

**THE PRACTICES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GRADE R,  
NYLSTROOM CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that: **“THE PRACTICES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GRADE R, NYLSTROOM CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO”** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**TF SAMBO**

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**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother Mehlaba Elizabeth Sambo, my children Agreement and Hlulani; and my brothers and sisters. May God richly bless you.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Heavenly Father for giving me life and making it possible for me to complete this project. The word of the Lord from Amplified Bible, Proverbs 3: 5-6 "*Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths.*" This scripture always strengthens and encourages me.

There are a number of individuals who contributed towards the success of this project. Without their assistance, support and positive encouragement; I could have given up.

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## ABSTRACT

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy of White Paper 5 protects the development right of children and to learn at an early age. In line with this, the Inclusive Education (IE) policy of White Paper 6 (2001) acknowledges that all children hold the potential of learning within all bands of education and they all require support. The purpose of this research was to investigate the practices of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo in South Africa. Practicing IE in Grade R classes has become a challenge because teachers have to identify different strategies so as to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners. According to the Department of Education (2010:22) practicing IE needs a teacher with knowledge and skills to be able to adapt the curriculum and use differentiated strategies to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners. Most practitioners and teachers have not been trained to teach in IE classes; hence they experience challenges of accommodating the diverse needs of all learners. Even though mainstream schools with Grade R classes are being encouraged to practice Inclusive Education, learners are not receiving the education based on their educational needs. Based on the assumption that challenges may be caused by the education system and other related factors, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and the qualitative research design were used in this study to explore the practices of IE in selected Grade R classes in primary schools, with nine teachers being interviewed and observed. Yin's method of data analysis was applied and factors affecting the practices of IE in Grade R were highlighted. The following factors were identified: curriculum policy factor, classroom factors, parents' involvement and collaboration with NGOs and health professionals, teaching strategies, education matters and resources. It was recommended that Grade R teachers needs to be trained in inclusive practices so that they can respond appropriately to the learners' needs. The involvement and support of parents should be encouraged in the education of young learners so that learners could succeed in their academic careers.

**Key words:** Accommodation, Grade R, Inclusive Education, integration, mainstream schools, practitioners, support

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EI	Early intervention
IE	Inclusive Education
ILST	Institution Level Support Team
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
SBST	School Based Support Team
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SIT	School Intervention Teams
STALDs	Senior Teacher Advisors Learning Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WP5	White Paper 5
WP6	White Paper 6

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction and background of the study**

The need for all teachers to practice inclusive education has become evident with the growing diversity of children in Grade R (the reception year). There is an increase in a number of young children who are entering Grade R class with diverse needs that require responsive inclusive practices. Teachers should therefore have the knowledge and skills to respond appropriately to the needs of learners. Since 2010 South African mainstream schools have been encouraged to include learners with special needs in their classes and to include Grade R classes to be part of primary schooling system. According to Excell and Linington (2015:1) Grade R is a year before a child starts formal schooling in Grade 1 and it is the final year of the preschool phase. Grade R is needed in schools in order to introduce and prepare children for formal learning and for development. Davin (2013:1) argues that Grade R plays an important role in the development of young learners aged five to six years. For effective development of young children, teachers who teach Grade R learners should be well equipped with knowledge and skills with regard to teaching young children and who understand them. Practicing Inclusive Education (IE) is still a challenge in most schools including Grade R especially in the Limpopo Province. According to Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (2001) WP5, the early years of a child have been recognised as the ideal phase for the transmission of the values that are essential for a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. These values include respect for human rights, appreciation of diversity, tolerance, and justice. This implies that early learning will encourage social interaction with different to children and to prepare them for the world outside their homes. In line with WP5, Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (2001) WP6 acknowledges that all children have potential and are capable of learning within all bands of education and they all require support. Practicing IE at an early age of a child opens the path to lifelong learning and the development of their potentials.

According to the Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2010:3) the South African Schools Act [SASA] (Act 79 of 1996) through section 5 makes provision for all

schools to be full-service by stating that public schools must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way. Mahlo (2011:1) remarks that the education system prior to 1994 was reasonably well-developed in special schools to accommodate learners with special needs, while education system was not well developed to cater for learners with special needs in mainstream schools as such parents were compelled to send their children with special needs to special schools. Most teachers who are currently teaching in Grade R were trained before 1994 and were not trained to teach in Grade R but to teach either mainstream or special need schools. However, since the implementation and introduction of IE in the mainstream schools which includes Grade R teachers and practitioners had to assume roles of practicing inclusive education in their classrooms.

All children, youths and adults have the potential of learning within all bands of education and they all require support (Department of Education [DoE] 2001:24). Practicing IE early in Grade R may grant children the opportunity of developing their skills, confidence to learn together and feel accepted irrespective of their disabilities. The success or failure of the practices of inclusive education in mainstream schools may depend on the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the teachers. Davin (2013:89) points out that teachers' in the inclusive classrooms need special skills and support strategies, and need to understand their role and responsibilities. Teachers with special skills and who understand their role will be able to support learners' needs in the inclusive classes. According to WP6 (2001) all children require support because most learners experience barriers to learning or drop out because of the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of their learning needs. This may result in learners dropping out of school at an early age, thereby increasing the number of illiterate people in the country, becoming alcoholics, drug abusers or becoming involved in criminal issues. Practicing IE in Grade R shows that the diverse needs of all children are being recognised and catered for with a view to prevent learners from dropping out of school at an early age .

The Salamanca Statement (1994:11) asserts that inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their learners, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all by following appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource

use and partnerships with their communities. Teachers need to practice inclusive education by using different teaching strategies, different forms of assessment and different type of resources to accommodate the diverse needs of all children. Taylor and Francis (2011: 299) maintain that teachers often lack skills that are needed to meet the needs of children with disabilities within the natural settings. This implies that skills necessary for meeting the needs of different learners are very important in practicing inclusive education in mainstream schools.

Scherman, Zimmerman, Howie and Bosker (2014: 89) assert that a range of different performances have to be identified so that in each level the knowledge and the skills that learners are able to accomplish can be described. As learners learn differently it is essential for teachers to know their learners, know how they learn and their learning level so that appropriate teaching methods that suit different levels can be identified and applied correctly. According to the DoE (2008:91) learning programmes and materials as well as assessment procedures must be made available to all learners and must accommodate the diverse of learning needs to facilitate learners' achievement to the fullest. According to The Salamanca Statement (2008:12) in the inclusive schools, children with special educational needs should receive whatever extra support they may require to ensure their effective education. This will help learners with special needs to receive proper education and to enjoy learning without experiencing barriers.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The practices of inclusive education in the mainstream schools in South Africa (SA) have become an issue of concern in most schools, when a challenge arises of identifying the methods or strategies that will be suitable for teaching diverse learners in the same class. Teachers are frustrated because they have to apply different approaches in order to accommodate the diverse needs of learners in Grade R classes. Excell and Linington (2015:77) claim that the approach followed by Grade R teachers, should lay the foundation for future learning. It is essential for all learners to be granted equal and participation opportunities in the learning environment so that effective teaching and learning can take place. In the researcher's opinion most teachers lack suitable skills and knowledge of practicing inclusive education in Grade R classes more especially in the Nylstroom Circuit,

Limpopo. Most Grade R teachers are practitioners with Early Childhood Development (ECD) level 5 certificate which is considered to be a basic qualification for teaching Grade R learners but they were not trained to teach Inclusive Education.

According to the DoE (2001:8) WP6 in the mainstream schools, education priorities should include multi-level classroom instructions so that teachers can prepare main lessons with variations that are responsive to individual learner needs, co-operative learning, curriculum enrichment, and enable dealing with learners with behavioural problems. This means that teachers need skills and knowledge of how to develop such variation of lessons in order to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners. Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011:88) declare that identification of the resources and assets in the child's environment that can provide a basis for learning opportunities and participation is important in early childhood education. Therefore it is important to explore the practices of inclusive education in the Grade R classes since this is where the formal learning of the child begins. In the researcher's opinion Grade R teachers currently lack specific skills and knowledge in order to practice IE in Limpopo, particularly in Nylstroom circuit.

**Figure 1.1** (below) illustrates the map of Limpopo Province one of the nine provinces of South Africa in which the study was conducted.



**Figure 1.1.** Limpopo Province in South Africa: A map of Limpopo Province showing the location of the different towns. (<http://www.mapsofworld.com/south-africa/provinces/limpopo.html>, Retrieved 30 September 2015)

Modimolle is a small-sized town situated in the southern part of the Limpopo Province in the Waterberg District which is approximately 150km from Polokwane and the northern part of Pretoria which is about 130km in the Gauteng Province. Modimolle was initially named Nylstroom and was renamed “Modimolle” in 2002, (<http://www.mapsofworld.com/south-africa/provinces/limpopo.html>, Retrieved 26 February 2016). Most families who are located around Modimolle work at the farms around the area and most of the learners who attend schools are left with their grandmothers or older siblings to care for because learners are either orphans or their parents work far off and only come home either during weekends or month ends.

### **1.3 Motivation for undertaking the study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the practices of IE in Grade R classes in the Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo. In the researcher’s non-formal observation, as a Foundation Phase teacher at the school, the researcher realised how teachers and practitioners are trying to include all learners in practicing Inclusive Education in Grade R classes. According to the Department of Education (2005:61) teachers should have a conceptual understanding of inclusion and the diverse needs of learners including those with disabilities. Grade R is an important phase in which the foundation of learning is laid effectively and is a critical period during which interest in education is promoted, and positive attitudes towards school and self-concepts are developed. If teachers are applying the practices that are not relevant to and appropriate for these learners, the future of the learners is bleak.

Atmore, Van Niekerk and Ashely-Cooper (2012:135) confirm that quality teaching and learning is essential for effective development to take place and a quality teacher can provide a learning environment in which a child can develop optimally and in a holistic manner. The challenge is that most teachers employed in the Grade R classes do not have formal qualifications and the training of those who have some form of qualification, their training was not focused on Grade R teaching; consequently they experience problems in practicing inclusive education properly in



their classes. Allday, Neilsen-Gatti and Hudson (2013:300) declare that elementary teachers must have a basic understanding of the special education process (that is pre-referral procedures such as Response to Intervention [Rtl], assessments, and individualized planning) to begin to differentiate between an educational disability and a learner needing more or different instruction. Allday, Neilsen-Gatti and Hudson (2013:301) further explain that since many children with disabilities are educated in the general education classroom, elementary teachers need to grasp the characteristics of each disabled group to gain a general understanding of the disability as well as the inclusive practices to use in their classrooms to serve learners successfully. Therefore this research might suggest innovative practices that the teachers can adopt in their Grade R classes so that learners can succeed in their academic careers.

#### **1.4 Research questions:**

##### **Main question**

Considering the importance of the practices of inclusive education in the mainstream schools, this study is guided by the following main question: What are the practices of inclusive education in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo?

##### **Secondary research questions**

The following secondary research questions will be addressed in order to fully explore the main research question:

- How is inclusive education practiced in Grade R classrooms, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo?
- What challenges do teachers face in employing inclusive practices in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo?
- What strategies could be applied to enhance the practices of inclusive education in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo?

#### **1.5. Aims of the study**

**The main aim of the study is to investigate the practices of Inclusive Education in the Grade R in Modimolle, Limpopo Province.**

Flowing from this aim the study pursues the following objectives:

- To investigate Inclusive practices in the Grade R classrooms, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To identify the teachers' challenges in employing inclusive practices in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To explore the strategies that could be applied to enhance the practices of inclusive education in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.

### **1.6. Significance of the study**

The focus of this study is to explore the practices of Inclusive Education in the Grade R classes in the Nylstroom Circuit in the Limpopo Province. This circuit employs teachers as well as Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners for teaching Grade R learners. Currently a need exists for identifying the practices used by teachers and to ensure proper practices of Inclusive Education. The findings of this study will benefit the society by reconsidering to register their children with different learning abilities in the Grade R classes and to know that the practices of Inclusive Education play an important role in the mainstream schools. The aim of the research is to recommend valuable guidelines to the schools to their vision, mission, policies and their practices that reflect their commitment to practice Inclusive Education. The study will also contribute to the schools setting goals for their curriculum development and strategies that reflect the vision and values of inclusion. It therefore is believed that the findings will contribute significantly to the study and the recommendations will assist in improving the situation.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study followed the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner because it describes how learning and development of the child is influenced by the interaction of different systems such as micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono. Excell and Linington (2015:21) argue that no person develops in isolation; following from this, the interaction between the systems influence the development and learning of the child.

Bronfenbrenner (1979:21) contends that the ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active

growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between settings, and the broader contexts in which the settings are embedded. The child's development is investigated within the context of the system of the relationship that forms his or her development, for example the home, peer group, the school and the local community; thus these influence the proper learning of a child and positive attitude. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2009:41) assert that child development takes place within the four nested systems, the micro-, the meso-, the exo- and the macro-systems with the interaction of the chronosystem. The ecosystem perspective shows how the micro-system such as the family interacts with the meso-system such as the school, the exo-system and the macro-system such as the broader community and the developmental time that affects the interaction which is the chrono-system. The researcher needs to understand the influence of the families, the peer group, the classroom, the school environment, the resource materials and the local community and the experience of the teachers or practitioners in the study.

## **1.8 Research methodology**

This research followed the qualitative research approach in order to explore the practices of inclusive education Grade R mainstream schools. Johnson and Christensen (2012:376) see qualitative researchers as individual who rely on the collection of qualitative data in the natural setting and study a phenomenon in an open-ended manner without prior expectations while developing interpretation of phenomena based on what they had observed. The researcher of this current study seeks to understand the teachers and practitioners' experience in practicing IE by directly collecting data from the participants by using of open-ended questions and observing their behaviour in a classroom situation.

A research design is a plan and procedures for data collection and analysis including when, where and from whom data will be collected for the research study (Creswell, 2009: 3; McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 20). In this study the phenomenological design was followed in order to understand the lived experiences of the participants with regard to the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:372) depict phenomenological design as that it describes and interprets the experiences of participants regarding a particular event with the purpose of understanding the

participants' meanings they ascribe to that event. This research was conducted in Grade R classes in primary schools in the Nylstroom circuit which is the context of the learning for learners so as to explore how early childhood education and Inclusive Education is practiced.

## **1.9 Research instruments**

The data of the study will be collected using the following instruments which are relevant to a qualitative approach: interviews, observations and field notes.

### **1.9.1 Interviews**

The aim of the research is to gain information by means of individual interviews. Maree (2013: 87) describes an interview as two-way communication in which an interviewer asks the participants questions so as to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour of the participants. The interviews were conducted to obtain data from participants while allowing them to voice their personal opinions, their knowledge and understanding of the research study. Johnson and Christensen (2012:202) explain that the researcher interviews participants with a view to obtain in-depth information concerning their thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations and feelings.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow more room for altering and rephrasing the questions for the teachers or practitioners if they might have needed clarity. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:374) describe semi-structured interview as the type that allows the interviewer flexibility and freedom. Open-ended questions were used to enable the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding as provided by the participants. Face-to-face interviews with duration of approximately one each hour were conducted after working hours to avoid the disturbance of the smooth running of the school programme. The interviews were audio-taped with the consent of the participants. The audio-tape records assist with the capturing of the information which the researcher might not have been able to write down during the interview that will be useful during data analysis. Creswell (2009:180) asserts that tape recordings enable participants to directly share their reality and are not time-consuming. Tape recordings also allow the researcher to have access to the information that was missed during note taking.

A researcher should be present in the site so as to see naturally by observing what is actually happening in real life-situation. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350) argue that the observation method is applied by a researcher to see and hear what is naturally occurring in the research site. Lessons presented by the participants with duration of twenty to thirty minutes were observed by the researcher to see how teachers and practitioners practice Inclusive Education in Grade R. The observation method was also applied to see how the learners participated and how the teachers dealt with different challenges from learners. Cirocki (2013:63) advances that observation allows the researcher to observe the learners' attitudes and their approaches to learning, tasks, methods of teaching and teachers, and it also allows the researcher to detail classroom management issues. During observation the researcher was able to assess how teachers practice IE in their classes and how they interacted with Grade R learners. The researcher was afforded the opportunity of observing how teachers apply their strategies in an inclusive classroom and their attitudes. According to Bordens and Abbott (2011:237) observation gives the researcher insight into how behaviour occurs in the natural setting and to describe the observed behaviour. The researcher's observation of the study was based on what she saw and heard during the lessons presentations.

During observation the researcher took notes to reflect on what had occurred during and immediately after the observation before the information was forgotten. White (2005:148) emphasises that during note-taking the researcher should attempt to capture the exact phrases and statements made by participants and should not interfere with the discussion.

### **1.10 Ethical Considerations**

To ensure ethical consideration the researcher will adhere to research ethical principles cited by McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 121-122) which include anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, participants' privacy and safety. The researcher requested the permission from the Limpopo Department of Education in the Waterberg District, from the participating schools and participants to conduct the research. An ethical clearance certificate was also obtained from the University of South Africa (UNISA) for collecting data from participants.

### **1.11 Assumptions of the study**

The researcher made the following assumptions about the study:

- The Grade R teachers may bear no knowledge of the policy of Inclusive Education.
- The participants may possibly lack knowledge and skills of practicing Inclusive Education in Grade R classes.
- There may possibly be a lack of appropriate teaching resources to practice IE effectively in Grade R classes.
- The researcher may be concerned about the withdrawal of participants from the research since they have the right not to participate if they wish to do so.
- The participants may not answer the questions for the interview in depth based of the knowledge they have of the study.

### **1.12 Chapter outline**

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study**

This chapter provides the general overview to the study which includes the introduction and background to the study; as well the rationale and significance of the study. It also includes the problem statement, research questions, aims and objectives, purpose of the research and clarification of concepts.

#### **Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review**

This chapter provides literature exploration with regard to information on Inclusive Education in Grade R.

#### **Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

Chapter three describes the research process in detail including the research methodology adopted for the study.

#### **Chapter 4: Data presentation and interpretation**

The fourth chapter provides the raw data, analysis of the data and discussion of the findings of the research study.

## **Chapter 5: Findings, recommendations and conclusions**

This chapter summarises the results of the research study and present the conclusions drawn from the study. Finally the limitations of the study are discussed and the recommendations for future study are also discussed.

### **1.13 Concepts Clarification**

#### **Inclusive education**

According to UNESCO (2009), inclusive education is seen as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education.”

#### **The Department of Education (2001:16) White Paper 6 explains Inclusive Education as that:**

- “It is about acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.
- It is accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and are an ordinary part of our human experience.
- It is about enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.
- It acknowledges and respects differences in learners, whether be it age, gender, ethnicity, class, disability or HIV status.
- It is about changing the attitude, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
- It is broader than formal schooling and acknowledges that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures.
- It is about maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.

- It is about empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.”

**Disability** - “It is a physical or mental condition that limits a person’s movements, senses, or activities.” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2010.)

According to the DBE (2010:12) **disability** is regarded as a learning barrier and the most common barriers are: visual loss, hearing loss, speech and language difficulties, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, psychological disorders and neurological disorders.

**Barriers to learning** - “Barriers to learning refers to difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself which prevent both the system’s and the learner’s needs from being met.” (DoE, 2011.)

According to the DBE (2010) learning and participation barriers include social, negative attitudes, lack of acceptance, unfavourable socioeconomic factors, lack of community involvement, lack of parental recognition, and lack of parental participation.

**Full-service/inclusive schools** “Full-service/inclusive schools are 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.” (DBE, 2010).

**Support** – “....give assistance, encouragement or approval.” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2010).

**Grade R** – “Grade R is the first year before the child starts formal schooling in Grade 1 and is the final year of preschool phase,” (Excell & Linington, 2015:1)

The South African Schools Act (DoE 2011:8) section 2 (5) (4a) (i) explains **Grade R** learners as learners whose age should be four years turning five years by 30 June in the year of admission.

#### **1.14 Concluding remarks**

Grade R classes are becoming more involved in the practices of inclusive education even though some teachers have not been developed to practice inclusive education



as most of them qualified before 1994 and still need support from the government or parents. The WP6 asserts that most learners experience barriers to learning or drop out primarily due to the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs in the form of inaccessible physical plans, curricula, assessment learning material and instructional methodology. A need seems to have developed to provide teachers with skills and guidelines required to support learners with educational needs. According WP6 the early years are critical for the acquisition of the concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In Chapter one, the researcher gave an introduction to the entire research study. A brief description of the practices of inclusive education in Grade R was given. According to WP5, early childhood programmes were introduced to acknowledge that human development begins early with measures to protect the rights of the child rather than to wait for 18 years later. Introducing children to early childhood programmes will encourage effective development and this will allow the teachers to identify-, already at an early age of the learners, the challenges they face. WP5 emphasises that young children are capable learners and that suitable educational experience during the pre-school years can have a positive impact on school learning. WP6 in line with WP5 commits to provide educational opportunities in particular for those learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or who have dropped out of learning due to the inability of the education and training system to accommodate their learning needs. In this chapter the in-depth literature study related to the practices of inclusive education in meeting the challenges facing the mainstream schools are discussed.

Since the mid-1990s the education system in South Africa has undergone numerous and radical changes and some of the changes include the inclusion of learners with special needs in the mainstream schools (Landsberg, Kruger and Swart, 2011:17). The current restructuring initiatives and the demands of the twenty first century in the education sector necessitated the practices of inclusive education in the mainstreams especially in Grade R. Mainstream schools face the challenges of the practices of inclusion, behaviour, acceptance and support to the diverse learning needs of children. Bronfenbrenner's theory was used to explore the practices of inclusive education in the Reception year in the Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo.

#### **2.2. Theoretical Framework: Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory**

The theory of Bronfenbrenner is relevant to the study because it is based on the relationship of the development of a person and his/her physical environment. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2009:37) explain that this theory sees different levels

and groups of people as interactive systems in which the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between all parts.

Bronfenbrenner's theory explains the interaction that occurs in the relationship of the factors that influence the development of the child. Donald et al (2009:41) argue that the interactions that occur in face-to-face, long-term relationships such as between a mother and a child, teacher and student or a child and a close friend are the most important in shaping the lasting aspects of development. The existence and success of the learner is influenced by the interaction of the family, school where there are teachers and peer group and the curriculum. The child who feels secure and confident will be encouraged to explore in the interaction that will bring a change in the new environment. Excell and Linington (2015:22) point out that according to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the child's development is influenced by the following levels: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. These levels interact and influence the development of the child. The following section discusses the levels in detail.

### **2.2.1. Micro-system**

Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011:14) argue that micro-system constitutes the immediate environment in which the proximal processes take place. Micro system involves the environment in which a child is exposed to the world through them; in this study it is the home, school, the guardian teacher, care givers, peer group and any other person that will make the child feel appreciated. At the micro system the child should feel supported, have a sense of belonging and welcomed both by teachers and the peer group. Teachers motivate learners, encourage positive behaviour and encourage the development of skills from learners so that they can succeed in learning.

Berns (2013:16) asserts that family is the primary socialiser of that child that has the most significant impact on the child's development. If the child is not supported from home, at school he might isolate himself from others and fail to associate with other learners in the classroom - even with the school as a whole. The school should support the child's belonging, love and protect on so that he/she does not feel isolated or sidelined by others. Since the classroom or school is identified as the closest environment to Grade R, the need to feel accommodated by teachers and

peers is strong. Accommodating and supporting learner diversity will promote the practice of IE in Grade R classes.

### **2.2.2. Meso-system**

Meso-system comprises the interrelation among two or more settings in which developing person actively participates such as home, school, neighbourhood and peer group (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25). The child's development may be influenced by interaction that exists between home and school including teachers and the peer group. The way the teachers practice their teaching to different learners may affect the ways of learners' learning and development. Donald et al (2009:42) assert that what happens in the family or peer group can influence how children respond at school and vice versa. If the home, the school and peer group work together in supporting the learners, the learners will experience love, care and support and develop positive learning habits and a feeling of security. The teachers should display proactive characteristics to learners so that self-esteem and a sense of security could be developed in the learners. Parents' involvement in their children's education can influence the effective practice of Inclusive Education. Unfortunately some parents do not respond to the teachers' invitations, which can influence the education of their children adversely. Poor interaction between Grade R teachers and parents may affect teachers' support to learners and how Inclusive Education is practiced.

