org/HomeInfo-3631.html>). In order to raise the awareness of parents regarding the issues of inclusive education, they were provided with copies of the 2011 Guideline. They were asked to read and discuss this document before answering questions.

A purposive sample technique was used in this research as it provides a specific group of people within the population with particular characteristics who will better be able to assist with the problem under investigation. Three parents whose children experienced learning difficulties participated in this study. All participation was voluntary and the participants were informed that they could terminate their participation at any stage of the research. The researcher chose not to select teachers as participants as the research was meant to focus on parents' perceptions of inclusive education. The participants were drawn from schools where teachers were aware of inclusive education issues and policy.

1.8 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

1.8.1 Chapter 1

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction. It provides a brief theoretical background, culminating with the problem statement. After the problem statement the research question is posed followed by the aims of the research study. The definition of key terminology used in the study is further discussed. This section concludes with a brief rationale of the research design and research methodology.

1.8.2 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 is concerned with the literature review of the research. The concept of learning disability as well as the types and causes of learning disabilities are discussed. The main

characteristics of learners who experience learning disabilities are explored together with ways in which the needs of these learners can be accommodated in classrooms. The chapter includes a section on the psychological developmental phase of the learners in the research. The reason is that teachers' opinions are regarded as an important factor in the lives of the learner and affect personality development. This is because the learner must deal with demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence (Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup 2008:86). The theories underlying inclusive education, being critical disability theory and systems theory, are explored and the way these theories have informed various policy documents of the DoE is analysed. In order to extend the discussion on inclusive education, the requirements and principles of good practice as stated in the conditions for membership of ISASA as well as its Diversity and Equity Policy are examined. Research findings on inclusive education as practised at independent schools are also presented. Lastly, the role of the parent in inclusive education are considered.

1.8.3 Chapter 3

Chapter 3 explains the research design and the methodology followed in this study. Detailed descriptions of the two research paradigms are provided as well as subject selection and material. Procedures relating to the collection, recording and analysis of the data are discussed.

1.8.4 Chapter 4

Chapter 4 focuses on the findings from the interviews held with the parents. Chapter 4 includes an analysis and discussion of the results in relation to the main aim and objectives of the study.

1.8.5 Chapter 5

Chapter 5 merges the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 with the empirical study from Chapter 4. Suggestions for supporting each learner in an individual manner are provided to illustrate the value of the 2011 Guidelines in helping teachers help learners with learning difficulties.

To realise the aim of establishing in what way parents at independent schools consider the support their children receive at independent schools as adequate, the secondary questions are answered.

1.8.6 Chapter 6

Chapter 6 considers in what way the research question, which is: "what are parents' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education that their learning disabled children

experienced at independent schools when compared to the guidelines for implementing inclusive education as provided for by the 2011 Guidelines ?”, has been answered. Conclusions are drawn from the major findings and recommendations are made for implementation of inclusive education policies in terms of the 2011 Guidelines at independent schools.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction and gives the necessary information regarding the background to the study. Chapter 1 finds its focus in the statement of the research problem, clarification of key terminology as used in the study, the research design and methodology. It also outlines the research programme and the demarcation of the research study.

The following chapter presents a review of literature to gain an understanding of learning disability, accommodations for learning disabilities, intermediate school phase and inclusive education practices at public and independent schools in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

LEARNING DISABILITIES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 begins with an explanation of the concept of learning disability and an attempt to provide a definition of learning disability focusing on the changing meaning that is attached to the concept of disability. Next the history, causes, identification and behaviours of learners with learning disabilities are reviewed. A section on the psychological developmental phases of learners is included to highlight the importance of ensuring that children with learning disabilities are accommodated so that they can experience academic success. The theories underlying inclusive education are explored to show how these theories have informed South African education policies. A discussion follows regarding the different documents that the DoE has published for public schools to illustrate how learners with learning disabilities can access the necessary support that they require in their normal public schools. These policies and guidelines aim to ensure that normal public schools follow policies, and accommodate cultures and practices that are welcoming to learners with learning disabilities so that these learners are included in ordinary public schools. In comparison, the Independent Schools Association of South Africa's requirements and principles of good practice in their conditions for membership as well as their Diversity and Equity Policy are examined in relation to independent schools. Research findings on inclusive education at independent schools are also presented. Lastly, the role of the parent in inclusive education at public schools will be considered.

2.2 LEARNING DISABILITY

Over the years, various terms have been used to describe learners who display behavioural problems such as learners with emotional disturbances or specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthographia (spelling difficulties) and dyscalculia. More recently, however, people began to object to terms such as *emotional disturbances* because it was noted that learners began to manifest emotional problems only once they started failing school standards (Finlan 1994:19). Terms such as *dyslexia*, *dysgraphia*, *dysorthographia* and *dyscalculia* were considered too narrow because many learners displayed more than one of the listed disabilities as well as others. The term *learning disability* was proposed by Kirk in the 1960s (Finlan 1994:19-27).

Finlan (1994:19-27) who raised the issue that this term labelled learners and meant that people could treat the learners as if they were stupid. The label 'learning disability' also gave no indication of how to assist children with learning disabilities and caused confusion among the different professions treating the learners because each has a particular frame of

reference. Finlan further argued that terms such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthographia and dyscalculia were flawed because they do not take into consideration poor teaching, poor curriculum, poor teaching materials, boring subjects or lack of motivation (Finlan 994:19-27). It can be seen from the above that there has been debates surrounding this concept of learning disability, what constitutes a learning disability and how best these children should be helped (Dednam, Krüger, Burden, Levitz and Landsberg in FDESN3-T Study Guide 2002:73).

2.2.1 Definition of learning disability

There are many definitions of learning disability in South Africa and internationally; however, some of the definitions share similar components. The American National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities (1990) and Hallahan and Kauffman (2006:171) define learning disabilities as follows:

Learning disabilities are a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems in self-regulatory behaviours, social perception and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (Hallahan and Kauffman 2006: 171).

McLoughlin and Netick (1983:22) criticised the definition because it did not recognise the difference between a learning disabled child's real potential and their level of scholastic functioning. Furthermore, he argued that it places too much emphasis on the internal nature of the learning problem, rather than attributing it to environmental factors. It also does not recognise the child's abilities. Thus we can see that the terminology surrounding the concept of learning disability is contested.

What is evident in South Africa is that the meaning that is attached to the concept of 'disability' is changing. The definition accepted in South Africa by the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons, is based on a socio-political perspective of disability. The office on the Status of Disabled Persons explain the concept of disability as a human rights and development issue, stating that disability results from factors in the social environment and that disability needs to be understood in terms of a social and not a medical model. The social model recognises that disability stems from barriers to learning that are caused by the community's attitude towards people with impairments. A learner with a disability is one who has an impairment and who is hindered and prevented by society to participate fully in their society (Du Toit, Landsberg and Levitz 2000:5).

For the purposes of this study, the DoE definition as referred to in Chapter 1 (subparagraph 1.6.2) contained in the Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion (2002:14) will be used:

... a range of difficulties with receiving, processing, expressing or retrieving information, which affects the person's ability to function effectively in one or more areas such as spelling, grammar, following directions, spatial relations and numbers (DoE 2002:14).

'Learning disability' and 'learning difficulties' are terms that are commonly used and are often used interchangeably. The term *learning difficulty* will be used when interviewing the parents as it is a less complex term that is better understood by parents. The term *learning disability* can also imply that problems cannot be overcome by the school accommodating the learner's problem through inclusive education and implies a necessity to move them out of their ordinary schools.

2.2.2 History of learning disability

During the seventies in South Africa, the term *minimal brain dysfunction* was used based on the 1969 Murray Report. This report formed the basis for education policy pertaining to learning disability in South Africa. In 1981, the De Lange Report funded by the Human Sciences Research Council accepted the term *minimal brain dysfunction* or MBD, but also used the term *learning restraints* or *disability*, which referred to any children who did not realise their potential. In 1980 the Interdepartmental Advisory Committee on disabled children suggested the term *specific learning disability* rather than MBD because it was claimed that it was not always possible to prove the presence of brain dysfunction in these children. Over time, the term '*learning disability*' gained favour over the term *specific learning disability* because the specific nature of the term was incorporated in the term *learning disability*. The term is still used to describe the condition in South Africa, although there are different opinions regarding the term *learning disability* (Dednam, Krüger, Burden, Levitz and Landsberg FDESN3-T Study Guide 2002: 74).

In South Africa, the British term *learners with special education needs* (LSEN) or *Special Needs* has also been used to refer to all learners, including those with learning disabilities. For instance, the Department of Education 1997 report entitled 'Quality Education for all: Overcoming barriers to learning and development' (1997:3) uses this term. They define Special Needs as

... needs or priorities which individual person or the system may have which must be addressed to ensure effective learning (DoE 1997:3).

Special needs often arise as a result of barriers within the curriculum, the centres of learning, and a broader social context. The DoE therefore suggested that the term *barriers to learning*

and development rather than *special needs* be used to refer to learners with disabilities (DoE 1997:3).

2.2.3 Causes

The exact causes of learning disabilities are not known, but it is generally believed to be associated with brain function, in particular a central nervous system dysfunction. Three main factors have been identified as causes of learning disability. The first factor is genetics. This includes learners who inherit their learning disability from a family member. The second is organic factors which indicate differences in the size or functioning of the brain owing to differences when the brain developed. The third factor are environmental factors such as poor nutrition and exposure to poisons such as alcohol and smoke, prenatally and post-natally (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2010:56; Hallahan and Kauffman 2006:176).

The Department of Education 1997 report entitled 'Quality Education for all: Overcoming barriers to learning and development' expanded the notion of causes from a medical one to a social one. The department recognised that in South Africa, as in other developing countries, special needs and support services were seen as an add-on in schools. The DoE recognised that the challenge facing education was a comprehensive one and needed to address the different needs of the entire learning population and to remove and prevent barriers to learning and development. The curriculum was regarded as the enabling mechanism to achieve this goal (DoE 1997:2).

2.2.4 Identification of Learning Disabilities by Schools

Public schools make use of an official documented process that independent schools can also use. If a learner is identified by a teacher as being at risk of having a learning disability, it is the responsibility of the teacher in consultation with the parents/caregiver and the Institution Level Support Team (ILST) or School Based Support Team (SBST) to complete the Support Needs Assessment forms (SNA). The Support Needs Assessment form captures information such as the following with the parent/caregiver:

- The areas of concern verified by the teacher in discussion with the parent/caregiver;
- An inventory of the strengths and needs of the learner across a broad spectrum of areas is put together;
- On the basis of the information gathered, an action plan is formulated to support the learner and a termly review date is set;
- When the support given by the teacher proves to be ineffective, the teacher will involve the School-based Support Team.

The Support Needs Assessment 2 form guides the School-based Support Team when a learner is referred to the School-based Support Team:

- A plan of action through which the teacher/school could strengthen the support (with the help of in-house specialists and/or teachers is formulated. This will involve using the 2011 Department of Education's 'Guidelines for Responding to Diversity in the Classroom';
- The support plan is captured and put into action. It must have a review date on which progress or lack thereof will be discussed. On the review date the plan is adjusted and the School-based Support Team (SBST) may decide that a higher level of support is needed in which case the District-based Support Team (DBST) is asked to assist. Such plans should be reviewed at least once a term. Plans to assist the learner would involve tailoring of the curriculum, assessment and instruction (DoE 2014:29-30).

During the process of Support Needs Assessment, the 'Guidelines for Full Service/Inclusive Schools' (DoE 2010:27) requires public schools not to view assessment with an evaluation by specialist therapists. Assessment should rather be multi-dimensional or systemic in nature, located within the framework of barriers at the individual (learner and educator), curriculum, institution, family, community and social contextual levels. The educator/school, learner and his/her parents must lead the assessment process (DoE 2010:27). Gillies (2014:1) maintains that while assessment information can be collected through standardised assessment, more informal ways often provide teachers with opportunities to determine how learners respond to learning situations that enable immediate adjustments to be made to their individual educational programmes. This can be done through formative assessment.

ISASA does not appear to have a standard official documented process for member schools dealing with the identification of learners with learning difficulties as described above.

2.2.4.1 Formative assessment

Following the DoE Curriculum and Policy Statements (2011c:9), teachers in public schools are encouraged to use formative assessment for learners with learning disabilities to include them in ordinary public schools.

Gillies (2014:1) explains formative assessment as teacher designed assessments which provide them with information on what learners understand, where they are experiencing difficulties and how the teaching process may need to be adjusted to overcome difficulties that have been identified. Formative assessment incorporates two approaches to assessment, namely dynamic assessment and response to intervention (RTI) (Gillies 2014:2)

Grigorenko and Sternberg (1998:762) understand dynamic assessment 'as a collection of testing procedures designed to quantify not only the products and processes of learning but also individuals' potential to learn'. Grigorenko and Sternberg (2009:132) maintain that assessment should be carried out as part of an intervention and for the sake of selecting or modifying intervention. In this manner, teachers have access to assessment information that

they can use to help them develop instructional strategies that they can use to scaffold and guide learners.

While the emphasis in dynamic assessment is on assessment, the emphasis with Response to Intervention (RTI) is on instruction and how different assessment tools can be used to monitor learners' responses to the instruction that they are getting as a way of dealing with current difficulties and preventing future ones. In this way learners are given help to develop to their full potential (Gillies 2014:2). Bouwer in an interview (2015:1) maintains that RTI is a way of breaking away from achievement-orientated perception of assessment. Since the focus is on teaching and learning, formative assessment prevents teachers and specialists from thinking about learners in categories and labelling them based on their learning outcome. In Response to Intervention, the learners' progress is closely monitored by the teacher while s/he is teaching the learner. If the learner is struggling with their learning more assistance is given, all the time monitoring the learners' progress. Only those learners that continue to appear challenged after approximately a year, are assessed to investigate the possibility of specific support needs (Bouwer 2015:1). This type of thinking is reflected in the 2011 Guidelines.

2.2.5 Behaviours of learners with learning problems in the intermediate phase

Learners with learning disabilities display a wide variety of behaviours. Some of the most common behaviours of learners with learning disabilities include the following:

2.2.5.1 Attention and memory

Attention problems are often experienced by learners with learning disabilities. The learners are regularly diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity (ADHD) (Hallahan and Kauffman 2006:187).

Many learners with learning disabilities have deficits in both long and short-term memory and working memory for verbal information (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2010:58). Working, (or short-term) memory (Melby-Lervåg and Hulme 2013:270) is a part of memory where new information is held while it is mentally processed. It is where thinking, or information processing, takes place, where a learner tries to make sense of a lesson, or solve a problem (Banikowski 1999:3; Melby-Lervåg and Hulme 2013:270).

The DoE maintains that between three percent and ten percent of school-age learners suffer from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Learners with ADHD often make careless mistakes, are often distracted from completing an activity, do not seem to listen when spoken to, often fidget with their hands and feet, talk a lot, cannot remain seated, are impatient, have outbursts and intrude on others. ADHD results in handwriting problems, underachievement, poor behavioural planning and disruption of classroom activities. Early

identification, intervention and accommodation are required for these learners if teachers are to prevent the development of a more serious condition of oppositional defiance disorder and conduct disorder (CDE). CDE may develop if the teachers do not understand their difficulties and accommodate them appropriately (DoE 2010a:94).

2.2.5.2 Thinking and reasoning

Critical thinking can be considered as a cognitive process of constructing schemata. A schema is the organised knowledge that one has about people, objects, places, events, processes, concepts, and virtually everything that provides a basis for learning (Abdulmohsen 2012:35). As learning disabled learners often do not have organised pre-knowledge, it is difficult for them to accommodate (create new schemata) or assimilate new knowledge into the existing knowledge base (Abdulmohsen 2012:39, 40).

Learners with learning disabilities consequently may experience thinking and reasoning difficulties. This is especially apparent when it comes to abstract reasoning. These learners often take longer than others to learn new concepts and perform new tasks. Other difficulties these learners may display are problems with organising their thinking, drawing conclusions, over-rigidity in thinking and general lack of effective strategies for problem solving (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2010:58).

2.2.5.3 Metacognitive abilities

Metacognition refers to a person's own understanding of the strategies available for learning a task and the regulatory mechanisms needed to complete a task (Hallahan and Kauffman 2006:187). Research has confirmed that metacognition is vital to academic success (Rosenzweig, Krawec and Montague 2011:508), especially in mathematics and languages (Stimley 2006:11, 26), one of the reasons being that both are dependent on working memory abilities (Moll, Göbel, Gooch, Landerl and Snowling 2014:1).

Learners with learning disabilities often lack the necessary metacognitive skills to complete their school work independently and successfully. According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (2010:58) and Hallahan and Kauffman (2010:187), these learners may appear disorganised and lack understanding of what to do or how to proceed, they often respond impulsively, use trial and error, fail to confirm solution paths and evaluate answers. Rosenzweig et al. (2011:508) states that learners with learning disabilities are consequently poor problem solvers ((see 2.2.5.2).

2.2.5.4 Social-emotional functioning

Learners with learning disabilities may experience social or emotional problems of such a magnitude that they are distinguished from their peers on a social level such as, cooperation with peers, taking initiative in joining peer activities, and initiating conversations. (Kavale and Forness 1996:235). The learner's social deficit may be so severe that the deficit can in itself represent a specific learning disability (Kavale and Forness 1996:226).

Deficits in the social domain are important to recognise because of their potential negative impact on academic achievement and the subsequent possibility of dropping out of school (Kavale and Forness 1996:226). The perceptions about academic incompetence appear to be associated with less interaction, reduced acceptance, greater rejection, and lower social status for students with learning disabilities, according to teachers and peers (Kavale and Forness 1996:233).

Emotional problems emanating from the above can include low self-esteem, poor self-awareness, low self-concept, weak self-confidence, anxiety and depression (Hallahan and Kauffman 2010:189; Mastropieri and Scruggs 2010:58) as well as general feelings of inferiority (Kavale and Forness 1996:234), inadequacy, sadness and frustrations which are reflected in outward behaviour such as anger and defiance (Pederson 2012:6).

2.2.5.5 Spoken language

Many learners with learning disabilities have problems with their spoken language. They have difficulty with syntax (grammar) semantics (word meanings) and phonology (the ability to break words into their sound units and blend individual sounds together to make words). They also have difficulty with pragmatics (the social uses of language) which impacts on the learners conversational abilities. For instance, the learner struggles with the mutual give-and-take that conversations between people require (Hallahan and Kauffman 2006:184).

2.2.5.6 Reading

Reading is a process of decoding and comprehension where an individual gives meaning to the decoded words (Stimley 2006:9, 10). Most learners with learning disabilities struggle with reading (Hallahan and Kauffman 2006:182, Mercer and Pullen 2009:235). Many of them lack phonemic awareness, which is the understanding that speech is made up of small units of sound, such as words, syllables and phonemes (smallest sound unit). Reading problems result when learners experience difficulties learning the sound codes represented by the letters in the alphabet and in applying those codes for successful reading (decoding). Learners who have problems with decoding often have problems with their reading fluency (the ability to read effortlessly and smoothly). These learners often do not read for pleasure as they are unable to read sight words automatically. Reading comprehension problems often

accompany decoding problems (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2010:58; Graham 2004; Gregg and Mather 2002).

Hallahan and Kauffman (2006:186) suggest that readers of English are more susceptible of learning disabilities than readers of some other languages, such as Italian, to problems of phonological awareness. For instance, twice the number of people fit the definition of 'dyslexic' in the United States as in Italy. Researchers suspect that certain languages expose the disorder while others allow dyslexics to compensate. English consists of just 40 sounds, but these phonemes can be spelled, according to one estimate, in 1120 different ways. Italian speakers have to map only 25 different speech sounds to 33 combinations of letters (Hallahan and Kauffman 2006:186). At the independent schools where the research was carried out, it was compulsory for learners with reading difficulties to learn Afrikaans and Xhosa as second and third languages, while learning English as their first language.

2.2.5.7 Written work

Hallahan and Kauffman (2006:183) maintain that learners with learning disabilities often have problems with handwriting, spelling and composition (Hallahan and Kauffman, 2006:183). These children often write slowly and their handwriting is often illegible. Spelling can pose a problem for them because of their difficulty in understanding the correspondence between sounds and letters. They may also have difficulties with the creative aspects of composition (Mastropieri and Scruggs 2010:58; Montague and Graves 1992:261-276). They use less complex sentence structures, include fewer types of words, write paragraphs that are not well organised, have few ideas in their written work and write stories that have fewer important components, for example, main characters, setting scenes and describing a conflict that has to be resolved (Hallahan and Kauffman 2006: 183).

2.2.5.8 Mathematics

Many learners with learning disabilities have mathematics difficulties in one or all of the many mathematical areas (e.g. geometry etc.) or in one or a set of individual competencies within each domain. The problem is often to distinguish between poor achievement owing to insufficient support and instruction, from poor achievement owing to a real cognitive disability (Geary 2004:4). Mastropieri and Scruggs (2010:332) suggest that learners might struggle with learning mathematics facts, rules, procedures, concepts and might have problems with personal mathematics such as managing money. Hallahan and Kauffman (2010:58) maintain that the learners struggle with word problems owing to inefficient application of problem-solving strategies.

2.3 INTERMEDIATE PHASE

The learners of the parents interviewed in this study fall into the Intermediate School Phase which extends from Grade 4 through to Grade 6, with an age range from 9 to 12 years.

During this school phase, learners are in what Erickson calls the Industry versus Guilt stage of the psycho-social development of their personality. During this stage, the learners are six to twelve years of age. Teachers' opinions are regarded as important factors in their lives affecting personality development. This is because the learner must deal with demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence (Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup 2008:86).

Erikson (Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup 2008:86) believes that a person's personality develops in a series of stages. In his psychosocial theory, he maintains that a person's sense of self and search for identify as well as their relationships with others develop through their social experiences with others. A significant element of his theory is the development of ego identity. Ego identity constantly changes depending on new experiences and information that is acquired in daily interactions with others. Erikson believed that competence motivates behaviours and actions. Each stage in his theory is concerned with becoming competent in an area of life. If the person handles the stage well, they will acquire a sense of mastery; however, if the stage is experienced negatively, the person will emerge with a sense of inadequacy (Cherry ND). In each stage a person faces a developmental crisis. This will involve a conflict between developing a positive quality or a negative quality. The manner in which the person resolves each crisis will have a lasting effect on that person's self-image and view of the world (Woolfolk, Hughes and Walkup 2008:86).

2.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THEORIES

Inclusive education means different things to different authors and its implementation is complex.

UNESCO defines inclusive education as

... a process intended to respond to students' diversity by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion within and from education. It is related to the attendance, participation and achievement of all students, especially those who, due to different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized (UNESCO, 2005:13.)

Inclusive education in the South African context will be discussed below.

2.4.1 What is understood by the term *inclusive education* in South Africa

In South Africa, the Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001:6), defines inclusive education as:

- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners due to disabilities;
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners;
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning (DoE 2001:6).

These principles underlie the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and find expression in the 2011 Guidelines.

2.4.2 Theories influencing inclusive education

The development of inclusive education has been influenced by Critical Disability Theory and Systems Theory. These theories have influenced policy developments.

2.4.2.1 Critical Disability Theory

Critical disability theory (CDT) reflects a theoretical basis for disability laws, which are reflected in South Africa's education policy. CDT plays an advocacy role and focuses on disability and how disabled people are treated and should be treated by 'normal' people (Hoskin 2008:6).

Hoskin (2008:6) maintains that throughout most of the twentieth century, the medical model of disability was adopted by society. Society saw disability as a personal misfortune that should at best be prevented or at worst cured. It privileges 'normal' people over 'abnormal' people and makes able bodied norms the dominant norms of society and recognises that only economically productive people are of value. This thinking was reflected in the laws, legal institutions and social policy (education) of the times. In contrast, CDT adopts a social model based on the ideas that disability is firstly, a social construct, not the inevitable consequence of impairment. Secondly, that disability is best characterised as a complex interrelationship between impairment, individual response to impairment and the social environment. Thirdly, social disadvantage experienced by disabled people is caused by the physical, institutional and attitudinal environment which fails to meet the needs of people who do not match the social expectation of normalcy (Hoskin 2008:6).

CDT values diversity. It recognises that being identified as a disabled person is central to understanding one's self, one's social position and one's knowledge of the world. Any response to disability which serves to make disability invisible is not capable of protecting the rights of disabled people to full participation in their communities (Hoskin 2008:8). CDT regards the law as an essential tool to advance the equality claims of disabled people and to encourage their full integration into all aspects of their society (Hoskin 2008: 12).

2.4.2.2 Systems Theory

Another theory that can be used to understand inclusive education is Systems theory. Systems theory claims that in adapting to internal and external change, systems attempt to maintain equilibration or dynamic balance (Boyle, Kay and Pond in Kalenga and Fourie 2011). Systems theory adopts a circular causality model which maintains that change in one part of the system or in an individual affects other systems and individuals, who will, at a later stage, bring about change (Landsberg *et al* 2010:12; Higgs and Smith 2008:27). Therefore changes in society, such as through inclusion education policies, affect families and schools. This change is reciprocal, as the change in families and schools also feeds back into the inclusion education policies and other systems operating. An inclusive school that encourages reciprocal relationships between parents, learners, the community and other organisations is more effective than those that do not interact with other systems (Landsberg *et al* 2010:12).

According to systems theory, rules such as legislation, policy and guidelines are essential for the effective functioning of systems and to maintain the intactness of the system. Rules are also essential to organise the respective interactions and serve to maintain a stable and consistent system. Problems develop when the rules and values of each system are not discussed and shared as this often results in stereotyping. Thus it is essential that when there is interaction between different systems, there exists a set of operating rules for the entire overarching system (Landsberg *et al* 2010:12).

Bronfenbrenner's (Landsberg *et al* 2012:13) ecological systems model is significant in understanding inclusion education. His multidimensional model illustrates the complexity of the interaction and interdependence of multiple systems that impact on the learners, their development and learning. Therefore an action on one level cannot be regarded as the cause of an action on another level as is the case in the medical model. Rather, it is only possible to understand why things are as they are at any stage by understanding the dynamic interaction and interplay between these multiple influences. The implications of this model for system theorists is that when a learner with learning difficulties and their parents experience difficulties, the solution will not be found in one single system, but rather the interdependence between all the systems. Therefore each system possesses critical contributing factors and not causes. Efforts to assist will involve trying to improve reciprocal

relations between the systems as a whole, while at the same time helping the system work better for the individual (Landsberg *et al*, 2012:13).

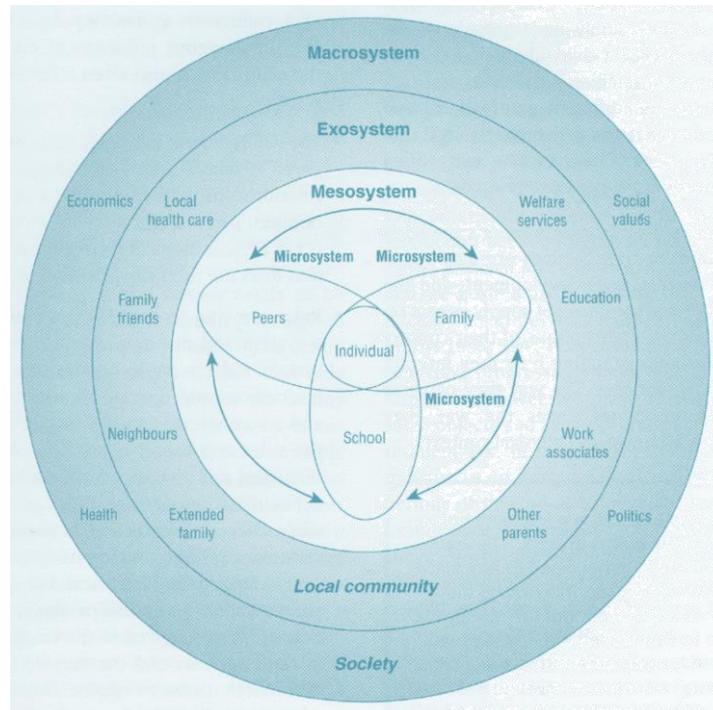


Figure 2.1 Ecosystemic model layout

Bronfenbrenner argues that there are four interacting dimensions that need to be considered when understanding a child’s development. These are process factors such as patterns of interaction that occur in a system. Process involves proximal processes which refer to the need to involve progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between individuals and the people, objects and symbols in their immediate environment. For these interactions to be effective they need to occur on a regular basis and over extended periods of time so as to become more complex (Landsberg *et al* 2010:13).

Secondly, person factors such as behaviours that encourage or discourage certain kinds of reactions from others are relevant. Thirdly, contexts are important. This refers to the family, teachers and school system of beliefs which impacts on the individual’s development. Fourthly, change that occurs over time due to maturation in the individual as well as the environment must be considered. Time assists one to understand the role and continuity of developmental processes and outcomes in producing large-scale changes over time, and the implications of these changes for society’s future. Inclusion is an example of such large scale change and is dependent on continual, regular and reciprocal interactions between people, objects and symbols (Landsberg *et al* 2010:14, 15).

Landsberg *et al* (2010:15) maintain that the bio-ecological model is important as it has the potential to explain the nature and dynamics of implementing a large-scale change process such as inclusive education. Everyone is affected by this change and it contributes to the further development of an inclusive society. Conversely, proximal processes can also create barriers to learning and hamper development. Therefore implementing inclusive education needs to be regarded as complex and ecologically sensitive. An analysis and understanding of both human and physical aspects of the context is essential to understanding the implementation of inclusive education as defined by educational policy.

2.5 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

Since 1994 the Office of the Presidency has introduced various laws, policies and guidelines pertaining to the rights of South Africans with disabilities to achieve equality. Despite this, the DoE is aware that laws and policies are often not carried through at the provincial and school level where new segregated special schools are being built leading to the exclusion of children with disabilities from their families and communities (DoE 2010:6). Human rights lawyers agree with the DoE and maintain that learners are prevented from attending schools on the basis of the argument that 'it is not reasonably practicable to support the learners in the mainstream' (DoE 2010:6). Lawyers argue that legislation needs to be strengthened so that they can act against schools excluding learners on the basis of disability. Schoeman (2012:1) maintains that many learners are being failed by the policies because teachers are not positively inclined towards minimising the barriers that are experienced by learners. Growing numbers of learners are being referred to segregated special education schools. Many of these children are learners with mild learning difficulties such as dyslexia and ADHD, and they are being referred out of mainstream schools despite public policy changes.

Inclusive education policy differs in its implementation at independent schools. Public schools follow policies and guidelines flowing from the Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2001). On the other hand, independent schools which are members of ISASA are limited by its outdated Diversity and Equity Policy of 2002 and broad principles of good practice that do not contain specific guidelines for inclusion related to disability. The Diversity and Equity Policy encourages 'inclusivity of learners with special education needs, wherever feasible educationally' (Walton 2006:52).

2.5.1 Public schools

The South African Schools Act allows all public schools to be full service schools. Full service schools are defined as 'first and foremost mainstream education institutions that provide quality education to all learners by supplying the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner' (DoE 2010:8). The Act states that 'public schools must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way, that governing bodies

of public schools may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public school, in determining the placement of a learner with special education needs, the Head of Department and Principal must take into account the rights and wishes of the parents and of the learner in any decision-making process'. Section 12 of the South African Schools Act further states that 'Members of the Executive Council must, where reasonably practicable, provide education for learners with special education needs at ordinary public schools by providing relevant educational support services for such learners and taking all reasonable measures in ensuring that physical facilities at public schools are accessible to disabled learners' (DoE 2010:3).

2.5.1.1 The National Education Policy

The National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 is the national education policy. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 comprises the following documents:

- The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for all approved subjects for Grades R – 12 (CAPS);
- The National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12;
- The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12.

These policy documents apply to all learners at public schools and those learners at independent schools offering the National Senior Certificate (Republic of South Africa 2011:3).

A single, comprehensive National Curriculum and Assessment Policy for each subject is provided. This provides details on what content teachers need to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis. Topics for each subject and the recommended number and type of assessments per term are specified (du Plessis 2012:1).

In order to implement inclusive education policy as highlighted in the White Paper on Inclusive Education and make the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) accessible to all learners, the DoE has produced a number of key strategy documents that provide strategies for accommodating learners with learning disabilities. One of these documents is the Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) that has to be read with three guideline documents, namely the Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, the Guidelines for Full Inclusive/Inclusive Schools and the Guidelines for Responding to Diversity in the Classroom.

- a) Strategy for Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)

One of the purposes of the Screening Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy document (DoE 2008; 2014:9) is to assist learners with learning difficulties and language issues at mainstream schools to be able to access the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12. The document aims to achieve this by ensuring that teachers and schools understand the support needs of these learners. This will ensure the transformation of the education system towards an inclusive one, which is in line with the prescripts found in the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE 2001).

Through a set of forms, this policy outlines the protocol that has to be followed in identifying and addressing barriers to learning that may affect these individual learners. Some of the barriers to learning that the learners might face in their school careers at mainstream public schools include: negative attitudes, inflexible curriculum implementation, lack of parental recognition and involvement and disability. By recognising the barriers, the needs of the learners should be able to be met at their ordinary public schools without any need for referral out of their original school. Among other things, inclusive education will be achieved by principals, teachers and school-based support teams (SBST) providing teaching and learning support.

Among other things, support at mainstream schools will include:

- making reasonable accommodations so these children can gain access to learning;
- teachers planning lessons in such a way that they accommodate these learners;
- involving all staff members in support activities that focus broadly on the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and school needs;
- ensuring that specific support for these learners includes curriculum and assessment differentiation.

In this way the SIAS policy document (DoE 2014:15-18) hopes to shift focus from the individual learners to the support programme offered to these learners at their ordinary schools.

By shifting focus from the individual learner to the support programme, which will be offered at site level and nodal sites, the SIAS policy (DoE 2014:19-23) aims to ensure that learners with learning difficulties can access support without the need to move to any other than their ordinary neighbourhood schools. This can be achieved by the learner receiving learning support from the specialist teachers in the School-based Support Team (SBST) who in turn can access the specialist support from the District-based Support Team (DBST); together they can adjust the curriculum and assessment so it is appropriate for the individual learner and provide specialised Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) and assistive devices such as computers to ensure that the child has access to education. This shift will bring ordinary schools in 'line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of person with Disabilities which advocate for putting "the child first" instead of the disability' (DoE 2014:24).

In order for the SBST to put 'the child first instead of the disability', the SBST needs to use the Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom, so that they can tailor the curriculum, assessment and instruction. This is important as no learners who experience barriers to learning, and whose support needs can be answered in an ordinary school close to their homes, may be admitted to a special/resource centre (DoE 2014:32).

b) Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning

In the Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (DoE 2010a:13), the needs of children with learning disabilities at ordinary schools are specifically addressed when it comes to their inability to achieve certain assessment standards. In this document these children are defined as children with dyslexia and the acquisition of additional languages, dyspraxia and communication problems and dyscalculia and numeracy. In their case a policy of straddling of grades needs to be developed in order to prevent these learners from being excluded, as research has indicated that grade retention does not remedy such situations (DoE 2011:19).

c) Guidelines for Responding to Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011

The 2011 Guidelines (DoE 2011:3) recognise that learner diversity includes those learners who have difficulty in reading and writing, hearing, visual and co-ordination difficulties, emotional difficulties and those learners experiencing difficulties in remembering what has been taught to them. Many schools act as if all learners are the same in terms of ability and operate with an evaluation system that rewards only a certain number of abilities. This gives rise to early and mistaken separation of those considered bright and those considered not intelligent. Therefore the document suggests that teachers adopt Gardner's ideas of multiple intelligences as these practices increase achievement for all learners, improve discipline and parent participation (Woolfolk 2010:116). Furthermore, it will also make children feel included and affirmed.

Teachers should monitor their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours when responding to learners. This can be done by:

- Recognising any biases or stereotypes that they may have absorbed;
- Treating all learners as individuals and respecting all learners regardless of their disabilities;
- Avoiding the use of language that is biased and undermines certain groups of learners;
- Refraining from remarks that make assumptions about learner's experiences;
- Considering the unique needs of learners when designing learning programmes and lessons;

- Constantly re-evaluating methods of teaching and assessing learners in diverse settings;
- Considering different approaches, methodologies and strategies when teaching in the classroom;
- Creating opportunities for all learners to participate in activities.

In the 2011 Guidelines (4), teachers are requested to respond to diversity through the curriculum. Curriculum differentiation involves the process of ‘modifying, changing, adapting, extending and varying teaching methodologies and teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum. It takes into account learners’ abilities, interests and backgrounds’ (DoE Guidelines 2011:4). Curriculum differentiation can be done on different levels which will be discussed below.

i. Differentiating curriculum content

The content is an essential aspect to be differentiated in the curriculum. This can be achieved by adapting the content of the curriculum so that it is manageable for a wide range of learners. The content is what the teacher teaches and what the learner is expected to learn. By modifying the content to help learners the teacher should provide access to learning, provide successful learning experiences for all the learners, motivate learners and build self-esteem (DoE Guidelines 2011:5). Content needs to be differentiated at three levels: the abstract, complexity and variety.

a. The abstract level

The abstract level of content refers to the:

Facts, definitions, descriptions, patterns, relationships, key concepts and generalisations that are part of any curriculum. The teacher needs to take into account that all children in his/her class cannot operate at the same abstract level, some may operate at the semi concrete level and some at the concrete level. It is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that the content is adapted to the level of the individual learner in his/her class who may operate at the semi-concrete or concrete level as well as those that can operate at the abstract level (DoE Guidelines 2011:5).

b. The complexity level

The complexity of the content refers to those parts of the curriculum that can be very complex and difficult for the learner to understand. It also refers to contextualising topics rather than using facts in isolation (Ibid 2011:5).

c. The variety level

The variety of the content refers to the need to cater for learners' levels of functioning and their interests.

Differentiating the curriculum leads to differentiating assessment. Differentiating assessment is premised on the view that the assessment needs of all learners cannot be met in the same way. Therefore the National Curriculum Statements Assessment has been designed to allow flexibility in assessment to accommodate a wide range of learner needs, while keeping everyone on the same curriculum. Assessment then serves a number of purposes. It is to inform instructional planning, to inform instruction, to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching for all learners, to assess learning, to identify needs and strengths of learners and to evaluate learner achievement against predetermined criteria for providing the learner with grades and a report (DoE 2011:12).

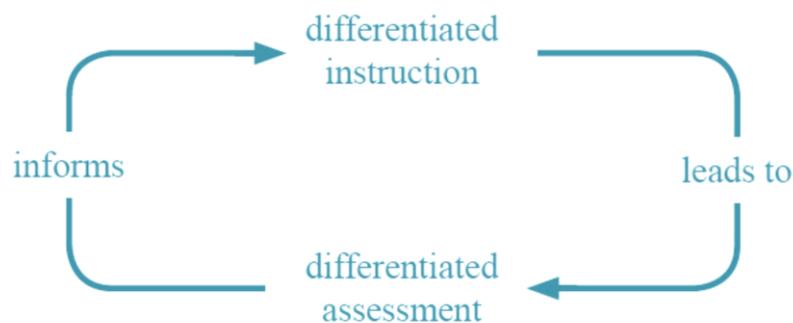


Figure 2.2 Differentiated Assessment Process

(Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, 2011: 13)

The key principle for assessment in an inclusive classroom is to harness high expectations for all learners, but all learners should have access to the standard of assessment best suited to their needs. No learner may be disadvantaged by the assessment strategy. Assessment informs teachers and parents about what the child can do at a particular stage and what support a learner needs to progress to another level. Learners need to be allowed to show what knowledge and skills they have learned in different ways. Assessment should also be authentic and make provision for multiple abilities, learning styles and levels. All assessment needs to lead to supportive teaching practices and integrated in future teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, the learners' abilities determine what will be expected of them (DoE 2011:12).

When differentiating assessment the following procedures need to be adhered to by teachers:

- They need to design assessment tasks which allow for different learning styles and intelligences as well as allowing for group assessment of tasks;
- Assessment activities can be scaffolded and allowance can be made for tests and assignments to be taken orally as well as in written form;
- Learners need to be given multiple-choice options as well as tasks which require short answers for those with disabilities;
- Extra time needs to be given to complete tasks;
- The use of technological aids such as computers and other special arrangements need to be permitted to undertake the assessment tasks;
- Records need to be kept of materials and assessment tasks used;
- Teacher observation books need to be kept for learners who need additional support;
- Learners with disabilities should be allowed to focus only on key concepts in assessments, with the focus being on the positive aspects of the learner's talents;
- Assessment activities need to be varied;
- Poor marks collected by the teacher in the beginning of the term can be excluded, when the learner has subsequently made good progress (DoE 2011:14).

While the minimum requirements of the National Curriculum Statement (Grades R-12) cannot be compromised, the National Curriculum Statement allows learners with learning disabilities to qualify for three different types of alternative forms of assessment across all the grades:

- Alternate Assessments Based on Grade-level Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills); this is for learners with learning disabilities or learning difficulties such as dyslexia who need testing formats or procedures that provide them with equal opportunities to demonstrate their attainment of content which is at the same grade-level as the general assessment. These learners need additional time, alternate formats, readers, amanuensis, electronic equipment etc.
- Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills) for learners with disabilities who may require more time to master the content, but who are working on grade-level content that is covered in the general assessment. These assessments measure a learner's mastery of grade-level content with a reduced learning load or at a more functional level.
- Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills) for learners with a significant cognitive disability (DoE 2011:19).

All three types of assessment should be available in schools so that learners do not need to be referred to special schools. It also provides a mechanism that ensures that these learners are included in an educational accountability system (DoE 2011:19; 2011: 30-31).

The performance assessment of learners with learning disabilities needs to be analysed, recorded and reported in a systematic way. Initially, a baseline assessment will be made to establish the learner's current level of knowledge and functioning. This assessment

information will inform the type of content taught or how to differentiate learner activities to accommodate the varying ability levels within the classroom. Then formative or performance based assessment will be used which will inform the teacher about the learners' progress through the curriculum i.e. what skills the learner has acquired and what the learner still needs to know. This recorded information needs to add to knowledge about the learner's progress. At all stages records must be kept such as anecdotal records, portfolios and journaling. These records must also state the nature of support needed and what support has been given. Support needs to be co-ordinated by a site-based support team and supported by the district-based support team or DBST (DoE 2011:21).

A learner who does not meet the requirements for promotion can be progressed to the next grade in order to prevent the learner from being retained in the same phase for longer than four or five years. When this occurs, the learner needs to be on an intervention programme to address the academic backlog, and evidence must be provided by the school of an effective intervention programme. Information must also include the adaptive and alternative methods of assessment that are granted to the learner and how appropriate, effective and available the adaptive methods being used are. Reporting to parents and learners also needs to be given at least once a term and made available to all stakeholders. Where no curriculum modifications take place but only concessions in terms of assessment procedures such as amanuensis or extra time are allowed, the report card must not be altered and the concessions should not be reflected. This is important to protect the self-esteem of the learner and parents. However, it is necessary to report why the concessions were granted in the learner's history and profile. The report card may be altered only if the learner accessed the knowledge, concepts and a skill on a lower level i.e. if the learner is straddling the grades (DoE 2011:22).

This document is clearly in line with international and the state's drive towards achieving inclusivity in education.

2.5.2 South African independent schools

Following international trends, growth has occurred in the demand for independent schools in South Africa. Hofmeyer and Lee (2004:143) state that the majority of learners at independent schools are black, with the majority of independent schools having been established since 1990. These independent schools charge average to low fees and are religion or community-based.

The main reasons for the growth of independent schooling in South Africa are;

- Demand factors: Unmet demand has historically been a feature in black communities, whereas differentiated demand has been a factor in white communities. In recent

years, differentiated demand has increased significantly in black communities. Factors that attract parents could include smaller class sizes, and the perception of greater accountability and better quality of schooling in these schools;

- Supply factors: The South African government's voluntary supply severance packages and redeployment strategies for teachers in the mid-1990s created an excess of experienced teachers with substantial capital from pension pay-outs, who could be approached to establish independent schools, or did so on their own initiative. There are also many entrepreneurial individuals and corporations interested in making a profit by tapping into the strong quantitative and qualitative demand for education in South Africa (Hofmeyer and Lee 2004:160).

Gernetzy (2013) states that even though there is a perception that independent schools do not receive state money, 'independent schools are eligible for a state subsidy of 15-60% of what a public school pupil costs a province, with the subsidy determined according to the level of fees levied on parents.

2.5.2.1 ISASA's diversity and equity policy

The Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) is a non-profit organisation. It is South Africa's largest and oldest association of independent schools in the Southern Africa region. ISASA's mission is to 'articulate the value of independent education, to promote common interests of its members, and to provide professional services that will enhance their contribution to education in Southern Africa' (ISASA 2012).

As ISASA is a voluntary association rather than a governing body, it differentiates between requirements and principles of good practice in ISASA's conditions for membership. Requirements are what independent schools have to undertake for membership (and what ISASA can reasonably enforce as a voluntary association) and principles of good practice are what member schools should endeavour to uphold.

In terms of the requirements, members must 'promote and nurture a commitment to a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights' and 'Produce and publicly display a positive affirmation of its commitment to a non-discriminatory society and a diverse, just and equitable school community' (ISASA 2011:2).

The principles of good practice on the other hand state that members of ISASA should adhere to the following:

B.1.5 encourage a learner-centred philosophy in order to develop:

- *each child to her/his full potential academically, emotionally, physically and spiritually,*

- *a community of learners who are self-disciplined and have a sound work ethic, and*
- *a code of conduct based on courtesy, mutual respect and acknowledgement of the rights of all groups in the school community.*

B.1.7. ensure that it implements fair admissions and employment practices;

B.5.5. value each child individually and teach to varied learning styles, abilities and life experiences;

B.5.6. It develops, publishes, implements and monitors policies promoting equity and justice in all aspects of school life.

B.5.7. support the on-going education of the governing body, parents and all school personnel as essential to the creation and maintenance of a diverse, equitable and just community, with particular reference to teaching, assessment, curriculum, extra-curricular programmes and leadership opportunities;

B.5.8. develop in its learners a sense of responsibility for equity and justice in the wider community;

B.5.9. strive to develop in all learners an awareness and acceptance of others, sensitivity to opinions and values different from their own, and broadminded thinking, which is free of bias, prejudice and uninformed judgements.

(ISASA 2011:2-5)

Although the principles of good practice allude to members adhering to principles of diversity, there is no specific reference to diversity based on learning disabilities. The diversity policy included in the conditions of membership rather focuses primarily on racial diversity, as this was identified as a key issue for independent schools in South Africa (Lee 2015). In addition, there are no guidelines on inclusive education.