### **2.2.3. Exo-system**

The child's learning can be directly or indirectly be influenced by a number of environments in which the child finds himself or herself. Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011:14) emphasise that the child's development can be influenced by the education system, health services, the media, parent's workplace or a local community organisation. An education system that supports the educational needs of diverse learners is empowering and can improve the lives of many previously disadvantaged learners. Even though the South African education system has been developed to cater for all, teachers should be properly trained to apply the strategies that are suitable for all learners including those with disabilities. The exo-system in this study may refer to the curriculum strategies that do not cater for the diverse learning needs of all learners, which may indirectly affect Grade R learners. In Grade

R, teachers need proper training and special skills on how to accommodate the needs of all learners so that IE is practiced effectively.

#### **2.2.4. Macro-system**

Donald et al (2009:42) explain that macro system involves social and economic structures as well as values, beliefs and practices that influence all other social systems. In the South African education system the influence of the practices of the education comes from the National Department which is the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The schools receive the policies developed by the department to implement them without the strategies of how to implement them so that the needs of all learners are catered for. Teachers need knowledge and skills to practice IE in Grade R classes. Grade R teachers should receive continuous development, monitoring and support and guidelines or strategies for practicing IE in classes.

#### **2.2.5. Chrono-system**

The chrono-system will include the change of the curriculum since the existence of the government of national unity in 1994 and the training and knowledge of teachers in inclusive education. Landsberg et al (2011:14) argue that the chrono system encloses the dimension of time and how it relates specifically to the interaction between these systems and their influences on the individual development. Changing the curriculum and restructuring the education system influences how teachers should teach Grade R learners and how to support them where a need exists. Since the South African curriculum has been changed, teachers' knowledge and skills needed for practicing Inclusive Education need to be continuously developed for effective teaching to take place. Some teachers become confused because whenever they learn to adjust to the curriculum that is introduced, it is changed once more and replaced by the new curriculum depending on the appointed Minister of Education. The macro level can be that in which the DoE has the responsibility of developing the curriculum that has to be implemented by teachers at the micro level. For proper implementation, teachers should be continuously trained and developed by more knowledgeable people so that they can adjust to the new curriculum and be able to practice IE in Grade R. Knowledge of the curriculum, application of relevant skills and strategies by Grade R teachers may influence the practice of IE.

Excell and Linington (2015:22) argue that chronosystem refers to the events over time that could be far from the child but still influence the child's development. South Africa is one of the African countries in which immigration is increasing at a fast rate. Most immigrants to South Africa bring their children and register them in Grade R classes. This affects how teachers practice IE because the children speak some of the languages that are not even known in South Africa.

### **2.3. Literature review**

The practice of Inclusive education in Grade R classes has become a worldwide transformation strategy that is intended for the inclusion of learners with different learning abilities. Each country has its own way of understanding inclusive education and implementing policies that suits them. The following literature of different countries was used by the researcher to gain an understanding of the research topic.

#### **2.3.1. International countries**

Hu and Szente (2010:14) conducted the study on general quality of the learning environment as well as increasing teachers' understanding and use of developmentally appropriate practices in building blocks for meeting the needs of children with mild disabilities in the regular classrooms. They found that teachers in Beijing were lacking in understanding of and positive experiences dealing with children with special needs; therefore they project negative attitudes towards including children with exceptional needs in their classrooms, although teachers who worked in semi-inclusion settings project more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those in full inclusion programs. This shows that the need of knowledge and understanding of inclusive practice is important for the teachers to practice inclusive education so that they can project positive attitude in their classrooms. Hu and Szente (2010:16) established that many children are under-identified due to lack of educational and psychological assessment instruments and qualified personnel for diagnosing students with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and complex language disorders only a few universities in China prepare teachers to work with the special needs population and fewer programs specialize in early childhood special education.

Switzerland had special schools for children with special educational needs (SEN). However during the past few years shift had occurred moving from a separated support system towards more inclusive settings of educational support for children with special educational needs in early childhood classes. According to Luder, Moretti, Kunz and Diezi-Duplain (2011:164) teachers in early childhood need to develop their own learning about the knowledge and competence necessary for the inclusion of children with SEN; hence the Zurich University of Teacher Education made efforts to provide knowledge and tools for better inclusive education through research and development. This indicates that to practice IE effectively in Grade R, teachers need to development appropriate knowledge and skills. Grade R teachers should be supported and encouraged to continue developing their skills so that they are not left behind respect of knowledge of IE.

Starczewska, Hodkinson and Adams (2012:163) pointed out that in Poland where there are integrated classes, two teachers are normally required to work together where one teacher usually is a subject teacher and the other a teacher who normally has had substantial training in the area of special needs in elementary classes. Fyssa, Vlachou and Avramidis (2014:224) argue that in Greece inclusion is enacted in various ways representing different organisational arrangements such as operation of 'integration classes' within mainstream schooling. Fyssa et al (2014) assert that the provision of in-class support with the co-teaching model applied by special education teachers; and full placement in mainstream schools without additional support was also introduced for early childhood teaching. In rural schools of Spain many Special Education Need (SEN) student families, together with educational authorities, have made substantial efforts, but it was not enough because teachers failed to develop and implement teaching-learning processes directed at inclusion for elementary classes, (Moreno, Jaén, Navío & Moreno 2015:112). Moreno et al (2015) maintain that teachers were unable to practice educational proposals in their classes because teaching skills, time, material resources and personal support for inclusion were considered insufficient. Teaching early childhood learners, including those in Grade R need skills, teaching and learning materials; and support from teachers. Teachers should be developed with knowledge and different skills so that when they teach Grade R learners in an inclusive classroom they are able to accommodate all learners equally.

Richmond, Irvine, Loreman, Cizman, and Lupart (2013:199) examined the inclusive policies, attitudes, and practices of a particular school district. The school district has a prominent policy of inclusion with all learners placed in regular education classrooms and there are no segregated classrooms based on disability operating in the district. The study demonstrated that in the context of one rural Canadian school district that follows an inclusive philosophy, teachers generally have positive views of inclusion for early childhood learning. It is very important to adopt the policy of inclusive education and to have a positive attitude in order to practice inclusive education and to support the affected learners.

According to Lee and Low (2013:219) most regular teachers in the Malaysian schools were not exposed to any formal training in teaching children with special educational needs and followed no -courses that exposed them to special education during their pre-service training. They further argue that the teachers' lack of knowledge was particularly prominent in schools without special education programmes because special education programs were only available in selected National schools and almost none in National-type schools. This indicates that special education programmes were supposed to be made available at all schools - not selected ones only - in order to accommodate all learners. In Romania in United Kingdom (UK) the integration of children with SEN in early childhood in mainstream schools was on an upward trend, and teacher training in inclusive education was done both through initial and in-service level (Tudor, 2015:68). This indicates that continuous training is needed for the teachers to be able to practice IE effectively in early childhood classes. Grade R teachers should not rely on knowledge obtained during their formal training only, - but they should continue developing their knowledge and skills to keep in line with the development of programmes. Teachers with the knowledge of how to practice inclusive education will be able to apply differentiated strategies in order to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners in Grade R.

Stevens-Smith and Stegelin (2015:1) intended to determine whether play-based learning and healthy child development support active learning of kindergarten or preschool learners. Stevens-Smith and Stegelin (2015) established that play-based learning promotes the development of inclusive play opportunities which take into account and responds to children's different abilities and needs. This means that



pre-school children need an active and energetic teacher who will promote learning through play. For learners to be actively involved in learning, the teacher must actively encourage them by being a role model in what he/she or does. According to Stevens-Smith and Stegelin (2015:10) play policy is most often successfully implemented by a group of individuals who are knowledgeable and committed to a particular cause. Grade R teachers should be committed to learning different approaches that will promote social development and active learning in their classes.

Babić-Čolaković, Pasalic and Memisevic (2015:113) determined that in Bosnia and Herzegovina early intervention (EI) is a widely recognized system of providing children aged 0-5 years of age with support. According to Babić-Čolaković, Pasalic and Memisevic (2015:114) evidence suggested that EI is the most efficacious method for reducing and potentially eliminating the symptoms of developmental disabilities or children at risk or who already have some developmental delay. Babić-Čolaković, Pasalic and Memisevic (2015:114) found that children do not receive the necessary support such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, early special education etc. in most of the regular preschool institutions because resources are too scarce in the majority of schools to provide such support. This indicates that availability of resources to support children who experience learning problems is vital in promoting effective learning and development to early childhood. Since Grade R is regarded as part of development, schools need appropriate resources that will accommodate the diverse needs of all learners.

Alexander, Brody, Muller, Ziv, Aчитuv, Gorsetman, Harris, Tal, Goodman, Schein, Vogelstein and Miller (2016:17) found that including children with disabilities in a preschool or kindergarten class is a challenge, which some teachers welcome and others avoid. The researchers indicated that a majority of the teachers voiced support for inclusion of children with special needs but felt tension in implementing an inclusive classroom due to multiple variables. Teachers should be provided with support to be able to implement inclusive education in preschool or kindergarten. Alexander et al argue that most challenging issues for the teachers involve lack of efficacy, lack of support, balancing needs of all stakeholders, and family cooperation. For effective teaching and learning to take place especially for Grade R learners, involvement of all stakeholders and family cooperation is needed. This indicates that

interaction between the stakeholders and families should be strengthened in order to support Grade R learners and their teachers.

Hussin and Hamdan (2016:2) examined knowledge, readiness and teaching techniques used by mainstream teachers in the inclusive classroom of early childhood. Hussin and Hamdan (2016:3) found that practicing inclusive education in early childhood classes provide information and expose teachers to the regulations, education acts, world acknowledgement and regulation in their practice of inclusion. Hussin and Hamdan (2016:3) also found that special education children need to be given some adjustment in advance, and academics agreed that inclusive settings offer more academic and social learning opportunities for special education learners. It was however proven in the study that teachers' readiness is one of the main factors. Teachers should be more alert about the special needs of the learners in their classrooms. Teachers should be well-informed about the time management, subject of learning, content of the co-curriculum and many more. These indicate that before IE can be practiced in early Grade R classes, teachers should be ready and be knowledgeable of what they are intending to teach and how. Grade R teachers should know how the programmes are being implemented throughout the day so that IE is effectively practiced.

### **2.3.2. Developing countries**

Most developing countries have also taken into consideration the practices of Inclusive Education in the mainstream schools especially in Grade R classes. According to Samkange (2013:96) the government of Zimbabwe added the rights of people with disabilities in the new constitution that they should be enabled to become self-sufficient and to live with their families and participate in social, creative and recreational activities. Samkange further asserts that to strengthen the rights added to the constitution the government created and provided the resources to all regardless of their abilities in order to connect their potentials and skills. Resources that are in line with the practices of inclusive education are very important in order to assist the teachers in planning relevant and differentiated activities for all learners.

Botts and Owusu (2013:139) explain that in Ghana most classroom teachers lack professional preparation to teach children with disabilities because they have not done coursework in this respect; hence in Ghana's university system, the courses for training teachers in the instructional methods and nature, and needs of children with special needs were not introduced or integrated with the curriculum before 2007. Botts and Owusu (2013:140) found that the training of teachers to teach in the inclusive classroom starting with early childhood was introduced at the university in 2007. Similarly in Botswana Senior Teacher Advisors Learning Disabilities had limited knowledge and skills with regard to teaching learners in the inclusive classrooms due to lack of in-service training facilities (Mukhopadhyay, 2013: 46). Mukhopadhyay (2013:45) maintains that inclusion of learners with barriers, resulted in time constraints due to inadequate planning and preparation, teacher "burnout", more time was required to learn how to apply classroom accommodation strategies and workload increased due to high learner: teacher ratio. Mukhopadhyay (2013: 46) asserts that most primary schools in the south-central region of Botswana had Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) and School Intervention Teams (SIT); which were brought into being to encourage parents' involvement and support; unfortunately, parental support was minimal in most of the schools and in some situations- SIT appeared only on paper- not in practice - while these were supposed to be structures which should involve parents of learners with SENs. Grade R teachers need time to plan and prepare what they are going to teach in an inclusive classroom in order to accommodate all learners. This indicates that Grade R teachers together with the school need to design programmes that will encourage parents' involvement in their children's education so that IE can be appropriately practiced.

Oswald and Swart (2011:399) investigated the changes in pre-service teachers' perceptions of inclusive education, with the emphasis on including learners with disabilities, after having follow courses on inclusive education that served as an intervention. After the course work, positive changes were apparent in South African pre-service teachers' perceptions of their comfort levels when interacting with people with disabilities and their attitudes towards including learners with disabilities in early childhood of mainstream classrooms. Oswald and Swart (2011:399) found that even though teachers indicated an increase in knowledge and skills required for teaching

learners with disabilities after the course work, they were particularly concerned about implementing inclusive education in an environment where support and resources were limited and classes were large. Oswald and Swart (2011) maintain that learning support in mainstream schools can be enhanced by establishing partnerships with colleagues, parents, non-government organisations and other community members, as well as members of education district offices. This indicates that for IE to be effectively practiced, partnership with other schools' stakeholders should be established. Partnership will afford teachers the opportunity of continually learning together and supporting in addressing learners' diversity in Grade R classes.

Most African countries experience the challenges in the practices of inclusive education in Grade R or early childhood education in the mainstream schools even though they have adopted the policy of IE in their education systems. Most of the schools lack resources, teachers lack knowledge and sufficient training and support from the government and some of the parents. Biljon, Kritzinger and Geertsema (2015:58) are of opinion that limited provision of special needs services in formal education in South Africa, as well as insufficient material resources in the educational settings, pose significant challenges that result in children not receiving the education they need and are entitled to when they begin their school career. In the study conducted by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013:9) teachers perceived their training to be lacking; consequently teachers become frustrated and unmotivated and experience feelings of guilt and inadequacy. Green, Parker, Deacon and Hall (2011:118) are convinced that to strengthen quality teaching in the introductory classes of the foundation phase, an integrated approach needs to be adopted and "the right people" to teach in the grade need to be appointed. Grade R teachers need sufficient resources and knowledge of how to apply of different approaches that will enhance their practice of IE. For teachers to be motivated and not become frustrated, they need sufficient training and knowledge to be able to deliver quality education.

Bruwer, Hartell and Steyn (2014:20) investigated the experiences and concerns of teachers with regard to supporting learners with insufficient school readiness. They involved two urban schools in Pretoria which accommodated a large number of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. They found that both schools are

equipped with the necessary resources, apparatus and books and that their classrooms are designed and equipped in such a way as to provide the learners with as much stimulation as possible and to create a welcoming learning environment. They also discovered that the more experienced teachers were confident and eager to discuss the effect of insufficient school readiness on teaching and learning in their classes and provided detailed answers to the interview questions where as the novice teachers (less than five years' teaching experience) appeared less confident and more nervous and hesitant about their answers. They clearly relied on the more experienced teachers for guidance. This is related to the study because the researcher investigates how Grade R teachers and practitioners respond to the interview questions based on their teaching experiences.

Bruwer, Hartell and Steyn (2014:28) found that teachers feel that learners were not ready for the curriculum and they feel that the curriculum was inaccessible and that the pace and expectations are unrealistic since there is heavy pressure on the teachers to implement the curriculum. Bruwer, Hartell and Steyn (2014) suggest that the people responsible for compiling the curriculum should be flexible and prepared to adapt the curriculum according to learners' needs. Dreyer (2013:60) argues that the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) adopted the system of Institution Level Support Team (ILST) which adapts the curriculum; compiles relevant programmes and materials, includes cooperative learning and, support parents, arranges for learners to be tested to identify specific areas of need. Dreyer (2013:61) found that learning support teachers further assisted general classroom teachers in developing support programmes and in adapting the work for the learners which included showing them how to simplify the work and offering professional input at ILST meetings on the support Grade R teachers could provide in class unlike the School Intervention Teams (SIT) in Botswana. Based on Dreyer's findings, the support teams developed for the purpose of supporting learners and teachers should be functional. Grade R teachers will be able to practice IE in their classes if they are supplied with relevant programmes and materials; and have learning support teachers to support them.

Okwany (2016:2) discovered that despite an expanded vision, domesticated rights instruments, comprehensive guidelines and policy frameworks for the care and well-being of young children in Kenya and Uganda, there are major gaps and inherent

weaknesses in implementation that hinder universal state support of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Okwany (2016:2) explains that the lack of universal social protection means that most young children are exposed to multiple and intersecting risks and vulnerabilities that profoundly affect their growth and development. Support for early childhood has been found to be a major element for effective learning to take place. Children feel safe and confident when they realise that their teachers or parents are supporting them in their learning. Okwany (2016:4) advances that many of the ECCE programmes are in reality genuine pre-primary education centers that pay unequal attention to cognitive development via didactic learning methods and exam-oriented curricula. This indicates that programmes that promote equal attention to cognitive development should be given to early childhood teachers. Programmes should support the positive learning and promote development especially that of Grade R learners.

Geldenhuis and Wevers (2013:5) followed qualitative approach and phenomenological strategy to focus on the ecological aspects influencing the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Cape. Their investigation revealed that the implementation of inclusive education is not only hampered by aspects within the school environment, but also by aspects across the entire ecological system of education. Geldenhuis and Wevers' finding revealed that all the systems involved in education should support one another for the success of inclusive education to take place in Grade R because no system can stand alone.

Geldenhuis and Wevers' (2013:9) findings indicated that Grade R classes were not very accommodating and user-friendly microsystems for learners that experience barriers to learning. The investigation revealed a lack of structural modification among the participating schools to accommodate the needs of learners with limited mobility. They found that many learners that experience barriers to learning continue to be excluded from aspects of school life, because the required resources and support are lacking. This resulted in learners not being able to participate fully in classroom activities, and they were thereby denied the opportunity of developing optimally. This implies that mainstream school especially Grade R classes should be disability friendly so that learners do not experience barriers to learning due to the infrastructure. The infrastructures should be renovated such that learners with

disabilities are also accommodated. This investigation revealed that much still have to be done for inclusive education practice to be properly implemented more - especially in Grade R classes.

Geduld (2015:6) indicated that through a collegial teaming approach, accomplished teachers and student teachers accepted responsibility for improving their practices in the Eastern Cape. Geduld (2015) asserts that collegial teaming cultivates fresh avenues for teacher collaboration; sharing responsibility for group learning and working together which all enhance effectiveness. Wium, Makgatho and Louw (2015:37) maintain that despite the emphasis on collaborative practices in schools, inter-professional collaboration remains challenging because a systemic change is required whereby 'outsider' specialists are welcomed into schools and into classrooms as 'insider' professionals. Inter-professional collaboration with subject specialists or teachers with more knowledge either in the same school or from other schools will assist in overcoming challenges Grade R teachers experience in practicing IE. A need exists for Grade R teachers to practice collaboration or collegial teaming in order to enhance effectiveness of IE in their classes.

Ogunyemi and Ragpot (2015:2) found that for early learning and development to take place, learners should be given the opportunity of actively processing ideas, events and phenomena with which they come into contact to form their own knowledge and that much of this can be carried out playfully. In contrast, Aronstam and Braund (2015:8) found that teachers still appeared to be lacking knowledge of how to employ spontaneous informal play moments to enhance the learning process, even though teachers seemed aware of the essential role of play in young children's lives as well as the relation thereof to children's early development. Through play learners not only learn or develop but they also create social relationship with their peers and eventually with the teacher. Grade R teachers need to develop their knowledge of play activities in order to enhance effective learning. Grade R learners need young active and energetic Grade R teachers who will emphasise play activities during teaching in their classes in order to involve learners actively.

Ogunyemi and Ragpot (2015:6) further argue that playful experiences must be conceptualised to reflect the social, emotional, physical and moral needs of the child as well as the policy aspirations of the society. Ogunyemi and Ragpot (2015) argue

that early childhood education curricula should be comprehensive, dynamic and also eclectic and equally important the complementary role of parents who should be educated to drop the age-long prejudices against play in early childhood education centers. Since parents play an important role in the education of their children, they should not be left out on how to support the children as early as possible. Playful activities fulfil an important role in the development of children during their early ages. Parents should also be encouraged to emphasise play activities at home that will create learning, to help children develop physically or to be able to form relationship with their peers. These will play an important role in practicing IE in Grade R classes since children will learn to respect and work effectively with one another in class.

### **2.3.3. Early Childhood inclusion and intervention**

Allen, Cowdery and Johnson (2012:3) explain that early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies and practices that support the right of every infant and young child with his/her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of the families, communities and societies. Inclusive practice is about enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners. The young children with disabilities and their families are full members of the community which reflects societal values about promoting opportunities for development and learning, and a sense of belonging for every child. It also reflects a reaction against previous educational practices of separating and isolating children with disabilities. Allen Cowdery and Johnson (2012:4) remark that the desired results of inclusive experience for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships and development and learning to reach their full potential. Early childhood inclusive practice is about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners. It is about maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning. Children need to learn from an early age that every human being needs to be treated with respect. The families and different members of the community need to understand that every child irrespective



of disability has a potential and if supported properly and granted the opportunity, they can demonstrate their potential.

Early intervention which is supported by basic policy shift will assist teachers in changing their classroom teaching strategies that will promote positive learning for children and increase home-school connections. The Department of Education (2008) argues that to help practitioners assess the needs, they should work together with families and service providers to meet those needs. The schools, parents, community and Department of Education should work together as early as possible for the child's education which will help them work together to provide the necessary resources for children with learning barriers and to help them fit into those institutions. Early intervention will allow all the stakeholders to help children before they become frustrated with the situations, which might even prevent them from receiving the education they deserve. Involving people such as health practitioners will also guide the teachers to know how to deal with children with learning barriers and to allow those who need special treatment to be given it. A need exists for the Department of Education and Health to strengthen the relationship in order to provide children with the necessary assistance as early as possible. Grade R teachers also need to be trained and guided with regard to –how challenges experienced by children that need special attention can be identified so that when health practitioners are unavailable they will be able to help the learners accordingly.

Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011:89) emphasise that early childhood intervention focuses on preventing developmental problems in young children as well as on minimising the impact of problems or impairment once they are identified. It is important to identify the learning barriers of the children at an early stage so as to accommodate or offer support at an early stage. According to The Salamanca Statement (1994) early childhood inclusive education schooling depends on the early identification assessment of the young child with special educational needs. Young children with special educational needs should be assisted to be accommodated in schools and make effective transitions from home by both adults and teachers. "Early childhood care and educational programmes for children aged up to 6 years' ought to be developed and/or reoriented to promote physical, intellectual and social development and school readiness," (Salamanca Statement, 1994.) Identifying the learning barriers of children at an early age helps the curriculum developers to

develop it in such a way that every child is accommodated in it and not left outside. Different assessments that will be able to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners, especially those in Grade R are needed. Grade R teachers should be able to apply different approaches that will assist Grade R learners to transit effectively in class.

Adelman and Taylor (2008:17) argue that the main aim of early intervention in teaching and learning is to make judgements as an aid for decision-making. Early intervention gives direction to all stakeholders to know the types of challenges they are facing and how to deal with them. It gives direction concerning how to plan for such children in the classroom and how to deal with their challenges so as to include them in the learning process. Adelman and Taylor (2008) further argue that early intervention assists in planning for a specific change such as immediate and short-term objectives and procedures for accomplishing the intended goals. It is important to identify learners' challenges in Grade R so that teachers can identify intervention programmes that will help them. Grade R teachers should know how to plan for the diverse needs of all learners in class so that they are able to practice IE effectively.