ISASA does have a separate diversity and equity policy document published in 2002, which defines diversity in its preamble as:

...the wide range of differences amongst our people in race (ethnicity), gender, sexual orientation, culture, language, religion, ability: physical, intellectual and psychological, urban or rural location, age, socio-economic level. Other significant diversity issues include: physical appearance, the technological divide and differing political views.

This document proceeds to state that:

Inclusivity of learners with special educational needs, wherever feasible educationally, should be encouraged.

and

Schools that effectively exclude or do not serve well particular segments of the population cannot be considered to be of high quality, irrespective of their examination results and sporting achievements. While education may be selective, it cannot claim to be of high quality if it perpetuates discrimination. In this understanding, quality and equality are inseparable: our schools need to meet this social and educational challenge (Southdowns College 2009).

The equity and diversity policy is however outdated in that it was published in 2002 and, although there is reference to inclusivity of learners with special education needs, it does not contain guidelines on the implementation of inclusivity with regard to learning disabilities.

Inclusion is therefore regarded as a quality indicator in evaluating schools belonging to ISASA and inclusive education based on learning disability is not a requirement for membership.

a) Extent and practice of inclusive education in independent schools

Walton (2006:i) states that despite not having access to state resources, independent schools belonging to ISASA are implementing inclusive education. Learners who experience AD(H)D and learning disability are the most common intrinsic barriers that principals at independent schools report dealing with at their schools. Support for these learners is provided at school and classroom level through the use of inclusive practices taken from international literature on inclusion and local policy and guidelines. Other practices include:

- Developing policies that guide the support of learners who experience barriers to learning;
- Ensuring personnel are available to provide appropriate support;
- Harnessing support for learners, their parents and teachers both from within the school and from the wider community;
- Ensuring wheelchair access;
- Facilitating access and participation.

Walton maintains that most ISASA schools are showing progress and commitment to inclusion; however, there are a few who are not (2006:i).

In a study of ISASA schools, Walton (2006:159) found that of the 15 possible classroom strategies that support learners who have barriers to learning, the following classroom strategies were often used:

- Facilitating co-operative learning such as peer-tutoring;
- Teaching to accommodate preferred learning and cognitive styles;
- Modifying the classroom environment by seating arrangement and lightening;
- Modifying assessment tasks by reducing the task or providing alternative tasks;
- Making spelling concessions when marking learners' work;

- Making handwriting concessions when marking learners' work;
- Allowing extra time for the completion of tasks.

Sometimes at ISASA schools the following classroom strategies are used:

- Individualised Education Programmes (IEP) are formulated;
- Modified assessment is permitted to allow a reader to read the task to the learner;
- Assessment is modified to allow an oral response.

Very occasionally at ISASA schools the following media are used:

- Multimedia such as film clips, slides and tape recordings;
- Word processors;
- Digital personal organisers;
- Assistive devices such as microphones and braille translators (Walton 2006:159).

Inclusive literature recommends that these practices should be used especially if learners with learning disabilities are to be included in regular classrooms.

Although independent schools are implementing various inclusive education practices, there is no formal and extensive policy document to guide parents, teachers and schools in supporting learners who experience learning difficulties.

2.6 ROLE OF THE PARENT IN EDUCATION

Internationally and in South Africa, parent participation is recognised as an important component in the education of their children. This has come about with the paradigm shift to inclusive education which requires a strong parent-school partnership if any inclusive placements are to be successful. (Yessel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff and Swart 2008).

2.6.1 International perspectives

In 1994 the United Nations Education Agency produced a report entitled the Salamanca Statement. This report called on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schools by implementing practical and strategic changes. The White Paper includes many of the key recommendations of the Salamanca Statement and in this regard South Africa can be seen to be pursuing policies congruent with international standards.

In the Salamanca Statement there is emphasis on governments to give attention to the importance of parent participation (UNESCO 1994:ix). One of the proclamations is the encouragement and facilitation of the participation of parents, communities and organisation of persons with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes concerning provision for special educational needs (UNESCO 1994:3).

Furthermore, according to a study conducted in the United States at over 1,000 school districts, parental involvement was among the common factors identified at schools where inclusive education was flourishing (Lipsky and Gartner 1997). Parental involvement closely reflects the findings of other studies, for instance from Giangreco (1997:204), who argues that inclusive schools that have established partnerships with parents have resulted in parents becoming team-members in the planning of education programmes for their children. Parent participation has led to parents being able to express their opinions and foster their relationship with professionals.

2.6.1.1 South African public schools

In South Africa, the important role of parents in the education of learners who experience disabilities has been recognised in legislation and policies at public schools. The South African Schools Act states that 'in determining the placement of a learner with special education needs, the Head of Department and principal must take into account the rights and wishes of the parents of such learners (Chapter 2: Section 5(6)). This law gives parents the right to play a greater role in the education of their children than was previously possible prior to 1997.

The reason for the changes in laws, Vogel, Dednam and Landsberg (2006:27) argue, is that parents know their child better than the teachers and are able to inform the teachers about their child's learning problems and needs. Parents can contribute to the design and implementation of joint learning support strategies, for instance by helping their children with homework, studying or learning support.

To prevent the information provided by parents to teachers being used against the parents and learner if the school is not practising inclusion education at public schools, the draft policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (DoE 2014:29) states that the 'parent/caregiver and the learner (in the case of older learners) must be involved throughout in the decision-making process of screening, identification, assessment and support'. It goes on to state that parents need to know that they have a right to appeal a decision taken by the School-based Support Team (SBST). The appeal can be made to the District-based Support Team, and must be responded to within three weeks' (DoE 2014:41).

Engelbrecht, Swart, Oswald and Eloff (2005:266), state that the main reason for parents wanting their children to be included in ordinary classrooms is that they want their children to be socially included. The acceptance of friends who have grown up with the child at school plays an important role in offering emotional security for the child. Engelbrecht *et al* (2005:266) further state that parents are even prepared to compromise by giving academic support at home and let their children take extra lessons to enable them to stay in the mainstream school, because this can facilitate successful inclusion into broader society after leaving school (Engelbrecht *et al* 2005: 366)

Even though some parents are prepared to pay for academic support, their perspectives however, are not always understood or considered in the decision-making process. Yessel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff and Swart indicate that:

Parents often seemed to feel disenfranchised in case conference meetings and during the IEP process (Yessel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff and Swart 2007: 359)

Soodak (2004:264) indicates that this marginalisation may be due to the fact that parents are outnumbered by professional school staff and are unable to understand the jargon.

In the draft Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (DoE 2008; 2014) the role of the parent, caregiver, or any person or persons primarily responsible for the care and development of a child is stated as:

- *Parents/caregivers should at all times be involved in the identification and assessment processes involving their child, and should be regarded as equal partners in this process;*
- *Parents/caregivers should be free to initiate contact with teachers regarding their child's progress. When choices have to be made about the learner's enrolment into a site where additional support is available, parents and caregivers need to have full information about all options so that they can make informed choices.*
(DoE 2008; 2014)

The unwillingness or inability of the system to support the learners in the current school should never be a primary motivation to move a learner, especially if it is necessary for the child to attend school far from home (DoE 2014:39).

The draft policy further states that parents and caregivers:

- Need to take responsibility for the support of their child in the most inclusive setting possible;
- Should be empowered to understand how the potential of their child can be optimally developed;
- Need access to information about the kinds of support needed by their child;
- Must know their rights in terms of accessing available support;
- Must make every effort to ensure that their child has access to an appropriate early intervention programme available in their area;
- Must ensure that the relevant sections of the Support Needs Assessment form are completed in respect of their child's needs.

2.7 CONCLUSION

From the literature reviewed we can conclude that the definition of learning disability has been contested over time and that there has been a change in meaning attached to the concept of learning disability. The current meaning holds that the problem does not rest so much with the individual, but rather lies with the system into which the individual is born, which does not want to accept the individual, with learning disabilities as 'normal' and belonging in an ordinary classroom.

A discussion of the different characteristics of learners with learning problems was presented to provide information about the wide variety of areas where these learners struggle.

The critical disability theory particularly explains the disadvantage experienced by learning disabled people at the hands of 'normal' people, while the systems theory explains how systems such as schools need to become inclusive of all learners if an inclusive society is to be achieved.

From the literature on various Department of Education policies it is evident that enabling mechanisms incorporated into policy ensuring that learners with learning disabilities receive support at ordinary public schools and that public schools adopt policies, cultures and practices that are welcoming to learners with learning disabilities.

The Department of Education's Screening Identification Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy document and key guideline documents, namely the Guidelines for Full Service/Inclusive Schools, the Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning and the 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements were discussed. They illustrate how learners with learning disabilities can be included in ordinary public schools and how their rights to this are enshrined in official education policy. The guidelines achieve this by creating cultures that are welcoming and ensure participation so that these learners and their parents are made to feel that they are valued and that they belong.

The literature review also sought to examine the role of ISASA in providing policy on inclusive education at independent schools and the research into inclusive education at independent schools.

The role of parents as they relate to inclusive education is important regarding the support of their children. They should be empowered to understand how the potential of their child can be optimally developed and they need access to information on the kinds of support needed by their child.

The next chapter will focus on the research design and method.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Evans (2002:201) the rationale for research is to increase knowledge so that it can be used to improve situations. Furthermore, research knowledge can be used to increase the effectiveness of the services that society provides so that the quality of life may improve. In light of the above, this research aims to provide insight into inclusive education so that our education system, more specifically at independent schools, can become more inclusive for all learners.

In Chapter 1, the context and aims of the research were outlined. In Chapter 2, learning disabilities and inclusive education were discussed, more specifically how the Department of Education has ensured that learners with learning disabilities can be included in ordinary classrooms. Independent Schools were also discussed and how they do not fall into the DoE Inclusive Education Policy and 2011 Guidelines ambit. In Chapter 3, a discussion is provided on the different research paradigms and how these paradigms influence the research design. This is followed by a discussion on qualitative research and its characteristics. The research methods, which include the selection of participants, and data collection and processing, are then presented. Measures for trustworthiness and ethics are also reviewed.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design refers to the structure of an enquiry. Cassell and Symon (2004:326) maintain that the research design can be described as “the logical steps which will be taken to link the research question(s) and issues to data collection, analysis and interpretation in a coherent way”. McMillian and Schumacher (2011:102) maintain that the research design indicates the participants that will be studied, specified where and under which circumstances they will be studied so that the result is credible.

In order to choose what research design to use it is important to look at research paradigms. This is important as the paradigm provides a ‘conceptual model of a person’s worldview complete with the assumptions that are associated with that view’ (Mertens 2003:139). Three main research paradigms exist: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods which is a combination of the use of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms (Mouton 2001:35).

3.2.1 Quantitative paradigm

A quantitative paradigm of research (positivist and post positive) implies that knowledge can be gained by scientifically and objectively verifying observable human experience. Quantitative studies presuppose that there is an objective reality and that people can know this reality (Nightingale 2012:1). In other words positivism depends on 'verified hypotheses that can be accepted as facts or laws' (Guba and Lincoln 1994:113). Thus, scientific methods, experimental testing, manipulation of variables and statistics can be used to achieve knowledge. These methods serve to limit the subjective biases of the researcher from the objective reality being studied. The quantitative paradigm was not chosen because the researcher believes that statistics are not suitable for exploring parents' subjective perceptions. Since a mixed method approach uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, and that quantitative methods were not selected for this study, a mixed methods approach was also not considered or explained.

3.2.2 Qualitative paradigm

The researcher worked in the qualitative paradigm. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011:7) define qualitative research as 'the collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (i.e. non-numerical) data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest' (ibid 2011:7). Merriam (1998:3) believes that the key to understanding qualitative research lies in the belief that 'meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world' (Merriam 1998:3). That reality is not a fixed, single, agreed upon or measurable phenomenon assumed in quantitative research. Rather, there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality in flux and that change over time. Qualitative researchers want to understand what those interpretations are at a particular point in time and in a particular context. Hence, smaller but focused samples are used rather than a large sample (Merriam 1998:4). Learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world, and the meaning it has for them, is called an interpretive qualitative approach (Merriam 2002:3).

Based on the attributes of the qualitative approach stated above, and the fact that qualitative research provides insight into the 'human' side of research, the researcher focused on exploring and describing parents' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education that their learning disabled children experienced at independent schools when compared to the guidelines for implementing inclusive education as provided for by the 2011 Guidelines.

3.2.2.1 Characteristics of qualitative research

There is common agreement regarding key characteristics of qualitative research. These are the following:

a) Natural setting

A natural setting means that behaviour is studied as it occurs naturally. Unlike quantitative research, there are no constraints, manipulation or control of behaviour (McMillan and Schumacher 2011: 321).

b) Context sensitivity

According to McMillan (2011:322) the situational context is very important in understanding the behaviour of the participants in a study. This is due to the belief that human actions are greatly influenced by the settings in which they occur. The larger context in which the research is conducted is also significant. In this case, macro context sensitivity refers to the researcher's knowledge of the DoE policy of Inclusion Education and the researcher's knowledge of micro context sensitivity which refers to the effects on parents' children when policy is not implemented in the classroom and at schools.

c) Rich narrative description

Merriam (2002:5) maintains that the aim of qualitative research is to provide descriptions that capture what has been observed in the same form in which they occurred naturally in a particular context. This approach to description is necessary to obtain an understanding of the setting and to reflect the complexity of human behaviour accurately. Data in the form of quotes from documents and participant interviews are used (Merriam 2002:5). To accomplish these goals, the study may extend over a long period of time and require intense involvement on the part of the researcher (McMillan and Schumacher 2011:322) In this study, data in the form of what the participants said as well as Department of Education laws, policy and guidelines were included in support of the findings

d) Direct data collection

The researcher acts as an interviewer, observer and person who studies artefacts and documents. Qualitative researchers want to obtain information directly from the source. They do this by spending a considerable amount of time in direct interaction with the settings, participants and documents they are studying (McMillan and Schumacher 2011:322). They essentially constitute the instrument (the questions they use) (Merriam 2002:5).

e) Inductive data analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2011:322) claim that the data is gathered first and then synthesised inductively. The method accommodates the formation of new ideas during the

data collection. In this way qualitative research is intended to understand and build (McMillan and Schumacher 2011:322).

f) Emergent design

Qualitative researchers use an emergent design for conducting their research. As the researcher learns about the setting, the people and other sources of information, they are better able to know what needs to be done to fully describe and understand the phenomena being studied (McMillan and Schumacher 2010:323).

g) Participants' perspectives

Patton (1985:1) states that qualitative research is, 'an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting, what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what is going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting, The analysis strives for depth of understanding.' (Patton 1985:1)

h) Researcher as key instrument

The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. The researcher as key instrument is essential in qualitative research because to gain understanding the researcher needs to 'be the human instrument' that is able to immediately respond, and adapt the questions to gain understanding from the respondent. This allowed the researcher to expand her understanding through verbal and non-verbal conversation, process data immediately, clarify and summarise material and most importantly, check with the respondent whether the researcher had accurately interpreted and recorded the respondents' views. This also allowed the researcher to explore unusual and unanticipated responses (Merriam 2002:5). Being the 'human instrument' often results in bias in research. However, Merriam (2000:5) maintains, that 'rather than trying to eliminate these biases or subjectivities, it is important to identify their biases and monitor them as to how they may be shaping the collection and interpretation of data'. Peshkin (1988:8) argues that 'one's subjectivities can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers' making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected'.

As qualitative research involves an interpretive approach to its subject matter, meaning is constructed by subjective experiences, which results in multiple realities. The interpretive paradigm makes use of hermeneutics philosophy (Mouton 2001:113) that views life as a

process of interpretation and dialogue (Higgs and Smith 2008: 16). Hermeneutics starts with the premise that the task of the researcher is that of understanding the other and that this understanding requires that the researcher has objective knowledge of which there is a scientific grasp and which is based on dichotomous thinking (Piper and Stonach 2004:33) Interpretive designs highlight the meaningfulness of human action and thinking, thereby providing a new interpretation of existing research.

The researcher decided to utilise the interpretative paradigm because it was necessary to find out from parents in what way inclusive education was implemented at the independent school that their child attended and how they thought the 2011 Guidelines would be beneficial for their children at independent schools. The researcher also believed that we cannot use models developed for the physical sciences to understand unique, individually constructed meaning and reality. Another reason is that the researcher was allowed to use her own interpretations, as well as that of the participants to explain the results of the study from the data collection. Readers are also allowed to use their own interpretation of the study which allows for multiple views of the research. The limitation of this approach, with its constructivist nature which focuses on the individual, is that it cannot be opened up to critique. If one had to critique these parents' perceptions it would be contradictory to the unique perceptions underpinning this epistemology. However, since the researcher was interested in finding a solution to the research problem, a qualitative approach was more suitable.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

3.3.1 Case study

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, the researcher used a case study method. The word 'case' means an instance of' and the main feature of case study research is the investigation of one or more specific 'instances of' something that comprise the cases in the study (Rose, Spinks and Canhoto 2015:1). Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011:624) maintain that a case study can be an in-depth investigation of a small group of participants from whom the researcher collects detailed information. It includes the accounts of the subjects themselves. A central characteristic of a case study is that the case is a "bounded system". Being bounded, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2011:344) means "being unique according to place, time and participant characteristics". The conclusions drawn can be applied only to the participants and only in their specific contexts, with the emphasis being placed on exploration and description (Huberman and Miles 2002:9).

3.3.2 The research population and sample

According to McMillian and Schumacher (2011:129), the research population is a “group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher can generalize the results of the research.” Welman (2005:52) maintains that this group that the researcher is interested in is called the target population. Since the target population is usually too large or scattered geographically to study directly, a smaller group of participants are selected for study by means of a particularly chosen sampling technique. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002:198) maintain that the findings of a study can only be generalized when it can be assured that what is observed in the sample of subjects would also be observed in any other group of subjects from the population. The population for this study were parents that the researcher knew had children with learning difficulties and whose children were at independent schools in the Western Cape.

3.3.3 Sampling technique

McMillian and Schumacher (2011:129) distinguish two major categories of sampling techniques: probability and nonprobability. In probability sampling the subjects are drawn from a larger population in a manner that the probability of selecting each member of the population is known. Nonprobability sampling does not include any type of random selection from a population. The researcher will use subjects who happen to be accessible or who may represent certain types of characteristics (Ibid 2011:136). McMillian and Schumacher (2011:137) distinguish three types of nonprobability sampling: convenience sampling, purposeful sampling and quota sampling. In convenience sampling a group of subjects is selected on the basis of being accessible (Ibid 2011:137) and in purposeful sampling, the researcher selects subjects with certain characteristics. On the basis of the researcher’s knowledge of the population, a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research (Ibid 2011:137). Trochim (2006) states that “purposive sampling involves the sampling process being approached with a specific plan and group of respondents in mind.”

The parents in the research were purposively selected as they had children who would have benefitted from inclusive education. The parents also had experience of the topic being researched. They served as a rich source of information regarding the implementation of the Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion and the 2011 Guidelines at an ordinary independent, ‘academic’ schools. The parents’ children struggled academically to keep up with their peers.

The mothers were interviewed. All the mothers were married and living with their spouses. Except for one, who worked full time in her own business, the other two parents were 'stay at home' mothers. They all fell into the upper socio-economic category of people.

The first parent had attended a co-educational public school herself. She had three children, two of whom were at university. Her eldest daughter attended a prestigious independent school which provides education to learners from Grade R to matric and attended the same school as her youngest child to whom the parent referred in the study. Her eldest daughter was in her fourth year at University. This parent's middle child, a son, attended a well-established traditional public boys' school. The boys' public school goes from Grade R to 12. Her son was at the time of the interviews in his second year of university. The child that the mother referred to in the study used to go to the same school as her elder sister. However, she was moved by her parents in the second term of her Grade 4 year because she felt that the independent school was 'too academic and pressurised for her'.

The second parent had two daughters. Her eldest daughter was at an independent girls' school. The eldest daughter 'sailed through school and found everything easy', while her other daughter struggled. The child that the mother referred to in the study, used to attend the same school as her older sister. She had been moved to another independent school because her mother felt that she struggled too much.

The third parent's child attended an independent boys' school. The parent also attended a public school from Grade 1 to Grade 12. Both her children struggled at their independent school although she and her husband had not. Despite her son struggling at school, she had kept him at his independent school.

3.3.4 Data collection

Two basic types of data collection were used for this qualitative research, namely, interviews and documents.

3.3.4.1 Interviews

Data was collected by means of a number of interviews with the participants on a face-to-face basis. Both open-ended and closed questions were posed in the interviews to obtain information from the participants. Punch (2011:168) notes that interviewing is a very good way of accessing a person's perceptions, meanings, descriptions of situations and constructions of reality. He emphasises that it is the most powerful way of understanding others (Ibid 2011:168). The researcher started by using a semi-structured interview to obtain the background information and establish direction. In-depth interviews were then used. In-depth interviews use the individual as the starting point for the research process and assume

that individuals have important and unique knowledge about the social world that can be determined through verbal communication (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2011:119).

In-depth interviews are particular kinds of conversations between the researcher and the interviewee that need active asking and listening. The process is a meaning-making endeavour embarked on as a partnership between the interviewer and her participants. This part of the research took the form of conversation, where the researcher used her knowledge about the context of the school and classroom to find out how the 2011 Guidelines were implemented. Sinha (2013:1) argues for, 'fostering sociable forms of dialogue where analytical dialogue can produce circulations of communication oscillating across the researcher's and participant's horizons of understanding'.

The interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone and then transcribed. The data collection took place at the participants' homes.

3.3.4.2 Documents

In addition, data was obtained from documents such as school reports and the reports of professionals provided by the participants. These documents were kept confidential to protect the parents, their children, the professionals and schools. Only the researcher and her supervisor had access to them.

3.3.5 Data processing

"Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories" (McMillian and Schumacher 2010:367). Data analysis is an on-going process of the study in that analysis is done during data collection as well as after all the data has been collected (Ibid 2010:367). In this manner qualitative analysis is a "relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest" (McMillian and Schumacher 2010:367).

During individual interviews, the researcher collected descriptions of events through the use of semi-structured interviews and conversations. Transcriptions of the recorded interviews with the participants were produced. From these semi-structured interviews and conversations with the participants the researcher attempted to find out in what way inclusive education was implemented at the independent school that their child attended and how they thought the 2011 Guidelines would be beneficial for their children at independent schools. As the data (content of the interviews) were analysed, the researcher tried to find patterns, relationships or common themes among the data (Gay, Mills and Airasian 2011:402), which represented inclusive education based on the literature review, the Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion and the 2011 Guidelines.

3.4 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS (VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY)

Trustworthiness refers to the authenticity and credibility of the study. To determine trustworthiness, two measures are used, namely reliability and validity.

3.4.1 Reliability

Reliability in qualitative studies is concerned with the consistency of measures. 'Reliability of measurement is the degree to which that instrument produces equivalent results for repeated trials' (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee 2008:150). In other words, if other researchers were to transcribe the researcher's interviews, would they generate similar interpretations and results? Thus reliability is the extent to which a data collection procedure and analysis yield the same answer for multiple participants in the research process (Kirk and Miller 1986:57).