#### **2.3.4. Children learn at an early age**

Grade R is a class in which learners start with formal learning. Davin (2013:1) argues that the main purpose of teaching Grade R is the development of the whole learner. For the learner to develop physically, emotionally, socially and morally; he or she needs learning materials that will enhance this mentioned development. Children are able to learn and grasp things easily at an early age. Guralnick (2001:103) argues that children are ready for school when they have matured and developed the skills needed to be successful. This confirms that even though children learn at an early age, maturity and development of readiness to learn is of cardinal importance. Davin (2013:5) argues that readiness to learn is a stage of total development when an individual is able to understand and grasp those concepts and skills that have been believed to be important for a child of a specific age to attain. This indicates the learning readiness should be determined by not only physical or age development, but all the factors that have an influence should be considered so that the child's learning is enhanced.

Children are unique, special and already have different backgrounds of experience with them when they start their schooling, meaning that they do not go to school being empty in their minds. Dimitriadi (2015:44) contends that the classroom increasingly contains groups of children with a wide range of individual differences which, amongst others, includes a wide range of capabilities. Thus such teachers should open necessary channels and provide the necessary environment for future leaders. The school is the environment in which the children are taught respect, appreciation for one another, to listen to other people's views and to socialize with others. Davin and Van Staden (2005:64) argue that if all learners are granted the opportunity and support, each child can learn in his/her own way or at his/her own pace. Learners need the teacher's support and encouragement so that they can learn and be able to demonstrate their capabilities. Grade R teachers should identify their learners' capabilities to enable them to use these capabilities to encourage learning. It is the teacher's responsibility to open learning channels for children at an early age for them to develop their learning potentials.

Dimitriadi (2015:66) asserts that in the early years of the child in Grade R is the first social group children meet outside their family environment; it is the perfect environment to unlearn any unfair and unjust messages children have absorbed as well as any stereotypical behaviour that has already been built in their minds. This shows that children come to school with something that they have learnt even if it is not formal learning but at school they learn formally. According to Cook, Klein and Chen (2011:4) special education learners in early childhood should master the skills that are related to the facilitation of learning, healthy growth and development. The teacher should be able to identify the learners' learning levels and understandings as soon as possible so that he/she can assist in supporting the learning of the learners and facilitating the development of the mastered skills. Davin and Van Staden (2005:5) argue that the teacher should establish what the learner knows and use it as a starting point. This means that prior knowledge of a learner should be considered and the teacher should use it to encourage learning in the learner. The Grade R teachers should be able to link learners' prior knowledge to what is being taught in order to develop their understanding of learning.

It is important for the teachers to be well-informed about backgrounds of children they teach so that if they encounter challenges they can have a picture of the

learners they are dealing with. Cook, Klein and Chen (2011:35) assert that collaboration with the parents or other caregivers is essential for the development of families' awareness of the importance of their role in facilitating, guiding and supporting their children's development. It is important to collaborate with parents with regard to the education of their children so that teachers can know what is expected of them, identify their needs and that parents can understand their role in their children's learning. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2009:213) the family should be the source of security, support and guidance in the interest of the physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, social and spiritual development of its children. If parents become involved in their children's education at an early age, they will have an understanding of how to support them with their school work, and their communication with teachers will be effective. Parents need to be made aware that they are the primary teachers of their children since they also spend more time with them.

Social interaction among the learners encourages positive attitudes towards learning and belonging. According to the California Department of Education (2009:3) children who are typically developing well benefit from interactions with children who have disabilities or other special needs as well. Learners need to socialise with other learners so that they feel can appreciated. The California Department of Education argues that supportive environments teach children about differences and about respecting and valuing other people, regardless of their abilities. This indicates that a supportive environment gives a child a sense of belonging and makes him/her realise that he/she is also important. Guralnick (2001:168) argues that child-to-child conversation during passive teaching encourages communication in learners. Learners need to be encouraged to communicate with their peers so that they can develop confidence and communicate freely. The best learning resources in any school are the learners, and a variety of methodologies of peer support and cooperative learning foster a school culture that encourages learners to learn collaboratively rather than competitively [Department of Basic Education (DBE) 2010:17]. Cooperative learning will encourage social development among the learners and enable them to seek help from their peers. Communication and self-confidence will be developed in children who seldom speak in class or who are always quiet.

### **2.3.5. Expectations of the Foundation Phase teachers in mainstream schools/full service schools, especially in the Grade R classes.**

Full-service schools, colleges, further and higher education institutions are mainstream education institutions that provide quality education to all learners and students by supplying the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner (DoE 2005:6) . According to the DoE the schools should strive to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education and they should establish methods to assist curriculum and institutional transformation to ensure both an awareness of diversity and that additional support be available to those learners and educators who need it. Grade R is the environment in which formal learning starts taking place and quality education, additional support for both for learners and teachers should be well-provided and established hence qualified skilled teachers are needed for the grade. Excell and Linington (2015:77) argue that teaching Grade R requires a high level of responsibility and accountability; therefore a foundation for lifelong learning should be laid for learners. Similarly, the Department of Social Development (2006:14) asserts that the early years of a child's life is the period during which they acquire concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning, and the early years are acknowledged as being the ideal phase for passing on values that are important for building peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. Grade R teachers should provide learners with knowledge that will guide them in developing their skills and values. This indicates that Grade R teachers should be more knowledgeable and be able to provide necessary support to Grade R learners.

Green, Parker, Deacon and Hall (2011:118) point out that few new Foundation Phase (FP) teachers were being educated and those who were trained, were poorly trained, which consequently had impacted on learners' education. For teachers to be trained; is of importance that they should be able to deliver the curriculum to the learners in a well-planned manner that will enhance Grade R learners' understanding. Feeney, Galper and Seefeldt (2009:88) aptly deem specific training and education of teachers in early childhood education or child development essential, since it contributes to better quality programmes. This indicates that teachers who are specifically trained to teach in early childhood have knowledge and skills which enable them to work with these learners. Green, Parker, Deacon and Hall (2011:119) found that learners placed with high-performing teachers', progress

three times faster than those placed with low-performing teachers. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2008: 265) asserts that training should focus on multi-level instruction enabling teachers to develop responsive teaching methods, co-operative learning and more generally to deal with learners with behavioural problems. Grade R teachers should be well-knowledgeable and have special skills to be able to perform effectively in their classes. Grade R teachers should continuously develop their knowledge so that they are able to respond to different teaching methods and to be capable of practicing IE in their classes.

Young children need special attention and they need a person who understands their thinking, way of doing things and how they learn. According to UNESCO (2009:21) a teacher who is teaching in an inclusive classroom should be flexible and familiarise himself/herself with new curricula and be trained in addressing learners' problems. The teacher should be able to create the environment that is welcoming and safe and encourages learners to learn together. The OECD (2015:234) further contend that all Grade R programmes that are conducted at schools or at ECD centres, should have access to the same professional development and curriculum support material.

Every learner needs support, but some learners may require additional support for learning and additional support needs can arise from any factor that causes a barrier to learning, whether that factor relates to social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, disability, or family and care circumstances (DBE 2014:8). Learners in Grade R should be provided with the same support because if intervention is done early in their academic career, the chance of them experiencing problems later in life is limited. The DoE (2011:4) asserts that the teacher should be able to attend to learner diversity by means of curriculum differentiation which involves processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum. In the same vein Smith, Polloway, Patton and Dowdy (2012:42) assert that teachers should have received sufficient training in management techniques, instructional strategies and curriculum adaptation tactics in order to accommodate learner diversity. This will enable the teachers to differentiate their instructions so that learners of different abilities are included in the teaching-learning process. Teachers in Grade R need

sufficient training that will enable them to adapt the curriculum that will accommodate the diverse needs of learners.

After the approval of WP6, the Department of Education developed the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) in order to respond to the needs of all learners. According to the DoE (2008:1) SIAS was developed to allow large numbers of children of school-going age who experience barriers to learning, including those who are disabled, to exercise their right to basic education and to access the necessary support in their local schools as far as possible. By applying this strategy, Inclusive Education started to be practiced in Grade R classes. SIAS has shifted the focus to a holistic approach by which a whole range of possible barriers to learning a learner may experience are considered, such as extrinsic barriers in the home, school or community environment, or barriers related to disabilities with the aim of designing support programmes in such a manner that the learner gains access to learning (DBE, 2014:15). The policy outlines how the schools could restructure their culture, policies and practices in order to provide support programmes, services, personnel and resources that will be made available for special and ordinary schools to increase learner participation in the learning process. If SIAS is properly implemented, Grade R teachers will have clarity on how to support the diverse needs of all learners.

Even though the South African education system has extended the programmes of inclusive education to mainstream school, there are no resources, effective programmes are lacking and most of the schools are not yet equipped to support the range of disabilities and even some of the teachers do not possess the skills to be able to support the learners. On the contrary, the policy of SIAS DBE (2014:35) states that learning programmes and materials as well as assessment procedures must be made accessible to all learners, and must accommodate the diversity of learning needs in order to facilitate learners' achievements to the fullest. Mainstream schools should be more accommodative to the diverse learning needs of all children and teachers should possess skills and knowledge of how to practice inclusive education in their classrooms. For the purposes of this current study the researcher intends to determine skills, knowledge and the strategies the teachers adopt to practice inclusive education in their classrooms. The availability of learning programmes and materials will enable the Grade R teachers to practice IE effectively

in their classes. It is vital that Grade R classes be supplied with learning programmes and materials that encourage the practices of Inclusive Education. Grade R teachers also need skills and knowledge to be able to use the learning programmes and materials effectively.

#### **2.4. Teacher qualifications in relation to Grade R skills, and knowledge of inclusivity**

For learners to receive quality education, different teaching skills, knowledge of the curriculum and relevant resources are needed for the teachers. Teachers are expected to accommodate learners of different learning abilities in their classes and to produce better results. Cook, Klein and Chen (2011:380) claim that teaching in those sites where teachers are well trained and have knowledge of both child development and special education is easier. The teachers who work with young children should be aware of their natural abilities, be able to accept them and to appreciate their differences. Feeney, Galper and Seefeldt (2009:88) postulate that specific training and education of teachers in early childhood education or child development contributes to better quality programme. This indicates that specific training for Grade R teachers is very important for quality teaching. Feeney et al (2009:89) stress teachers with more education will be able to interpret children's actions from a developmental perspective. Grade R teachers should not only depend on training from the Department of Education they should develop their knowledge through studying and reading books relevant to their field of teaching. The more the teacher reads, more he/she becomes exposed to different ideas and understandings of different concepts related to his/her field of education.

Teachers that possess knowledge of how Grade R learners learn will be able to differentiate and interpret the curriculum correctly. Wium, Makgatho and Louw (2015:31) assert that a differentiated curriculum is required to respond to learner diversity and adapted teaching and assessment methods and the learning environment, which would include classroom management. Teachers' ability to respond to children and appropriate learning can be influenced by their knowledge and skills. Guralnick (2001:168) is of opinion that the competencies of untrained teachers are often inadequate in addressing young children in inclusive programmes. This implies that training of teachers is of cardinal importance for



teaching Grade R learners to be trained in this field because they lay the foundation for all future learning.

Grade R learners need teachers who will respond appropriately to the diverse needs of Inclusive Education. Davin (2013:89) is convinced that Grade R teachers need reorientation, support and assistance; and that they also need instructional and technical skills to work with learners' diverse needs. This indicates that Grade R teachers need to understand their roles and responsibilities in an inclusive classroom in order to be effective. Van Rensburg (2015:119) points out that most schools share a common factor of having teachers who possess only low levels of qualification. According to Van Rensburg (2015:119), the training level of the teachers is key to the attainment of school and learning readiness of Grade R learners and the author also argues that well-trained educationists follow an approach to education based on knowledge of how children learn and develop. The teacher should be able to restructure the environment, adapt material, determine how the child learns and is able to select appropriate teaching strategies for the learners.

Children develop and learn best in a physically and emotionally safe environment where their basic physical and emotional needs are met. Wium, Makgatho and Louw (2015:35) contend that as teachers remain the key players in the successful implementation of inclusive education, it means that their knowledge and skills need to be continually refreshed and developed; hence the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) requires supporting teachers through training, mentoring, monitoring and consultation. It is important for teachers to be able to understand and interpret what they are teaching. Teachers should develop their knowledge and skills to be able to support all learners in their classes. Cook, Klein and Chen (2011:30) stress the fact that teachers must develop competency characteristics of both early childhood teachers and special teachers - the skills needed include the same skills essential for working with all young children, even though children with disabilities require additional skills and expertise. This implies that Grade R teachers need special training that will develop their skills so that they become experts in teaching all learners.

## **2.5. Concluding remarks**

This chapter discussed the Theoretical Framework underpinning the research study and how inclusive education is being practiced both in developed and developing countries. The skills, knowledge and teachers' qualifications were also brought to the fore. In the next chapter the research methodology for data collection and how it will be analysed will be discussed in detail.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In Chapter two, the researcher discussed the literature to the practices of inclusive education in the mainstream schools in detail. In this chapter the research method that underpins the research study will be discussed in detail.

#### **3.2. Research purpose**

The purpose of the study is to explore how the mainstream schools practice inclusive education in the Grade R classes. Data collected will be important in assisting with the understanding of the research study and answering the questions related to it.

#### **3.3. Research design**

The design of the research study is informed by the research problem. "A research design is a plan or strategy which moves from underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done" ( Maree 2013:70). The researcher selects the participants, identifies the data-gathering techniques and data-analysing methods based of the chosen research study. Taylor (2005:6) contends that research requires a plan in order to focus and control research and a systematic plan should be developed addressing, integrating and infusing the various components.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) contend that a research design encompasses all the procedures the researcher has to follow when conducting the research, which includes when, from whom and under which conditions- the data will be collected. The researcher specifies the plan that will be used to obtain data in order to respond to the research question. Creswell (2009:1) contends that the plans need to be made taken during the research involve several decisions which can be taken in any order that makes sense during presentation. "Traditional (typological or linear) approaches

to design provide a model for conducting the research, a prescriptive guide that arranges the components or tasks involved in planning or conducting a study in what is seen as an optimal order” (Maxwell 2013:216).

### **3.4. Research paradigm**

A paradigm is a model or concept of the world that is shared by the members of a community and that governs their activities (Engler 2009:13). “A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimate or first principles and represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do” (Guba and Lincoln 1994:107). The researcher has chosen the constructivist paradigm because she will rely on the participants’ views in relation to the phenomenon being studied. Creswell (2013:8) contends that constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:21) explain that the central idea of interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience in order to retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated; where efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. They further assert that interpretive paradigm focuses on the actions of the participants and the researcher depends on those actions in order to find the intentions of the participants in sharing the experience. Maree (2013:59) explains interpretive paradigm as that it helps to uncover the meanings imparted, to improve the researcher’s comprehension and helps to develop a sense of understanding of the research study. Interpretive paradigm assists the researcher in understanding what happens at one place at a particular time compared to what happens to different places and times. According to Maree (2013:59), in interpretive paradigm human life can only be understood from within by focusing on people’s subjective experiences and how they interact with one another. Since the researcher will personally collect data from the participants, interpretive paradigm will assists in understanding the participants’ experiences of the study in their different places.

### **3.5. Research methodology**

In the next section qualitative research method will be discussed in details. The researcher chose qualitative research method because she wanted to understand the experiences of the participants as it occurs in the natural setting.

### **3.5.1. Qualitative research method**

Creswell (2009:4) contends that qualitative research is a research method that is used to explore and understand the meaning the individuals attach to the social or human problem. Creswell (2009:175) defines qualitative researcher as a person who collects data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem of the study by observing behaviour or interviewing the participants. Sharon (2009:14) is also of the same opinion that qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experience. Creswell (2013:234) contends that in qualitative research the researcher does not bring participants into a laboratory but information is gathered by talking directly to participants and seeing them behave and act within their context. "The ontological position of qualitative research suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which the research questions are designed to explore," (Mason, 2002:63.) The researcher was granted the opportunity of speaking to the participants, seeing how they behave and act in relation to the study. White (2005:81) explains that qualitative research deals with understanding the phenomenon from the participants' points of view in their daily lives. The researcher chose the qualitative method because first-hand information was obtained from the participants.

Maxwell (2008:221) contends that qualitative researchers study a small number of people or situations and preserve the individuality of each of these in their analyses, rather than collecting data from large samples and combining the data across individuals or situations. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:321) contend that in qualitative research the behaviour is studied as it occurs naturally without manipulating or controlling it or the setting, while no external interferences occur.

Yin (2011:7-8) explains that qualitative research has five features:

- Studying the meaning of people's lives, under real-world conditions;

- Representing the views and perspectives of the people (labelled throughout this book, as the participants) in a study;
- Covering the contextual conditions within which people live;
- Contributing insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour; and
- Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone.

Johnson and Christensen (2012:376) assert that a qualitative researcher relies on the inductive mode of the scientific method and the major objective is exploratory and to discover. Johnson and Christensen (2012) further assert that the researcher studies the phenomenon in an open-ended manner without prior expectations and develops theoretical explanations based on the interpretations of what they observe. The researcher did not manipulate the information in order to explore the study. Mason (2002:66) asserts that qualitative research might involve participants by trying to ascertain their reasoning or judgements in certain areas by focusing on events and situations of the experiences rather than simply asking them their views.

### **3.6. Phenomenological design**

The researcher followed the phenomenological design in order to gain the actual understanding of what the participants experience in their daily lives. Maree (2016:77) asserts that phenomenological design focuses on determining what the participants had experienced by providing comprehensive description of their own experiences. The researcher gained an understanding of what the participants had experienced from their description. “Phenomenological design place important assumptions and prior conceptualizations about a phenomenon of interest in order to remain open to what are in the data” (Roulston in Flick 2014: 302). Creswell (2014:42) contends that phenomenology is a design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. The researcher had the opportunity of identifying the participants’ experiences regarding the study by interacting with them. Creswell (2009:13) contends that in a phenomenological design a researcher identifies the quality of human experiences about the study as described by the participants by studying a small number of participants. The

researcher used the design in order to identify what is common in their experiences about the study. Johnson and Christensen (2012:385) elucidate that phenomenological researchers do not assume that individuals are completely unique, but they assume that there is some commonality in human experiences that need to be understood. The common experiences identified by means of the design assisted the researcher in understanding the relationship that exists in human experience and how it affects the study.

### **3.7. Location**

The research study was conducted from the primary schools in Phagameng in the Nylstroom Circuit which is situated in the Waterberg District in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The location is more accessible to the researcher and Grade R classes in mainstream schools have started practicing inclusive education.

### **3.8. Population and Sampling**

White (2005:113) argues that a population can be described as all possible elements that can be included in the research. Grade R teachers were selected because it was regarded as the grade which children start to experience formal learning. Mills and Airasian (2011:130) argue that the first step in sampling is to define the population to which the results will be generalised. Nylstroom circuit has nineteen primary schools with Grade R classes, sampling followed five schools because Grade R learners are taught both by qualified teachers and practitioners. The researcher has chosen the small group of participants in order to save time and costs because studying a large group of participants can be time consuming.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) see sampling as selecting a group of subjects or participants. The researcher identified the teachers and practitioners who are currently teaching in the Grade R classes from the Nylstroom circuit in the Waterberg district in Limpopo for the research study. The researcher assumed that the teachers and practitioners would provide relevant information concerning the research study because they are presently teaching Grade R. Maree (2013:79) describes that purposive sampling as selecting participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. Grade R teachers and practitioners were

chosen because their information would be able to answer the research questions and enable the researcher to gain necessary knowledge.

Singh (2006:81) sees sampling in a population to be done in order to limit the costs, time and other factors which are usually operative in the situation; stand in the way of studying the total population and it also makes the research findings economical and accurate. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:114) assert that purposive sampling is a feature of qualitative research in which a researcher handpicks the participants to be included in the research study on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being required. The participants who were chosen are presently teaching in Grade R and they are relevant to the study. Some teachers were not trained to teach in Grade R and the practitioners were trained to teach Early Childhood Development (ECD); hence the researcher intended to determine how they practice inclusive education in their classes. Johnson and Christensen (2012:231) argue that in purposive sampling the researcher specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then tries to locate individuals who have those characteristics in order to include them in participating in the research study. The participants were informative about the topic and assisted the researcher in collecting relevant data since Grade R is regarded as the first year of formal teaching.

In this research study the Grade R teachers or practitioners have been chosen because they have experience of teaching the grade. Grade R is the environment in which formal teaching and learning starts and some learners have not be exposed to teaching since they never attended pre-school. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:137), in convenience sampling participants are selected based on their accessibility. The Grade R teachers or practitioners sampled were more accessible to the researcher because they are from the same circuit and the researcher did not have to travel a long distance to collect data. The researcher chose convenience sampling from the schools with a view to understand the relationship that may exist since learners who attended these schools are from the same community. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005:92) are convinced that the quality of research stands or falls as a result of the suitability of the chosen sampling strategy. The researcher chose the practitioners teaching Grade R in order to observe how they practice inclusion education in their classrooms. The practitioners



are being paid by the Department of Social Development and not by Department of Education; thus they are relevant in this research study because they are presently teaching Grade R.

### **3.9. Data collection instruments**

Data collection is very important to enable the researcher to understand the phenomenon being studied. The choice of the strategies to be used for data collection is vital in the research process because making the wrong choice can also affect how the researcher analyses and interprets data. According to Pandey and Pandey (2015:57) data collecting tools or techniques guide the researcher in data collection and evaluation; they vary in complexity, interpretation, design and administration. The following data-collection techniques were used: interviews, observation, taking down field notes and recording.

#### **3.9.1. Interviews**

Maree (2013:87) defines an interview as being a two-way communication in which the interviewer collects data by posing questions to the participants so that she can learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours pertaining to the research topic. The researcher poses questions in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Mason (2002:64) asserts that the researcher is unlikely to have a complete and sequenced script of questions, and most interviews are designed to have a fluid and flexible structure, to allow the researcher and interviewees to develop unexpected themes. The researcher's task will be to ensure that the interview is relevant and contexts are brought into focus so that situated knowledge can be produced. Maree (2013:85) is of opinion that a good interviewer is a good listener who should maintain good eye contact and give the participants time to respond without interrupting them.

White (2005:143-144) elaborates on the sensibility of choosing to interview the participants by explaining that even though interviews have the disadvantage of consuming time and of requiring the researcher to travel, interviews also hold the following advantages:

- **Flexibility** – Interviewers can probe for more specific answers and can repeat questions when the response indicates that the respondent misunderstood the question.
- **Response rate** – The interviewer has a much better response rate than in the case of mailed questionnaires and people who cannot read and write can still answer the questions in the interview.
- **Non-verbal behaviour** – The interviewer is present to observe non-verbal behaviour and to assess the validity of the respondent's answers.
- **Control over environment** – An interview can standardise the interview environment by making certain that the interview is conducted in privacy, and that it is relatively quiet.
- **Question order** – The interviewer has control over question being posed and can ensure that the respondent does not answer questions out of order.
- **Spontaneity** – Spontaneous answers may be more informative than answers about which the respondent has time to think.
- **Respondent alone can answer** – The respondent is unable to cheat by receiving prompting answers from others.
- **Completeness** – The interviewer can make sure that all questions are answered.

Creswell (2014:241) also supports that interviews are useful when the researcher cannot directly observe the participants, participants can provide historical information and the researcher can also control her way of questioning. Kumar (2011:142) states that in complex and sensitive areas the interviewer has the opportunity of preparing a respondent before asking sensitive questions and of explaining complex questions to respondents in person. He further contends that information obtained by means of interviews can be supplemented with those gained from observation and non-verbal reaction and interviews can be used with almost any type of population such as children, people with disabilities, illiterate persons or those that are very old.

Interviewing also provides the participants with important opportunities in respect of the research. Creswell (2013:218) contends that open-ended questions grant the participants the opportunity of creating the option of responding and voicing their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research

findings. Creswell contends that even though interviewing is time-consuming and the researcher summarizes the participants' views, the interviewer can control the type of information she seek to obtain by asking specific questions to obtain it. Mason (2002: 64) asserts that relevant contexts are brought into focus by means of the interaction between the researcher and the participants. Interviewing will allow the researcher to obtain data that may not be readily available in any other form and the researcher is also able to prepare the questions in advance. However, the researcher also has the opportunity of revising or approaching the questions from different angles during the interview in order to allow the participants to respond freely.