3.4.2 Validity

According to Cresswell (2014:201), qualitative validity refers to 'determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants and the readers of an account.' To achieve validity the researcher can use several strategies which include the following:

- The researcher can triangulate different data sources of information. This information is used to build a coherent justification for themes. If themes are established based on merging several sources of data, in this case the DoE inclusive education documents, especially the Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion and the 2011 Guidelines and the perspective of the parents (data), then this process can be said to add validity to the study (Cresswell 2014:201);
- Member checking can be used to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings. This is done by showing the different sections and themes to the participants to determine whether they feel that the researcher has accurately interpreted what they said. This involves follow-up interviews;
- A rich description can be used to convey findings. This description may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences;
- The researcher needs to clarify her bias that she brings to the study. The researcher admitted her bias to inclusive education and believed that the guidelines and other Department of Education documents allow learners with learning disabilities to be included in ordinary classrooms at independent schools. She also believed that parents would be able to suggest ways of helping their children to be included and that teachers and schools must be open to parents' ideas;

- Negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes needs to be presented in the research. By presenting this discrepant information, it adds to the credibility of the account. Real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always fit neatly together;
- The researcher needs to spend prolonged time with the participants so that an in-depth understanding could be developed. The number of hours used for this needs to be recorded;
- Peer debriefing needs to be used to enhance the accuracy of the account. This involved locating a person (a peer debriefer) who in this case was the study supervisor, who reviewed the account and asked questions about the study. This was important so that information could be checked and ensured that the account would reflect people, other than the researcher. This process, involving an interpretation beyond the researcher, added validity to the account (Creswell 2014:202-203).

The above are the primary strategies frequently used to assess the accuracy of findings. The researcher used all the above to ensure validity.

3.5 ETHICAL MEASURES

In qualitative research ethics are important because of the intrusive nature of the research. Ethical measures include informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, caring and fairness.

It is an ethical requirement to obtain consent from participants because research deals with the most sensitive, intimate and innermost matters in people's lives. This involves giving participants assurances of confidentiality, anonymity and describing the intended use of the data. The researcher explained to the participants that this research was about inclusive education, their perceptions of inclusive education at their children's independent schools and in what way they thought the 2011 Guidelines were implemented and how they would be beneficial to their children. When gaining permission, the researcher assured the participants that the parents, their documents and the school the parents' children attended would remain anonymous. The participants were also allowed to turn off the Dictaphone if they did not want what they were saying to be recorded. This was important to protect the participants and the schools as this is a published dissertation. Codes for the parents' names were used in the transcriptions to ensure anonymity. The researcher also had to allow the participants to withdraw from the research at any stage.

Appendix A indicates that the researcher was granted ethical clearance from UNISA to carry out this research.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the framework of the researcher's research design including the paradigms and specific research methods for data collection and analysis. The researcher adopted a qualitative case study approach based on the research problem, personal experience and inclusive education advocacy. The choice of this approach determined decisions relating to data collection process and the choice of research instruments. The chapter concluded with issues related to trustworthiness and ethics.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the data collection from the interviews held with the parents. The data analysis that emerged from the data reflect the perspective of parents of learners with learning disabilities regarding the implementation of inclusive education in independent schools in the Western Cape. The interviews were conducted individually at the parents' homes, over a number of sessions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the researcher used a predetermined interview guide that was organised into two sections. The questions were organised to obtain general information about the parent and the child's learning difficulty and the second section was based on the 2011 Guidelines for inclusive education. The researcher often veered away from the interview guide to obtain more in-depth understanding, to clarify respondents' answers and look at documents.

All the interviews took place at times convenient to the parents, so that the research could be done in the parents natural setting of their homes. Conducting the interviews in the parents' homes allowed the researcher to determine that these three parents can be described as white, English and falling into the upper income bracket; the classification can be determined from the neighbourhood that they can afford to live in, as well as the independent schools to which they can afford to send their children.

The initial part of the interviews involved the parents who provided personal information about themselves and their children. This information is presented in a table form (see Table 4.1). The following references to the participants are used: Parent codes are prefixed with a *P*. *P1* refers to Parent 1, the 1 indicates the order in which the parents were interviewed.

The second part of the interviews with the parents involved them answering questions based on their perceptions of inclusive education at their child's independent school. An analysis of the findings of the interviews follows.

4.1.1 Description of parents

All the parents interviewed were married mothers over 40 years of age with more than one child. Their home language was English with Afrikaans being their second language, which they had learnt at school. It was also the only additional language they had learnt. They had all taken Afrikaans as a second language to matriculation level. None of the parents had learnt Xhosa at school so they were unable to help their children, for example to prepare Xhosa orals and assist with Xhosa homework

They had all attended white, middle class schools prior to 1994. They had sent their children to schools where the language of learning and teaching was English. The independent schools that they had chosen for their children could all be classified as high fee schools as they charge more than R3000.00 per month and are well established in Cape Town, in that they have been in existence for more than 50 years. All the schools had existed for more than 50 years, so their names and reputations were known to the parents when they were growing up.

The first parent interviewed did not work and had three children. Two of her children were at university. Her eldest daughter was in her final year of doing a junior primary teaching course and her son was studying environmental management. The second parent, also a stay-at-home mother, had an elder daughter in high school. The third parent had two sons, both in junior school. She worked full time.

4.2 INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARENTS

Prior to the interviews the parents were given the 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom for Inclusion as proposed by the Department of Education to read. In order to clarify concepts in the 2011 Guidelines the researcher provided examples to which the parents could relate. The parents did not know what questions the researcher would pose ahead of the interviews so they could not prepare their answers. After the researcher had written up the chapters the parents were asked to read through them to confirm that the researcher had heard their words correctly.

4.2.1 Background information on parents and children

The following data emerged from the background information of the parents' interviewed. Table 4.1 is an indication of the learning support each parent's child received. The independent schools ascribe to their own policy as stipulated by the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA), *"inclusivity of learners with special educational needs, wherever feasible educationally, should be encouraged"* (Southdowns College 2009).

At the time of conducting the research, independent schools were not bound to adhere to the 2011 Guidelines.

Table 4.1 Learning support undergone

Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3
Learner's age: 11	Learner's age: 12 Learner had repeated Reception year at first independent school. Emotional immaturity had	Learner's age: 12

Grade: 5 Gender: Female	been cited as the reason for repeating. Grade: 5 Gender: Female	Grade: 6 Gender: Male
Had moved from initial independent school to public school in Gr 4.	Had moved from independent school to another independent school in Gr 3.	Had never moved school
Had been assessed by a psychologist prior to being moved.	Had been assessed by a psychologist prior to moving to another school. One copy of the psychologist's report had been sent to the teacher and one had been placed in the learner's school file. A working memory difficulty had been identified. Parent had not known whether the learning support department at the school knew about the educational psychologist's report as parents had only met with the Grade 1 teacher to discuss the educational psychologist's report.	Had been assessed by a psychologist. The school learning support teacher had recommended the educational psychologist and the occupational therapist in consultation with the teacher.
Had received light therapy on the recommendation of the teacher. Parents had paid an extra charge for this therapy.	Had attended speech and language therapy in pre-primary years. In reception year, the speech and language therapist's report had been given to the Reception year teacher when she had started at the first independent school. From the end of Grade 3 to the end of Grade 5 language and reading therapy had been provided by reading and language therapists. Parents had paid extra charges for this. A mild form of dyslexia had been diagnosed.	Received occupational therapy (O.T) from the O.T. who operated from the school premises. Parents had paid extra fees for the O.T.

<p>Teacher had referred learner to the learning support department. Had attended learning support at previous independent school.</p>	<p>Had attended learning support at previous and present independent schools.</p>	<p>Teacher had referred the learner to the learning support department. Attended learning support at school in mathematics and English until Grade 5. In Grade 6 he received training in study skills.</p>
<p>The initial independent school had at least three learning support teachers.</p>	<p>The initial independent school had at least three learning support teachers.</p>	<p>The independent school had at least three learning support teachers. A private speech and language therapist had been operating from the school premises. There had been a school counsellor on the staff of the school. An outside speech and language therapist had been recommended by the school, but parents had not been able to afford this therapy. They took it upon themselves to attend to the child's language problems.</p>
<p>Had been receiving private learning support outside school. Parents were paying extra fees for this.</p>	<p>Had been receiving private learning support in mathematics and English outside of school. Parents were paying extra fees for this.</p>	<p>Had been receiving learning support at school. Parents were paying extra fees for this.</p>
<p>Learner struggled to remember what had been taught to her.</p>	<p>Learner struggled to remember what had been taught to her in lessons.</p>	<p>Although the parent had reported that the child did not struggle to remember what had been taught in lessons, she later stated that her child could not generalise the words learnt in the weekly spelling tests to general spelling work, which was an indication that he did struggle to remember what he had learnt.</p>

Had difficulty with mathematics, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. Experienced heightened anxiety.	Had difficulty with mathematics, English written language, Afrikaans, and Xhosa.	Had difficulty with learning to read English. Had difficulty with mathematics, reading, spelling in English and Afrikaans, handwriting, organisational skills, following instructions and experienced heightened anxiety.
Xhosa was no longer being offered as a third language at the learner's present school.	Xhosa was not being offered as a third language at the child's present school.	Was still taking Xhosa as a third language.
Parent understood the term 'inclusive education' from the 2011 Guidelines which her older daughter, in her 4 th year of studying teaching at university, had read and explained to her.	Researcher explained the term 'inclusive education'.	Parent understood the term 'inclusive education' from the 2011 Guidelines. Researcher expanded on the definition.

Table 4.1 provides background information on the children, the learning difficulties they experienced and the support they received. It also indicates the parents' level of understanding of the term 'inclusive education'.

The parents' initial understanding of the term *inclusive education*, their experience and perceptions of the 2011 Guidelines at their child's respective schools are discussed below.

4.3 FINDINGS BASED ON THE INTERVIEWS

The following findings were based on the data collected and analysed during the interviews.

4.3.1 Awareness of inclusive education policy at the schools the learners attended

Despite South Africa's adoption of a policy of Inclusive Education in 2001 (see 1.1), none of the parents interviewed were aware of a policy of inclusive education at their children's school.

Verbatim response to question number 4 (Appendix D):

P1: "No I am not aware of any inclusive education policy at the school."

P2: "I am not aware of a written policy of inclusion, however, the school that she is at, X which is a much smaller school, one class per grade, there sort of motto is ... With my child and her issues due to the fact that the class is smaller and that the teacher is aware, the teacher does spend a little bit more time with her, particularly over exam time so while it is not written, I would say where she is, the teachers have come to the party in that regard." /

P3: "No, I am not aware of it. I am not aware if they specifically have a policy. I am only aware of what they do."

4.3.2 In what way are the 2011 Guidelines a positive step to inclusive education

All the parents interviewed agreed that independent schools should be obliged to implement the 2011 Guidelines as public schools do.

Verbatim response to question number 22 (Appendix D):

P1: "... you would think if it was a private school, they would be even more eager to help."

P2: "I think a lot of independent schools have just the simple academic approach, in terms of one way of learning... I think some independent schools need to realise that all children learn differently ... I think if they [should] ... open this up, it can only be beneficial ..."

P3: "Yes, I do. We have to write the same matric exams so why should it be any different. If anything there should be more attention at Independent Schools because parents are paying more money and there should be more support and teachers should have more time to do this sort of thing because the classes are generally smaller. So I think, if anything, this should start at these independent schools."

4.3.3 Curriculum Differentiation

According to the 2011 Guidelines (2011:4) 'curriculum differentiation is a key strategy for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning styles and needs. It involves processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies,

teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum. It takes into account learners' ability levels, interests and backgrounds'.

All three parents unanimously agreed with the concept of curriculum differentiation.

Verbatim response to question number 13 (Appendix D):

P1: "Definitely! In my case the educational psychologist suggested that if there were 20 questions in a test that she be given 10 and then 10. That it is broken down into sections as she is totally capable of answering and doing the work, but when you see 20 in one go it's daunting for her."

P2: "I think teachers should look at that."

P3: "Yes, I do think that that would be very beneficial... When they do their tests, regardless what stream you are in, you write the same tests, you have got the same amount of time and you are assessed in the same way..."

4.3.4 Curriculum content differentiation

The 2011 Guidelines (2011:4) state that:

'An important aspect to be differentiated in the curriculum is the content. This can be done by adapting the content of the curriculum in such a way that it is manageable for a wider range of learners. This should not be seen as a watering down of the curriculum but rather as a graded process where learners are taken by a different route to a similar endpoint. Some learners require an advanced level of content and others may still be grappling with what is being taught in the grade.'

All the parents agreed that their children would benefit if their teachers, for instance, would reduce the number of spelling words, because it is a daunting task for their children to keep up, and that is only with the spelling. Their children should be guided to start studying at least the week before they write their weekly spelling tests in the three languages, English Afrikaans and Xhosa.

Verbatim response to question number 14.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "... with regards to English, Afrikaans and Xhosa, ... at this young age, rather master their home language, ... if I had my way I would rather master one language and then when you're comfortable with that and know the basics move onto language two and three."

P2: "Yes, I certainly agree that if they did reduce the number [of languages] this would definitely aid the child that does have a form of spelling learning problem..., for example, my daughter this week ... has 21 words in English and they are difficult words with a lot of the silent vowels such as catalogue, cataclysm, cathedral. Whilst we have managed to get through the words for the week, I know for a fact that when she comes to write her test tomorrow, on the Friday, she is possibly not going to do as well as she could do if just the number of words were reduced.

Afrikaans they have ten words... for children who are struggling on the language side I think it would be most beneficial...to just have half the number of words so that they can learn those words, master it, do well in the test. It boosts their self-esteem, boosts their confidence so that when they do the test the following week they can only aim for higher marks.

My child does not do Xhosa at the school that she is at... Fortunately for us... because she certainly does struggle with the work load in terms of just the English and Afrikaans on a weekly basis."

P2: "..., I can't agree more. I think it would make a huge difference.... It [spelling] is just a complete nightmare. So his little self-confidence just gets a beating every week. It is very hard to come home with nought out of ten and to keep telling yourself that you are okay and not useless. And we [parents] are certainly not saying that, but...they [children] are all talking to one another..."

4.3.5 Differentiation at the abstract level of a child's learning

The 2011 Guidelines (2011:4-5) recognise that not all children will be accessing the curriculum content at the same level; some may be accessing it at a concrete level and others at an abstract level. Since not all children can learn easily at an abstract level, it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the content is adapted at the level of the individual learner.

Parents unanimously felt that using concrete apparatus is helpful when teachers are teaching abstract concepts. They agreed, for example in mathematics, that when their children are learning fractions, various opportunities should be given to their children to cut up things into different fractions so that they can experience the concept of fractions in a concrete manner. Another example is that when the concept of time is covered in class and in test and

examination situations, learners have clocks at their desks so that they can move the hands of the clock physically.

Verbatim response to question number 14.2.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "I think that that would be an excellent idea and one that the child would probably remember."

P2: "I think it would be fantastic! Fortunately, School X where she is at the moment has been very good when they learnt to tell the time they did work from a clock and they had to make their own clock. When they do fractions they do cut up, so that has definitely helped her. However, she does still struggle, particularly in terms of measurement and conversion. Perhaps possibly two rulers, one that shows the cms and one that has the mms so that when they can see the conversion so they can physically see the 2cm is 20 mm... if they could be given more visual [aids]. Based on my child, she definitely learns more from visual[s] and pictures, than just reading it out the book or being told it verbally."

P3: "Yes, I would agree with that. Bringing it alive! Making it real would be fantastic. There are some children who grasp the concepts so quickly and so they just sail through. At my child's school, if you don't grasp thing very quickly, in terms of mathematics then once you get to Grade 5 then they start streaming you into mathematics classes. So immediately you are categorised and you know boys are really tough on each other...if you are in set three. They can be put down for that. So if you are anxious it all becomes a bit of a vicious cycle. There are some children who don't care, but for many they may not show that they care, but inside it does matter. Certainly for my child, I don't think he has many nails left and he chews those. He chews anything else he can get hold of. But the big thing for us is that he is so anxious that he is not in a calm frame of mind. You can't learn properly if you are not calm. ... If you are in a test or exam, you can't retrieve that information properly, because you are just in panic mode. So we have had to intervene a lot and then through the counsellor rebuilding that confidence and just not letting those things worry you, just because you know you are not perceived to be achieving."

4.3.6 Complexity of content differentiation

The 2011 Guidelines (2011:5) recognise that, ‘many aspects of the curriculum can be very complex and difficult to understand for some learners’.

The parents were asked if they felt that their children would benefit if the teacher reduced the complexity of the concept. Spelling was used to illustrate this idea to them. Where, for example, there was more than one sound pattern to learn for a test, that the teacher expected the child to learn only one sound pattern a week for a test. The parents unanimously agreed that it would help their child.

Verbatim response to question number 14.3.1 (Appendix D):

P1: “I think that that would be incredibly beneficial. Why complicate things and confuse them. Stick to, for example, cough, one would automatically think of ‘coff’, but it is ‘cough’. And then put a whole lot of words with that sound and then master it.”

P2: “At school X, they do tend to get one sound pattern per week. However on a three week rotation, all the sound patterns are put together for a combined test. She does still seem to struggle so perhaps some of them should actually just be given the separate sound patterns, than throwing them all together.”

P3: “Yes, yes! In Xhosa, they are still giving one sound pattern a week in Grade four, five and six. There is not a lot of homework at all in Xhosa. It is very manageable. There is a high volume of words for English and Afrikaans each week. It is two lists. One English, one Afrikaans. In English it is just ten words and in Afrikaans it can be up to 20 words. It is a lot.”

4.3.7 Differentiation at the level of variety

The 2011 Guidelines (2011:5) state that, ‘to cater for learners’ levels of functioning and their interests we need to expand the curriculum’. This can be achieved by differentiating at the level of variety.

In order to illustrate this idea, parents were asked how they thought that in reading, their children would benefit from being allowed to select a reading book according to their interests which they could bring home to practise their reading. This was an alternative to a teacher providing their children with readers that all the children in the group were using

Parents unanimously agreed that especially in reading, there should be differentiation at the level of variety. This is important as often three languages: English, Afrikaans and Xhosa are being taught and examined at school.

Verbatim response to question number 14.4.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "Without a doubt. Definitely with reading they are ... at different stages. Why put them off reading, trying to read a book that is above them, the writing is too small, book too thick, too long! To enjoy reading, I feel that if they pick the book, to their standard and subject, it would be far more beneficial."

P2: "...most definitely. Looking at my child, she is a child that won't actively...pick up a reading book. It is not because she doesn't like [reading] or is unable to read. I think when she reads she doesn't comprehend the story because of the punctuation within the reader. However, she is a child that loves horses and if she was given a choice of selecting a book, she would possibly select a book that had horses or a horse story in it. This would in turn give her the confidence to come home and actually want to read it, which...would alleviate being given a set book which...she is not interested in at all. ...Therefore she wouldn't...apply herself in wanting to get the story [read] or comprehend the story. So yes, if they were able to choose their own books, I think this would be a big help. One of the things I did find that over the holiday period is actually being able to go in and purchase a variety of English and Afrikaans books that are geared to her level so that she could...practise. She was not given books from the school. I was...told...to go to a book shop and purchase book[s]. It is quite difficult trying to purchase books in the various languages, particularly Afrikaans that will cater for her level, in terms of being able to enjoy the book and wanting to...read it and understand what she is reading."

P3: "It would be wonderful if children could choose their books according to their interest. Certainly that does happen from Grade 5. They're not given readers, but just pick their own books. They have library every week. They have an excellent library and they can just choose. But I think that in Grade three it's just given to them. I don't believe you can learn a language without reading. I have had a running battle to get Afrikaans readers, to the point of going to the librarian and asking. It still has not happened. I have

ended up having to buy Afrikaans readers. It is quite incredible because I didn't do very well in Afrikaans at school. So I am very anxious that my children won't inherit that, especially since it is not a difficult language like English. So every night pretty much I read two little passages to my youngest child in Afrikaans, but I did not do that with my older child. And it is just incredible the difference because my youngest reads more, how much better his Afrikaans is. It is not showing itself in his marks when he is trying to remember spelling. Woordeskat [the vocabulary], that is a real challenge for him. But when he is asked to write sentences, it just comes natural[ly] the sentence construction. ... I think reading is fundamental.

[For] Xhosa there is nothing. Not one Xhosa reader has ever come home which is just ridiculous. How can you learn a language when you are never reading? ...Other things I have done is bought...CD books. Afrikaans CD books so you listen to the CD and you read the book. ... I have got quite a lot of those as a way of trying to get them to hear Afrikaans because we are a very English family. ...Even some friends who are Afrikaans speaking, they don't speak Afrikaans to each other, they speak English. It is really challenging to try and address it. You can say they can watch TV, 7de Laan [7th Avenue] or something, but that's...not realistic. They're not going to. How can a 12 year old watch 7de Laan. ... I think reading is...fundamental and that...needs more emphasis than just lists of words. I think how is a list of words, just parrot fashioning lists of words going to help you. I think it is crazy! You need to have more conversation. You should be spending time in the class...talking. ...Orals are great and just learning together. ...You spend the whole day...only speaking Afrikaans in the classroom and just that and now Xhosa. I know from myself as soon as I was in a working environment where I had to speak Afrikaans suddenly it all fell together.

It is tough on our children to learn three languages at the same time, when at least two of them they are not hearing at all. One of the challenges of helping them to read and to practise is finding the resources available. ...I can afford to find all these things. I must have spent thousands of rands trying to find resources to help them practise. ...I have bought books, I have bought readers and CD's in Afrikaans. I have not bought any in Xhosa because I don't know what level they are meant to be at. I don't have a clue. But

certainly with Afrikaans it has been impossible to find. I have gone to the...school stationery shop, the proper book supplier to look for work books where the children can practise what they are learning at school because (...) I can't help them easily to construct the sentences (...). Then they change that and know that it's correct. I don't want to teach them incorrectly so it really has been very, very difficult. I have gone online. I couldn't find anything in Afrikaans. I did manage to find something in mathematics and I signed up to...for R800 and odd rand a year, where they practise mathematics. But...they have very limited appeal so I found after the first few months [the child says] 'It's kinda boring, Mom!' I have looked at Khan Academy, they do a bit of that. But at the end of the day ... they lose...interest very quickly."

From the above verbatim responses, it is possible to deduce that exposure to multiple languages at once is difficult for learners. Furthermore, children need to choose reading literature according to their reading interest. Limited availability of foreign language literature for reading, results in less exposure to the foreign language and thus less learning of the foreign language.

4.3.8 Using multilevel teaching

One of the ways teachers can cater for all ability levels in the class is through multi-level teaching. This involves (Ibid 2011:6), 'introducing the target concept to the whole class first. Throughout the presentation of the target concept during the lesson, the teacher at different times lowers and raises instruction to keep the below level and above level learners interested. This shows the teacher is catering for the different abilities. When assigning a task, the teacher will split learners into separate groups according to their different levels. Learner's tasks may be levelled according to their interests, proficiency and language skills. The teacher will end the lesson with the whole class together in the application stage of the lesson'.

Parents agreed that multilevel teaching in creative writing should be used. They were asked if they thought story structures should be used to help the children organise their thinking in creative writing if they struggled with organising their thoughts.

Verbatim response to question number 14.5.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "That would definitely make it easier. If they were given help with setting the scene and establishing the characters and plot."

P2: "I think that this would definitely help the child that does have an issue with story writing. ...For them to be given the actual steps and a bit of a structure to show them how to do it. To be told what the beginning is, where the middle is, where the end is and help them to build their characters. ...This would definitely help in improving the child's marks and just the child's thought process when it comes down to writing an actual story."