Semi-structured interview were chosen to conduct the research because the researcher asked new questions as follow-ups to the participant's reply. Bryman (2012:470) contends that in qualitative interviewing the researcher is interested in the interview's point of view and this gives the researcher insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important. The researcher was able to change the wording of the questions or to vary the order of questioning in order to accommodate the participant. Bryman further contends that semi-structured interviewing tends to be flexible and responds to the direction in which the participants take the interview and perhaps adjusts the emphases in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge during the course of the interview. Maree (2016:93) asserts that the researcher should be attentive to the responses from the participant in order to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied.

### **3.9.2. Observation**

Maree (2016:90) contends that observation is a systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants without questioning or communicating with them. The researcher observed what was taking place using different senses to gather information and to understand the phenomenon being observed. A researcher should be present at the site so to see naturally by observing what is really happening in the real-life situation. According to Creswell (2014:239) a qualitative observation is made when a researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities at the research site by recording in a semi-structured or unstructured

manner using open-ended questions related to specific aspects of the research to which she seeks to obtain answers. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350) explain that observation is used by a researcher to see and hear what is naturally occurring in the research site. The researcher chose observation because it allowed her to observe practically how inclusive education is practiced in selected schools.

Cirocki (2013:63) maintains that observation allows the researcher to reveal the participant's attitude and the approach towards learning, tasks, methods of teaching and teacher, and it also allows the researcher to detail classroom management issues. During observation the researcher of the current research study was able to describe in detail and assess what happened during the classroom process rather than making use of a questionnaire to obtain data regarding strategies applied by the teachers, because if she did use a questionnaire for this purpose it would have deprived her of the opportunity to observe how teachers apply their strategies in an inclusive classroom. The observation method assisted the researcher in obtaining access to first-hand information from the participants, recording information as it occurred and/or noticing unusual information as it took place.

Kothari (2004:96) remarks that during observation the information is sought by way of the investigator's own direct observation without asking anything -from the respondent and by observing information related to what is happening during that period in time. Kothari further asserts that the main advantage of observation is that subjective bias is eliminated, provided it is done accurately; the information obtained relates to what is currently happening; it is not complicated by either the past behaviour or future intentions or attitudes and it is independent of respondents' willingness to respond and as such is relatively less demanding of active cooperation on the part of respondents as happens to be the case during the interview or with the questionnaire method

The researcher fulfilled the role of non-participant observer so that data was collected without interfering with the activities performed during the observation. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350) are of opinion that a non-participant observer approach allows a researcher to document data without interfering with the decision of the participant or being biased. Being non-participant allowed the researcher enough time to collect data without being disturbed by participating in the activities

the researcher intended to observe. Observation facilitates the understanding of the phenomenon being studied and allows collection of a more complete set of data. The researcher will look at the barriers that benefits or hinders the practice of inclusion in the Grade R. According to Bordens and Abbott (2011:237) observation gives the researcher the insight as to how behaviour occurs in the natural setting and to describe the observed behaviour. The researcher's observation of the study was based on what the researcher saw and heard during the lessons. The researcher observed and analysed phenomena that were either difficult to spot or could not be directly examined such as intentions, feelings or attitudes, (Cirocki, 2013: 64). During the observation the researcher reflected on what had happened in order to record what she heard and saw.

### **3.9.3. Notes taking and audio recordings**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350) contend that the researcher should take notes to record what is seen or heard and also reflect on what has occurred during and immediately after the observation. This will allow the researcher to access the information before it is forgotten or mixed because it will be used for data analysis and for further recommendations for future studies. Similarly Hancock (2002:9) maintained that the researcher can record observations of people, a situation or an environment by making notes of what has been observed so that they could be used later.

Creswell (2009:183) contends that even if the researcher records information from the interview, notes taking should also be done. Audio recording will help the researcher to focus on what is being said, to follow up on interest points being made and to not be distracted by concentrating on taking down notes on what is said. White (2005:163) asserts that the researcher should not rely only on her memory during observations - other techniques such as notes taking and recording should be employed. Maree (2013:92) also agrees that recording can be used to capture elements that the researcher was unable to identify during notes taking. Kumar (2011:136) contends that recording an interaction allows the researcher to listen to it a number of times before interpreting an interaction or drawing any conclusions from it and can also invite other professionals to listen to the interaction in order to arrive at more objective conclusions. The researcher was able to play back and listen to a

portion that might have been unclear; without interference from anything. According to Bryman (2012:482) audio recording allows more thorough examination of what people say and permits repeated examination of the interviewees' answers. Audio recording afforded the researcher more time to listen to the participants' responses and to examine it thoroughly for better understanding. Audio recording assisted the researcher in capturing the information that she was unable to capture either through writing or observation.

### **3.10. Data analysis**

The first step of analyzing qualitative data is the immersion of the researcher in the data in order to become familiar with the information. During this process the researcher took all the collected data from interviews, observations and notes taken during observation and started to form a clearer understanding of the information. The researcher assigned codes to data and conduct content analysis by looking for specific words for which themes could be identified. Kothari (2004:122) defines coding as the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes which should be appropriate to the research problem under consideration. This allowed the researcher to reduce the collected data to small numbers of categories which require critical analysis. Green (2007:25) explains that a thematic analysis is one that looks across all the data to identify the common issues that recur, and identify the main themes that summarize all the views collected. All the collected data were summarised and grouped according to common characteristics that were identified and summarised.

Creswell (2013:236) asserts that the data analysing procedure is a process that requires understanding how to make sense of data collected with the purpose of creating answers to the questions. "Data analysis is the process of resolving data into its essential components, to reveal its characteristic elements and structure" (Dey 2005:31). According to Singh (2006:223) analysis of data deals with studying the tabulated material to determine inherent facts or meanings which involve breaking down existing complex factors into simpler parts and putting the parts together in new arrangements for the purpose of interpretation.

Dey (2005:46) contends that classifying does not only deal with breaking the data up into bits, it also deals with assigning these bits in categories or classes which bring these bits together again in such a way that bits that 'belong' to a particular category are brought together; and in the process the criteria for allocating data to one category or another is identified. Maxwell and Chmiel in Flick (2014:24) contend that in coding data segment is labelled and grouped by categories; they are examined and compared both within and between categories. The research used coding categories to sort the collected descriptive data so that the material bearing on a research study could physically separate from other data.

Creswell (2014:245) states that even though text data are dense and rich, not all information can be used in qualitative study as such. The researcher should focus on some data and disregard others. Yin (2011:178) contends that data analysis begins by compiling and sorting the field notes accumulated from the fieldwork and other data collection. Field notes accumulated were sorted in such a manner that it assisted the researcher in categorising and understanding them. Yin (2011) further explains that compiled data can be broken down into smaller fragments or pieces which may be considered the "disassembling" procedure which should be followed by using substantive themes or even codes or clusters of codes to reorganize the disassembled fragments or pieces into different groupings and sequences than might have been in the original notes. This process assisted the researcher in identifying the information that was important and to disregard those parts that were less important for data analysis and interpretation.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:370) assert that transcription is the process of taking data collected during observation and notes taking, interviews and audiotape-recorded interviews and converting them into a format that will facilitate analysis. The researcher transcribed data collected by herself to include all important prompts. Maree (2013:104) emphasizes that when transcribing data collect by digital means such as tape-recordings, laughter or gestures should not be ignored because they may also add meaning to the spoken words and everything should be written verbatim in order to avoid being biased. Both verbal and non-verbal information collected was taken into consideration when analysing data because both conveyed special meaning in the research study.

### **3.11. Trustworthiness**

Maree (2016:123) points out that trustworthiness is important in qualitative research. To assess the trustworthiness of the data the researcher allowed the participants or any person with interest in the research to comment on or assess the research findings. According to Maree (2013:114) participants can be granted an opportunity of commenting on whether the interpretations of data are in line with personal experiences that they tried to express during the interviews. Yin (2011:19) asserts that to build credibility and trustworthiness the researcher should be transparent, also make the research accessible to the public and that the document should be described in the procedures so that other people should be able to review and try to understand them. The research will be made available to the public as soon as the study is completed and approved by the institution. Johnson and Christensen (2012:265) contend that even though biasness tends to be a problem in qualitative research, the researcher engages in critical self-reflection on her/his potential biases and predispositions. For the purpose of avoiding bias - the researcher did not allow her personal views to affect data collection and the interpretation thereof.

White (2005:200) explains that reliability is regarded as the elimination of casual errors that can influence the research results. The researcher checked the transcripts to make sure that they did not contain obvious mistakes. White further contends that the contradictions in the findings should be referred back to the participants for explanation by means of open discussion. Where the researcher was not certain about the information, she referred data back to the participants for the purpose of clarification and discussions. Kumar (2011:168) contends that reliability is maintained when the researcher obtains similar information from the same or similar condition using the same instrument. The researcher conducted the research at five different schools from the same circuit and area in order to maintain the reliability of data. White (2005:204) contends that for data to be reliable and consistent the findings should yield the same results even if it is administered by different people. According to Creswell (2009:190) reliability can be maintained by constantly comparing data with the codes and by writing memos about the codes and their definitions. The researcher did at all the times check and compare data with codes to make sure they corresponded with one another.



### **3.11.1. Dependability**

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:159) explain that dependability suggests that the researchers need to go back to participants to check that their findings are dependable. It is very important that the researcher should be flexible by verifying with the participants that the findings are reliable and consistent but not biased. Participants need to know that the findings of the researcher are true and that what they said during the interviews represent what the researcher has observed. Participants can also be allowed to verify the data gathered during the interviews or the informal conversations with the researcher to correct some errors of facts or to verify whether the researcher's interpretations of the participants' information are correct. Maree (2013:114) believes that allowing the participants to verify the information gathered by the researcher may inform the researcher to change data gathering techniques in order to strengthen the study. Bryman (2012:392) asserts that to establish the merit of the research, the researcher should keep the complete records in an accessible manner so that participants can be able to verify whether the correct information had been reported. The researcher allowed the participants to verify if the data were correctly captured and presented according to participants' views.

### **3.11.2. Credibility**

Kumar (2011:172) proposes that for confirming credibility the researcher should take the findings of the research to the participants for confirmation, congruence, validation and approval. The researcher familiarised herself with the participants and their organisation prior to data collection. Green (2007:11) contends that credibility implies that the questions that are asked and the ways in which they are asked should be reasonable for generating valid (or 'truthful') accounts of phenomena. The researcher posed open-ended questions to allow the participants to voice their own opinions in the study and to elaborate on what they were saying. White (2005:203) explains that qualitative research is credible when it represents accurate descriptions or interpretations of human experiences such that people who also share that experience would immediately recognise the description. The researcher interpreted the data in such a manner that participants will recognise the description of the researcher of the participants had shared and thus presented it credibly.

According to Maree (2016:123) the researcher can exercise credibility by submitting the transcripts or field notes to the participants to correct the errors. During the informal conversation the researcher asked the participants to verify whether the interpretation of data gathered from the interviews were correct. Bryman (2012:390) is also of the opinion that credibility can also be ensured by submitting the research findings to the members where the study has been carried out for confirmation that the researcher has understood them correctly. The researcher submitted the research findings to the participants for validation to ensure credibility. The participants were asked to verify whether the information had been accurately captured and presented by the researcher. Maree (2013:114) contends that the researcher should allow the participants and other people who may have a specific interest in the research to comment on or assess the research findings, interpretations and conclusions to enhance the credibility of the findings. Accessibility to the research findings was made available to all concerned so that they could make comments or assess it.

### **3.11.3. Transferability**

White (2005:204) explains that transferability is met when the findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or suitability of fit between the two contexts. The researcher should be able to present the sufficient descriptive data that will allow comparison between the contexts. To show transparency to the participants the researcher gave the participants a copy of the findings of the study so that they can see how data were collected and analysed. Green (2007: 11) defines transparent as that the methods used to collect data should be written up so that readers can see exactly how the data were collected and analysed.

Maree (2016:124) in turn explains that transferability invites readers of the research to make connections between the elements of a study and their own experiences or research. The researcher ensured that the participants were clear about the research study and that the researcher would provide the complete understanding of the context. Maree further contends that the researcher should provide the readers with a full and purposeful account of the context, participants, and research design so that the readers can make their own decision concerning transferability. The

researcher described data in such a manner that the reader is able to determine whether the research is transferable even to their own situation.

#### **3.11.4. Confirmability**

Bryman (2012:392) asserts that the researcher should not allow personal values or theoretical feelings manifest to influence the conduct of the research and the findings arising from it. The researcher did not allow personal feelings or emotions to have any influence on the findings of the information from the research. The researcher represented the views of the participants fairly and assisted them in arriving at a better understanding of their environment. Lincoln and Guba as cited by Maree (2016:125) define confirmability as the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, motivation or interest. The researcher tried by all means to reproduce enough text to allow the reader to decide what the participant is trying to convey. The researcher attempted to be as neutral as possible during the research process in order to avoid bias and misunderstanding. White (2005:205) contends that neutrality has to do with the freedom from being biased in the research procedures and results. The researcher should be objective and not influence the research by prolonging the periods of observation. The researcher did not spend too much time during the interview or the observation session with a view to avoid any negative influence on the research study. The researcher observed the participants for approximately thirty to forty-five minutes to be objective about the study.

#### **3.12. Ethical consideration**

Creswell (2013:210) maintains that researchers should seek permission for the study through the approval process of the institution review board by developing the description of the project, designing informed consent and having the project reviewed. The researcher submitted the application letter to the senior district manager requesting permission to do the research at the schools around the district which will also cover the schools around the circuit and the permission was granted. Johnson and Christensen (2012:108) contend that before the participants take part in the study they should be given a description of all the features of the study that

might influence their willingness to participate. Research permission was requested from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education of the University of South Africa (UNISA). Permission letters were also submitted to school principals and SGBs around the circuit to explain the intentions of conducting the research, asking for their consent for taking part in the study. Consent letters at the schools were only submitted to the Grade R teachers/practitioners who were identified as part of the research.

### **3.12.1. Informed consent**

Blackstone (2012: 61) contends that human beings as research subjects must give consent to their participation in research and identities and the information they share should be protected by researchers. The researcher explained to the participants how the study was to be conducted and to ascertain whether or not the volunteer would be available and willing to participate in the research study before implementing the interview. Brooks, Riele and Maguire (2014:80) contend that participants should be provided with information about the research project that is sufficiently complete and accessible for their decision about whether to take part to be considered informed. The researcher respected the participants who took part in the study. The participants were notified that participation was voluntary and that the participants were allowed to withdraw from the research any time during the process if they so wished.

Participants have the right to know when and how the information will be shared and if they do not want to receive the findings of the study they should not be forced to do so – their decision be accepted. The information and responses shared during the research are kept private and results were presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identity of the participants. Cohen et al (2007:61) contend that privacy may be violated during the course of the research or denied after it has been completed. The researcher did not violate the privacy of the participants during the research process nor when releasing the information. Creswell (2014:138) explains that in qualitative research the researchers should use aliases or pseudonyms for individuals and places, to protect the identities of participants. In this study the identities of the participants were protected by using of names that do not belong to the participants.

### **3.12.2. Anonymity**

Blackstone (2012:64) contends that anonymity occurs when no one is able to connect individual participants with collected data such as interview quotes or survey responses but only the researcher can link participants with their data, and he or she promises not to do so publicly. The researcher did not use the names of the participants from the collected data so that the readers are unable to connect data to the participants. Schumacher and McMillan (2010:121) explain that in anonymity no one should be able to identify who said what from the collected information. In this current research participants were given names that allowed the researcher to interpret data correctly while the participants remained anonymous and protected from anyone who will read the findings of the report. Cohen et al (2005:61) add that the researcher should guarantee the privacy of the participants no matter how personal or sensitive the information is. The participants should feel that they provide the information out of their own will because they may not trust or have confidence in the researcher.

### **3.12.3. Integrity**

It is very important for the participants to trust the researcher with whatever information they impart during the research study. According to White (2005:151) the researcher should maintain a sound relationship of trust, she should not raise false expectations, and participants should be treated with honesty. The researcher under no circumstances should promise any expectations such as payments or rewards to gather data from them. The researcher should be honest to let the participants understand that there will be no payments, rewards or any bribe that will be given to gather the data from them and their participation in the research is at their own free will. According to Yin (2011:41) research integrity means that the researcher's words can be trusted as representing truthful positions and statements since people should know through her actions, behaviour and research methods, that she is striving to produce research that is truthful, including clarifying the point of view being represented.

### **3.12.4. Confidentiality**

It is very important not to betray the trust of the participants in a research study. Brooks, Riele and Maguire (2014:54) explain that confidentiality refers to personal information about the people being protected from disclosure and misuse and safeguarding data both during and after data collection. Cohen et al (2007:65) advance that the way of protecting a participant's right to privacy is by promising confidentiality, which means that although researchers know who the participant is, they will in no way make the connection known publicly; the boundaries surrounding the shared secret will be protected.

The researcher ascertained the participants that the information gathered during the study will be kept confidential. White (2005:150) adds that the participants should be satisfied that their identity and the information they provide will be treated as confidential. "Confidentiality means that no one has access to individual data or the names of the participants except the researcher and that the subjects know before they participate who will see the data", (McMillan and Schumacher 2010:122.) The researcher under no circumstances released the names of the participants or made it possible for people to identify the participants by means of the collected data. The participants were told that they would be informed about the outcomes of the research and that they would be given a copy of the findings after completion of the study, should they need it. Johnson and Christensen (2012:116) contend that confidentiality refers to the agreement with the researcher about what can be done with the information gathered from the participants about the study.

### **3.13. Concluding remarks**

In this chapter the detailed description of the research method was discussed. Qualitative research approach which was used for data collection and interviews and observation for data collection were also discussed. Chapter four will discuss the process of the data analysis in detail.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1. Introduction

In Chapter two an in-depth analysis of literature review was presented while in Chapter three the research methodology was discussed. The literature review focused on adopting the policy of inclusive education in the mainstream in order to meet the needs of learners with disabilities especially in early childhood education. The discussion in Chapter two focussed on different ways in which international and developing countries practice inclusive education in the mainstream schools particularly in Grade R. Data was collected by means of unstructured interviews and observations as indicated in Chapter three. It also mentioned that data can be analysed by assigning symbols to the answers so that responses can be put into limited number of categories. Both verbal and non-verbal information were considered when analysing data. This chapter will first present the profile of the participants and then followed data presentation.

#### 4.2. Profile of teachers and practitioners

The interpretation and analysis of data of teachers and practitioners is divided into various sections. The first section covers the profiles of teachers and practitioners with regard to qualifications and experience. Participants will be identified as participant number one to nine where participant will be represented with the letter “P” and the numbers will be in numerical order from “1” to “9”. The participants will be “P1” to “P9”

**Table 4.1:** The Profile of participant (P)

P	Qualifications	Experience
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1	<p>Primary Teachers Course (PTC)</p> <p>Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD)</p> <p>Advance Certificate in Education (ACE) – Grade R</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 59 years old and a female teacher</li> <li>• 36 years' teaching experience</li> <li>• Taught Sepedi, English, Afrikaans, Life Skills, Geography and History</li> <li>• Taught Grade 4-5 and Foundation phase</li> <li>• 10 years teaching Grade R</li> </ul>
2	<p>Standard 10 (Grade 12)</p> <p>Early childhood development (ECD) LEVEL 4 &amp; 5 certificates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 50 years old and a female practitioner</li> <li>• Taught in crèche 4 years'</li> <li>• 3 years teaching Grade R</li> </ul>
3	<p>Standard 8 (Grade 10)</p> <p>ECD LEVEL 5</p> <p>Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) LEVEL 4 certificate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 59 years old and a female practitioner</li> <li>• 6 years' teaching Grade R</li> </ul>
4	<p>ECD LEVEL 5</p> <p>Currently register Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 50 years old and a female practitioner</li> <li>• 6 years' teaching Grade R</li> </ul>
5	<p>Standard 8 (Grade 10)</p> <p>ECD LEVEL 4 &amp; 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 56 years old and a female practitioner</li> <li>• 21 years' teaching pre-school</li> </ul>



		<p>and was a principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 years' teaching Grade R</li> </ul>
6	<p>Standard 8 (Grade 10)</p> <p>ECD LEVEL 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 50 years old and a female practitioner</li> <li>• 6 years' teaching Grade R</li> </ul>
7	<p>EDUCARE N6</p> <p>LEVEL 5 ECD</p> <p>Currently registered Diploma in Grade R</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 47 years old and a female practitioner</li> <li>• 6 years' teaching experience in pre-school</li> <li>• 4 years' teaching Grade R</li> </ul>
8	<p>Senior Primary Teachers Diploma</p> <p>Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) diploma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is 60 years old and a female teacher</li> <li>• 4 years' experience in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)</li> <li>• 4 years' experience Grade 4 – 7 Natural Science, Sepedi, Technology</li> <li>• Started teaching Grade R January 2017</li> </ul>
9	<p>Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD)</p> <p>Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Grade R</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 47 years old and a female teacher</li> <li>• 12 years' teaching experience</li> </ul>

	Bed (Honours) in Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 years' experience in Grade 1</li> <li>• 10 years' experience in Grade R</li> <li>• School based support team (SBST) coordinator</li> </ul>
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Participant 1 is 59 years old and a Grade R teacher during the time of data collection. She obtained her (Primary Teachers Course) PTC qualifications prior to 1994 and upgraded to JPTD after completing Standard 10 (Grade 12) through correspondence. She then furthered her studies to obtain the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) specialising in Grade R. She has been teaching in mainstream schools for the past 36 years from intermediate to foundation phase and then she was allocated Grade R after completing her ACE certificate in Grade R since 2007.

Participant 2 is 50 years old and a Grade R practitioner. She did Level 4 and 5 courses with the Department of Education. She was the principal of the crèche and taught for 4 years before teaching Grade R. She became Grade R teacher for the past three years after being transferred to the mainstream school because she is receiving a stipend from the Department of Education. She went to teach Grade R because if she opted to remain taking care of the crèche, the Department would withdraw their stipend.

Participant 3 is 59 years old and a Grade R practitioner. She completed Standard 8 (Grade 10) many years ago. She completed Abet Level 4 and also obtained Early Childhood Development (ECD) Level 4 and 5 courses of crèche with the Department of Education. She started her own crèche in 2008 and was then transferred to mainstream school in 2011. Similar to participant 2, she receives her stipend from the Department of Education and this is the reason why she was also transferred to the school to teach Grade R learners.

Participant 4 is 50 years old and Grade R practitioner. She has standard 10 (Grade 12). She studied ECD Level 5 certificate with Department of Education. She started her own crèche in 2007 and taught for 4 years. Like the previous two practitioners, she was also transferred to teach Grade R in the mainstream school because she

gets stipend from department of education. She is currently registered for a Postgraduate Diploma in Education to further her studies.

Participant 5 is 56 years old and a Grade R practitioner. She has 21 years' teaching experience in pre-school and was also a principal. Like the other three previous participants, she was also transferred to teach Grade R in mainstream school. She passed her standard 8 and obtained ECD Level 4 and 5 courses. She has been teaching Grade R since 2011.

Participant 6 is 50 years old and a Grade R practitioner. She passed standard 8 (Grade 10), obtained ECD Level 4 and 5 courses. She has 6 years teaching experience of pre-school. Like the other practitioners, she was also transferred to a mainstream school to teach in Grade R in 2011.

Participant 7 is 47 years old and a Grade R practitioner. She obtained N6 EDUCARE certificate and has 6 years' teaching experience in pre-school. She also obtained ECD Level 5 certificate with the Department of Education. She has 4 years' teaching experience in Grade R. She was also transferred to the mainstream school to teach Grade R learners. She is currently doing her first year of Grade R diploma through distance learning.

Participant 8 is 60 years old and a Grade R teacher. She obtained Senior Primary Teachers Diploma in 2003. She also furthered her studies and obtained (Adult Basic Education and Training) ABET teaching diploma. She taught ABET for four years and then she was permanently employed to teach in mainstream schools for the past 6 years. She started teaching Grade R in January 2017.