P3: "...I think that that would be enormously helpful because for some children just getting off the starting blocks is challenging. You sometimes ignite their ability by just giving them a bit more direction. Helping them think about things in a different way. As well as just taking them out of just sitting there behind a desk. Just putting them in a different environment."

The following can be deduced from the above verbatim responses. Provision of story structures by teacher to learners will increase level of understanding, competency, and writing skills.

Parents also thought it a good idea if learners were allowed to edit their work after they had written it.

Verbatim response to question number 14.5.2.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "Yes, in other words, have more time."

P2: "Yes ..., particularly in my child's case, with her punctuation issue. For her to be given time. ...Her current class teacher has been very good in reminding her that she must go back and check her work because this helps her to go back and do the 'sprinkles', in terms of checking the punctuation, making sure the full stops are in the right place, the question marks are there. The capital letters are there at the beginning of a sentence."

P3: "Yes, I do think it would benefit him. So my son doesn't specifically struggle with that, but he does rush through his work and so I think it would be enormously useful if there was time to reflect back on it and to look at it through fresh eyes again. ...their pressure is massive, in an hour to get everything done. I am yet to see a situation where they...truly implement that step of, right you have finished your work, now go back and check. They are so relieved that they have finished, that's it."

Parents also agreed that somebody else should be allowed to help the children to check their spelling, grammar and idea organisation and generally edit their work.

Verbatim response to question number 14.5.2.2 (Appendix D):P1: "In my child's case, the problem is that there is no time for that because she is slow putting pen to paper and to get the ideas flowing. There would be no time...at all for editing so it would have to be 'extra time'. ...Yes, the idea is good."

P2: "This would definitely help, particularly my child. Particularly, now in her formative years, so that by the time she got to high school she would probably be more mature and be able to understand it better. ...if someone could actually sit with her, go through it and help her with her spelling, help her recheck the grammar. Just give her the tools in assisting her to be able to edit her own work. Yes...I think a teacher to help or another adult that would definitely be beneficial."

P3: "... that would be fantastic, especially on the spelling side because my child has this strangest thing. He can do the spelling test and get full marks and then ask him to do those same words in a creative writing piece and you know the spelling is horrific. Capital letters in the middle of the sentence, no capital letters at the start. He does organise his thoughts pretty well. He is very creative and so I think there is structure to it. Sometimes it's illegible because it is untidy."

The following meaning can be extracted from the above verbatim response. Creativity should not be inhibited by learners focusing on spelling when the goal is to convey the story or content.

Parents were asked in what way it would help if the children were allowed to spell phonetically in creative writing, without being penalised.

Verbatim response to question number 14.5.2.3 (Appendix D):

P1: "I do agree that that would be kind for a Grade 4. ... For me, creative writing is to write the creative writing, it is not about spelling, spelling can come later. So get your story out, get the creative juices flowing and ignore the spelling that can be corrected later. I don't think you should be penalised."

P2: "I do agree that this would certainly...help my child who is a phonetical speller. I know when she was at the reading and language therapist, when they discharged her, they have...recommended that we get a concession for spelling. However, at this stage we are holding back to see how she matures before going into high school and if need be, we will then make the concession and go for the concession then. But yes, she is a 'phonetical' speller and I think it would be beneficial for her not to be marked down because she happened to spell the word incorrectly. Again, if she was working on a computer and as she tells me, there is a spell check."

P3... "Definitely! ...I have noticed that the school is very good at that so they have not penalised him for spelling in his subjects unless it is in English. ...When he is writing in other subjects and he gets a spelling mistake he does not get marked down. In English, they have marked him down if the word is in the passage, but if it is a new word that he's used to describe something then he is not marked down if he has spelt it incorrectly. ...That has been very good and I think that that is fair. Interestingly, though, I think it does depend on the teacher. I think in the case of my younger son, I have seen him being penalised. I don't know if my older child's poor spelling results are so well known now maybe they give that allowance. I don't know how they standardise that or make sure that that has been taken into account. I don't know, I think it is a bit hit and miss."

Parents were asked if they thought their children should be allowed to use a computer with spell check to write their stories. Two of the parents did not think so, while the other parent responded in a positive manner?

Verbatim response to question number 14.5.2.4 and 14.5.2.5 (Appendix D):

P1: "I am not sure, because then you might never learn how to spell so for me that might not be the greatest idea."

When this parent was asked if all the children in the class were allowed to do it, the response was:

"Then I would probably fall in line, but it is not actually what I would want."

Parent 3 also did not think it would benefit her child.

P3: "No I don't think in all school days, but perhaps in exams and assessments. I do think that it could be very useful, but I don't think it helps them to learn to spell and remember to spell. I think in exams I don't think they should be marked down, but I think you should be doing things to encourage them to learn to spell. If they are not trying and just relying on a crutch ... I think he needs to learn to spell himself. I don't think he should rely on a computer. That is going to come, but I think when you are at school you have to learn. You must not have an aid in the way of a computer to do it for you. So I think you need a dictionary."

Parent 3 was asked what happened if the child could not look up the word in the dictionary because their spelling ability did not allow the child to access the word in the dictionary. The parent replied:

P3: "I think that is a challenge. I have seen a real problem with the computer when the boys have to do an oral in Afrikaans and just go on to Google Translate. How is that teaching him? You just type in your oral in English and then when I look at it, I go well this does not make sense. You can see what he has done. So forcing him to sit and think about the sentence construction and look up the word. It is very laborious. So I think the problem is that computers give them a very easy way out. It is not helping him."

The second parent thought it would be a positive step.

P2: "Yes, most definitely. She definitely seems very confident with the computer. I think because basically there is a virtual adult behind her in terms of a spell check and grammatical correction. She thrives on a computer when she puts her stories together. I watch and she goes back and actually makes use of the spell check and the grammar. ...I think giving these children an opportunity to use the computer or an iPad would definitely boost their confidence in this regard."

From the above verbatim response it can be determined that there are differing opinions regarding the use of computers in the classroom environment.

4.3.9 Differentiated learning environment

The 2011 Guidelines (2011:6) indicate that ‘the learning environment in which our learners work can create barriers to learning. It is our responsibility as teachers to make sure that we make the learning environment as conducive to learning as possible. Differentiation at this level is important’.

The learning environment does not only refer to the physical environment of the classroom but also to the psychosocial environment. The psychosocial learning environment which encapsulates the psychological and social factors has an effect on the child’s satisfaction, health, well-being and ability to perform effectively. In order to maintain their children’s psychological well-being, the parents were asked if they thought that positive comments or stars should still be used when a child had not fared well to maintain the child’s self-esteem.

Verbatim response to question number 15.1 (Appendix D):

P1: “I don’t agree with false praise because a child isn’t stupid. They know if they have done well or they haven’t done well. But for trying and persevering there would be nothing better than praise or a star or a sticker to make them feel good and to be acknowledged for trying, but I wouldn’t give false praise, but definitely for trying they [should] ... get acknowledged.”

P2: “Most definitely. ...The original school X, where my child was, yes, there were positive comments, but there was always also a comment that was: you can do better or big red circles around the words she’d got wrong. I must say moving her across to school Y, I have seen a lot more: ...well done, you are trying hard, keep going, smiley faces. ...This certainly is far better in terms of my child’s self-esteem and confidence. I know when she saw the red line and comments about doing better she almost switched off and ...almost did not want to apply herself. Whereas [with] positive reaffirmation we have definitely seen a difference.”

P3: “...You know it’s a sad face when you haven’t done well and a happy face when you’ve done well. I think at this school we celebrate the excellence. But to be fair, in some subjects when there is a slight increase, the teacher does praise that. The child wants to be praised if it’s a good effort. ...They have been generally good at that, but you can’t get away from how you do. When the result is poor versus when the result is excellent.”

It can be drawn from the above verbatim response that parents are aware that their children need praise and appreciate genuine praise.

4.3.10 Physical environment

In order to meet the learning needs of all children, the physical environment needs to be addressed by the teacher. Parents were asked if they thought it would be beneficial for their children if the classroom desks were arranged in groups so that peer support was available to the learner when the teacher was busy. They all agreed that it would be a good idea, but recognised that it still had to be managed by the teacher so that the children's discussions centred on their work and the noise level did not become a barrier.

Verbatim response to question number 16.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "...I think that that would be a very good idea. But in our case, my daughter was put in a desk under the teacher's nose, right next to the teacher's desk and every now and again when they rearranged the desks and people that you sat next to, they would all be rearranged, but she wouldn't be. She would just remain under the teacher's nose, under the desk and [was] made to feel different. She would also be sitting all alone. There would be no desk next to her, it would be jutting forward, all alone. So she was made to feel isolated and different. ...There was nobody for her to ask for help."

P2: "I think this would be beneficial. However...it has to be managed, particularly if the child is prone to distraction. ...If the teacher is busy the child [should] know that they can turn to the friend next to them or in front of them. ...even if they were possibly allocated a big sister ...that that child could go and ask that particular [child] to help them with spelling."

P3: "I don't have any experience of that because when I went to school you never had that. There was never any talking and it was just you are on your own. I think group sessions are great. I suppose it is just managing [them] ...When there is chattering, are they talking about school work or are they just talking? I do see it at the school. Sometimes the desks are organised in groups and sometimes they are just one next to another. I think they tend to put them in groups in the younger grades more regularly,

but as soon as you start getting to Grades 6 and 7, then they are just on their own. ...It is very isolating at times."

4.3.11 Social well-being

The 2011 Guidelines (2011:6) mention that in order to address the social well-being of learners, it is important for teachers to create safe environments where learners can take risks. The parents were asked whether they felt it would benefit their children if the teachers created safe environments where their children were allowed to take risks by allowing the learners to work in groups so that the stronger learners could support the weaker learners.

All three parents agreed with the concept.

Verbatim response to question number 17.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "...I ... think it is a good idea because the stronger learners can also learn that some children aren't as bright as them. It is also a learning curve to accept children who are different to them."

P2: "...It will build the child's self-confidence if they are in a group. They feel safe, they feel confident enough to take that risk, not [to] be afraid and enable them to get a mark that they wanted to get."

However, one parent warned about the stronger learners dominating the weaker learners when the teacher grouped learners into mixed ability groups:

P3: "...Group work is very positive [and it] does take place. But I don't know whether [it] is done in the context of the stronger ones helping the weaker ones. I don't know how they organise it. If it is motivated by just learning to work as a team or its motivated by let's mix them up and get the stronger ones to help the weaker ones. I think what does happen though is that the stronger ones dominate so where do the weaker ones ...get to show [what] they can do ... that they have ideas too."

4.3.12 Differentiated teaching methods

There are numerous ways that the 2011 Guidelines advise teachers to differentiate teaching methods. One of the recommendations is differentiating the learning materials.

Parents were asked whether they thought that visual aids such as pictures were important when teaching spelling words. The example used for the parent was the learning of homophones and homonyms, that the word, picture and sentence that shows the word, meaning and context is used:

Verbatim response to question number 18.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "...I feel any bit of extra help will go a long way in helping the child."

P2: "...Most definitely. Fortunately again at the school that my child attends I think they have tried to be as inclusive as possible within the classroom because my child has come home with pictures as well as just the written words. ...Having a child that is more visual, pictures definitely seem to help her. Her [private] remedial support lady [teacher] uses pictures in terms of Geography [to help the child with her exam learning]. If [her daughter] ...is able to draw it, she [her child] seems to maintain that information better."

P3: "I think it would be useful."

The parents were then asked whether they thought the spelling lists were graded, from simple to more complex spelling words.

Verbatim response to question number 18.1.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "No, I haven't found that the lessons are graded. What I have seen is that the spelling words are all jumbled up. I feel that they were covering three languages. For example, in Afrikaans, you might be given a word in English and then would have to translate the word into Afrikaans and be able to spell it. Then you would have English spelling and Xhosa spelling. To understand the meanings of three different languages, the spelling and translation is too much for this age group to comprehend, in my opinion."

P2: "The lessons, don't seem to be graded, however, just going on my child's [present] school, the words obviously, at the beginning of the year seem to be a lot more simple, however, now that we are into the fourth term, the words have become quite complex. This has had a slight impact on my child because the more complex the words are, the more she seems to struggle. For example, this past week her words for learning have been: cathedral, caterpillar, catapult, catch phrase, cataclysm. ...This week has certainly

been very, very difficult and she has definitely struggled so perhaps even week by week ... it would be beneficial to grade the spelling words for those children who do have a difficulty. ...following on from that ...as the work becomes more complex, like in the case of this week, it does become more difficult sitting with my child, because obviously she is struggling and therefore she gets more frustrated. I am trying to get the words done and the patience starts running a tad thin so there is a lot more conflict that goes on between her and myself when the words are difficult. This week she has had the difficult English words together with quite difficult Afrikaans words: kaartjie, geskenk, kleure, klere [colours and clothes] so it has been a tough week so it definitely puts quite a strain on a mother daughter relationship when you are trying to get these words into their little brains for a particular test because they kick against you, obviously because of the struggle that they themselves are having.”

P3: “In terms of the graded tests I think it would be fantastic to do that. So instead of having all 20 words you have some quite straight forward and simple, to more complex. That you allow the child to just focus on certain ones, but expose them and stretch them. But I have asked that so it is quite difficult as a parent (...). Generally what will be said [as a parent] is that it is an awful lot that you will be expecting the child to do, children to do. And the teacher will go, well that is what we have to get through, this is the curriculum. These are the certain things we have to do. We have to get through them. So I think that is the kind of response you will get from the teacher. And in a sense as a parent, you end up feeling like are you just being overprotective of your child. If the teacher is being drilled that you have to get through this work [and] all the children have to do it. Certainly at the moment, I don’t think they [the teachers] have got very much flexibility at all to say, this child definitely would do better in a week if they [got] ... these five words and no more. And you would build that child’s confidence and you could say right, in two weeks’ time, now you are going to do six words, as opposed to every week, 20 words. ...he just can’t remember that many and in another language.”

The meaning that can be attached to the above verbatim response is that parent’s battle with their own emotions when being faced with emotions of their child battling in the classroom. Emotions and frustrations lead to conflict between parent and child.

It can be deduced that parents are involved although they might be overprotective in the process or experiencing emotions themselves.

The parents were then asked if the learning activities were linked. For example, when the children were learning spelling sounds did teachers use reading passages that contained words with the particular spelling sounds?

Verbatim response to question number 18.1.2 (Appendix D):

P1: "No, they would not get a paragraph or any extra help with the word. No pictures, no paragraphs, just the word. They would just learn the words like parrots. Just learning off by heart, lists of words ... It has no context, it is just the word so they don't know how it fits into a sentence."

P2: "Definitely at the moment, there is no link. She basically gets her weekly sheets of spelling words and based on my child, she does find this difficult. I think she would certainly benefit if she had a reading passage or story that was linked to that particular spelling sound for that week because she would then be able to build a picture and based on the fact that she thrives on pictures and learns through pictures this would assist her with her spelling. ...there needs to be a link between the two."

P3: "Very limited [linking context]."

Lastly, the parents were asked if their child was assisted in the classroom in any of the following ways:

In mathematics, were multiplication tables visually displayed so that the children could refer to them when doing mathematics?

When doing written work were spelling words that the children found difficult displayed visually for them to refer to if they needed help with the words?

Verbatim response to question number 18.1.3 (Appendix D):

P1: "No, there were no times table written on the wall and no tricky spelling words written on the walls or desk to help with language."

P2: "The school itself has not given her a mathematics times table or a spelling sheet with words. I do this myself when the words are difficult, like this week I have cut up the words and stuck them on her bedroom cupboards so that she can look at them and go

over them. Fortunately, her remedial support teacher [the support teacher employed by the parent privately], has given her a times table piece of paper which she is able to refer to the various times tables and she carries this around with her, but it has not come from the school.”

P3: “I do think that would be amazing. So given that my children have really struggled with spelling. That just having a list of key words that they consistently get wrong and they say these 10 words they get into the habit of always checking themselves. I think that habit of checking yourself is a fantastic life skill to learn. To just check yourself and it is not seen as though you are cribbing or you are cheating. In terms of mathematics times tables, I think they are up in the classroom somewhere on a poster. ...my child really struggled with fractions and it has been quite surprising given that he just has an incredible ability to do mental arithmetic, but yet now why is he struggling with concepts. For him, he struggles with the abstract form of things. So I think some tools would give him the little bit of support he needs without giving him the answer. He still has to work it out. But just saying you don’t have to fly solo here.”

The 2011 Guidelines (2011:9) state that teachers need to differentiate their methods of presentation by modifying the formats to cater for the diverse needs of learners. Parents were asked whether they thought the following strategies would help their child:

- Simplified pictures or diagrams which did not compromise the complexity of the questions;
- Written descriptions that replaced pictures or diagrams;
- Pictures or diagrams supplemented with written explanations;
- Real items or models instead of pictures or diagrams;
- Irrelevant pictures or diagrams not on display;
- Reducing the amount of information in pictures and diagrams.

All the parents agreed with the above. They added the following thoughts:

P1: “Pictures or diagrams being simplified without compromising the complexity of the questions would be great. I agree that unnecessary pictures or diagrams should be removed. That the diagrams should be simplified and would be a good idea to maybe have the real item or a model on hand. ...A simple explanation to accompany the diagram would be useful.”

P1: "In terms of pictures or diagrams being simplified, yes, because often I have noticed that in the contents subjects' photocopies are not clear and you can't work out what the picture is. Yes, either clearer photocopies or textbooks which they can use in conjunction with that particular picture because in a textbook you would get a very, very clear picture as well as a very clear and simplified written description of what is being taught. At my child's school, they also...use models. In geography, if they have had projects in terms of volcanoes or whatever, the children get given a science fair to put together, and they in turn will actually build that particular volcano or try and create something in terms of a model and that definitely seems to help."

P3: "For a private school I have been quite surprised at the poor resources that we have had to work from. ... if I think it has been almost 30 years since I have finished school and it is still just photocopying out of a book. We live in this incredible age of technology. I am surprised at how basic it still is. I would agree that unnecessary stuff and making a simple issue overly complex is not necessary. I think things in colour, things with pictures [should be used]. I think the human brain, regardless of what your learning ability is, learns far quicker when you can associate a picture and colour, than you can a list of words. To say that we have not ... leapt forward from that and we are still giving black and white photocopied notes to these kids is crazy. So I have invested in a programme called 'Y' to help the boys with their studying to break down all this information they have to learn by putting it on computer in a mind map. ...Where you can add colour and pictures and to try and bring it alive for them. That programme was R3500. I am sure it will serve them right through their schooling and I have also used it in my business so it has not been entirely just for them. Why doesn't the school have this? They do encourage mind maps, but I think they should be doing that more in their learning."

4.3.13 Differentiated assessment

The 2011 Guidelines (2011: 12) state that differentiated assessment is important as it is based on the rationale that the needs of learners cannot all be met in the same way. Differentiated assessment involves rethinking the traditional practice of having all learners do the same assessment tasks at the same time. In this new way of thinking, teachers need an assessment approach and plan that is flexible enough to accommodate a range of learner needs.

Parents were asked if they thought having mixed ability groups working on a task for an assessment would benefit their child. They all answered in the affirmative and gave the following opinions:

Verbatim response to question number 19.1 (Appendix D):

P1: "...This would definitely help my child having a mixed ability group working together as it doesn't label a child as only belonging to one group. If one child does not write nicely, then she could maybe do the research, and the next person writes. The task comes together nicely."

P2: "...Most definitely. I think working within a group, the child would not be self-conscious of her weaknesses because it would be diluted. ...If she was put in a group where there was a stronger child together with a weak child so that this weakness would not be as prevalent and therefore it would boost her confidence in getting the task done. ... [For] instance ...my child, she enjoys drawing and is good at art. In terms of a group assessment, if she was given the task of drawing the picture this would boost her confidence and the other child in the group who maybe is not as good at drawing, but is good at the written work, could actually do the written aspect of that particular project. So most definitely allowing for group assessment of tasks so each child's weaknesses is not exacerbated and that they don't feel labelled."

P3: "I do because then they would feed off each other. One would say one thing and that would spark a different opinion or a different child responding in a different way. So I think that in the same way that I understand now how it works in terms of working in a group. It could also be very useful from an assessment point of view."

Parents were asked if they thought that the teacher providing extensive scaffolding to their children during the initial phase of learning new ideas, when their children could not work independently, was a good idea. All the parents agreed with scaffolding the assessment activities. They voiced the following ideas:

P1: "The support of the teacher will help the learner grasp new ideas and with repetition eventually the child will be able to do it on her own."

P2: "I think that scaffolding is an excellent idea. Like in my [child's] case, with her mathematics. If my daughter was given the facility of being able to have the ruler on her

desk and only working on one specific concept, i.e. cm to mm, if she was just given that and she grasped that she would be confident enough to do it and therefore would be more confident to moving [on] to the next step.”

P3: “Allowing time before you take away that support. If you do that you have a stronger being, than if you take it away too soon. So I think it [scaffolding] is a wonderful concept.”

Parents were asked if they thought it would benefit their children if tests and assignments could be done orally as well as in written form. They all responded positively.

P1: “I think to allow for tests and assignments to be taken orally as well as in written form would be an excellent idea. For example, if a child stutters, he wouldn’t want to stand up in front of the classroom and do the oral, then the written form would be a good idea. It is the same thing which keeps coming through, that we are not all the same. Cater for the needs of the different types of children in the classroom.”

P2: “We have experienced this. During the second term, my child had a slight fall at school and being left handed she happened to fall on that side of her arm. She did not break it, but it was strained. ...It was right at the beginning of the second term exams. The school was very accommodating. The doctor’s letter asked if they could possibly test her orally. It was amazing to see her report because she definitely coped far better in terms of being able to stand up and answer the test and the question orally, than ...writing it down because I think with her issues, in terms of writing, the punctuation is an issue and the comprehension so she definitely benefitted. Her marks went sky high ... being able to do it orally than actually written. After these exams, I asked her, ‘how did you find the question? Her words to me were: “Mommy I found it so much easier to answer the question than to write it down”. My hubby is a lawyer, so his oral skills are good. I think the oral side in our family is clearly one of the stronger issues so for her it was certainly beneficial.”

P3: “Definitely, where writing is such a problem. [My son] has really struggled with holding a pencil and writing is...hard for him. Despite the O.T. [occupational therapist], his pencil grip is still dreadful, his handwriting is poor. So he doesn’t find it easy. Talk to

him and you are just blown away. ...A combination would ... get a more accurate view of the child's ability and what they have learnt."

Parents were asked if they thought multiple choice options would help their children in assessments.

P1: "I think multiple choice options are an excellent idea as a word could spark the answer in the child. The only thing I am not for is negative marking so it's got to be a positive plan. It also helps the child that is not very good at spelling."

P2: "I think this would help my child. The fact that she struggles with punctuation, I think she would find a multiple choice question far easier. She would probably finish well within the time limit because the options would be narrowed down in terms of the answer. She wouldn't have to try to work out what the question is actually asking, particularly very long questions."

P3: "I do like multiple choice. It helps them if it is all in their head and they struggle to get it down. And if they see it, then often it triggers recollection. ... If they are not great at writing [and] if their handwriting is not brilliant I think it is useful."

Parents were asked if they thought it would benefit their children if the assessment involved tasks which required short answers. Two of the parents thought it was a good idea. However, the third parent felt that her child might be disadvantaged as he tends to write verbosely and struggles to write succinctly.