Participant 9 is 47 years old and a Grade R teacher. She obtained her Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma (JPTD) in 2000. She taught Grade one for two years. She started teaching Grade R in 2007 and completed her ACE certificate in Grade R in 2008. She further upgraded her studies by doing BEd Honours in Management. She coordinates the School Based Support Team (SBST) at the school where she is currently teaching. She also assists in the Senior Management Team (SMT) in monitoring Grade R teachers.

The ages of the participants were 47, 47, 50, 50, 50, 56, 59, 59 and 60; hence four who are aged 56, 59, 59 and 60 have reached the retirement age since the

government allows early retirement from 55 for all employees appointed before 30 June 1996. Three of the participants are qualified teachers of whom one has done Senior Primary Teachers Diploma and the other two teachers are the only ones who have specialised in junior phase teaching. One teacher upgraded her studies by doing Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Grade R because she loves and enjoys teaching young children. According to her during the interview, studying Grade R course was an advantage to her and her involvement in SBST because she is able to identify learners with learning problems and know how to use intervention strategies. One qualified teacher who is 59 years indicated that she will retire in 2018 because she wants to rest while the other teacher who is currently 60 also indicated that she will retire when she reaches 65 since she has not been teaching for a long period.

Data was collected from female participants because there was no male teacher or practitioner who was allocated to teach Grade R learners. Most of the teachers are practitioners who were transferred to schools to teach Grade R because the Department of Education is paying them a stipend and those who went back to their crèches or pre-schools are no longer receiving the stipend from the department. Some of the practitioners do not have national senior certificate even though they have acquired ECD Level five certificates provided by the Department of Education. Not all the practitioners have qualifications to teach Grade R learners and only two have decided to further their studies by registering for the diploma for teaching Grade R. They only attend workshops organised by curriculum advisors and National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) to assist in practicing IE in Grade R classes. This indicates that they depend on lesson plans with daily routine and few resources provided from the workshops to teach learners in Grade R. As mentioned in Chapter two, most African countries experience challenges in practicing inclusive education in mainstream schools because most of the schools lack resources and teachers lack knowledge and sufficient training.

The presentations of the findings are comments both from qualified teachers and practitioners which will be integrated to more than one theme or sub-theme. Direct words from the participants are presented *in italics*.

### **4.3. Presentation of the findings**

Initially the researcher planned to interview ten participants but only nine participants were interviewed and one participant was not interviewed because she was on sick leave during the time of data collection. Arrangements for conducting interviews with participants were done by contacting principals of the identified schools and confirmation was done telephonically. Consent letters were given to the participants by the principals of the schools and they were collected before data collection commenced. Participants were also informed in the letters that interviews would be recorded with their permission. Before the interview the use of recording was also clarified to participants in order to ensure the purpose of using it and to guarantee confidentiality of information that would be recorded. During the interviews participants requested to use both English and Sepedi so that they could feel comfortable in responding to questions. The researchers translated their responses into English during transcription the process.

Data collected evolved around the main research question: “What are the practices of inclusive education in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo?” The qualitative research method was used to collect data following interviews and observations as data collecting instruments. The interviewing process was guided by interview procedures defined in Chapter three. As mentioned in Chapter three, open-ended questions were used to allow the participants to voice their own experiences. It was also mentioned that interviews allow the researcher to develop themes from collected data during data analysis. Data analysis and interpretation will be integrated to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory as mentioned in Chapter two. Yin’s phases of analysing data and how it interacts was adopted in analysing the research’s findings. Text from audio recording through interviews were compiled and typed as word documents. Compiled data were then broken down into smaller units and themes were assigned to the units which were used to reorganise and group data. The following steps were followed:

- The researcher compiled and sorted field notes collected from interviews, audio recording and observations.
- Compiled data were broken down into smaller units, which were repeated several times while assigning codes.
- Substantive themes were used to reorganise the units by grouping and sequencing them accordingly.

- The researcher then reassembled data to create a new narrative, with accompanying tables where relevant, that became the key analytic portion of drafted text.
- Finally, the researcher integrated and drew conclusion from collected data.

(Yin, 2011:179)

The results and analysis of data are presented according to the following themes that have been identified based on the practice of IE in Grade R in mainstream schools in the Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo:

- Inclusive Education policy
- Curriculum policy factor
- Classroom factors
- Parents' involvement and collaboration with NGOs and health professionals
- Teaching strategies
- Education matters
- Resources

#### **4.4. Inclusive Education policy**

Teachers were asked to express their opinions about practicing inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo. The objective of the question to the study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the contexts of the practice of inclusive education from different participants.

##### **4.4.1. Introduction**

The findings revealed that teachers felt ill equipped to practice inclusive education in Grade R classes but they are expected to practice inclusive education effectively in and cover the curriculum expected for each term.

##### **4.4.2. Inclusive Education policy**

The findings revealed that teachers are concerned about the policy that has been formulated because they have to implement what the policy says without questioning it. The teachers as well as the practitioners are concerned about the criteria that are applied for admitting learners to Grade R, learner: teacher ratio, the curriculum,

infrastructure and resources. Participant 5 was concerned about the learners who were five years old and were born premature. *“Admitting learners at the age of five or four and half, is frustrating to us because some learners come to school while still talking baby language to show that they have not yet fully developed. Even though learners are not the same, but some of them cope well especially those who started from crèche.”* Similarly participant 9 said: *“Learners who have not yet fully developed, they frustrate us because they do not concentrate at all. Learners who did not go to crèche are the ones who give us a lot of problems than those who went to crèche.”* This is consistent with what indicated by Davin (2013:5) in Chapter two when arguing that readiness to learn is a stage of total development when an individual is able to understand and grasp those concepts and skills that have been believed to be important for a child of a specific age to attain. This indicates that development level of learners and preschool/crèche attendance should be taken into consideration when admitting learners in Grade R so that they all come to school with a background of learning and being used to not being home for a particular period of time.

According to White Paper 6 concerning IE, strategies and interventions that will assist teachers coping with diversity of learning and teaching needs to ensure that transitory learning difficulties that are reduced will be introduced. Based on what the participants indicated, teachers experience challenges because those strategies or interventions have not been introduced to them. Participant 3 also had a similar case with learners who could not concentrate in class and she said: *“I have a child who always does not concentrate when I am busy teaching, he will crawl under the chairs, start to disturb other learners and he does not focus at all.”* This indicates that going to crèche is important because children learn rules and get to know that certain routines must be followed at school. In Chapter two Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011:89) pointed out that early childhood intervention focuses on preventing developmental problems in young children as well as on minimizing the impact of problems or impairment once they are identified. Early childhood intervention allows the teacher to accommodate and support the learner. Admitting learners who are not ready for school creates challenges to teachers and also to other learners because they disturb others. However, if the teacher has knowledge and skills on how to deal with such learners, the learners’ challenges can be attended to as soon as possible.

Participants understand inclusive education practice as being able to accommodate all learners in schools. Participant 4 said: *“In order to practice inclusive education in Grade R, we should admit all learners irrespective of the language they speak or where they come from because they are also human beings like us.”* This indicates that teachers need to understand the importance of diversity in order to practice inclusive education in the classrooms. Participant 6 pointed out this: *“Inclusive education practice in Grade R means that we should accommodate different learners of different racial groups, with different abilities, who speak different languages, who come from poor families or different children from our community.”* All learners should be treated equally with respect and they should feel accommodated in the teaching and learning situation. Participant 2 pointed out the following: *“The practice of Inclusive education should include all learners without isolating them when other learners do activities, any learner should do activities with other learners whether inside the class or outside. Learners feel being accommodated or being part of others, not as an outsider and they will have confidence when doing things.”* All learners are capable of learning and need education to develop their capabilities to be successful in life, and for these to happen it needs teaching practices that accommodate individual differences regardless of their disabilities. Learners should be equally accommodated so that they feel free and being part of the class where they are learning.

According to White Paper 6 special attention will be paid to developing flexibility in teaching practices and styles through training, capacity building and the provision of support to learners and teachers. The challenge is that most of the participants are not trained to teach in inclusive classrooms or how to practice IE. Participant 3 said: *“It is important that all children must learn together so that they feel appreciated, but the problem is that we are not trained to teach learners with disabilities. If we can be trained and be supplied with resources that will assist learners such as Braille for learners who cannot see clearly, we will be able to practice inclusive education without struggling.”* This indicates that proper training for practicing IE is needed for Grade R practitioners because this is where formal teaching starts and if learners’ needs are not considered, then their future is destroyed from the very beginning.

Participant 2 highlighted the following in connection with factors that hinder the practice of inclusive education in Grade R classes: *“Learners with hearing or vision*



*problems, we usually advise parents to go to the hospital to get help of hearing aids or spectacles for their learners because sometimes these tests are done for free and free spectacles are given to people who need them.”*

According to White Paper 6 establishing an inclusive education and training system will require changes to mainstream education so that learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early and appropriate support be provided. Participants explained how they view the issue of identifying learners experiencing barriers to learning earlier in mainstream schools as very important because learners will be able to receive the help and support they deserve. Participant 1 said: *“It is difficult to identify learners early during the beginning of the year because we are teaching many learners.”* To support this, Participant 7 said: *“If there can be a form that parents complete when they register their children at school to indicate the challenges their children are experience so that we can engaged with professionals who can help when necessary.”* This is consistent with what Adelman and Taylor (2008:17) pointed out in Chapter two when arguing that early intervention assists in planning for a specific change such as immediate and short-term objectives and procedures for accomplishing the intended goals. Similarly Babić-Čolaković, Pasalic and Memisevic (2015:114) in Chapter two pointed out that early intervention (EI) is the most effective method for reducing and potentially eliminating the symptoms of developmental disabilities or children at risk or who already have some developmental delay. This indicates that EI of learners with learning difficulties is important both for the learners and teachers so that support needed could be properly provided for those learners. If learners are identified early during the year, the opportunity of being supported or of receiving the help they needed to eliminate the challenge can be identified and implemented as early as possible. The researcher observed that it is difficult to practice IE effectively in overcrowded classes because in some classes the teachers could not move around due to lack of place. Classes that are not overcrowded enable the teachers to move around the classroom during teaching and learning so that learners with learning problem are supported.

#### **4.4.3. Concluding remarks about inclusive education policy**

The discussion above has revealed that admitting learners who have not yet fully developed or who are ready for formal school in Grade R is frustrating to teachers. Teachers felt that attending crèche or pre-school should be considered a requirement for admission to Grade R because children from crèches or pre-schools are disciplined and display knowledge of following certain rules. However, teachers feel that all learners should be treated equally irrespective of their disabilities. It is important for the Department of Basic Education to come up with programmes that should be considered requirements for admission to Grade R. Teachers need to be trained so that they are equipped with skills and knowledge to practice inclusive education effectively. The above findings emphasized that the relationship is influenced by different ecological systems such as the Department of Education which can be referred as exo-system as developed by Bronfenbrenner in his theory. Hence programmes developed by the Department of Education should be made available and utilised effectively for IE practices.

#### **4.5. Curriculum policy factor**

During the interview participants were asked to respond to the following question: “Which factors affect the practices of inclusive education in the Grade R in the Nylstroom circuit?”

##### **4.5.1. Curriculum**

Judging from the responses below about what factors affect the practices of Inclusive Education, it is evident that early childhood inclusive practice is about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners. This is clear in the words of the following participant: Participant 9 *“It is important that teachers should follow the policy document so that they know what should be covered for each term rather than following the learners’ book (DBE books) because you find that certain items are not well arranged, for example some term one items are in term two section. If the policy document is followed correctly, you will find that the teaching themes are related to each other which make it easy for some learners to understand what is being taught.”* It is quite evident that the participant understands the curriculum and follows it accordingly because the Department of Basic Education supplies the schools with the policy document for each subject which is supported by learners’ work books

with activities. On the contrary, Dreyer (2013:61) found that in Western Cape Department of Education (WCDE) learning support teachers assisted general classroom teachers in developing support programmes and in adapting the curriculum for the learners which included showing them how to simplify the work and offering professional input at Institution Level Support Team (ILST) meetings on the support Grade R teachers could provide in class. Grade R teachers need support from those who are knowledgeable about the curriculum so that they can implement it accordingly. The teacher has to understand that in order to cover the term's work, guidelines from the policy document must be followed and relevant activities from the learner's book should be identified according to the topic indicated for that term. According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2010:29), in order to address barriers arising from the curriculum; the process of teaching and learning should be made flexible enough to accommodate different learning needs and styles. The findings revealed that teachers have to clearly understand the curriculum in order to accommodate all learners in class. If teachers do not follow the curriculum correctly, it will be difficult for them to maximise the participation of all learners or uncover the learners' barriers.

The DBE (2010:29) mentions that one of the most significant barriers to learning for learners in the curriculum is the pace of teaching and the time available for completing the curriculum. Participant 3 was concerned about learners who cannot see clearly and even though teachers always make them sit where they can see, it is difficult for learners because teachers start writing from the top of the board and they are too small to clearly see everything: *"I always let learners who cannot see clearly sit in front chairs so that they can see what is written on the chalkboard. Sometimes I have to enlarge the copies for those learners so that they can read or copy from big printed activities."* This indicates that visual aids and enlarged print activities should be made available to all learners to learn properly at mainstream schools so that the needs of every learner are met and barriers to learning can be addressed. Participant 6 also mentioned: *"Time that is allocated for daily routine disadvantages some learners in completing their activities because we have to move from one activity to another without stopping. Sometimes I cannot cover curriculum for the term because I have to make intervention for learners who experience challenges."* According to Davin and Van Staden (2005:10) different activities inside the

classroom should take place simultaneously, not one after the other so that learners are able to choose the activities they want to participate in and they should decide for themselves the order in which they will tackle the different activities. On the contrary, Participants 7 pointed this out: *“Learners’ rotate in writing the activities because there is few furniture and lack of space”*. This indicates that the teacher spend more time in completing an activity with learners because they have to rotate in using furniture for writing. Based on the observations, the teacher could have used different strategies such as oral work or practiced the activity outside the classroom since learners with practicing to write a letter of alphabet. Participant 9 said: *“I give learners dough to create number or letter, I let them first practice the number or letter on the air and also write with fingers on the floor”*. This shows that the teacher has knowledge of different strategies and knows how Grade R learners learn. The knowledge of how Grade R activities should be organised to suit learners is very important for the teacher so that the learners should be able to always complete the activities. Data from observation revealed that rushing from one activity to another creates a barrier to other learners especially those who are slow in understanding concepts and even in writing.

#### **4.5.2. Concluding remarks about curriculum**

Curriculum for inclusive education practice should meet the needs of all learners in order to encourage maximum participation in class. The findings have revealed that in order to meet the maximum participation, the teacher has to understand and know how to follow the curriculum correctly. If the teacher does not follow the policy documents accordingly, this may create a barrier to learners because topics will not be correctly linked. The findings also revealed that vision, hearing and curriculum that are not flexible can also become a barrier to learners in an inclusive classroom; hence a curriculum should be made available to all learners to enable them to learn.

#### **4.6. Classroom factors**

The other issue that was raised regarding the factors that affects the practices of inclusive education in Grade R classes in Modimolle is classroom factors which include language of learning and teaching and overcrowding which will be discussed below in detail.

#### 4.6. 1. Language of learning and teaching (LOLT)

Most South African schools are admitting learners of different cultural groups including the immigrants from different African countries. Language of teaching and learning can also prevent the teachers from practicing IE in the Grade R in mainstream schools. Participant 5 pointed out the following: *“In the beginning of the year there was a learner whose home language is Afrikaans. The learner could not understand Sepedi or English and I had to always call someone who could understand Afrikaans to translate everything to her. The learner was unable to participate in classroom activities because she could not understand what was being said. It was also frustrating to me because if the learner wanted something, I had to look for someone to come and translate to her.”* This indicates that language can also become a barrier to learners and as such learner should be taught in the language they know and understand. What was happening to the learner mentioned above was contradicting the Constitution of the Republic of South African, 1996 (section 29 point 2) which states: “Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language.” The DBE (2010:29) also confirms -what was happening to the child when it indicates that other barriers to learning can come from language or medium of instruction. According to the teacher, the school talked to her guardian and they took the matter to the circuit manager so that arrangements could be made that she be transferred to an Afrikaans school in town because this was a barrier to her learning. On the contrary, this was against the South African School’s Act because inclusive education indicates that all learners should be accommodated in an inclusive classroom irrespective of the language they speak. In Chapter two it was mentioned that learners learn better at an early age where they meet with different social groups. Since there was a teacher who could understand Afrikaans from the school, they could have arranged that the learner be moved to that teacher’s class temporarily so that she could teach the learner a few basic words of Sepedi for a few days. Alternatively, her peers from the class could have been encouraged to play and speak with her continuously in Sepedi as learners learn through play. Participant 6 said this: *“We have difficulty of communicating with other learners especially those who come from other countries such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria etc because they cannot speak South African vernacular languages but they can speak English some of them”*. Similarly, Participant 9 pointed this out: *“It is difficult to*

*communicate with learners who come from other African countries in Sepedi because they completely do not understand what I say but some can speak English, I usually speak with them in English.*” Since learners learn easily at an early age, they should be encouraged to speak with other learners who speak Sepedi fluently during play-time so that they can learn to speak Sepedi.

When learners go to school, they already know something they bring along with them which they had already learnt from the family, television or when they play with other children from their neighbours. During observation the researcher realised that language of teaching and learning to most learners is a challenge like when the teacher introduced the new number in mathematics which was 7. The teacher wrote 7 on the chalkboard and asked learners: *“What number do you see on the chalkboard?”* All learners answer in English: *“Is seven.”* Participant 6 asked learners to count numbers from 1 to 10 and learners responded: *“Counting in English: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten.”* *Similarly, Participant 9 pointed this out: “When I do mental Maths with learners, I allow them to count the numbers in English because it is done orally.”* It was mentioned in Chapter two, that children are unique, special and are from different backgrounds and have had different experience when they start their school careers; hence they do not go to school being empty in their minds. Prior knowledge of children play an important role in children’s learning; it should therefore not be ignored or phased out.

Based on the researcher’s observation, language has an impact on teaching and learning of young children. What the researcher has observed in almost all the schools is that learners’ prior knowledge plays an important role in their learning. Even though learners are being taught in Sepedi, some learners count or call the numbers in English which shows that learners know the numbers from somewhere. Participant 1 said: *“When learners do counting, I allow them to count in English because it is not formal assessment and they count easy in English than in Sepedi.”* Similarly Participant 4 pointed this out: *“During workshops, they tell us that we should not penalise learners for counting numbers in English because some learnt them at pre-school, when they play with their friends or when watching television.”* As most of the families watch television it can be assumed that they have learnt the numbers there and some who started from crèche or pre-school have also learnt the numbers there in English. In some cases language of learning and teaching creates

a barrier to learners because it might not be their mother tongue or during play-time they use a different language. Learners from other African countries do not know South African vernacular languages, and it is very difficult for the teacher to communicate with such learners.

The researcher also observed that in most classes learners are encouraged to participate freely without disturbing others. In most classes the researcher observed that learners with certain disabilities are encouraged to participate and those learners enjoy learning. This was observed when Participant 4 asked premature learner to recite a poem and he recited the poem with confidence and without fear. Participant 4 indicated this: *“This boy is always willing to participate and he is not shy even though he has speech problem. I called the boy’s mother and told her to encourage him to speak or play with other children at home.”* What is fascinating about these learners is that they are premature children and they all experience speech problems.

#### **4.6.2. Overcrowding**

The teachers as well as the practitioners complained about overcrowding in their classrooms. The researcher observed that classes range from 47 to 67 learners which create challenges with regard to monitoring and supporting every learner according to his/her needs. Concerning overcrowding Participant 1 said: *“In a big class like this one, it is difficult to identify learners who experience problems because there are 57 learners; some are identified during the middle of the second term.”* Similarly Participant 4 also said: *“Proper monitoring and support is not easily followed because learners are many in class. The school does not stop admitting learners because they even admit during the year. The learners are from other schools because their parents have been transferred or got the job in town.”* If classes are overcrowded, some learners can be ignored because the teacher might not identify them.

Feeney, Galper and Seefeldt (2009:89) assert that teacher-learner ratio and group sizes are assumed to be important because as the number of children increases, the teacher’s ability to individualize attention to children decreases, and managing large numbers of children can be stressful for even the most sensitive and knowledgeable teacher. Participants 3 and 4 each have 55 learners in their classes and their

classes are not normal classroom buildings because was one-size classroom divided into two classrooms. Learners do not sit comfortably in class because the space is too limited and they do not have enough chairs. Participant 7 said: *“I think in school inclusive education is hindered by overcrowding and lack of space.”* Participant 4 said: *“The learner-teacher ratio of Grade R should be manageable so that the teacher can be able to know all the learners and be able to assist them according to their needs. Our challenge is that the classes are small and this prevents us from grouping learners so that we monitor their work and to know all the learners better according to their performance.”* Learners who are manageable in class allow active participation and afford the teacher an opportunity of knowing the learners well so that she/he is able to attend to their challenges. Participant 9 added: *“If learners are more than 40 in class, it is difficult to attend to individual problems because we do not have enough time to do so.”* The size of the classroom and number of learners in the class has an impact on monitoring and supporting. It is important for learners to be supported by the teacher in class so that they can gain the confidence of learning.

#### **4.6.3. Concluding remarks about classroom factors**

LOLT and overcrowding are some of the factors that have been identified as affecting the practices of inclusive education in Grade R classes. LOLT that is not accommodating different types of learners may become a barrier to their learning. It has been identified that learners are admitted to school being able to count numbers in English because some have attended preschool or crèche and even learners who come from other countries. The success practice of inclusive education requires the language that is accommodative to all learners of different cultural groups. LOLT plays a huge role in teaching and learning since learners need to understand what is being taught.

Overcrowding has also been identified as another factor that affects the practices of inclusive education in Grade R. Overcrowding creates a challenge for teachers to be able to identify and attend to learners who experience challenges in class. In most cases learners with learning difficulties are ignored due to overcrowding and lack of space. It is important for all learners to be accommodated in teaching-learning classrooms. Practicing inclusive education in Grade R classes can be possible if



there is no overcrowding in classes. Teachers should be presented with classes that will allow them to accommodate all learners without leaving others behind.

#### **4.7. Parents' involvement, and collaboration with NGOs and health professionals**

Partnership between parents and teachers is very important for the success and better practice of Inclusive Education in Grade R classes. Teachers cannot work alone in order to promote the learners' learning and better future, but this has become a challenge since some learners are not given that support from home. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2009:174) a caring and consistent relationship with at least one stable caregiver is a protective factor in the lives of children who manage to rise above their circumstances. It is important for parents or caregivers to support and encourage their children at school so that they can develop competence and confidence in their school performances.

##### **4.7.1. Introduction**

The findings revealed that parents' involvement is vital in practicing inclusive education in Grade R. The involvement of parents or guardians in their children's learning plays a significant role in the development and success of the learners.

##### **4.7.2. Parents' involvement**

Support parents give their children plays a significant role in their children's lives, education and future. The involvement or non-involvement of parents in their children's education shows how concerned they are with the future of their children. Participant 5 said: *"When we call some parents regarding their children's education, they do not come to school. Even now am still having term one report cards for most learners and majority of the reports are for learners who experience challenges in class. What worries me is that most parents are still young and they should care about their children's education."* Similarly Participant 6 said: *"Most parents do not attend parents' meetings when invited to discuss issues relating their children, they will only come to school when their children reported that they have been beaten or something wrong was done to them."* Parents should understand their involvement in

their children's education and the support they should provide. Participant 9 pointed out the following: *"Most parents do not care about their learners; they only come to school when they need us to complete the social grant form for them. I discovered one learner from another class who comes to school without wearing the underwear and she also have wounds on her buttocks. You will be surprised to know that most parents of Grade R learners are still young but they don't care about their children."* This indicates that parents have to be reminded of their responsibilities towards their children, the importance of becoming involved in their education and caring about them. Parents need to understand that they are the primary teachers of their children before they meet professional teachers at school.