P1: "I think that would be an excellent idea for the child who cannot write a whole paragraph just to give short answers."

P2: "In terms of my child's punctuation issue, I think if she just needed to answer with two sentences than having to write a half a page paragraph, it would assist her. Because having to write a lengthy paragraph for an answer would require her to have to think how the sentence[s are] going to be structured, what she has to put into [those] ... sentence[s] and she does struggle in terms of the punctuation, the comma and capital. It would just add more stress. ...for her, a short answer would be far better."

P3: "I am not sure that it would help my particular child because I think he tends to be quite verbose so I think sometimes it is harder to say everything in a shorter answer. ...I

am not sure that in his case it would be useful. I think allowing them to express and give more time can sometimes, for him in particular, be more beneficial. Maybe for another child it is different. But I think generally it is harder to say what you want to say in fewer words.”

Parents were asked if they thought giving their children extra time to complete assessments would help them.

P1: “I think that that would be an excellent idea as some are definitely slower than others. Once again, I keep saying it, but to ... [put] everybody into one category isn’t fair or correct. Some are quick, some are slow, extra time would be great.”

P2: “Yes, I think it would help my child. Maybe not in all her subjects because the ones she is strong at she would be fine. But, particularly maths, I think if she was given extra time based on the fact that that is one of the areas where she struggles, it would help her. ...It would ...not necessary [be based] on the whole class, but obviously for those children who do have their various issues. When they are ...writing a subject where the teacher is aware that this child has a weakness that they are given extra time to complete it.”

P3: “...I think time pressures for very young children stops them being able to think in a calm way. I think when they stop being calm and there is pressure on them that they don’t process correctly. If you put time pressures on too early it stops them from completing the tasks neatly and thinking clearly and taking their time. ... I think at such a young age, the time pressure is not necessary. ... I think more time is useful.”

The parents were asked in what way they thought technology would help their children when they were being assessed.

P1: “It would also be a good idea in this day and age to use technology.”

P2: “My child ... is confident with a computer or an iPad and if she was able to do her assessments having her ability to use this type of technology, it would definitely help her.”

P3: “I ... think that technology can be very useful, but I don’t think exclusively.”

Parents were asked if they thought that focusing only on key concepts for their children would benefit them. Two of the parents thought it a good idea, the other parent was concerned that the children would not be extended sufficiently.

P1: "Yes, because there is a lot of waffle between all the facts. Stick to the facts short and sweet."

P2: "Yes, fortunately at the school that she attends, they do try to implement this. I have seen with a couple of her content subject books that come home, the work seems to be condensed and focused on sort of shorter paragraphs, with highlighted single words. I am also aware because her teacher has mentioned that they try and have shown the children various study methods. Going on the basis that some children obviously are quite comfortable in learning [and] writing out longer sentences. But at her school they do seem to use a key concept method with some of the children. She has come home with that."

P3: "I am not sure so just making sure that the fundamentals are covered. I suppose the difficulty is that it then doesn't broaden their knowledge base. I am not sure if it will be helpful."

The parents were asked in what way they thought that focusing on the positive aspects of learners would be beneficial.

P1: "...Focusing on the positive aspects of learners would be great at this young age. If they have written a test or an essay. ... If the spelling is incorrect, I feel it should be ignored because spelling will eventually come to them, but rather get the facts across and give positive marking for that and not take off marks for spelling."

P2: "... Definitely. Again I have had good experiences at my child's school. Where the teacher and the school are aware of the children's weaknesses, however their strengths are certainly highlighted. If I look at my child, she often gets given the task of talking in assembly. They are quite happy with her ...answering questions orally if somebody has come and visited the school. She came home the other day saying that she was the one who could chat to the lady and give the answers. So they are aware that her oral aspect [ability] is certainly one of her strengths. She enjoys acting so they will encourage that and highlight that within the school day and this has definitely boosted her confidence."

P3: "I ...think so because they get categorised according to very typical assessment measures or grading systems. ...I think that in the case of a child that is verbally very strong, but yet the majority of the assessments are done, in writing. I don't think that that is always taken into account sufficiently enough. I think being able to do certain tests where you just talk it through and it is an oral rather than a written [assessment], gives a more correct assessment of the child's ability."

Parents were asked in what way they thought it beneficial if the teacher excluded some marks collected early in the semester for a learner who performed poorly at the beginning of the year but subsequently made good progress.

P1: "Yes, I am 100% behind that. I feel that it is all good and well for the child who does well throughout the year, but for the child who has had extra lessons or stayed up late and put in the extra time to go up percentage wise and then have it all brought down because of work done in the earlier term is soul destroying."

P2: "Yes, I think this would definitely help because in my child's case, we do notice that being a September child she does seem to struggle a little bit more the first six months of the year and then it is almost as though maturity kicks in and we start seeing quite a difference within the third and fourth term. ...I think for a child that does blossom later, if those poor marks could be either withdrawn or not highlighted. Again I think it would boost that child because she ...or he would see the progress and that would boost them for the following year's grade."

P3: "... Certainly you always want to be in a situation where you're able to say to your child, don't worry about that that they are not going to take in those marks. I think that that does help them [the child] not to get overwhelmed with the worry of I have done so badly it is going to bring all my marks down. So I think from that perspective it can be very useful. ...I think generally it is an average over the year. I suppose on the whole it would help because it helps them not to feel negative. That they can say, okay, we'll put that behind [us] and move on."

Parents were asked how they felt it would benefit the children if the teacher set tests that were suited to their child's abilities.

Verbatim response to question number 19.2 (Appendix D):

P1: "Yes, I feel that it would benefit my child if the teacher sets tests that are suited to my child's abilities, meaning the way the questions are asked. ...If the paper is out of 20 maybe to give the first 10 questions, let them be completed and then do the next 10."

P2: "I have quite a mixed answer here because at the same time I think if it is set just to your child's abilities, will they [the child] not possibly lose the determination to try and improve. ... I think it would have to be very ... [closely] matched. Possibly, maybe, the first part of the year, where the child is struggling is ... have a test or two on that particular level, but at the same time, encouraging the child to broaden out beyond that and then increase the test so that they are up to the level where maybe the child should be. It is quite a difficult question this because if at the same time you keep matching the test to the child, will the child ...really want to grow and want to try to improve. ...At the end of the day, you also want your child to be challenged and for them ...to see how far they are growing or have grown. So yes, you could [do that] for a while set it to a child's ability, but I do think you do need to raise the bar. But you need to raise it at the child's pace."

P3: "Yes, I think they should be. I suppose they have to test on certain work, but I think for me it is more important how they're testing. I suppose I am saying that maybe one size doesn't fit all and they need to have for children who learn in different ways and express themselves in different ways."

The parents were asked how they felt that their children were disadvantageded by the assessment strategy. The parent who had moved her child from an independent school to a public school where she felt her child was included, did not answer the question.

The other parent who moved her child from an independent school to another independent school answered in the following way based on where she was before.

Verbatim response to question number 19.3 and 19.4 (Appendix D):

P2: "The present independent school does not particularly hone in on the weakness. They really boost the strengths of the child. So in terms of her assessment strategy that they use at school Y, I am quite happy."

The parent was then asked in what way they felt that the school that the child attended prior to the present independent school had a strict assessment strategy.

P2: "Definitely, it was much stricter. There wasn't much leeway on either side. And her weaknesses were highlighted more than her strengths, by the original assessment strategy. And that was one of decisions [reasons] why we moved her [from one independent school to another]."

The parent was then asked in what way she felt that the present school's assessment strategy was strict.

P2: "I do feel that they are certainly more broad based, than actually forcing a child to be in a particular box and having to conform to that box. ...Where she is now, it is more broad based and it has been encouraging to see."

The parent was then asked if she thought the present independent school was implementing many of these strategies from the 2011 Guidelines.

P2: "I think they definitely are. I think School Y is quite proactive in that regard."

The third parent said she could not answer this question.

The parents were then asked how they thought their children's abilities determined what was expected of them.

Referring to the independent school from which this parent had moved her child, the parent responded:

Verbatim response to question number 19.5 (Appendix D):

P1: "I don't feel that my child's abilities determine what is expected of her as your teacher knows if your child is struggling because you are often called in and the tests [that] are set ... are difficult tests."

The next parent, referring to both the first and the second independent school where she had sent her child responded as follows:

P2: "Yes, I do feel that her ability determines what is expected of her. Just based on her previous [independent] school, every time we were called in they were always highlighting her weaknesses and what we were needing to do to the point where I have gone into her present [independent] school expecting the same sort of feedback, only to be told that the teacher is happy with what my child is doing and how she is maintaining and that actually she [the teacher] is quite happy that she [the child] is well within the norm where she should be. ..."

This has actually been fantastic because one has always got used to going in being told, no she needs an extra lesson here, she needs an extra lesson there. Where to go in and you think okay, what am I going to get? And to be told that she is actually fine ...is really great."

The third parent responded as follows:

P3: "Definitely they put a lot of pressure [on the parent and child]."

4.3.14 Alternate forms of assessment

The 2011 Guidelines (2011: 14) make provision for alternate forms of assessment. Alternate assessment is based on grade-level attainment of knowledge. It is assessment that recognises that learners with difficulties need testing formats or procedures that provide them with equal opportunities to demonstrate their attainment of content which is at the same grade-level as the general assessment.

Parents were asked if they thought additional time in tests and examinations would benefit their child. They responded as follows:

Verbatim response to question number 20.2 (Appendix D):

P1: "... That is great to have extra time in tests and exams. It would definitely help my child because she is very slow. She writes slowly, she reads slowly so yes, extra time would definitely help."

P2: "Yes, particularly in the area that she struggles ...i.e. the language ...to allow her to re-read the question."

P3: "... I definitely think that would be helpful because it would just take that pressure off—knowing that they've got extra time."

Parents were then asked if they thought alternate formats of tests and examinations would help their child. The example given to help them understand this idea was a close procedure.

Verbatim response to question number 20.3 (Appendix D):

P1: "I think that that would be extremely helpful as it is incredibly daunting to have to write a paragraph rather than just fill in the missing word. What [the teacher] ... should be trying to find out [is] what the child knows, not what they don't know. Often when it

is all consuming, it looks like they don't know anything. So yes, one word or filling in information is a good idea."

P2: "Most definitely and in fact I have seen this. The school ha[s] seemed to embrace this format within the school term. I have noticed in these books that obviously when they learn new subjects or new content they do seem to be given a much more condensed version where they only have to circle the answer. She definitely benefits from this. It seems to stick more with her than actually the long worded paragraph."

P3: "I do think that alternative formats of tests are useful for children who have particular difficulties in writing or hearing or reading. I think that could be very useful. It is not my particular experience. ...I don't think it is right for everybody, but it could be useful for those children."

Parents were asked whether a Reader would assist their child:

Verbatim response to question number 20.4 (Appendix D):

P1: "A reader would be an excellent idea for those who are struggling."

P2: "Initially we thought this would help, but she has grown so much from having attended Reading and Language Therapists, that at this stage they have said that we don't really need a Reader. However, we could consider this option in high school. What I liked about my child's school at this stage, they have said, let's see how much she grows, lets encourage her and take it from there, which has actually been quite a different approach from her previous school where it would have been you need to simply go this route, she is never going to cope. Where here they are allowing her to grow and they will reassess once she gets to high school level."

The parent was then asked by the researcher whether her child's previous independent school allowed Readers in the tests or examinations. The parent responded:

P2: "No, no and it certainly wasn't encouraged. I am not saying the school doesn't allow it, so I would be speaking out of turn. Based on her Grade 1, 2 and 3 years, this was not an option, it was not given to us as an option. ...At her current school, she does not need it as much, but initially at the beginning of the year, the teacher was quite approachable so my child could go to her, she [the teacher] would re-read the question. In fact, there

is another child in her class who has a facilitator with the child during the school day and for the first part of the year, this facilitator would ... come sit next to my child and help my child and re-read the questions for her. She seems to have improved quite dramatically, in this regard and we did not need one in the third term tests."

P3: "...A Reader would be very useful."

When asked whether a scribe would be helpful the parents remarked:

Verbatim response to question number 20.5 (Appendix D):

P1: "Yes, a scribe would be very useful to those that need one. It would speed things up."

P2: "Yes, I think this is a brilliant idea for possibly the child who suffers from severe dyslexia. In the instance with my child, this was a thought that had crossed my mind, however, again after attending reading language therapists and her support she has come along in leaps and bounds and at this stage, this won't be necessary. But it would certainly be an option that I would consider if she needed it in the high school. If this was an option out there, I think it can only benefit the child who really struggles in terms of writing down."

P3: "Yes, I ... think that that would be very useful."

When asked whether the parents thought that using a computer with a spelling and grammar check could benefit their child the parents responded:

Verbatim response to question number 20.6 (Appendix D):

P1: "Yes, electronic equipment can be useful, but I am not sure how it can fit into a class that is not all using electronic equipment."

P2: "Most certainly in my child's case. If she was able to do her exams or her test on a computer which has the spelling and grammar check, it would probably halve the anxiety because spelling and grammar is where her issue is."

P3: "Yes, because I think they're some children who really struggle with spelling, their handwriting is so poor, but that is a mechanical thing not a thing that they haven't studied."

4.4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to explore in what way parents at independent schools would consider the implementation of the 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom for Inclusion as proposed by the Department of Education as being beneficial to their children. In this chapter, the researcher provided a summary background of the parents and their children based on the research conducted through semi-structured interviews with the parents. The first section determined the children's problems as well as the support that they had received from the parent, school and the institutional support network. The second section of the interviews dealt with the 2011 Guidelines. From the interviews with the parents whose children attended independent schools, it was determined that these parents thought the 2011 Guidelines were a positive approach to including their children in the school environment

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings and integrates the findings with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 so that the research question can be answered.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research was to explore and describe in what way parents considered the inclusive education support that their children with learning disabilities received at independent schools to have been adequate when compared against the 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom for Inclusion as proposed by the Department of Education. Data was collected from three parents whose children experienced learning difficulties at their independent schools. This chapter merges the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the empirical study from Chapter 4. Suggestions for supporting each learner are provided by responding to each learner's problems through inclusive education policy, particularly curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation.

To attain this aim of establishing in what way parents at independent schools consider the support their children received at independent schools as adequate, the following secondary questions were used:

- What is understood by the term 'inclusive education' in public and independent schools in South Africa, from the literature review and the perspective of parents?
- What are the perceptions of parents whose children are at independent schools regarding how inclusive education is implemented at their independent school?
- What are the perceptions of parents at independent schools regarding their understanding and effectiveness of the 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements?
- What potential support could such learners have received if the support had been based on the 2011 Guidelines?

The first question is answered in 5.2, the second in 5.3, the third question in 5.4 and the fourth question in 5.5.

5.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Education Act makes provision for public and independent schools.

5.2.1 Public schools and inclusive education

South Africa adopted a policy of inclusive education in 2001 with the policy document, the Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (see Chapter 1.1). This document paved the way for new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. The aim of the inclusive

paradigm and practices is to remove the barriers to learning and teaching that learners with disabilities experience and to ensure that they have access to the school of their choice and can remain at ordinary schools (DoE 2001:43). To achieve the Department of Education's intentions as highlighted above, the Department of Basic Education published various guidelines for addressing inclusion in the classroom. This research focused on the most recent guideline titled: 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements. The aim of these guidelines was to '... provide teachers, principals, subject advisors, administrators, school governors and other personnel, parameters and strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classrooms through the curriculum' (DoE 2011:2) (See Chapter 2.5.2.1)

The research undertaken revealed that the three parents interviewed felt that these 2011 Guidelines:

- Should be utilised for inclusive education policy at independent schools in the same way that they are applicable to public schools;
- Were a useful tool to enable learners with learning difficulties to be included at independent schools, because they involved curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation.

5.2.2 Independent schools and inclusive education

As indicated in the literature study (see Chapter 2.5.2.2 b; Walton 2006:i) all member schools of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) have to abide by ISASA's conditions of membership and the Diversity and Equity Policy. As far as this research could determine, the policy of independent schools is not visibly based on a specific theoretical framework, such as the critical disability theory, otherwise the well-being and opinions of disabled learners and their parents would have influenced practice more. The advocacy stance of critical theory does not allow for silence where learning disabled learners are not treated fairly.

This research confirms the previous research of Walton (2006:i) which found that independent schools were implementing various degrees of inclusive education and that there did not appear to be uniform guidelines to guide all parents, teachers and schools in the practical support of learners who experienced learning difficulties. The absence of uniform guidelines might be a reason why independent schools cannot be held accountable by parents. Although the parents interviewed supported the 2011 Guidelines, the independent schools that their children attended did not subscribe to uniform practical guidelines against which the schools actions could be compared.

5.3 PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING HOW INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS IMPLEMENTED AT THEIR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

None of the parents interviewed were aware of an inclusive education policy document at their independent school, even though they had had educational assessments done on their children because their children struggled with their learning. Only one parent felt confident that her child was assisted by the class teacher and school, but this only occurred after she moved her child from a previous independent school to the present independent school that her child attends. All the parents interviewed viewed curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation as a positive step to inclusive education. They also felt that independent schools should have to implement inclusive education, particularly the practical 2011 Guidelines, in the same manner that the public schools were required to apply them.

5.4 PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS AT INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS REGARDING THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 2011 GUIDELINES

A summary of the data based on the perceptions of the parents at independent schools regarding their understanding and effectiveness of the 2011 Guidelines, in particular curriculum and assessment differentiation, follows.

Table 5.1 Summary of parents' answers regarding curriculum and assessment differentiation

Themes	Analysis
Curriculum differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents unanimously agreed curriculum differentiation is necessary for diversity.
Curriculum content adaption Differentiation at the abstract level of a child's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents unanimously felt using concrete apparatus would be helpful when teachers are teaching abstract concepts such as telling the time.
Complexity of content differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents unanimously felt that there should be complexity of content differentiation, especially in the light of learning a first, second and third language.
Differentiation at the level of variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents unanimously agreed that especially in reading that there should be differentiation at the level of variety. This was important as often

	three languages were being taught and examined at school.
Using multilevel teaching	<p>Parents thought that in creative writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story structures should be given to learners to help organise learners' thinking; • Learners should be allowed to edit their work after they have written it; • Someone should help them edit their work; • Learners should be allowed to spell phonetically; • Two parents were not keen that computers were allowed, although one parent thought it a good idea.
Differentiated learning environment for psychological well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' unanimously agreed that positive comments or stars should be used when a learner has not fared well for the child's self-esteem purpose.
Physical/social classroom environment is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents unanimously agreed that it would be beneficial for their children if the desks were arranged in groups so that peer support was available to the learner when the teacher was busy; • Parents agreed sitting next to a stronger academic learner (friend) was beneficial. One parent warned that it had to be done with care as one learner could be labelled clever, which could exacerbate differences.
Social well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents agreed that social well-being was an important concept. However, one parent warned about the stronger learners dominating the weaker learners when the teacher groups learners into mixed ability groups.
Differentiated teaching methods	<p>Parents agreed that visual aids were important when teaching spelling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling lists should be graded; • Learning activities should be linked; • Concepts should be reflected in the environment;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different methods of presentation should be used.
Differentiated assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents were in favour of group assessment based on mixed ability; • Scaffolding the assessment activities would provide teacher support to the learner; • Oral assessments should be used for learners with handwriting and written language difficulties; • Multiple choice questions should be used; • Short-answer questions may be used although they may not benefit children who struggle with putting their ideas down succinctly; • Extra time should be given to learners with disabilities during assessments; • Technology should be used during assessments, but not exclusively; • Focusing on key concepts is acceptable although this may limit broadening knowledge acquisition; • The focus should be placed on the positive aspects of learners; • Exclude some marks collected early in the term for a learner who initially performed poorly, but made good progress later in the term.
Tests set to child's abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents 1 and 3 responded that they thought this would be a good idea; • Parent 2 voiced ambivalence. She suggested that it may result in the learner not being challenged. She suggested that initially tests should be set at the learner's ability level. Later in the year, the tests should challenge the learner to encourage continuous learning, while at the same time, always keeping the tests within the child's ability.
Being disadvantaged by the assessment strategy	Parent 1 felt that her child had been disadvantaged.

	<p>Parent 2 felt that at her child’s present school, she had not been disadvantaged.</p> <p>Parent 3 did not know.</p> <p>Only one parent felt confident to say that the school made provision for multiple abilities and that her child’s abilities had determined what was expected of her.</p>
<p>Alternative forms of assessment based on grade-level attainment of knowledge</p>	<p>There was unanimous agreement that in tests and examinations this should be available for learners that need it. This could take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional time; • Multiple choice and close questions; • A reader; • A scribe; • Electronic equipment.

5.5 THE POTENTIAL SUPPORT THAT THE LEARNERS COULD HAVE RECEIVED IF THE SUPPORT WAS BASED ON THE 2011 GUIDELINES

Based on the research and literature review the following individualised support, making use of the 2011 Guidelines, could have been used for the learners to make their school life easier:

Table 5.2 Suggested individualised support for Parent and Learner 1

<p>PARENT 1 AND LEARNER 1</p>
<p>Background to learner and comments on learning support given at previous independent school</p>

- This learner had had to move from her first independent school in Grade 4 because she was not coping with the academic standards of the independent school;
 - She had received school learning support outside the classroom at her previous independent school;
 - Her parents had paid for an educational assessment and for the light therapy that the teacher recommended;
 - The parent reported that the light therapy recommended by the teacher and the light therapist's homework had been 'a waste of time and extremely stressful', for herself and child;
 - Her child had also missed important lessons when she had been taken out of class for learning support, such as Xhosa, which had caused anxiety and further disadvantaged her in terms of her third language acquisition;
- The learning support teacher should provide English, Afrikaans and mathematics learning support, for example, during her actual English, Afrikaans and mathematics lessons. This support could have been flexible depending on this learner's needs and could have been given on an individual or small group basis. This would also have served to support the class teacher in the class.
- Learning support could have occurred before or after school when it would not impact on the child's afternoon sports activities. Sport was important for this learner as she was a member of a family that was keen on sport, especially running. It was also important for this learner's intellectual, physical, social and emotional wellness;
 - If alternate assessments based on Grade-level Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills) were not sufficient to assist this learner then Alternative Assessment Based on Modified Attainment of Knowledge should have been considered. Alternative Assessments Based on Alternate Attainment of Knowledge should also have been considered for her third language, Xhosa, as she was missing out on this subject when she was taken out of class for learning support for her first language and mathematics. The time spent learning the third language could have been used for learning support in English first language, mathematics and Afrikaans second language.