In Chapter two it was pointed out that the schools should work together with families as early as possible in order to help prevent frustrations in the children. Parents have responsibilities towards their children's education and to see that they get the education they deserve. Participant 1 said: *"The problem is that most parents do not disclose their children's challenges to us when they register their children at school so that we can know in advance and be able to prepare how to accommodate them. When we identify learners with challenges, through the office we invite the parents/guardians to come to school so that we can explain the challenges of their children."* According to the DoE in Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (2008:13) the parent/caregiver's understanding of the child is sought to provide a perspective on the child's strengths and weaknesses, goals and aspirations, interests, personality etc. such information is necessary to provide a picture of the child through the way he/she is able to present him-/herself at home and in other environments. The school is regarded as another environment in which children spend a large amount of time during school hours; thus such parents need to support their children at school and be available when needed. Participant 5 also said: *"Most parents do not come to school, even now I am still holding the learners' reports of the first and even some of the reports of the second are still here. Only few parents will buy stationery so that they can help their children at home especially those with learning difficulties."* Literature study in Chapter two confirms that collaboration with the parents or other caregivers is essential for the development of families' awareness of the importance of their role in facilitating, guiding; and supporting their children's development.

Parents need to be aware that they are also responsible for their children's learning and they should be more involved rather than complaining from a distance. Participant 4 said: *"Most of our learners' profiles are incomplete and it is difficult for us sometimes to call the parents because you find that the contact number is either not there or it does not exist."* This indicates that parents should always be contacted for their children's education so that teachers can be able to discuss the challenges or progress of learning being made. If parents cannot be contacted concerning their children's learning, the children's educational challenges cannot be attended to effectively. Participant 5 said: *"I have two premature learners, who are very slow but only the parent of one child came and the other did not come to school so that we can work together in helping the child."* Parents have to be encouraged to take part in the education of their children and to be concerned about them. Participant 6 pointed this out: *"Some learners are left at the care of grandparents or siblings because their parents are working far or they are staying somewhere with boyfriends."* This means that some older children who are in higher grades have to fulfil the role of being parents and being children at the same time which becomes difficult for them to do their own school work while looking after their younger siblings. The researcher has observed that learners who are supported and cared for, are clean and participate actively in class.

#### **4.7.3. Collaboration with NGOs and health professionals**

From the findings below, it is evident that collaboration among teachers and the different key stakeholders in enhancing the education of children plays an important role. The Department of Education has partnered with NGO's such as NECT (National Education Collaboration Trust) in order to enhance the education of children by building better foundations for learners. This support was indicated by participant 6 when she said: *"Partnership of parents, teachers, NGOs and the community can assist in practicing Inclusive Education properly. NGOs and some business members of the community can donate resources that are needed at schools."* Participant 7 was also of opinion that supporting learners is important by saying: *"The school can network with health care center so that we are able to support learners and those who need help can be attended."* The DoE (2008:16) asserts that Health Professionals play a significant role in the SIAS process and the school, when necessary, may require the support of health professionals such as

psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists and other therapists, to conduct more formal assessments. On the contrary, Wium, Makgatho and Louw (2015:37) in Chapter two maintained that despite the emphasis on collaborative practices in schools, inter-professional collaboration remains challenging because a systemic change is required whereby 'outsider' specialists are welcomed into schools and into classrooms as 'insider' professionals. This indicates that collaboration is with different relevant specialist in important for effective learning and support of learners who experience challenges. Collaboration between schools, NGOs and relevant departments is important in helping solve the problems that teachers alone are unable to solve. Participant 5 said: *"The school is allocated with professional psychologist from department of health but the person does not visit the school. We usually see the nurses who come to check learners three to four times a year."* Similarly participant 6 also said: *"You know, we are allocated psychologist who should always visits the school so that he/she can help learners with challenges that we are unable to deal with, but we don't see them because they don't visit us."* This indicates that teachers occasionally become frustrated when they themselves are unable to help learners with matters that seek professional attention. The researcher observed that there are learners with speech and hearing problems who need professional help and they are not receiving it due to inability of Health Professionals to visit the schools especially Grade R. Regular visitations of Health Professional will assists with intervention and support of learners who seek professional help.

#### **4.7.4. Concluding remarks on parents' involvement and collaboration with NGOs and health care**

The findings have revealed that most parents do not care about their children's education because they do not attend parent meetings at their children's schools. It was also revealed that some parents do not collect their children's progress reports to see how their children are progressing. This frustrates teachers because they end up not knowing how to help the learners because they are unable to discuss the problems that the learners experience in class with the parents. Some parents cannot even alert the teachers at the beginning of the year about their children's challenges so that teachers should know how to help the learners. Knowing the learners' challenges will enable the teacher to identify the intervention programmes related to the learners' challenges timeously. This would also assists teachers in

seeking help from health professional if they themselves are unable to assist, so that the learner receive the help he/she needs.

#### **4.8. Teaching strategies**

The research question that provided data concerning teaching strategies or teaching methods is as follows: “What kinds of strategies are followed to ensure that Grade R teachers are practicing inclusive education?” The strategy teachers apply in class may either enhance the practices of inclusive education, understanding or create a learning barrier.

##### **4.8.1. Introduction**

In Chapter two it was mentioned that learners are unique and special. According to Davin and Van Staden (2005:66) children have different learning styles and the teachers need to make adaptations to his/her teaching style so that it complements the learners’ learning. The teacher must know how learners learn so that he/she is able to adjust his/her teaching to accommodate all learners in the classroom.

##### **4.8.2. Teaching strategies**

The findings revealed that the processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum were indicated as curriculum differentiation that could help teachers to attend to learner diversity in the classroom. Teaching strategy or methods of the teacher can either encourage or discourage learning if not planned properly. Concerning how they practice IE in Grade R classes, teachers explained how they teach learners and how some of the activities are executed. Participant 9 said concerning the methods or strategies that she uses: *“Before teaching learners letters or numbers, what I usually emphasise to learners is to know the left and right hands. If learners know these, whether they are writing letters or numbers learners will not reverse them e.g. if learners knows that three opens to the left hand side, they will write it correctly. Sometimes when writing “3” so that they do not confuse it with “m”, I encourage learners to write three dots from top to bottom to help them write “3”.* This indicates that the teacher has ample knowledge of understanding the learners and how to tackle different challenges the learners might experience. Davin and Van Staden (2005:39) assert that the teacher

should understand how children learn so that he/she is able to provide appropriate activities. Participants 4 said this: *“I group learners but the groups keep on changing because learners do not remain the same for the whole year. Sometimes learners’ performance improves and they have to be moved to the relevant group.”* Different teaching styles should be used to accommodate all learners in the class, which means that teachers must avoid using the strategy of “one size fits all” because learners are unique and they learn in a different way. This was observed in Participant 1’s class when giving learners different activities according to their abilities. If the teacher knows the learners he/she teaches, it will be easy to identify the strategies that should be used for certain concepts so that all learners can grasp it. The researcher also observed that Participant 9 sits with learners with learning problem while doing activities to assist them and monitor their progress.

#### **4.8.3. Activities and assessments**

It has been revealed in the findings that the type of teaching strategies and activities determines how learners understand the content being taught. The Salamanca Statement mentioned that inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their learners, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. Participant 1 said: *“I give learners different activities based on their level of understanding. Those who are slow in understanding and completing the activities, I extend time with few minutes so that they are able to finish their work.”* Contrary to this Participant 2 said: *“I give them same activities but extend time for those who are slow so that they can complete the work.”* Participant 4 said: *“I group learners according to their intelligence or pair them so that they assist each other. Sometimes I repeat the lesson that I think learners did not understand or are struggling with. I do not teach learner for a long period based on the daily routine from lesson plan because they do not concentrate for a long period.”* Similarly Participant 3 said: *“Learners with learning difficulties I support them by explaining things through the use of examples, learners usually in groups for certain activities in order to help each other. I always use pictures and repeat the activity where necessary to help learners understand. If it is letter formation or number, I let them write on air first while say the direction.”* This indicates that different activities that

accommodate all learners should be identified in order to promote positive learning in class.

Participant 9 said: *“Learners who experience challenges I sit with them on my table and show them so that they can copy what I am doing. I also make copies of extra activities to reinforce understanding to learners who complete given activities very fast.”* Some learners need the teacher’s attention in order to focus to their work so that they are able to complete it. It is important that teachers should sometimes move around to observe how learners do their work. *Participant 1 pointed this out: “We as teachers sometimes rush children in answering the question instead of giving them time to respond, which creates frustration and fear to learners.”* According to Klein, Cook and Richardson-Gibbs (2001:13) the teacher should vary the pace when speaking so that learners can comprehend what is being said and he/she should give children enough time to respond because many learners take time to process what they hear and also need enough time to organise and encode what they say. The teacher should understand that not all the activities are suitable for all; different activities should be prepared based on the performance of learners.

The researcher observed how teachers and practitioners were administering their activities and assessments in class. Richey and Wheeler (2000:106) assert that planned activities should interest children and be developed in ways that children find them appealing or activities introduced by children are probably appealing to them, for example: acting out a song, playing circus or storytelling. This was observed when Participant 9 presented a lesson where learners were actively involved because she introduced her lesson through a song related to the poster that she was using. The researcher observed that learners were given the opportunity to identify the objects through a song while pointing them from the poster. Klein, Cook, Richardson-Gibbs (2001:14) contend that from learners with limited or no communication, the teacher should create a situation in which the learner will initiate communication in some way to obtain something. It is important to allow learners initiate their own communication from some of the activities so that they develop their confidence and understanding.

Learners should feel free and recognise that they are in class. Most participants were not only allowing learners who raised their hands to answer the questions, but

they were also giving learners who were not raising their hands to be provided with an opportunity to participate. This shows that teachers do not only focus on learners who always participate, but even also on those who seem shy by granting them an opportunity so that they feel that they are part of the class. Activities that are given to learners require them to repeat most of the time until they capture the concept. The researcher observed that the activity in the Maths lesson was repetition of a number in different ways such as tracing the number from the activity sheet, repeating it in a quarter of a page and counting objects while writing the number. Similarly in Home Language they were repeating a letter like in Maths. According to Klein, Cook, Richardson-Gibbs (2001:9) frequent repetition of activities develops a sense of comfortable familiarity and mastery which helps children to learn. Repetition helps learners to master what they have learnt and encourages learning.

#### **4.8.4. Concluding remarks regarding teaching strategies**

It has been highlighted that the type of teaching strategies and activities determines how learners understand the content being taught. Identifying different challenges learners experience during learning makes it easy for the teacher to be able to identify the strategies to be used to accommodate all learners. It is possible that teachers can exclude learners from participating or from doing certain activities because they did not understand her instructions. Some learners seek the teacher's attention in order to be recognised that they are present in class by not doing the activity given to them with the whole class.

The teacher should be able to identify strategies that will accommodate all learners and also be able to provide them with suitable activities. Instructions given to learners should be clear and learners should not be rushed in doing their work even though they have to be encouraged to finish in time.

#### **4.9. Education background and training matters**

Learners' effective learning in school depends mostly on the knowledge of the teachers of the subjects being taught and the skills of conveying knowledge to the learners. In Chapter two it was mentioned that most schools share a common factor of having teachers who possess low-level of qualifications, their training level is regarded as a key to the attainment of school and learning readiness by Grade R



learners and that well-trained educationists follow an approach to education based on knowledge about how children learn and develop. As it was mentioned in Chapter one the challenge is that most Grade R teachers do not have formal qualifications and the form of qualification some do have was not focused, on Grade R teaching; consequently they experience problems in practicing inclusive education properly in their classes.

#### **4.9.1. Teachers' qualifications**

Some of the teachers when asked how they practice IE in Grade R, were concerned about not being trained to accommodate learners with different challenges such as learners using wheelchairs, learners with hearing problems etc. Participant 2 said the following concerning knowledge and qualifications: *"Aish! There was a learner who could not speak and she was using sign language. When her mother brought her it was difficult to me as a practitioner like saying: come, stand or during break to tell the learner to go and wash hands so that she can eat."* Participant 3 said: *"Sometimes it is difficult working with learners with vision problem because I have to use big print on their papers which is not easy or when I let them sit in front they are small that they cannot see easy on the chalkboard because of height."* The researcher observed that learners with visual problems should be given worksheets to work on or the teacher should use small boards to write on so that all learners can see. This will allow the learners to avoid bending their heads so that they can see from the top of the chalkboard when sitting in front because they are short.

Participant 5 said: *"Inclusive practice needs teachers to be trained to teach in an inclusive class. Workshop does not empower us to practice IE but how to implement the curriculum provided and how to follow the daily routine. If teachers are not empowered or work-shopped to practice IE, it becomes a problem in doing it practically in class without knowledge."* Similarly Participant 2 said: *"We should be trained or be work-shopped on how to handle different learners in the classroom."* Knowledge of IE plays an important role in practicing what the teacher knows in class without encountering many challenges. If teachers are not trained how to practice IE in their classes, they would not be able to do what is expected from them in their classrooms. Training or workshops can play a very significant role

in empowering teachers on how to practice IE in Grade R classes so that all learners receive the education they deserve.

Qualifications of the teacher play an important role in teaching learners. According to Feeney, Galper and Seefeldt (2009:88) specific training and education of teachers in early childhood education or child development contributes to better quality programme. This was revealed when Participant 8 said: *“Hey mam, I started teaching Grade R in January and I am not familiar with most of the things. I was teaching in Grade 4 to 7 classes, so everything is new to me. I was not trained to teach Grade R or young learners.”* The researcher has observed that teachers who are more qualified understand the learners’ actions better than those who are less or not qualified at all. The researcher observed that planning and presentation of qualified teachers were more interesting and appealing to learners while presentations of practitioners were not appealing to learners. Most of the practitioners, except those who are upgrading their qualifications; struggle to maintain order in the class and to help learners with learning difficulties. This was observed in Participant 7 classroom when the teacher was struggling to keep order because some learners were speaking while others were disturbing other learners. The researcher also observed that they lack knowledge of applying different strategies that will accommodate all learners or they cannot apply strategies in an appropriate manner that will help to facilitate learning activities that match the developmental level of the learners. Adequate skills for teachers will address the transition into inclusive programmes, -and practicing IE in Grade R is essential. This has proven that relevant qualifications teaching Grade R learners are very important because learners need quality education to be successful in their future lives. This was also confirmed by Participant 8 by saying: *“Hee, mam! (Said this while laughing) As I have already indicated, I started teaching Grade R from January and I am still learning.”* From the participant’s response, one can tell that she has no idea of how to practicing IE. From the researcher’s point of view, the participant was brought to Grade R due to her age and to keep her busy until she retires. Some schools tend to re-allocate teachers to foundation phase classes when they are either old or they cannot produce good results.

#### **4.9.2. Concluding remarks about education background and training matters**

Knowledge and relevant qualifications of the teacher with regard to teaching Grade R learners should be taken into consideration when allocating teachers. It was identified that in order for teachers to practice inclusive education, training of the teachers must be done to improve their skills and knowledge. Learners need to be taught quality education that will prepare these learners for the next grade. Teachers who are old should not be allocated to the lower grades for the sake of keeping them busy; Grade R learners need active teachers who will be active in class and teach quality education.

#### **4. 10. Teaching and learning resources**

Availability of resources plays a significant role for effective teaching and learning to take place. Teaching and learning materials and infrastructures have been identified as resources that have an effect on teaching-learning situation.

##### **4.10.1. Teaching and learning materials**

The findings revealed that learners learn easier by playing, and touching and seeing things practically. Resources enhance learners' understanding and grasping of the content of what is being taught while allowing them not to forget what they have learnt. Participant 4 was concerned about the resources and said this: *"Hmm, I think something that I can add is that we need enough resources, play area, music corner, fantasy corner in the classroom so that learners can sometimes use these resources for better understanding of what they learn."* The practice of IE in Grade R can be promoted by using relevant resources. The DoE from the norms and standards indicates that sixty percent should be used for curriculum, which means that the school should budget properly so that they buy resources needed for practicing IE. Participant 6 also confirmed this when she said: *"If we have resources, we will be able to practice inclusive education."* The DoE should make provision for supply the mainstream schools with resources which they indeed undertook to supply so as to enable teachers to practiced IE and fulfil their roles as teachers in Grade R classes.

Participant 7 mentioned that teachers can create their own resources for teaching learners. *"I think we can improvise by making our own teaching resources that can be used to teach learners and the school can also add by buying some of the resources that are needed."* Teachers can make some of the resources themselves

so that they can use them for teaching the learners. Teachers should be creative and improvise where it is possible and not wait for the department or school to buy the resources. Similarly participant 9 indicated: *“I sometimes go outside with learners and collect sweets sticks so that they can use them in class for making shapes on papers with glue or build numbers or letters.”* The teachers produced examples of letters, numbers and shapes made by learners with sweets sticks. The views of participants indicated that resources play an important part in teaching Grade R learners. Participant 8 indicated that learners do not have small writing boards. *“My class does not have small writing boards where learners may practice their writing because I started teaching Grade R in January due to number of learners who were admitted, but the other classes have them.”* Participant 9 mentioned the following: *“We have CDs and DVDs for songs and stories that can be used for teaching learners especially to develop listening skills but the problem is that we do not have TV or radio to can do that.”* Resources that will enhance learners’ knowledge should be prioritised in schools so that learners are provided with the opportunity of learning and gaining understanding of a concept with ease. The researcher observed that learners enjoy learning through songs or story-telling. This was observed when Participant 9 introduced the lesson through a song related to the topic of the day. Learners participated actively when the teacher pause to ask the questions and learners responded actively throughout.

Availability of resources in school contributes positively to the teaching and learning of different learners in the classroom if these resources are properly used. Most teachers are unable to practice inclusive education in Grade R classes due to the lack of relevant resources that will enhance teaching and learning. According to Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2011:91) the identification of the resources and assets in the child’s environment that can provide a basis for learning opportunity and participation is important for early childhood education. The researcher observed that most Grade R classes lack resources that can be used to enhance active learning during teaching and learning while few classes have some resources but they cannot use them. Lack of resources prevents teachers/practitioners from differentiating activities to accommodate different learning abilities. Some classes do not have enough furniture for disadvantaged learners to do activities which simultaneously makes the teacher to fall behind with her work. It is important for

learners to be seated comfortably when writing in order to prevent discomfort or back injuries.

#### **4.10.2. Infrastructure**

The findings revealed that infrastructure affects the practices of inclusive education. The DBE (2010:37) indicates that all classrooms should be accessible to all learners, including those with disabilities and that the school should have adequate toilet facilities for learners and staff, including at least one toilet that is accessible to a person using a wheelchair. Foundation phase classes should have enough space for learners' movement and for putting different resources in different spaces as pointed out by Participant 4: *"Classes should be big enough so that there is a learning/reading corner, fantasy area, music and other things that will be able to encourage learners to have interest in learning and coming to school."* Small buildings that accommodate a large number of learners prevent effective teaching and learning from taking place. Participant 7 said: *"I think in school IE is hindered by overcrowding, lack of space, our classes are not user friendly if a child uses a wheelchair he/she would not be able to move around or go to the toilet because even our toilets are not suitable for them."* The sizes of the classrooms should allow both the teacher and learners to move freely without disturbing or hurting each other. Classrooms for foundation phase learners are not built in the same way as senior phase learners because they should have storing space where they store resources so that when they need them, they should be able to find them quickly and easily. Participant 9 also added: *"Our classrooms are not meant for Grade R learners because they do not have space where we should keep our resources. When we introduce a theme, we should prepare the resource the day before so that when we relate the story learners should see what we are talking about and be able to touch them."* This indicates that learners learn playing and touching to understand clearly what is being taught. The researcher observed that practical objects are very important for enhancing learners' understanding and emphasizing what is being taught so that they do not forget what they have seen. The researcher observed that learners could easily identify objects from the poster and mention them because the first saw and touched them while the teacher was teaching.

#### **4.10.3. Concluding remarks**

It is important for teaching and learning materials to be made available for learners in order to promote understanding and full participation. Young children learn better when they touch, see or imitate what is being done. Conducive environment contributes to the effective learning of children. Learners need classrooms that will allow them to move freely when performing different activities. Resources from mainstream school should be able to accommodate different learners so that they all learn together.

#### **4.11. Summary of the findings**

The purpose of the research was to explore the practices of inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo. Data discussed reveals that factors exist that affect the practice of inclusive education in Grade R classes and most of which are frustrating to teachers. What emerged from the study were issues such as overcrowding, resources, infrastructure, teacher qualifications/knowledge and lack of training. Qualified teachers' practices of Inclusive Education differ from the practitioners' practices. Due to the qualifications and knowledge they possess, they differ in their application of strategies that accommodate all learners in a teaching-learning situation. Lack of relevant resources was also identified by participants because it prevents learners from participating actively and from understanding the concept better. Without relevant resources, learners will not be able to receive the education that is meant for them because resources empower learners with knowledge and understanding. The next chapter will conclude the research and recommendations will be made for potential further studies.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the practices of inclusive education in Grade R classes in the Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo. Inclusive education practices in mainstream schools entails benefiting all learners in the classroom regardless of the language they speak, their culture, social differences or disabilities. Even though the practice of inclusive education in mainstream schools in Grade R is being encouraged, teachers and practitioners still experience challenges since there are factors that affect these practices.

Qualitative data for the study was collected by means of interviews and observations. The interviewing process was followed using interview questions provided in *Appendix I*. Participants in the study were teachers and practitioners teaching Grade R classes in mainstream schools in the Nylstroom circuit.

It is imperative to reflect in summary what was discussed in the previous chapters. Chapter one introduced the entire study. In Chapter two, literature that guided the study from international countries to developing countries was discussed. Different aspects related to Inclusive Education were also discussed. Chapter three discussed the methodology and research instruments used to collect data. In Chapter four the presentation and interpretation of data collected from participants were discussed. The fundamentals of the study also converged from the following identified objectives:

- To investigate Inclusive practices in Grade R classes, in the Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To identify the teachers' challenges in employing inclusive practices in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To explore the strategies that could be used to enhance the practices of inclusive education in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.

This chapter presents the summary and recommendations for future practice of inclusive education. The discussions of the findings are divided into a number of sections. Firstly, the chapter presents a summary of findings under the research questions and the recommendations based on the key findings. Secondly, it makes recommendations for further studies on Inclusive Education. It will then be followed by a brief description of delimitations and limitations of the study, and finally, the conclusion of the research will follow.

## **5.2. Summary of the findings**

The findings from the interviews and observations showed that even though Grade R teachers or practitioners are practicing inclusive education in mainstream schools, there are factors that affect the effective practice of Inclusive Education. The purpose of the study was to investigate the practices of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo. In Chapter two, literature relevant to the study was discussed. Research methodology was discussed in Chapter three while Chapter four analysed research data. Different themes that were identified from interviews and observations; and analysis of data were done and discussed.

The profile of the Grade R teachers and practitioners showed that only two teachers have Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD) qualifications; one teacher has done Senior Primary Teachers Diploma while most of the practitioners have done Level 5 which is an entry level to teach Grade R. From the practitioners only two have registered Grade R qualifications to upgrade their studies. This indicates that the two practitioners want to enhance their knowledge and better their studies. The findings showed that most teachers lack relevant qualifications for teaching Grade R. The Limpopo Department of Education took practitioners from crèches to assist in teaching Grade R classes even though they do not have relevant qualifications, but they were trying to avoid paying the practitioners stipend while working at crèches. According to the researcher's interpretation, the Department of Education might be trying to save money by not appointing more qualified teachers who should teach Grade R learners. In Chapter two Wium, Makgatho and Louw (2015) indicated that knowledge and skills of teachers teaching in an inclusive education classroom need to be continuously refreshed and developed through training, mentoring, monitoring and consultation because teachers remain the key players in the successful practice



of inclusive education. This is consistent with what transpired during the interview when most teachers indicated their concerns about training so that they could practice IE successfully. Teachers teaching in an inclusive classroom are expected to show some basic competence in responding to learners different abilities. Hence continuous development of teachers needs to be monitored in order to develop teachers' knowledge and skills.