Suggested support at current independent school using the 2011 Guidelines

Curriculum differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers should implement the educational psychologist's suggestion of reducing the amount of work the learner is expected to complete. For example, if there are 20 sums, first give the learner ten sums, let the learner complete them correctly before moving on to the next 10; • This concept should be extended to all subjects; • Curriculum differentiation was essential for the third language so that this learner would be able to cope with learning a third language in addition to her first and second language and mathematics.
-----------------------------------	---

<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus should be on learning English as it was the learner’s home language and the language of teaching and learning at the school; • The learner should master her home language before learning other languages. • The number of words to be learned should be reduced to a level that is not stressful for the learner to learn for homework. This should also be considered for Afrikaans and Xhosa; • As the learner was struggling with her first and second languages, Xhosa as third additional language, leniency in what the learner is expected to master should be considered; • The time taken to learn a third language should be spent learning English (learner’s home language) and mathematics.
<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the abstract level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, concrete and semi-concrete teaching and learning aids should be used; for example, in mathematics her child should be allowed to use a real clock when learning and being examined about time; • When the learner struggled with mental mathematics, she should be allowed to use a calculator.
<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the complexity level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When learning English, Afrikaans and Xhosa spelling, expect the learner to learn only one sound pattern a week until the learner can cope with learning more than one sound pattern at a time.
<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the variety level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the learner to choose her own English reading book in terms of what interests her and at her reading level. Also extend this to Afrikaans, with the school providing Afrikaans readers and allowing the learner to choose the reader according to the level that she can read. The same applies to Xhosa.
<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating the psychosocial learning environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and reward her child’s efforts for trying and persevering. This can be done with stars, stickers and positive comments; • Create a safe environment where the learner is allowed to take risks, such as working in a group, so that the stronger learners can support the weaker learners. This will also teach learners to accept those who are different from them.
<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating the physical environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange this child’s desk so that she is part of a group that her friends can support with her learning while the teacher is busy. In this way she can ask her friends what they have to do and how to spell a word and so on. She should also be positioned in a group with a more abled learner so that they can share knowledge and ideas.

<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating teaching methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When teaching spelling, give the e learning materials with pictures of the words that they are expected to spell. Also give the child graded learning materials such as spelling lists that are organised from simple to complex. Focus on one sound pattern at a time so that the different sounds do not confuse the child; • In her second language, expect the learner only to spell the words correctly rather than to translate the words from English to Afrikaans; • With the third language, allow phonetic spelling. To understand the meanings of words in three different languages and to spell and translate is too difficult for this age group; • Link the learning activities to reinforce the concepts being learnt; for example, provide the child with a reading passage that contains the words with the spelling sounds; • Write the words that the learner frequently misspells on a piece of paper which the learner can place on her desk so that she can refer to them when she has to spell them.
<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, use real items or models to explain concepts. Provide the learner with pictures or diagrams that have been simplified without compromising the complexity of the questions. Supplement the picture or diagrams with simple, written explanations. Remove all unnecessary pictures and diagrams from view;

Differentiating assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design assessment tasks which cater for the child’s preferred learning style and different intelligences; • Allow for group assessment of tasks; • Scaffold the assessment activities; • Allow tests and assignments to be taken orally as well as in written form; • Give multiple choice options; • Provide tasks that require short answers; • Allow the learner extra time to complete tasks and tests; • Allow the use of technology and aids such as calculators, clocks, rulers for mathematics assessments; • Subtly record the materials and assessments used to protect the learner’s self-esteem; • Indicate to the learner what the key concepts are that need to be learnt. For example, providing study notes with the key concepts underlined or use asterisks. Provide mind maps with the key concepts and definitions; • Provide a flow chart and a mind map with new terms; • Focus on the positive aspects and talents of the learner • Vary assessment activities; • Exclude marks where the learner performed poorly at the beginning of the year or when first learning a concept, but subsequently made good progress.
-----------------------------------	--

Table 5.3 Suggested individualised support for Parent and Learner 2

PARENT 2 AND LEARNER 2
Background to learner and comments on learning support given at previous independent school

This learner:

- repeated the Reception year in 2009;
- was diagnosed by a psychologist as having working memory problems and the speech and language therapist diagnosed a mild form of dyslexia;
- was moved to another school because her previous independent school was too academic. The learner would have benefited from alternative assessments based on Grade-level Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills) to avoid the need to move schools;
- if she continued to struggle at this level, then Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills) should have been considered to prevent this learner repeating another grade or being forced to move school because of academic pressure. Alternate Assessments, Based on Alternate Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills) needed to be applied when learning Xhosa which was the Third Language. Applying an inclusive education policy to this learner probably would have provided her with the support that she needed in order to thrive academically, socially, emotionally and physically at her first independent school.

Suggested support at current independent school using the 2011 Guidelines

- Ensure that an inclusive education policy is applied to this child to support her appropriately in all her subjects, especially in mathematics and in all her languages, particularly grammar, spelling and comprehension.

Curriculum differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the learner to use a computer or iPad, and Power Point for orals.
Content differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of spelling words in English and Afrikaans should be reduced, especially when they are difficult words.

<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the abstract level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible concrete and semi-concrete teaching and learning aids should be allowed; • In mathematics she should be allowed to use two rulers, one that shows the cm and one that has the mm so that the learner can physically see that 2cm is 20 mm; • Let the learner use a calculator to assist with mental mathematics; • When teaching the concept of time, use a real clock.
<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the complexity level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With regard to English, Afrikaans and Xhosa spelling expect the learner to learn only one sound pattern a week.
<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the variety level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the learner to choose her own English reading book in terms of what interests her, for example, books about horses and at her reading level. Also extend this to Afrikaans, with the school providing Afrikaans readers and allowing her to choose the reader so that she can decide on what level she can read. The same applies to Xhosa reading books.
<p style="text-align: center;">Multilevel teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide story structures that outline the beginning, the middle and the end of stories to be written. Help her to build her characters. Organise the child's thought processes necessary for writing a story. Provide opportunities for the learner to edit her work with the teacher's assistance; • Let the learner spell phonetically. Utilise the spelling concession available for learners with spelling difficulties; • Let the learner use a computer and the spell check facility when doing written work.
<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating the psychosocial learning environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use positive affirmation and smiley face symbols.
<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating the physical environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange the physical classroom environment so that the learner can sit next to a friend or group of friends; • Position the learner next to a more abled learner and a weaker learner so that the learner can get help from the more abled learner as well as help the weaker learner.

Differentiating teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pictures as well as written words; • Grade spelling words to be learned at home so that easier words are learnt before more difficult words; • Provide printed multiplication tables for easy reference.
Presentation methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use textbooks rather than poor quality photocopied material.
Differentiating assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for mixed ability group assessment of tasks to boost the child's confidence; • Focus on the child's artistic ability to boost her self-confidence; • Scaffold assessment; • Allow oral assessment; • Provide multiple choice option; • Provide tasks that require short answers to assess punctuation skills; • Allow extra time during tests to reduce her stress levels, and allow her to re-read the questions. Let her use a computer during assessments; • Focus on key concepts; • Focus on her strengths, such as acting which she enjoys. This will boost her self-confidence. Exclude some marks collected early in the term if she performed poorly at the beginning of the year but subsequently made good progress; • Provide a Reader to read test and examination questions to the child; • Let a Scribe write test and examination answers when the learner attends high school.

Table 5.4 Suggested individualised support for Parent 3 and Learner 3

PARENT 3 AND LEARNER 3	
Background to learner	
<p>This child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended occupational therapy for poor pencil grip and spatial issues; • Struggled with reading; • Had organisational issues; • Had anxiety issues; • He would have benefitted from Alternative Assessments Based on Grade-level Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills). If he continued to experience negative stress levels, then Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Attainment of Knowledge (content, concepts and skills) should have been considered to prevent anxiety from clouding his performance. Reduced anxiety would have allowed him to thrive academically, socially, emotionally and physically at his independent school. 	
Suggested support at current independent school using the 2011 Guidelines	
<p>Ensure that the inclusive education policy is applied to this learner to support him in all his subjects. Continue with study skills ensuring they are directly related to what he is going to be examined on in his tests and examinations.</p>	
Curriculum differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation will reduce anxiety.
Content differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of spelling words in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa to levels that are not anxiety provoking.

<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the abstract level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use concrete and semi-concrete teaching and learning aids.
<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the complexity level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect the learner to learn only one sound pattern a week in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa and limit the number of words to be learnt for tests to prevent the learner from becoming overwhelmed by the complexity and volume.
<p style="text-align: center;">Content differentiation at the variety level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the learner to choose his own English, Afrikaans and Xhosa books so that he can read what interests him at his reading level.
<p style="text-align: center;">Multilevel teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide story structures for him to use when doing written work; • Encourage him to edit his work; • Allow the use of a computer for writing completed at home.
<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating the psychosocial learning environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use positive affirmation, even if the learner has not fared well.
<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiating the physical environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange the physical classroom environment so that the learner can sit next to a friend or a group of friends to get help from them, when the teacher is busy.

Differentiating teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pictures instead of only the written words; • Grade spelling words to be learned at home from simple to more complex. Allow this learner to focus on a smaller number of words, but still expose him to all the words; • Have a list of personal spelling words that he consistently spells incorrectly and allow him to check the list when necessary; • Use concrete and semi-concrete aids with fractions.
Presentation methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology; • Use textbooks with pictures in colour; • Reduce the information to the essential and leave out the extraneous information.
Differentiating Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow phonetic spelling, especially in assessments and examinations; • Allow oral assessment to compensate for his handwriting difficulties and encourage his oral ability; • Employ group assessment of tasks; • Scaffold assessment initially and reduce this as he gains confidence; • Use multiple choice options; • Allow him to write in a verbose manner; • Allow extra time for him to complete assessments; • Exclude some marks collected early in the semester if he performed poorly at the beginning of the year but subsequently made good progress; • Provide a Reader during assessments; • Provide a Scribe to write answers when necessary.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Critical Disability Theory (CDT see Chapter – 2.4.1.1) provides a theoretical basis for South Africa’s disability laws. CDT adopts a social model based on the idea, firstly, that the consequences of a specific disability are often the social reactions of disabled people’s unique efforts to cope in a ‘normal’ world and not necessarily the physical consequences of that specific impairment. Secondly, this model incorporates the view that disability is best characterised as a complex interrelationship between impairment, individual response to impairment and the social environment. Thirdly, social disadvantage experienced by disabled people is caused by the physical, institutional and attitudinal environment which fails to meet the needs of people who do not match the social expectation of ‘normalcy’. CDT regards the

law as an essential tool to advance the equality claims of disabled people and to encourage their full integration into all aspects of their society in a humane way.

Independent schools are not obliged to follow the Department of Education's policy documents and 2011 Guidelines as long as they have their own protocol in place to replace those of the DoE. The researcher, however, found that when parents were questioned on their understanding of the independent schools' policy of inclusive education, none of them were aware of a written policy of inclusive education at their children's independent school. From the above analysis on the potential support that the learners could have received if the support was based on the 2011 Guidelines, it is suggested that in order for parents and learners at independent schools to benefit from an inclusive education policy, independent schools should either have an effective alternative to the supporting documents of the DoE, or it is recommended that they should make use of the documents as formulated by the DoE. If learners with learning disabilities are not supported carefully in a scientific way as described in the DoE documents, those learners may not realise their full educational potential.

It is clear that the participants did not consider the support that their children who experience learning difficulties at the independent schools under scrutiny as adequate. These schools are also missing an opportunity to combat discriminatory attitudes, to create welcoming communities, to build an inclusive society and achieve quality education for all. Consequently, they may have very little part in creating a humane society, where the vulnerable are supported to develop as valuable people, and who can make their unique contribution to society.

The final chapter will provide a summary of the research, draw conclusions and make recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 considers whether the secondary research questions posed in Chapter 1 of this study have been answered, in order to answer the main research question in this study namely: *what are parents' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education that their learning disabled children experienced at independent schools when compared to the guidelines for implementing inclusive education as provided for by the 2011 Guidelines?*

Conclusions are drawn from the major findings of the study and recommendations are made for implementing inclusive education policies in terms of the 2011 Guidelines at independent schools, so that learners with learning difficulties (disabilities) can receive the support to which they are entitled.

6.2 REVIEW OF FINDINGS

The general aim of this study was to explore and describe in what way parents considered the inclusive education support that their children with learning disabilities received at independent schools to have been adequate when compared against the 2011 Guidelines. This was done to initiate and contribute to a debate surrounding the possibility that independent schools also use the formal support documents for inclusive education as provided by the Department of Education, particularly the 2011 Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements. This section considers the relevance of the findings with regard to the research questions.

6.2.1 Major findings in respect of the secondary research questions

6.2.1.1 Question number one

What is understood by the term 'inclusive education' in public and independent schools in South Africa, from the literature review and the perspective of parents?

The literature review and the research conducted with the three parents interviewed revealed that:

- From a public school perspective, inclusive education in South Africa is understood in terms of the Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. This defines inclusive education as:

- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
 - Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners due to disabilities;
 - Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners;
 - Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning (DoE 2001:6).
- Independent schools who belong to the Independent Schools' Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) endeavour to follow ISASA's diversity and equity policy that encourages members to include learners with special education needs 'wherever feasible educationally' (Walton 2006:52). This policy is not as comprehensive as the 2011 Guidelines for including learners with learning difficulties;
 - The parents understood the term 'inclusive education' as explained in the 2011 Guidelines.

6.2.1.2 Question number two

What are the perceptions of parents whose children are at independent schools regarding how inclusive education is implemented at their independent school?

It emerged that:

- None of the parents interviewed were aware of an inclusive policy document at their independent school;
- All of the parents were aware of inclusive education practices at their schools in terms of having learning support departments, but the existence of this department did not always ensure that their children were offered support in terms of curriculum and assessment differentiation;
- Two of the parents were of the opinion that despite having educational assessments conducted on their children as suggested by the school because their children struggled with learning, they had to move their children owing to the deficiency of inclusive education at the previous school attended by their children;
- Only one parent felt confident that her child was assisted by the class teachers and school, but this occurred only after she had moved her child from a previous independent school to the present independent school that her child attended;
- All the parents perceived that the implementation of inclusive education would be strengthened with curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation.

6.2.1.3 Question number three

What are the perceptions of parents at independent schools regarding their understanding and effectiveness of the 2011 Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements?

The research showed that the parents:

- Considered that the 2011 Guidelines, being an extension of inclusive education policy, should be utilised for an inclusive education policy at independent schools in the same way that they are applicable to public schools;
- Regarded the 2011 Guidelines as a useful tool to enable learners with learning difficulties to be included at independent schools, because it involved curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation;
- Deemed that an effective way of including children who have learning difficulties (disabilities) was through curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation as indicated in the 2011 Guidelines;
- Considered that the 2011 Guidelines would assist them in understanding what support measures the school should be adopting in supporting their children at their independent schools.

Overall, it was revealed that the participants did not consider the support that their children who experience learning difficulties at the independent schools under scrutiny as adequate. They felt that their children would benefit from the implementation of an inclusive education policy at their independent schools, particularly through the use of curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation made possible by the 2011 Guidelines.

6.2.1.4 Question number four

What potential support could the learners have received if the support was based on the 2011 Guidelines?

The research indicated that the following support could have been provided using the 2011 Guidelines:

- Curriculum differentiation;
- Curriculum content adaption. This differentiation could have been organised at the abstract level, complexity of content level and level of variety;
- Multilevel teaching;
- Differentiating the environment to protect the psychological well-being of the learners;
- Differentiating the social learning environment;
- Differentiating the physical environment;

- Differentiating teaching methods;
- Differentiating the presentation methods;
- Differentiating assessment;
- Provision of alternate forms of assessment.

6.2.2 Major findings in respect of the main research question

The following conclusion serves as the final answer to the main research question, namely: *what are parents' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education that their learning disabled children experienced at independent schools when compared to the guidelines for implementing inclusive education as provided for by the 2011 Guidelines ?*

The conclusion is that the three parents interviewed were of the opinion that independent schools should be held accountable for the effective learning support of learners experiencing barriers to learning in their schools by having the same or similar policies and guidelines as those of the DoE.

At the time that this study was conducted, the absence of explicit guidelines at independent schools created uncertainty for parents and if independent schools did not deliver the anticipated appropriate support, parents were powerless to request more effective support measures for their children at their independent schools.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It was established that, according to the parents, the learners with learning disabilities in this study struggled with the demands of the curriculum and assessments at independent schools. To prevent this from happening, the 2011 Guidelines need to be in place for teachers so that they can respond to learner diversity in their classrooms through curriculum differentiation and assessment. Recognising that the 2011 Guidelines already exist in public schools, which allow for these learners' specific needs to be addressed by educators, it is recommended that the teachers at independent schools should respond to learners in their classrooms who have learning difficulties through curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation. This might be in terms of:

- Differentiating curriculum content;
- Differentiating the learning environment;
- Differentiating teaching methods;
- Differentiating assessment.

As the study involved a small group of parents there are limitations to the study that are highlighted below.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The sample of participants was very small and involved interviews only with the mothers of the children. Therefore the results cannot be generalised to a wider population. However, the results may be indicative of what is happening at the three independent schools that the parents referred to in the research, at a particular point in time.

Only the mothers were interviewed. A more nuanced opinion would have emerged if both parents, teachers and principals were included in the list of participants. From the parents responses, it appears as if there are different levels of inclusive education at the different independent schools.

More parents should be empowered with knowledge to support their children. However, through this research, the three parents interviewed were made aware of the positive effects that curriculum differentiation and assessment differentiation could have on their children's school life.

6.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study indicates how important it is to take parents' views into account when studying inclusive education practice. Inclusive education requires a strong and respectful parent-school partnership if any inclusive placements are to be successful. By giving voice to these three parents, they have helped the researcher to understand how to go forward with inclusive education practice at independent schools, which might help children with learning disabilities.

In line with the social model of disability, parents were tasked with getting involved in the identification and assessment processes involving their children as they knew them better than anyone else. Parents should also be regarded by the school as equal partners in this process because they are often paying for support such as psychological assessments, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. These same parents are tasked with the responsibility for ensuring that their children attend schools in the most inclusive setting possible. To enable parents to make informed choices for their children, parents need to be empowered to understand how the potential of their children can be optimally developed.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Further research should increase the sample size of parents interviewed at high fee independent schools that have been in existence for over 50 years. Further research needs to be done on the effects of compulsory second and third languages, on learners who struggle with the acquisition of their home language and mathematics in the intermediate stage of their schooling.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed that the parents interviewed were involved in the support of their children at the independent schools that their children attended. In an effort to assist their children, they paid for educational psychologists and other private therapies such as occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. The parents also tried to help their children with their homework by searching for resources on the Internet and they paid private teachers outside of the schools to support their children. The conclusion is that additional help is sought and provided by the parents.

The additional support was implemented by the parents to ensure that their children were included at their schools. The parents unanimously agreed that the additional support they provided would have been enhanced by concepts in the 2011 Guidelines.

This research established that from parents' perspectives the implementation of inclusive education at independent schools may be advanced by inclusive education guidelines that offer similar concepts to parents and learners at public schools.

REFERENCES

- Abdulmohsen, S.A. 2012. The relationship between reading comprehension and critical thinking: A theoretical study. *Journal of King Saud University – Languages and Translation*, 24(1): 35–41.
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2210831911000373>
(Accessed 3 July 2015).
- Ainscow, M., Booth, T. and Dyson, A. 2006. *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion*. Routledge: Great Britain.
- American Psychiatric Association. 2000. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR)*. Fourth Edition. American Psychiatric Association: Washington DC.
- Banikowski, A.K. 1999. Strategies to enhance memory based on brain-research. *Focus on Exceptional Children* 32 (2): 1-16.
http://sc-boces.org/english/IMC/Focus/Memory_strategies2.pdf (Accessed 14 July 2015).
- Bashir, M., Afzal, M. and Azeem, M. 2008. Reliability and Validity of Qualitative and Operational Research Paradigms. *Pakistan Journal of Statistics and Operation in Research*. 4 (1):35-45.
<http://www.pjsor.com/index.php/pjsor/article/viewArticle/59> (Accessed 6 March 2014).
- Bless, C. Higson-Smith, C. and Kagee, A. 2008. *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective*. Juta: Zambia.
- Booyse. A. Dednam, A and Krüger, D. University of South Africa. Department of Education. 1999. *Further Diploma in Education: Special Needs Education Module 2 Assessment and Assistance Study Guide for FDESE2-8*. Pretoria.
- Bornman, J. and Rose, J. 2010. *Believe that all can achieve: Increasing classroom participation in learners with special support needs*. Van Schaik: Pretoria.
- Bouwer, C. 2015. E-mail discussion, 25 February 2015. University of South Africa: Pretoria.
- Boyle, M., Kay, J. J., and Pond, B. 2001. Monitoring in support of policy: An adaptive ecosystem approach. *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change*, 4:116-137.
- Cassell, C. and Symon, G. 2004. *The Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organisational Research*. Sage: London.
- Cherry, K. (ND). *Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development*.
<http://psychology.about.com/od/psychosocialtheories/a/psychosocial.htm>
(Accessed 15 June 2013).

- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. 2011. *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge: New York.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. 2007. *Research methods in education* (6th edition). Routledge: New York.
- Cohen D, Crabtree B. "Qualitative Research Guidelines Project." July 2006. <http://www.qualres.org/HomeInfo-3631.html> (Accessed 14 May 2016)
- Creswell, J. 2003. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage: Croydon.
- Creswell, J. 2014. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage: Croydon.
- Crotty, M. 1998. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meanings and perspective in the research process*. Sage: London.
- Dednam, A. University of South Africa. *Department of Education. 1998. Teaching Practice: Learning Difficulties: Study Guide: FDELP-T*. Pretoria.
- Dednam, A., Krüger, D. Burden, A., Levitz, A and Landsberg, E. University of South Africa. 2002. *Department of Education: Study Guide Learners with Special Educational Needs for FDESN3T*. Pretoria.
- De Vos A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, CB. and Delport, C.S.L. 2002. *Research at Grass Roots. For the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Department of Basic Education. 2014. *Draft Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)*. Government Printer: Pretoria. <http://www.education.gov.za/PolicyonSIAS/tabid/1206/Default.aspx> (Accessed 16 May 2014).
- Department of Basic Education. 2012. *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12*. Government Printer: Pretoria. <http://www.education.gov/za/Curriculum/CurriculumAssessmentPolicy> (Accessed 3 May 2013).
- Department of Basic Education. 2011a. *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). Foundation Phase, Home Language Grades R*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Department of Basic Education. 2011b. *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12*. Government Printer: Pretoria. <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=BUB00bmth1%3D&tabid=419&mid=2313> (Accessed 29 July 2015).

- Department of Education. 2011. *Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Department of Education. 2010a. *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Department of Education. 2010b. *Report on the implementation of the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRD) in education*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Department of Education. 2010c. *Guidelines for Full Service/Inclusive Schools 2010*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
<http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/InclEdFSSbook2010.pdf> (Accessed 2 August 2014).
- Department of Basic Education. *National Education Policy Act 1996 (ACT No. 27 of 1996), Approval of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 as National Education Policy*. Government Gazette No 34600; 12 September 2011, Notice Number 722.
<http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/circulars/circulars12/GovermentGazetteNo34600.pdf> (Accessed 3 May 2013)
- Department of Education. 2008. *Operational Manual to the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
<http://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/CurriculumAssessmentPolicy> (Accessed 28 February 2013).
- Department of Education. 2005. *Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Full Service Schools*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Department of Education. 2002. *Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=oFcd8EO7VWY%3D&tabid=454&mid=400> (Accessed 2 August 2014).
- Department of Education. 2001. *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
- Department of Education. 1997. *Quality Education For All: Overcoming barriers to learning and development*. Government Printer: Pretoria.
<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=BNWeQZpNO14=&tabid=978mid=400> (Accessed 7 June 2013).
- Du Plessis, E. (2012) *Introduction to CAPS*, e-mail to D. Kruger (Kruged@unisa.ac.za). 30 Aug 2012.

- Du Toit, L., Landsberg, E. and Levitz, A. University of South Africa. Department of Education. 2000. *Advanced Certificate in Education, Special Needs Education: Education for All Study Guide FDESN1-R, FDESE1-6, ECDSNE-G*. Pretoria.
- Dyson, A. 2001. Varieties of Inclusion. In Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (Eds), *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A South African Perspective*. Van Schaik: Pretoria.
- Engelbrecht, P., Swart, E., Oswald, M. And Eloff, I. 2005. Parents' Experiences of their Rights in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa. *School Psychology International*, 26(4): 459-477.
- Evans, L. 2002. *Reflective Practice in Educational Research*. Continuum: New York.
- Finlan, T. G. 1994. *Learning Disability the Imaginary Disease*. Bergin and Garvey: London.
- Gay, L., Mills, G. and Airasian, P. 2011. *Educational Research Competencies for analysis and application*. Pearson Education: USA.
- Geary, D.C. 2004. Mathematics and Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 37 (1):4–15. <http://ldx.sagepub.com/content/37/1/4.full.pdf+html> (Accessed 3 July 2015).
- Gernetzky, K. 2013. ISASA mulls further court action over unpaid subsidies. <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/law/2013/04/29/isasa-mulls-further-court-action-over-unpaid-subsidies> (Accessed 3 May 2013).
- Giangreco, M.F. 1997. Key lessons learned about inclusive education: Summary of the 1996 Schonell Memorial Lecture. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 44(3), 193-206. (Accessed May 2014).
- Gillies, R.M. 2014. The role of assessment in informing interventions for students with special education needs. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 61 (1):1-5.
- Republic of South Africa. 2012. Government Gazette, Vol.570:3 <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=OvpJkPyVaSY%3D&tabid=188&mid=1759> (Accessed 24 July 2015).
- Grace, S. and Gravestock, P. 2009. *Inclusion and Diversity Meeting the Needs of All Students*. Routledge: New York.
- Grigorenko, E. (2009). Dynamic assessment and response to intervention: Two sides of one coin. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42, 111-132. Doi: 10.1177/0022219408326207
- Grigorenko, E. L. & Sternberg. R. J. (1998). Dynamic testing. *Psychological Bulletin*. 124, 75-111. Doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.124.1.75

- Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y. S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (p. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications Ltd: California.
- Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. in Groenewald, T. 2004. A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3(1):488-489. http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/3_1/pdf/groenewald.pdf. (Accessed July 2014)
- Hallahan, D.P. and Kauffman, J.M. 2006. *Exceptional Learners an Introduction to Special Education*. Pearson: USA.
- Hesse-Biber S.N. and Leavy, P. 2011. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, California.
- Higgs, P. and Smith, J. 2008. *Rethinking Truth*. Juta: Cape Town.
- Hofmeyer, J. and Lee, S. 2004 *The New Face of Private Schooling in Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. www.hsrcpress.ac.za (Accessed 1 May 2014).
- Hosking, D. 2008. Critical Disability Theory. Paper presented at the 4th Biennial Disability Studies Conference, September 2008 at Lancaster University, UK.
- Huberman, M. and Miles, M. 2002. *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion*. Sage: USA.
- Hycner, R.H. 1999. Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview *data*. In A. Bryman and R.G. Burgess (Eds.), *Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Science. <http://people.usd.edu/~mbaron/edad810/Phenomenology%20Hycner.pdf> (Accessed 29 November 2012).
- Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA). 2012. <http://www.isasaschoolfinder.co.za/> (Accessed 20 April 2014).
- Johnson, B. and Christensen, L. 2012. *Educational Research Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Approaches*. Sage: USA.
- Kalenga, C.R. and Fourie, E. 2011. Trekking back to mainstream for Inclusive Education, *Problems of education in the 21st century*. Volume 33, 29-40. <http://oaji.net/articles/2014/457-1406575960.pdf> (Accessed 17 July 2015).
- Kavale, K.A. and S.R. Forness. 1996. Social Skill Deficits and Learning Disabilities: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 29(3): 293-306. <http://ldx.sagepub.com/content/29/3/226.full.pdf+html> (Accessed 1 July 2015).
- Kirk, J. and Miller, M.L. 1986. *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. Sage: Beverley Hills.

- Krüger, D. and Yorke, C. 2010. Collaborative co-teaching of Numeracy and Literacy as a key to inclusion in an independent school. *South African Journal of Education*, 30 (2): 293-306.
- Landsberg, E. Kruger, D. and Nel, N.M. 2010. *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A South African Perspective*. Van Schaik: Pretoria.
- Lee, S. 2015. E-mail discussion 20 May 2015, ISASA: *Conditions for Membership, Revised July 2011*.
- Lipsky, D. and Gartner, A. 1996. Inclusion, school restructuring and the remaking of American society. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66 (4): 762-796.
- Mastropieri, M. A. and Scruggs. T. E. 2010. *The Inclusive classroom: Strategies for effective differentiated Instruction*. Pearson: USA.
- McLoughlin, J.A. and Netick, A. 1983. Defining learning disabilities: A new and cooperative direction. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 16 (1): 21-22.
- McMillan, J. and Schumacher. S. 2010. *Research in Education Evidence-Based Enquiry*. Pearson: New Jersey.
- Melby-Lervåg, M. and Hulme, C. 2013. Is Working Memory Training Effective? A Meta-Analytic Review. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(2): 270-291. <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycarticles/2012-12954-001> (Accessed 14 July 2015).
- Mercer, C.D and Pullen. P. C. 2009. *Students with Learning Disabilities*. Pearson: Ohio.
- Merriam, S.B. 2002. *Qualitative research in practice: examples for discussion and analysis*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.
- Merriam, S.B. 1998. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.
- Mertens, D. M. 2003. Mixed models and the politics of human research: The transformative-emancipatory perspective. In A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie, (Eds.), *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Moll, K., Göbel, S.M., Gooch, D., Landerl, K., and Snowling, M. J. 2014. Cognitive Risk Factors for Specific Learning Disorder: Processing Speed, Temporal Processing, and Working Memory. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 1–10. <https://webpsy.uni-graz.at/entwicklungspsychologie/publications/moll-k-goebel-s-m-gooch-d-landerl-k-snowling-m-j-2014-cognitive-risk-factors-for-specific-learning-disorder-processing-speed-temporal-processing-and-working-memory-journal/> (Accessed 29 June 2015). Published online before print:DOI:10.1177/00222/9414547221.

- Montague, M. and Graves, A. 1992. Teaching narrative composition to students with learning disabilities. In Presley, M., Harris, K. and Guthrie, J. (Eds.), *Promoting, academic competence and literacy in schools*. Academic Press: New York.
- Mouton, J. 2001. *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies. A South African guide and resource book*. Van Schaik Publishers: Pretoria.
- Neuman, W.L. 2006. *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 6th ed. Pearson: Boston.
- Nightingale, W. 2012. *A Positivist Approach to Research*. <http://www.wider-mind.com/research/wdn-positivism-v2.pdf> (Accessed 16 February 2014).
- Paton, M.Q. 1985. *Quality in qualitative research: Methodological principles and recent developments*. Invited address to Division J of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.
- Pederson, L. 2012. *Understanding Behaviour and Developing Emotional Literacy*. Lecture presented as part of a course on Teacher Professional Development at Bergvliet in May 2012.
- Peshkin, A. 1988. In search of subjectivity – one's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17 (7), 17-22.
- Piper, H. and Stronach, I. 2004. *Educational Research Difference and Diversity*. London: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Punch, K. 2011. *Introduction to Social Research Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Sage: Great Britain.
- Puri, M. and Abraham, G. (Eds.) 2004. *Handbook of inclusive education for educators, administrators and planners: Within walls, without boundaries*. Sage Publications: New Delhi.
- Republic of South Africa. 1996. *South African Schools Act, 1996 (84 of 1996)* <http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=alolZ6UsZ5U%3D&tabid=185&mid=1828> (Accessed 24 July 2015).
- Rose, S., Spinks, N., Canhoto, A. 2015. Management Research: Applying the Principles. documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/.../Chapter%206%20-%20Case%... (Accessed 19 May 2016)
- Rosenzweig, C., Krawec, J., and Montague, M. 2011. Metacognitive Strategy Use of Eighth-Grade Students With and Without Learning Disabilities During Mathematical Problem Solving: A Think-Aloud Analysis. *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 44(6): 508–520. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21971084> (Accessed 29 June 2015).

- Schoeman, M. 2012. *Developing an inclusive education system: changing teacher's attitudes and practices through critical professional development*. www.thutong.doe.gov.za (Accessed 14 July 2013).
- Sinha, S. 2013. *Making methods sociable: dialogue, ethics and authorship in qualitative research*. Sage publications: UK. <http://qri.sagepub.com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/content/early/2013/06/24/1468794113490717.full.pdf+html> (Accessed 29 July 2015).
- Skrebneva, I. 2010. *Supporting Deaf Learners in Inclusive Education Settings in South Africa*. M.A. dissertation, University of South Africa: Pretoria.
- Southdowns College. 2009. *Equity and Diversity Policy* <http://www.southdownscollege.co.za/assets/Uploads/Inclusion.pdf> (Accessed 1 May 2014).
- Stimley, S.E. 2006. *Reading to Learn: The role of metacognition in reading comprehension and academic achievement of students with learning disabilities*. Honours Thesis, Ball State University, Muncie, IN. <http://cardinalscholar.bsu.edu/handle/handle/192730> (Accessed 29 June 2015).
- Stofile, Y. 2008. *Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy: A case study in one province in South Africa*. DPhil thesis, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town. http://etd.uwc.ac.za/usrfiles/modules/etd/docs/etd_gen8Srv25Nme4_7965_1269472515.pdf (Accessed 27 May 2013).
- Swart, E. and Pettipher, R. 2010. A Framework for Understanding Inclusion, in Landsberg, E. Kruger, D and Nel, N. (Eds), *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A South African Perspective*. Van Schaik: Pretoria.
- Tannock, R. January 2014. DSM-5 Changes in Diagnostic Criteria for Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD): What are the Implications? http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/sites/default/files/IDA_DSM-5%20Changes.pdf (Accessed 17 May 2016)
- Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, A. 2003. *A Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Teddlie, C. and Tashakkori, A. 2009. *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioural sciences*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- The American National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities. 1990. <http://www.ldonline.org/pdfs/njcd/NJCLDDefinitionofLD.pdf> (Accessed 1 August 2014).

UNESCO The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, *World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality*, Salamanca, Spain, 7-10 June 1994.

Trochim, W 2006. *Positivism and Post-Positivism*.
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/positvsm.php> (Accessed 16 February 2014).

Trochim, W. The Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2nd Edition. Internet WWW page, at URL: <<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>> (version current as of October 20, 2006). (Accessed 19 May 2016)

UNESCO. 2005. *Guidelines for inclusion. Ensuring Access to Education for All*. UNESCO: Paris. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001868/186807e.pdf> (Accessed 21 April 2014).

Vandergriff, L. and Rust, J.O. 1985. The Relationship between classroom behaviour and self-perception. *Education*, 106(2): 172-178.

Vogel, H., Dednam, A., Lansberg, E. and Nel, N. University of South Africa. Department of Education. 2006. *Study Guide: Introduction to Inclusive Education: Section B, Learner Support for HBEDIE-6*. Pretoria.

Walton, E. 2006. The Extent and Practice of Inclusion in Independent Schools (ISASA Members) in Southern Africa. - Doctoral Thesis. University of South Africa: Pretoria.
<http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/783/thesis.pdf?sequence=1>. (Accessed 3 May 2014).

Walton, E., Nel, N., Hugo, A. and Muller, H. 2009. The extent and practice of inclusion in independent schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*. 29 (1): 105-126. Available at: http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?pid=S0256-01002009000100007&script=sci_arttext (Accessed 25 April 2013).

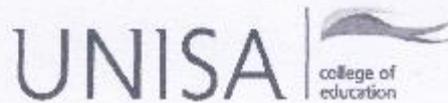
Western Cape Education Department (WCED). (ND) *Introduction to the Education Districts*. <http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/branchIDC/Districts/briefly.html> (Accessed 24 July 2015).

Woolfolk, A. 1980. *Educational Psychology*. Pearson: Canada.

Woolfolk, A., Hughes, M. and Walkup, V. 2008. *Psychology in Education*. Pearson: London.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Ethical clearance certificate



Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

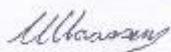
EM Cotterell [33923876]

for a M Ed study entitled

**The perspectives of parents regarding the implementation of Inclusive
Education in independent schools in the Western Cape: a case study**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two
years from the date of issue.

Prof KP Dzvimbo
Executive Dean : CEDU


Dr M Claassens
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Reference number: 2014 MAY /33923876/MC

19 MAY 2014

APPENDIX B Letter to parents

Dear

I am a University of South Africa (UNISA) student, who is currently studying for my master's degree in Inclusive Education. My research is titled "The perspectives of parents of learners with learning disabilities regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in independent schools in the Western Cape: a case study".

I am asking you to participate in this research because you have been identified as being a knowledgeable parent. If you agree to be involved as a participant in my research, you will be required to sign the attached Informed Consent Form that highlights the aspects of your participation that you need to be aware of before consenting to be interviewed.

If you agree to participate in the study and are prepared to share any of your child's reports or school work with me, only my supervisor will be provided with access to them.

Yours sincerely

.....

Elize Cotterell

6 Hendon Road

Wynberg

7800

tel 021 762 4615; cell 082 7656923

Supervisor:

Dr CS Gous-Kemp

PO Box 392, UNISA, 0003

tel 012 429 4434; cell 082 258 3441

APPENDIX C Parent's informed consent form

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Master of Education in Inclusive Education
Full Dissertation
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
RESEARCHER: Elize Cotterell 33923876

TITLE

The perspectives of parents regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in independent schools in the Western Cape: a case study.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, (name and surname), understand that I am being asked to participate in the above research study and that:

1. This research study is aimed at describing my experience of inclusive education as a parent of a child at an independent school in the Western Cape;
2. If I agree to participate in the study, I will be involved in an interview process with the researcher who will ask me a set of questions and the interview will be recorded. I may ask the researcher to turn the Dictaphone off while I am answering questions, if I do not want my answers recorded;
3. The expected duration of my participation will be approximately two sessions of approximately two hours each;
4. Including you, there will be a total of three participants in the research study;
5. I was selected as a participant because my child is receiving or has received learning support at an independent school in the Western Cape;
6. I am aware of the benefits of this research study and will not be receiving any reimbursement for my participation in the research;
7. My identity and that of my child will remain anonymous and I will be given a code name by the researcher;

8. As my identity and that of my child will remain anonymous, there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts in my participation;
9. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary, that I may withdraw from this study at any time should I wish to do so;
10. The study has been explained to me. I have read and understood the consent form, all my questions have been answered and I agree to participate. I understand that I will be given findings should I be interested to know about the outcome;
11. I am free to ask any questions about the study or about being a participant and I may contact Elize Cotterell (Master's Student) at (021) 762 4615 / 082 765 7923;
12. The University of South Africa has given guidance and ethics approval to this research.

SIGNED AT CAPE TOWN ON THIS DAY OF 2014

Full name of participant:

Signature of participant:

SIGNED AT CAPE TOWN ON THIS DAY OF 2014

Elize Cotterell (Researcher):

APPENDIX D General Interview questions

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Master of Education in Inclusive Education

Full Dissertation

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCHER: Elize Cotterell 33923876

TITLE: The perspectives of parents regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education in independent schools in the Western Cape: a case study.

GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. What learning difficulties does your child experience?**
- 2. How does the learning difficulty show itself?**
- 3. Relating to question 2, which is how the learning difficulty manifests itself, does your child have difficulties remembering what has been taught to him/her?**
- 4. What do you understand by the term *inclusive education*?**
- 5. Are you aware of a policy of inclusive education being applied at the school that your child attends?**
- 6. If yes, can you explain what the policy is?**
- 7. What measures has the school taken to assist your child with his/her learning problem?**
- 8. The school, does it have a learning support department?**
- 9. How many people are in the learning support department?**

10. How does the school manage your child's issue?

11. What subjects would you say are problems for your child?

12. How do you try to help your child?

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS POSED RELATE DIRECTLY TO THE GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO LEARNER DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM THROUGH CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENTS. EACH CONCEPT WAS EXPLAINED WHERE AFTER THE PARENT ANSWERED IN WHAT WAY THE GUIDELINES WOULD BE OF ASSISTANCE TO THEIR CHILD.

13. CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

13.1. One of the main ways teachers can respond to the needs of pupils of different ability is through curriculum differentiation. It allows teachers to change their teaching methodology, curriculum content and assessment strategies to the learner's ability. Would you say that it would be beneficial for your child's teacher to cater for different ability levels in his/her classroom? For example, by providing different amounts of work for children of different ability?

14. CURRICULUM CONTENT

14.1. Do you feel that your child would benefit if his/her teacher adapts the content of the curriculum so that it is accessible to a range of learners of differing ability? For example, if your child struggles with spelling the teacher reduces the number of spelling words, s/he must learn for the week before s/he writes her weekly spelling tests in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa?

14.2. Differentiation at the abstract level of a child's learning

14.2.1. When teaching abstract concepts do you feel that it would be beneficial to your child if the teacher assists your child with learning abstract concepts by using concrete examples? For example, when learning fractions in mathematics various opportunities could be given for your child to cut up things into different fractions so your child experiences the concept in a concrete manner?

14.3. Complexity of content differentiation

14.3.1. Do you feel that your child would benefit if the teacher reduces the complexity of the concept? For example, in spelling where there is more than one sound pattern to learn for a test, that the teacher only expects your child to learn one sound pattern a week for a test?

14.4. Differentiation at the level of variety

14.4.1. In reading, would your child benefit from being allowed to select a reading book according to his/her interests, which your child brings home to practise his/her reading? This is an alternative to a teacher providing your child with a reader that all the children in the group get.

14.5. Using multilevel teaching

14.5.1. Do you feel that it would benefit your child if the teacher caters for your child by using multilevel teaching? For example, if your child struggles with creative writing your child is given a story structure to help organise his/her thoughts when writing?

14.5.2. Do you feel that it would benefit him?

14.5.2.1. If he was given the opportunity to edit his work before it was marked, for example, his Creative Writing?

14.5.2.2. Somebody can help him check his spelling, grammar and idea organisation and generally edit his work. Do you think that would benefit him?

14.5.2.3. Being allowed to spell phonetically in creative writing, without being penalised? For example, if your child had to spell cough, he could spell it "couff", and not be penalised for phonetic spelling.

14.5.2.4. S/he is allowed to use a computer with spell check to write his/her stories?

14.5.2.5. And if everyone in the class is allowed to write their story on the computer?

15. DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

15.1. Do you feel that it would benefit your child if the learning environment is differentiated to address the psychological well-being of your child? For example,

by making use of positive comments or stars when your child has not fared well in a test?

16. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

16.1. Would it benefit your child if her physical environment in the classroom is changed? For example, if the desks are arranged in the class, in groups so that your child could ask another child in the group for help? For example, if the teacher is busy, then it helps the child to be able to ask another child, what they have to do or how they spell something.

16.1.1. Has your child been positioned next to a more abled learner so that the more abled learner can support your child?

16.1.2. Has your child been given a “buddy” (a stronger learner) whom your child can approach for assistance when the teacher is busy?

17. SOCIAL WELL-BEING

17.1. Do you feel that it would benefit your child if the teacher creates a safe environment where your child is allowed to take risks? For example, allowing the children to work in groups so that the stronger learners can support the weaker learners?

18. DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING METHODS

18.1. Do you feel that it would benefit your child if the teacher uses different teaching methods to teach your child, for example, in spelling, your child gets pictures to help him/her learn his/her spelling words. Such as when it comes to learning homophones and homonyms you not only have the word, but a picture to show the different meanings as well as a definition?

18.1.1. Are the lessons graded in any way? For example, spelling lists are they organized from simple to more complex spelling words?

18.1.2. Are the learning activities linked to reinforce the concept learnt? For example when learning a spelling sound, would your child get a reading passage that contained words with the spelling sound?

18.1.3. Does your child’s school have for example, the Math’s time tables written on a piece of paper which is stuck to your child’s desk or the wall so she/he can refer to them when she/he is doing mathematics. Or spelling words she/he finds tricky written on a piece of paper stuck onto the inside of his desk to help him with his language so he has got a reference point, so he can refer back if he needs help?

18.2. Different methods of presentation

18.2.1. This refers to using a wide range of teaching methods or strategies to cater for the diverse needs of learners:

And it will involve:

- **Pictures or Diagrams being simplified without compromising the complexity of the questions.**
- **That the picture or diagram is replaced with a written description**
- **The picture or diagram is supplemented by a written explanation.**
- **The picture or diagram is replaced with a real item or model.**
- **An unnecessary picture or diagram is removed**
- **The amount of information is reduced.**

19. DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENT

19.1. Differentiated assessment involves rethinking traditional practice of having all learners do the same assessment tasks at the same time? In this new way of thinking, teachers need an assessment approach and plan that is flexible enough to accommodate a range of learner needs.

It would involve:

- **Allowing for group assessment of tasks. (This would involve having a mixed ability group working on a task.) Do you think this would help your child and how?**
- **Scaffold the assessment activities. Scaffolding recognizes that some children have difficulty working independently and require extensive initial guidance. Scaffolding refers to support that the teacher gives the learner during the initial phase of learning new ideas. Do you think this would help your child and how?**
- **Allow for tests and assignments to be taken orally as well as in written form. Do you think this would help your child and how?**

- Give multiple-choice options. Do you think this would help your child and how?
- Provide tasks which require short answers for certain learners. Do you think this would help your child and how?
- Allow learners extra time to complete the task. Do you think this would help your child and how?
- Use technology to undertake assessment tasks. Do you think this would help your child and how?
- Focus only on key concepts for certain learners. Do you think this would help your child and how?
- Focus on the positive aspects of learners. Do you think this would help your child and how?
- Exclude some marks collected early in the semester for a learner who performed poorly at the beginning of the year but subsequently made good progress. Do you think this would help your child and how?

19.2. Do you feel that it would benefit your child if the teacher sets tests that are suited to your child's abilities?

19.3. Do you feel that your child is disadvantaged by the assessment strategy?

19.4. Do you feel that the teacher's assessments make provision for multiple abilities?

19.5. Do you feel that your child's abilities determine what is expected of him/her?

20. ALTERNATE FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

20.1. Alternate Assessment is based on Grade-level Attainment of Knowledge. It is an assessment that recognises that learners with difficulties need testing formats or procedures that provide them with equal opportunities to demonstrate their attainment of content which is at the same grade-level as the general assessment. This would involve giving learners:

20.2. Additional time in tests and examinations. Do you think this would help your child and how?

- 20.3. Alternate formats of tests and examinations. For example, that would include multiple choice questions or close procedures (where the teacher provides the paragraph and just leaves out key words which the child fills in rather than ask the learner to write a paragraph on a concept. Do you think this would help your child and how?**
- 20.4. A Reader in a test or examination. Do you think this would help your child and how?**
- 20.5. A Scribe i.e. someone who helps your child with writing their ideas down. The child tells the Scribe what to write and the scribe writes it down.**
- 20.6. Electronic equipment: In terms of your child being allowed to write her answer on a computer which has a spell and grammar check? Do you think this would help your child and how?**
- 21. Do you want to share anything else regarding this topic with the researcher?**
- 22. Do you feel that these guidelines are a positive step towards inclusive education?**
- 23. Do you think that independent schools should have to implement these guidelines as public schools do?**