### **5.3. Inclusive education policy**

Practicing inclusive education in Grade R classes in mainstream school is necessary because all learners deserve equal and quality education. However, admitting learners who are not yet fully developed or are not ready for formal learning is frustrating to teachers. The South African Schools Act (DoE 2011:8) section 2 (5) (4a) (l) states that: "The admission age of a learner to a public school to grade R is age four turning five by 30 June in the year of admission." This policy was amended from the 2006 policy that stated that admission of learners in grade was five turning six by the year of admission. This indicates that the Department of Education reduced the admission age to the lower age without considering children's readiness and development. WP 6 (2001:6) emphasises that education structures, systems and learning methodologies should meet the needs of all learners. However, the needs of all learners are not met because learning methodologies and systems do not accommodate the diverse needs of all learners, especially those of Grade R learners. This causes challenges to teachers for being unable to handle such learners and learners being unable to cope with school work.

Even though children develop differently, it is important for the government before deciding on the issue of changing the admission age in Grade R, to have considered the issue of development of children. Davin and Van Staden (2005:40) argue that the child's brain is approximately 90% at the age of six years. However, brain development continues at a steady pace. This indicates that a learner may have reached the age required for admission in Grade R, but may have not yet fully developed or may not be ready for formal learning. Teachers highlighted the issue of considering crèche or pre-school attendance as a requirement for admission of learners to Grade R for purposes of development and school readiness. This is consistent with Salamanca Statement from Chapter two which indicated that early

childhood care and educational programmes for children aged up to 6 years ought to be developed and/or reoriented to promote physical, intellectual and social development and school readiness. This means that if all children attend early childhood programmes, it will enhance the children's physical development, intellectual development and social development before entering Grade R. Children will be ready to attend Grade R classes because they would have received educational programmes.

### **Recommendations:**

- Parents should be encouraged and be made aware of the importance of registering their children for early childhood programmes so that they are prepared for formal learning.
- Policy on admission age should be reviewed and criteria such as admitting learners who are able to communicate easily in their home language and show intellectual development be considered for admission to Grade R since learners grow and develop differently.
- Grade R teachers and practitioners should also support learners by trying to establish what the learners can already do and use it as a point of departure.

### **5.4. Curriculum policy factor**

The research findings revealed that the curriculum is not accommodative enough to the diverse needs of learners in Grade R. Learning materials such as hearing and visual aids are not available at schools to assist learners with hearing and visual. The curriculum should be able to maximise the participation of all learners in order to practice inclusive education effectively in Grade R since this is where learners are officially exposed to formal teaching and learning for the first time. This is consistent with what was indicated by Bruwer, Hartell and Steyn (2014) in Chapter two when suggesting that the people responsible for compiling the curriculum should be flexible and be prepared to adapt the curriculum according to learners' needs. However, UNESCO (2009) as indicated in Chapter two argued that a teacher who is teaching in an inclusive classroom should familiarise himself/herself with new curricula and be trained in addressing learners' problems. This indicates that it is the responsibility of the teacher to take the initiative of familiarising himself/herself with

the curriculum rather than waiting for someone to train him or her. The teachers should develop skills in adapting strategies and the curriculum; and knowledge of how to use learners' books and policy documents in order to follow how the curriculum works.

The research findings also revealed that some teachers and practitioners are unable to follow the policy document effectively which becomes a challenge of being able to integrate the related themes when teaching. However, there are some teachers and practitioners who are able to follow the policy documents and are able to integrate the themes when teaching. This is consistent with what Bruwer, Hartell and Steyn (2014) mentioned, as indicated in Chapter two that teachers felt learners were not ready for the curriculum. Contrary to this, Okwany (2016) found that many of the Early Childhood Care Education programmes were in reality genuine pre-primary education that pays unequal attention to cognitive development via didactic learning methods and exam-oriented curricula. Bruwer et al (2014) indicated that the curriculum was inaccessible and that the pace and expectations are unrealistic since there was a large amount of pressure is placed on the teachers to implement the curriculum. It seems critical that if inclusive education practice is about responding to the diverse needs of learners, the curriculum should be made available to respond to those needs.

Dreyer (2013) as cited in Chapter two found that learning support teachers assisted general classroom teachers in developing support programmes and in adapting the work for the learners which included showing them how to simplify the work and offering professional input. This reveals that if there are teachers who can assist in developing support programmes, Grade R teachers should make use of them instead of waiting for the curriculum advisors. However, if the curriculum does not accommodate or respond to the diverse needs of learners, it can be a barrier to learners in an inclusive classroom and can also hinders the teachers from practicing inclusive education.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Department of Education should provide Grade R with a curriculum that accommodates or responds to the diverse needs of learners so that teachers are able to practice inclusive education effectively.

- Grade R teachers and practitioners should take the initiative of consulting different books about teaching Grade R in an inclusive classroom. This will enhance their knowledge and skills of practicing Inclusive Education effectively.

## **5.5. Classroom factors**

The classroom should be the place where learners feel accommodated, supported and belonging. Some practitioners had a challenge of teaching or accommodating learners' whose home language was not Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) of their schools. Teachers and practitioners experienced challenges of overcrowding in their classes because it hinders them from identifying learners who experience barriers so that they can develop intervention programmes for them.

### **5.5.1. Language of learning and teaching**

Communication is the basic need to be able to interact actively with other people either verbally or non-verbally. It is important for a learner to understand what the teacher says so that he or she will be able to learn. The findings from the study revealed that language of teaching and learning can be a barrier to learning if the learners do not know the language. This was revealed when the learner was removed from the school to another school where the LOLT was also her home language. Contrary to this, Guralnick (2001) in Chapter two argues that child to child conversation during passive teaching encourages communication to learners. In Chapter two it was pointed out that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) indicated that every learner needs support, but some learners may require additional support for learning and additional support needs can arise from any factor that causes a barrier to learning, whether that factor relates to social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, disability, or family and care circumstances. This indicates that the learner needed linguistic support from the school in order to be accommodated but the school denied her additional support by taking her to another school. Other learners from the class should have been encouraged to speak with her since it is easy for learners to learn from one another.

Findings revealed that most learners in Grade R are exposed to counting numbers in English, but due to the policy they learn Maths in Sepedi. Language of teaching Maths should be reconsidered because learners and teachers experience difficulties

due to certain vocabularies. Most children come to Grade R with the exposure of numbers, shapes and other Maths vocabularies in English not Sepedi or African languages. The findings also revealed that when children start school, they already have prior knowledge of some of the things they learn. This is consistent with what Dimitriadi (2015) mentioned as indicated in Chapter two that the classroom increasingly contains groups of children with a wide range of individual differences which include a wider range of capabilities. As such, teachers should open necessary channels and provide the necessary environment for future leaders. This indicates that for teaching subjects such as Maths in Grade R, language should be reconsidered.

### **Recommendations:**

- English should be considered as medium of instruction in teaching Maths in order to accommodate the diverse needs of learners. Learners are informally exposed to counting numbers in English before they start school.
- The schools should consider the issue of introducing multi-language teaching in the area where more than one language is being spoken in order to accommodate the diverse social groups.

### **5.5.2. Overcrowding**

The findings revealed that participants experienced different challenges in Grade R with learners ranging from 47 to 67 in a class. Hence they are unable to achieve the objectives of successfully practicing inclusive education in mainstream schools as set by the Department. The challenge the teachers face is learner-teacher ratio which prohibits them from effectively monitoring and supporting learners accordingly in their classes. Since inclusive education practice in Grade R schools is about responding to diverse needs of learners, the DBE (2013) Notice 932 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 indicates that the maximum of learners in Grade R should be 30 for all learners to receive the support and attention of the teacher equally. The Grade R classes should adhere to the learner-teacher ratio in order to identify and support learners with learning difficulties. The DBE (2014:16) indicated that for teachers to be able to practice inclusive education, teacher-learner ratio will be reduced. The findings revealed that learner- teacher ratio should be adhered to in order to enable teachers to identify learners who need extra support so that they can

be supported. This indicates that policy implementation should be correctly monitored to ensure that what has been indicated is implemented. For schools to adhere to learner-teacher ratio, the DBE should employ more teachers who will assist in reducing overcrowding to Grade R classes. The participants experienced challenges of overcrowding in their classes hence effecting teaching and learning do not occur properly. Monitoring and supporting learners with barriers is also not done properly.

### **Recommendations**

- The Department of Basic Education should continuously monitor the policy to ensure effective practice of inclusive education in Grade R. Teacher-learner-ratio should be followed in order for the teachers to be able to attend to individual learners' needs in class especially since Grade R is where formal teaching starts.
- Young people who are interested in studying for teachers' qualification should be encouraged to study for Grade R qualifications so that overcrowding can be minimised in future.
- Co-teaching should be introduced where a teacher who normally has had substantial training within the area of special needs should teach in one class with the teacher who had no training in order to assist with learners with learning challenges.

### **5.6. Parents' involvement, and collaboration with NGOs and health professionals**

Challenges regarding parents' involvement and collaboration with health professionals were revealed from the findings whereas collaboration with NGOs seems to be effective. These aspects are discussed in the following section.

#### **5.6.1. Parents' involvement**

The findings revealed that most parents lack support to their children's education which hinders the effective practice of inclusive education in Grade R. This is consistent with Mukhopadhyay's (2013) findings which indicated that parents' support was minimal. Even though some schools have Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) it appeared to be on paper but not in practice. The DoE (2008:95) emphasises that parents need to take responsibility for the support of their children in the most

inclusive setting possible. Cook et al (2011) as cited in Chapter two, argue that parents' involvement or that of other caregivers is essential for the development of families' awareness of the importance of their role in facilitating, guiding, supporting their children's development. However, interview findings revealed that most parents do not support their children's learning. This is consistent with what Alexander, Brody, Muller, Ziv, Achituv, Gorsetman, Harris, Tal, Goodman, Schein, Vogelstein and Miller (2016) as referred to in Chapter, pointed out when they indicated that most challenging issues for the teachers involve lack of efficacy, lack of support, balancing needs of all stakeholders, and family cooperation.

The findings revealed that the majority of learners in Modimolle stay with their grandparents or siblings because their parents are deceased or some parents work far from their homes. It is important that parents or caregivers should become involved in their children's education. In Chapter two, Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2009) were referred to as arguing that the family should be the source of security, support and guidance for the physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, social and spiritual development of its children. This indicates that children need support from their parents in order to be successful with their school work. Parents or caregivers need to be aware that they are the primary teachers of their children since they spend a lot of time with them at home.

### **Recommendations:**

- Teachers should appreciate parents through letters for supporting their children at home with school work. This can encourage parents to support their children and attend meetings when invited.
- Since there are health professionals such as social workers who are allocated to schools, Grade R teachers should continuously communicate with them for professional assistance with orphans.
- Teachers should not only invite parents to schools when they experience challenges with their children, but parents should also be invited to make contributions to the development of the school.

### **5.6.2. Collaboration with NGOs and health professionals**

During the interviews with teachers they suggested that collaboration with NGOs and community business people can assist where there is a need. The findings also revealed that psychologists who have been assigned to schools do not visit the schools to offer their professional help to learners who need it. This is consistent with the findings of Babić-Čolaković, Pasalic and Memisevic (2015) as referred to in Chapter two when they indicated that children are not given the necessary support such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, early special education etc. in most of the regular preschool institutions because resources are too scarce in the majority of schools to provide such supports. Support concerning effective learning and development of children is very crucial and it should be promoted to all relevant stakeholders.

### **Recommendations:**

- On-going monitoring and supervision by the Department of Health and the Department of Education should be administered to ensure that effective support is given to learners by health professionals.
- Training of teachers to administer Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) is needed to be able to assist in supporting learners whenever the health specialists are unavailable.
- The schools should identify and collaborate with NGOs and community business people who will assist in donating required resources for Grade R.

## **5.7. Teaching strategies, activities and assessments**

The type of teaching strategies, activities and assessments given to learners in the inclusive classroom are important. These aspects are discussed in the following section:

### **5.7. 1. Teaching strategies**

Findings from the study confirmed that teaching and learning occurs in many different ways. It was revealed that effective learning takes place when the teacher knows how the learners learn so that he/she is able to identify the appropriate teaching strategies that will accommodate the diverse needs of all learners. This is consistent with Dimitriadi (2015) findings which indicated that the classroom increasingly contains groups of children with a wide range of individual differences



which include a wider range of capabilities. As such, teachers should open necessary channels and provide the necessary environment for future leaders. In relation to play, Dimitriadi, Stevens-Smith and Stegelin (2015) cited in Chapter two, established that play-based learning promotes the development of inclusive play opportunities which take into account and respond to children's different abilities and needs. This indicates that the type of teaching strategy can either become a barrier to or a tool for implementing effective learning. Similarly Cook, Klein and Chen (2011) as described in Chapter two, was also of opinion that early childhood special education learners should master the skill that is related to facilitating learning and healthy growth and development in all children and the skill related to the specific and special needs of children with disabilities.

### **Recommendations:**

- Teachers should familiarise themselves with different teaching strategies through surfing the internet to acquire knowledge and reading different books with teaching strategy guidelines. From the internet and different books they might identify strategies that suit their learners in Grade R.
- Teachers should identify what learners know and can do so that they build learners' knowledge and understanding from.
- Teachers should not rush learners to answer the questions, but should be given enough time to process what they have learnt so that they give correct answers.
- Since most of Grade R activities involve play, play activities should be emphasised to encourage active involvement of learners and understanding.

### **5.7.2. Activities and assessments**

Interviews and observations findings revealed that learners should be given activities based on their level of understanding. This confirms that every learner is unique and should be treated as such. The findings confirmed that some of the activities that can be used for inclusive education practice are peer or group work and pictures. This is consistent with what the DBE (2010) (see in Chapter two), prescribes when mentioning that peer support and cooperative learning foster a school culture that encourages learners to learn collaboratively rather than competitively. Interview findings confirmed that teachers should be familiar with how learners learn so that

they should apply correct teaching strategies to accommodate every learner's needs. In Chapter two, the DBE in SIAS (2014) was referenced as indicating that learning programmes and materials as well as assessment procedures must be made accessible to all learners, and must accommodate the diversity of learning needs to facilitate learners' achievement to the fullest. This indicates that different activities and assessment procedures should be applied to accommodate all learners for better practice of inclusive education.

### **Recommendations:**

- Peer and group activities should also be emphasised to encourage social development and positive interaction of learners. This might result in building learners' self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Teachers who are qualified and have knowledge of how young children learn should be employed for teaching in Grade R. The teachers should have the knowledge of how the Grade R curriculum works so that they are able to identify activities that will encourage effective learning in learners.

## **5.8. Education background and training matters**

Education matters such as teachers' qualifications play a role in teaching learners. Knowledge and skills to be able to attend to learners' needs is required from the teacher.

### **5.8. 1. Teachers' qualifications**

Findings from the study revealed that most Grade R teachers and practitioners are not trained to teach in an inclusive classroom; hence it creates challenges for teachers and practitioners as they are unable to deal with learners' challenges. In Chapter two Van Rensburg (2015) was cited as arguing that well-trained educationists follow an approach to education based on knowledge of how children learn and develop. This indicates that Grade R teachers need knowledge and skills to know how learners learn and develop so that they can attend to their needs. Guralnick (2001), as explained in Chapter two, confirms that the competencies of untrained teachers are often inadequate for addressing young children in inclusive

programmes. Teachers need to acquire knowledge and skills so that they can be more competent in addressing the challenges faced by Grade R learners.

The observations and interview findings confirmed that qualifications play an important role in practicing inclusive education in Grade R classes. This is consistent with Cook, Klein and Chen's (2011) findings from the literature (see in Chapter two), - which indicated that teaching in those sites is easier where teachers are well-trained and have knowledge of both child development and special education. This indicates that knowledge and skills assist teachers in teaching different learners.

### **Recommendations:**

- Teachers should be encouraged to take responsibility for seeking knowledge and enhancing their skills through furthering their studies or researching what they should teach.
- The Department of Education should ensure that practitioners who are being placed in mainstream schools have relevant qualifications and are more knowledgeable about inclusive education practice.
- Continuous monitoring and support by curriculum advisors should be reinforced for the purpose of teacher skills development and knowledge attainment.

## **5.9. Teaching and learning resources**

Learning resources help learners to easily understand what is being taught. By using teaching resources, teachers are able to enhance learners' understanding and knowledge.

### **5.9.1. Teaching and learning materials**

The interview findings revealed that Grade R classes lack resources that will enable learners to enhance their understanding when learning. In Chapter two it was pointed out that different literature sources argued that limited provision of special needs services in formal education in South Africa, as well as insufficient material resources in the educational setting, pose significant challenges that result in children not receiving the education they need and are entitled to. This indicates that availability of resources in school encourages effective learning and enhances learners' understanding; it also allows the teachers to support their teaching.

Teaching and learning resources should be made available since young children learn better by playing and touching.

**Recommendations:**

- Educational material such as different shapes, play dough, CD players, TVs, radio and others that can be used in Grade R to encourage understanding should be made available to schools. Teachers should be provided with continuous training and guidelines as to how the resources are to be used.
- Teachers should be creative, resourceful and where possible develop their own resources that will enhance teaching and learning in an inclusive classroom.

**5.9.2. Infrastructure**

Teaching and learning takes place effectively where there is enough space to move around and learners can sit comfortably without disturbing other learners. The findings from the interviews and observations revealed that Grade R classes do not have enough space to keep resources for learners or different learning areas for learners. The findings also revealed that in some cases the classes are small, such that it hinders effective practice of inclusive education or teaching and learning.

**Recommendations:**

- Buildings that are meant for Foundation Phase classes where there is store room for each class to keep resources should be proposed to the government so that learners have enough space for learning and doing indoor activities.
- The schools should consider the issue of restructuring areas such as toilets to accommodate learner diversity, walking areas should be wheelchair friendly and also ramps.

**5.10. Recommendation for further study**

The findings of the study revealed that teachers experience challenges with the practice of inclusive education in Grade R in mainstream schools. The findings of the study show that one of the major factors affecting the practice of inclusive education in the mainstream schools in Grade R is teachers' training. As stated, teachers who lack qualifications experience challenges in practicing inclusive education and also dealing with problems in an inclusive classroom. However, a gap exists between lack

of qualifications and the practice of inclusive education; proper training and monitoring of practitioners by the Department of Education is also lacking. For the Department of Education to respond to the diverse needs of learners through quality education, the issue of training and qualifications of Grade R teachers and practitioners need to be taken into consideration.

**Further research may be conducted on:**

- The benefits of qualifications in practicing inclusive education in Grade R.
- Strengthening the involvement of parents in their children's education and their support thereof.
- The role of curriculum advisors in monitoring and supporting Grade R teachers in practicing inclusive education in mainstream schools.
- A comparative study of township mainstream schools with former model C and farm schools about the practice of Inclusive Education.

**5.11. Delimitations and limitations of the study**

As stated in Chapter three, participants were selected only from the mainstream schools of Nylstroom circuit. Limpopo Province is divided into five districts of which Waterberg has been subdivided into two sub-districts, Waterberg and Mkgalakwena. The study was conducted in only one circuit from Waterberg district out of nine circuits. Other teachers or practitioners from other circuits might have provided different responses since the social background of the environment has an influence on learning and teaching. The study concentrated on the practice of inclusive education in mainstream schools in the township schools while the former model-C and farm schools were not considered. The researcher depended on the participants' responses from the interviews and observations which might have limited the researcher from collecting more data since there are other research instruments that might have contributed positively to this research study.

**5.12. Conclusion**

The aim of the study was to explore the practice of Inclusive Education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo. The study was able to provide recommendations that can be used for overcoming the identified challenges. Through the study, challenges

facing teachers and practitioners in mainstream schools have been identified. The study is also significant because it contributed by adding more knowledge on issues related to mainstream schools in practicing Inclusive Education, especially by practitioners.

The practice of Inclusive Education in Grade R still needs proper monitoring and support by the Department of Education since most teachers lack qualifications. The study has revealed that although the Department of Education is encouraging the practice of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools and moving practitioners to teach Grade R in schools, proper training and monitoring should be taken into consideration.

This study determined that, if the mainstream schools are provided with the required resources and curriculum that accommodate the diverse needs of all learners, teachers and practitioners could practice Inclusive Education effectively in Grade R. Teachers and practitioners still need skills and knowledge of how to deal with behavioural challenges of learners in an inclusive classroom; hence professional development could assist in practicing Inclusive Education effectively.

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Internet resources

<http://www.routes.co.za/lp/map.html>, Retrieved 30 September 2015)

## APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/07/12

Ref#: 2017/07/12/31640036/27/MC

Dear Ms Sambo,

Name: Ms TF Sambo

Student#: 31640036

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2017/07/12 to 2020/07/12

#### Researcher:

Name: Ms TF Sambo

Email: rishengile@hotmail.com

Telephone: 0737938869

#### Supervisor:

Name: Prof FD Mahfo

Email: mahlofd@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 0124812756

#### Title of research:

**The practices of inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo**

**Qualification:** M Ed in Inclusive Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/07/12 to 2020/07/12.

*The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/07/12 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



University of South Africa  
Pretter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
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www.unisa.ac.za



1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2020/07/12. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number 2017/07/12/31640036/27/MC should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

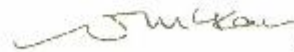
Kind regards,



**Dr M Claassens**

**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**

mcdtc@netactive.co.za



**Prof V McKay**

**EXECUTIVE DEAN**

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017



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## APPENDIX B: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DISTRICT DIRECTOR



### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

#### REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

##### Request permission to conduct research at Nylstroom Circuit, District Director

Title of the research: The practices of Inclusive Education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

District Director  
Ms Madela SJ  
Department of Education  
Waterberg District  
Modimolle  
Tel: 014 718 1500

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Tinyiko Florence Sambo am doing research under supervision of Prof FD Mahlo, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards M ED at the University of South Africa.

We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: The practices of Inclusive education in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo

The aim of the study is to:

- To explore Inclusive practices in the Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To identify the teachers' challenges in employing inclusive practices in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To explore the strategies that could be used to enhance the practices of Inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.

Waterberg district has been selected because more people are relocating to Modimolle due to employment in the District Offices and other department which their offices are in Modimolle and they bring their young kids who are then accommodated in Grade R classes.

The study will entail interviewing individual participant face-to-face and observing how they practice Inclusive education in the classroom situation.

The benefits of this study are:

The findings of this study will benefit the society by reconsidering to register their children with different learning abilities in the mainstream schools and to know that the practices of inclusive education play an important role in the mainstream schools today. The aim of the research is to recommend valuable guidelines to the schools to their vision, mission, policies and their practices that reflect the commitment to Inclusive education. The study will also contribute to the schools setting goals for their curriculum development and strategies that reflect the vision and values of inclusion. Therefore it is believed that the findings will contribute meaningfully to the study and the recommendations will help improve the situation.

There are no potential risks for taking part in the research study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail writing of a detailed report or email the report to you when requested.

Yours sincerely

---

TF Sambo (Ms)

Student at University of South Africa

Contact number: 073 793 8869

Email: [rishongile@hotmail.com](mailto:rishongile@hotmail.com)

## APPENDIX C: RESPONSE FROM DISTRICT OFFICE



Ref: 80146864  
Enq: Mathebula T.M.  
Tel: 014 718 1500  
Email: [Mathebulat@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:Mathebulat@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

2017 June 21

Ms. T.F. Sambo  
P.O. Box 2714  
Modimolle  
0510

**RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY ON THE PRACTICES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GRADE R, NYLSTROOM CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO**

1. Receipt of your letter dated 23 May 2017 bearing on the above subject is hereby acknowledged.
2. In response thereto, please be advised that permission to conduct research study on Inclusive Education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit is hereby granted subject to the following conditions:
  - ❖ That the interviews will be conducted outside school working hours and will also not interfere with teaching and learning in schools.
  - ❖ The research will not have any financial implications for the Limpopo Department of Education.
  - ❖ The interviews will also depend on the willingness of Principals / Educators to be interviewed.
  - ❖ Upon completion of the research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
3. The District appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your research.
4. The delay in responding to your letter is deeply regretted.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

## APPENDIX D: REQUEST PERMISSION TO CIRCUIT MANAGER



### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

#### **Request permission to conduct research at primary schools Nylstroom Circuit, Circuit Manager**

Title of the research: The practices of Inclusive Education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Circuit Manager  
Mr Mabusela SN  
Department of Education  
Nylstroom Circuit  
Modimolle  
Tel: 071 674 6814

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Tinyiko Florence Sambo am doing research under supervision of Prof FD Mahlo, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards M ED at the University of South Africa.

We are requesting the circuit manager to allow us to approach Grade R teachers from schools in Nylstroom circuit order to participate in the research study entitled: The practices of Inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo

The aim of the study is to:

- To explore Inclusive practices in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To identify the teachers' challenges in employing inclusive practices in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To explore the strategies that could be used to enhance the practices of Inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.

Nylstroom circuit has been selected because most Grade R classes are being taught by teachers who qualified before the year 2000 and Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners who were teaching from crèches. These teachers or practitioners were not trained to teach Grade R classes.

The study will entail interviewing individual participants face-to-face and observing how they practice Inclusive education in schools.

The benefits of this study are:

The findings of this study will benefit the society by reconsidering to register their children with different learning abilities in the mainstream schools and to know that the practices of Inclusive education play an important role in the mainstream schools today. The aim of the research is to recommend valuable guidelines to the schools to their vision, mission, policies and their practices that reflect the commitment to Inclusive education. The study will also contribute to the schools setting goals for their curriculum development and strategies that reflect the vision and values of inclusion. Therefore it is believed that the findings will contribute meaningfully to the study and the recommendations will help improve the situation.

There are no potential risks for taking part in the research study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail writing of a detailed report or email the report to you when requested.

Yours sincerely

---

TF Sambo (Ms)

Student at University of South Africa

Contact number: 073 793 8869

Email: [rishongile@hotmail.com](mailto:rishongile@hotmail.com)

**APPENDIX E: RESPONSE FROM CIRCUIT MANAGER**



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
WATERBERG DISTRICT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NYLSTROOM CIRCUIT

31/05/2017

Enq: Molekwa NF

To: Sambo TF  
Student at University of South Africa

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS**

1. Please be informed that permission for your application to conduct research at schools has been granted.
2. The research is self initiated and approved with own cost and must not interfere with the normal running of the school.
3. The Circuit wishes you good luck.
4. Hope you find this in order.

  
Circuit Manager  
Mabusela SN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Private Bag X 1040, MODIMOLLE, NYLSTROOM CIRCUIT.  
Tel: (014) 717 1834 Fax: (014) 1834

The best of South Africa – developed together

## APPENDIX F: REQUEST PERMISSION TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND SGB



### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

#### **Request permission to conduct research in Grade R classes, The Principal and School Governing Body (SBG)**

Title of the research: The practices of Inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Principal and School Governing Body

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Tinyiko Florence Sambo am doing research under supervision of Prof FD Mahlo, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards M ED at the University of South Africa. We have no funding for conducting the research project.

We are requesting the permission that teachers of Grade R are allowed to be approached to participate in a study entitled: The practices of Inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo

The aim of the study is to:

- To explore Inclusive practices in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To identify the teachers' challenges in employing inclusive practices in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.
- To explore the strategies that could be used to enhance the practices of inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo.



The school has been selected because Grade R classes are taught by qualified teachers and Early Childhood Development practitioners, it is where formal teaching and learning starts, Inclusive education is practiced and the researcher will be able to gather relevant information about the research study.

The study will entail an individual face-to-face interview with two Grade R teachers in the classroom and observing each teacher separately on how they practice Inclusive education in the classroom situation.

The benefits of this study are:

The findings of this study will benefit the society by reconsidering to register their children with different learning abilities in the mainstream schools and to know that the practices of Inclusive education play an important role in the mainstream schools today. The aim of the research is to recommend valuable guidelines to the schools to their vision, mission, policies and their practices that reflect the commitment to Inclusive education. The study will also contribute to the schools setting goals for their curriculum development and strategies that reflect the vision and values of inclusion. Therefore it is believed that the findings will contribute meaningfully to the study and the recommendations will help improve the situation.

There are no potential risks for taking part in the research study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail writing of a detailed report or email the report to you when requested.

Yours sincerely

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TF Sambo (Ms)

Student at University of South Africa

Contact number: 073 793 8869

Email: [rishongile@hotmail.com](mailto:rishongile@hotmail.com)

## **APPENDIX G: REQUEST TO PARTICIPANTS**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: The practices of Inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo

#### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

My name is Tinyiko Florence Sambo I am doing research under the supervision of Prof FD Mahlo, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards M Ed at the University of South Africa.

We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: The practices of Inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could benefit the society by reconsidering to register their children with different learning abilities in the mainstream schools and to know that the practices of inclusive education play an important role in the mainstream schools today. The aim of the research is to recommend valuable guidelines to the schools to their vision, mission, policies and their practices that reflect the commitment to inclusive education. The study will also contribute to the schools setting goals for their curriculum development and strategies that reflect the vision and values of inclusion.

Therefore it is believed that the findings will contribute meaningfully to the study and the recommendations will help improve the situation.

#### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are being invited because the grade that you are teaching is where formal teaching and learning of the child takes place and relevant information about the study can be collected from that grade. I obtained your contact details from names of the schools listed from the circuit. The researcher has chosen to gather information from two participants from the school which will give the total of ten participants around five schools. You have been chosen because you meet the requirements of the study which includes your professional qualifications, the teaching experience in the grade.

#### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves individual face-to-face semi-structured interview in the classroom which will include audio taping with the teacher's consent. The interview and observation will take forty five minutes to one hour and not more than one hour. The following questions will be asked:

1. What are your opinions about Inclusive Education in Grade R?
2. Which factors affect the practices of Inclusive education in the Grade R in Nylstroom circuit?
3. How can you be supported to practice Inclusive education in the Grade R?
4. What kinds of strategies are followed to ensure that Grade R teachers are practising Inclusive education?
5. Is there anything that was not asked but you want the researcher to know?

#### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are assured of complete anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of the information that you are going to give towards the study. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

#### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There are no potential benefits for the participants, participants as a group, the scientific community and/or society for taking part in the study. The purpose of the study is to help the society understand the importance of inclusive education in the mainstream schools and how it will benefit the children with different learning abilities.

#### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

There are no negative consequences for you if you take part in the research project. There are no potential levels of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant or foreseeable risks of harm or side-effects to the potential participants.

#### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

The records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. The report of the study may be submitted for publication, but participants' names will not be identified from the report because the names used will be anonymous.

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the researcher's place for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of relevant software programme.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no payment or reward offered, financial or otherwise for participating in the study. Participants will not incur any costs in the study.

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has applied for written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa (Unisa). A copy of the written application letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Tinyiko Florence Sambo on 073 793 8869 or email [rishongile@hotmail.com](mailto:rishongile@hotmail.com). The findings are accessible for a period of five years and thereafter it will be destroyed. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact TF Sambo at 073 793 8869 or email [rishongile@hotmail.com](mailto:rishongile@hotmail.com).

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof FD Mahlo on 082 431 3302/012 481 2756 or email [mahlofd@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mahlofd@unisa.ac.za).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

---

Tinyiko Florence Sambo (Ms)

Contact number: 073 793 8869

Email: [rishongile@hotmail.com](mailto:rishongile@hotmail.com)

## APPENDIX H: CONSENT LETTER

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview that will not take more than an hour to collect information.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname: Tinyiko Florence Sambo

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Researcher: Tinyiko Florence Sambo

**Topic:** The practices of inclusive education in Grade R, Nylstroom Circuit, Limpopo

Supervisor: Prof FD Mahlo

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are your opinions about Inclusive Education in Grade R?
2. Which factors affect the practices of Inclusive education in the Grade R in Nylstroom circuit?
3. How can you be supported to practice Inclusive education in the Grade R?
4. What kinds of strategies are followed to ensure that Grade R teachers are practising Inclusive education?
5. Is there anything that was not asked but you want the researcher to know?

## APPENDIX J

### EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW WITH GRADE R TEACHER

T- Tinyiko

Q- Question

R- Respond

PQ – Probing question

T: Good afternoon

R: Good afternoon

T: The topic of my research is “The practices of Inclusive Education in Grade R, Nylstroom circuit, Limpopo”.

T: As explained in the letter that I have sent to you, I will like to ask you few questions that will help me with my study. The first question will be “What are your opinions about inclusive education in Grade R?”

R: I think Inclusive Education is a good thing because all learners should be treated the same. We should accommodate all learners and we should not discriminate learners because of their disabilities. Inclusive Education is important because learners it encourages learners to know and understand one another.

Q: Which factors affect the practices of Inclusive education in the Grade R in Nylstroom circuit?

R: Some learners still speak baby language, some are unable to trace numbers and they crawl under the tables disturbing other learners. Learners who have not yet fully developed, they frustrate us because they do not concentrate at all. Learners who did not go to crèche are the once who gives us a lot of problems than those who went to crèche.

PQ: How do you identify those who attended crèche and those who did not attend?



R: Learners who attended crèche are disciplined and do not give us problems of crying when their parents bring them to school. They pay attention when we teach them because they have a background of being taught at crèche.

T: Is there anything else?

R: Yes, if learners are more than 40 in class, it is difficult to attend to individual problems because we do not have enough time to do so. This makes us not to be able to practice inclusive education effectively. It is also important that teachers should follow the policy document so that they know what should be covered for each term rather than following the learners' book (DBE books) because you find that certain items are not well arranged, for example some term one items are in term two section. If the policy document is followed correctly, you will find that the teaching themes are related to each other which make it easy for some learners to understand what is being taught.

PQ: Are there certain programmes or routine that you must follow when teaching Grade R?

R: Yes, We have Grade R routine that we should follow everyday starting from when learners enter into the gate. We follow the themes according to weeks and identify activities from the DBE learners' books to be completed. The themes are related to each other and need to be followed correctly. But we do not have enough resources to be used when teaching. There are resources like CDs but they are in English, the problem is that we cannot use them because we do not have CD player. We also had TV but it was stolen and since then it was never replaced.

FQ: What are the CDs about?

R: The CDs have got songs that can be used for teaching learners through singing.

Q: Hmm, I see. Is there anything else?

R: Another thing is that most parents do not care about their learners; they only come to school when they need us to complete the social grant form for them. I discovered one learner from another class who comes to school without wearing the underwear and she also have wounds on her buttocks. You will be surprised to

know that most parents of Grade R learners are still young but they don't care about their children.

Q: How can you be supported to practice inclusive education in Grade R?

R: Continuous workshops should be done for us so that we learn different skills and gain knowledge. We should have radio or tape to develop learners' listening skills. Practitioners who are teaching Grade R need a qualified teacher who will monitor and assist them in following the policy document together with DBE books.

The school should also buy us resources that we do not receive from the department so that we can use them.

Q: What kinds of strategies are followed to ensure that Grade R teachers are practicing inclusive education?

A: I use a poster to create a story and to introduce a lesson to learners. You can also introduce a lesson with a song or story while learners identify things or objects. The song or story encourages learning. I sometimes sit with the learners who are lazy so that they can read. They are not slow learners they need a teacher's attention. I also make copies of extra activities to reinforce understanding to learners who complete given activities very fast. Learners who do reversal, I use direction like left hand and right hand. Before teaching learners letters or numbers, what I usually emphasise to learners is to know the left and right hands. If learners know these, whether they are writing letters or numbers learners will not reverse them e.g. if learners knows that three opens to the left hand side, they will write it correctly. Sometimes when writing "3" so that they do not confuse it with "m", I encourage learners to write three dots from top to bottom to help them write "3". Reversal is sometimes cause by teachers the way we arrange learners in class. When they show learners right hand facing the opposite direction, learners will point the wrong side better let them identify the left and right hands first and they would not forget or reverse the numbers. I also use picture reading to teach learners.

Q: Is there anything that was not asked but you want the researcher to know?

I usually collect sweets stalks with learners to use them for making patterns, shapes to emphasise what they have learnt. Learners need a teacher who can teach and does not sit down.

Our classes are not meant for Grade R because there is no enough space to put resources. Learners should touch resources in order to understand what they are learning about.

## APPENDIX K

### EXAMPLE OF THEMES AND PATTERNS FROM DATA COLLECTION

Key:

P1 – P9 : Interview response from Grade R teachers and practitioners

OB : Observations by the researcher

Participants	Response	PATTERNS
<b>1. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY</b>		
P5	“Admitting learners at the age of five or four and half, is frustrating to us because some learners come to school while still talking baby language to show that they have not yet fully developed. Even though learners are not the same, but some of them cope well especially those who started from crèche.”	Admission policy
P9	“Learners who have not yet fully developed, they frustrate us because they do not concentrate at all. Learners who did not go to crèche are the once who gives us a lot of problems than those who went to crèche.”	Learner development ECD learning (crèche)
P3	“I have a child who always does not concentrate when I am busy teaching, he will crawl under the chairs, start to disturb other learners and he does not focus at all.”	Concentration from learner
P4	“In order to practice inclusive education in Grade R, we should admit all learners irrespective of the language they speak or where they come from because they are also human beings like us.”	Admit all learners
P6	“Inclusive education practice in Grade R means that we should accommodate different learners of different racial groups, with different abilities, who speak different languages, who come from poor families or different	Accommodate all learners

	children from our community.”	
P2	“The practice of Inclusive education should include all learners without isolating them when other learners do activities, any learner should do activities with other learners whether inside the class or outside. Learners feel being accommodated or being part of others, not as an outsider and they will have confidence when doing things.”	Accommodate all learners
P3	“It is important that all children must learn together so that they feel appreciated, but the problem is that we are not trained to teach learners with disabilities. If we can be trained and be supplied with resources that will assist learners such as Braille for learners who cannot see clearly, we will be able to practice inclusive education without struggling.”	Learning together  Training  Availability of resources
P2	“Learners with hearing or vision problems, we usually advise parents to go to the hospital to get help of hearing aids or spectacles for their learners because sometimes these tests are done for free and free spectacles are given to people who need them.”	Learning resources
P1	“It is difficult to identify learners early during the beginning of the year because we are teaching many learners.”	Overcrowding
P7	“If there can be a form that parents complete when they register their children at school to indicate the challenges their children are experience so that we can engaged with professionals who can help when necessary.”	Policy
<b>2. CURRICULUM FACTOR</b>		
<b>2.1. CURRICULUM</b>		
P9	“It is important that teachers should follow the policy document so that they know what should be covered for each term rather than following the learners’ book (DBE books) because you find that certain items are not well arranged, for example some term one items are in term	Curriculum policy

	two section. If the policy document is followed correctly, you will find that the teaching themes are related to each other which make it easy for some learners to understand what is being taught.”	
P3	“Learners who cannot see clearly need Braille so that they can touch numbers and letters. If the government can supply and train us with those books, all learners can have the opportunity to learn.”	Curriculum
P6	“Time that is allocated for daily routine disadvantages some learners in completing their activities because we have to move from one activity to another without stopping. Sometimes I cannot cover curriculum for the term because I have to make intervention for learners who experience challenges.”	Policy
<b>3. CLASSROOM FACTORS</b>		
<b>3.1. LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING</b>		
P5	“In the beginning of the year there was a learner whose home language is Afrikaans. The learner could not understand Sepedi or English and I had to always call someone who could understand Afrikaans to translate everything to her. . The learner was unable to participate in classroom activities because she could not understand what was being said. It was also frustrating to me because if the learner wanted something, I had to look for someone to come and translate to her.”	Language of learning and teaching (LOLT)
OB	“Even though learners are being taught in Sepedi, some learners count or call the numbers in English which shows that learners know the numbers from somewhere. Learners from other African countries do not know South African vernacular languages, and it is very difficult for the teacher to communicate with such learners.”	LOLT
<b>3.2. OVERCROWDING</b>		
P1	“In a big class like this one, it is difficult to identify learners	Overcrowding

	who experience problems because there are 57 learners; some are identified during the middle of the second term”	
P4	“Proper monitoring and support is not easily followed because learners are many in class. The school does not stop admitting learners because they even admit during the year. The learners are from other schools because their parents have been transferred or got the job in town.”	Overcrowding
P7	“I think in school inclusive education is hindered by overcrowding and lack of space.	Overcrowding Space
P4	The learner-teacher ratio of Grade R should be manageable so that the teacher can be able to know all the learners and be able to assist them according to their needs. Our challenge is that the classes are small and this prevents us from grouping learners so that we monitor their work and to know all the learners better according to their performance.”	Overcrowding  Small classrooms
P9	“If learners are more than 40 in class, it is difficult to attend to individual problems because we do not have enough time to do so.”	Overcrowding
<b>4. PARENTS’ INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION WITH NGOs AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS</b>		
<b>4.1. PARENTS’ INVOLVEMENT</b>		
P5	“When we call some parents regarding their children’s education, they do not come to school. Even now am still having term one report cards for most learners and majority of the reports are for learners who experience challenges in class. What worries me is that most parents are still young and they should care about their children’s education”	Parents’ involvement  Parents’ care
P6	“Most parents do not attend parents’ meetings when invited to discuss issues relating their children, they will only come to school when their children reported that they	Poor attendance by parents

	have been beaten or something wrong was done to them.”	
P9	“Most parents do not care about their learners; they only come to school when they need us to complete the Social grant form for them. I discovered one learner from another class who comes to school without wearing the underwear and she also have wounds on her buttocks. You will be surprised to know that most parents of Grade R learners are still young but they don’t care about their children.”	Parents’ care  Responsibility
P1	“The problem is that most parents do not disclose their children’s challenges to us when they register their children at school so that we can know in advance and be able to prepare how to accommodate them. When we identify learners with challenges, through the office we invite the parents/guardians to come to school so that we can explain the challenges of their children.”	Lack of knowledge  Parents’ involvement
P5	“Most parents do not come to school, even now I am still holding the learners’ reports of the first and even some of the reports of the second are still here. Only few parents will buy stationery so that they can help their children at home especially those with learning difficulties.”	Parents’ involvement
P4	“Most of our learners’ profiles are incomplete and it is difficult for us sometimes to call the parents because you find that the contact number is either not there or it does not exist.”	Responsibility
P5	“I have two premature learners, who are very slow but only the parent of one child came and the other did not come to school so that we can work together in helping the child.”	Responsibility and care
P6	“Some learners are left at the care of grandparents or siblings because their parents are working far or they are staying somewhere with boyfriends.”	Responsibility and care



<b>4.2. COLLABORATION WITH NGOs AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS</b>		
P6	“Partnership of parents, teachers, NGOs and the community can assist in practicing Inclusive Education properly. NGOs and some business members of the community can donate resources that are needed at schools.”	Partnership
P7	“The school can network with health care centre so that we are able to support learners and those who need help can be attended.”	Network
P5	“The school is allocated with professional psychologist from department of health but the person does not visit the school. We usually see the nurses who come to check learners three to four times a year.”	Partnership
P6	“You know, we are allocated psychologist who should always visits the school so that he/she can help learners with challenges that we are unable to deal with, but we don’t see them because they don’t visit us.”	Partnership
<b>5. TEACHING STRATEGIES</b>		
<b>5.1. TEACHING STRATEGIES</b>		
P3	“Before teaching learners letters or numbers, what I usually emphasise to learners is to know the left and right hands. If learners know these, whether they are writing letters or numbers learners will not reverse them e.g. if learners knows that three opens to the left hand side, they will write it correctly. Sometimes when writing “3” so that they do not confuse it with “m”, I encourage learners to write three dots from top to bottom to help them write “3”.”	Knowledge and skills
<b>5.2. ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENTS</b>		
P1	“I give learners different activities based on their level of understanding. Those who are slow in understanding and completing the activities, I extend time with few minutes so that they are able to finish their work.”	Differentiated activities

P2	"I give them same activities but extend time for those who are slow so that they can complete the work."	Time extension
P4	"I group learners according to their intelligence or pair them so that they assist each other. Sometimes I repeat the lesson that I think learners did not understand or are struggling with. I do not teach learner for a long period based on the daily routine from lesson plan because they do not concentrate for a long period."	Group activities Repetition
P3	"Learners with learning difficulties I support them by explaining things through the use of examples, learners usually in groups for certain activities in order to help each other. I always use pictures and repeat the activity where necessary to help learners understand. If it is letter formation or number, I let them write on air first while say the direction."	Support
P9	"Learners who experience challenges I sit with them on my table and show them so that they can copy what I am doing. I also make copies of extra activities to reinforce understanding to learners who complete given activities very fast."	Support
P1	"We as teachers sometimes rush children in answering the question instead of giving them time to respond, which creates frustration and fear to learners."	Time
OB	"Participant 9 from her lesson presentation which learners were actively involved because she introduced her lesson through a song related to the poster that she was using. The researcher observed that learners were given the opportunity to identify the objects through a song while pointing them from the poster."	Integration
<b>6. EDUCATION MATTERS</b>		
<b>6.1. TEACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS</b>		
P2	"Aish! There was a learner who could not speak and she was using sign language. When her mother brought her it	Knowledge and skills

	was difficult to me as a practitioner like saying: come, stand or during break to tell the learner to go and wash hands so that she can eat.”	
P3	“Sometimes it is difficult working with learners with vision problem because I have to use big print on their papers which is not easy or when I let them sit in front they are small that they cannot see easy on the chalkboard because of height.”	Knowledge and skills
P5	“Inclusive practice needs teachers to be trained to teach in an inclusive class. Workshop does not empower us to practice Inclusive Education but how to implement the curriculum provided and how to follow the daily routine. If teachers are not empowered or work-shopped to practice IE, it becomes a problem in doing it practically in class without knowledge.”	Training  Curriculum knowledge
P8	“Hee, mam! (Said this while laughing) I just started teaching Grade R from January and I am still learning.”	Knowledge
<b>7. RESOURCES</b>		
<b>7.1. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS</b>		
P4	“Hmm, I think something that I can add is that we need enough resources, play area, music corner, fantasy corner in the classroom so that learners can sometimes use these resources for better understanding of what they learn.”	Learning resources
P6	“If we have resources, we will be able to practice inclusive education.”	Resources
P7	“I think we can improvise by making our own teaching resources that can be used to teach learners and the school can also add by buying some of the resources that are needed.”	Teaching resources
P9	“I sometimes go outside with learners and collect sweets sticks so that they can use them in class for making shapes on papers with glue or build numbers or letters.”	Resources

P8	“My class does not have small writing boards where learners may practice their writing because I started teaching Grade R in January due to number of learners who were admitted, but the other classes have them.”	Resources
P9	We have CDs and DVDs for songs and stories that can be used for teaching learners especially to develop listening skills but the problem is that we do not have TV or radio to can do that.	Teaching and learning resources
OB	“The researcher observed that most Grade R classes lack resources that can be used to enhance active learning during teaching and learning while few classes have some resources but they cannot use them.”	Learning resources
<b>7.2. INFRASTRUCTURE</b>		
P4	“Classes should be big enough so that there is learning/ reading corner, fantasy area, music and other things that will be able to encourage learners to have interest in learning and coming to school.”	Big classrooms
P7	“I think in school IE is hindered by overcrowding, lack of space, our classes are not user friendly if a child uses a wheelchair he/she would not be able to move around or go to the toilet because even our toilets are not suitable for them.”	Lack space
P9	“Our classrooms are not meant for Grade R learners because they do not have space where we should keep our resources. When we introduce a theme, we should prepare the resource the day before so that when we relate the story learners should see what we are talking about and be able to touch them.”	Buildings

## APPENDIX L

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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I, **Ms Cecilia van der Walt**, hereby confirm that I took care of the editing of the dissertation of **Ms Tinyiko F Sambo** titled **THE PRACTICES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN GRADE R, NYLSTROOM CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO.**

  
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