

**EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT  
PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY FOR  
LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN  
SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT**

**by**

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**submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of**

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**in the subject**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that: “EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS’ ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT” is my own work and all the sources used have been acknowledged.

---

N.G MPYA DATE

## DEDICATION

- This work is committed to my late parents **Selinah and Joseph Shiburi**.
- To my beloved husband **Kwena Phaniel Mpya**, for his understanding, support patience and persistence, without which I would not be where I am today.
- To my children **Tshiamo and Kutlwano**, and to my grandchild **Tshimologo** for your quality time which was shared with this study but you remained patient and understanding.
- To **Shiburi's family**, my brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, most of all to **Zandile Shiburi** for being my cheer pioneer. Without your back I seem not have gone this far. May this proposition be a motivation and source of support to you all.
- To my aunts **Mrs Welheminh Baloyi, late Mrs Anna Shiburi, and Mrs Forcelyn Kekana** for acting as sources of unlimited support throughout my studies.
- In addition, I dedicate this thesis to my extended family and companions who supported and encouraged me on this academic journey. **Joyce Kgaugelo Tabane, Morane Welheminah Letsoalo, Madikela Titus Lekalakala** and **Otto Gregory Lekalakala**, I thank God for your moral support and for being an integral partner in this journey.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study explored the significance of educator's assessment practices for learners who experience barriers to learning within the senior phase in Tshwane North District. The goal of the study was to explore the challenges that affect educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning within Senior Phase. The study used the conceptual system based on the framework recommended by Hargreaves, Earl, and Schmidt (2002). The framework comprised four viewpoints which incorporate technological, cultural, political, and post-modern measurements. The model is exceptionally accommodating in explaining and justifying educator's assessment practices.

A phenomenological case study design was adopted in this study. Qualitative data collection instruments were used to gather data. The participants included 4 educators, 4 Deputy Principals, 4 Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) Coordinators, and 4 School Assessment Team (SAT) Coordinators. In addition, the other participants from District Office included the Head of District Assessment Team (DAT) and the Head of the District Level Support Team (DLST). Content analysis was utilised to dissect the data which was gathered in the study. The study revealed various barriers that hinder assessment practices when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Amongst others overcrowding, non-availability of resources, lack of training of educators in assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning, insufficient parental involvement, insufficient support from the ILST and the DLST emerged as factors which negatively affected educators' assessment practices in inclusive education classrooms. The results in this study resulted in the development of a Comprehensive Inclusive Classroom Assessment Model (CICAM) for Senior Phase secondary school educators in Tshwane North District. The researcher developed a model which responds to the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning so that their pedagogical and assessment needs are catered for adequately. The model showed the convergence of different stakeholders which are required on board for inclusive education assessment experience for educators and learners to be effective and efficient as well. It was recommended that inclusive assessment practices should be flexible and provide tailor-made assessment practices which accommodate all learners despite their diversity. In this regard it was further recommended that assessment in inclusive classrooms should be adapted to ensure

that assessment practices address the pedagogical and psychological needs of all learners in the classroom. The researcher believes that legitimate and adequate training can provide educators with clarity around what is anticipated of when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning. One of the recommendations is that teacher development and an ongoing support from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) needs to become a priority.

**Key words:** Assessment, assessment practices, assessment policies, barriers to learning, assessment techniques, classroom assessment, classroom practice, educators' beliefs, screening, identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS),

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ARG    | Assessment Reform Group  |
| ATP    | Annual Teaching Plan   |
| CA     | Continuous assessment  |
| CAPS   | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements                    |
| CAT    | Classroom assessment techniques                                |
| CICAM  | Comprehensive Inclusive Classroom Assessment Model             |
| DAT    | District Assessment Team                                       |
| DBE    | Department of Basic Education                                  |
| DBST   | District based support team                                    |
| DHET   | Department of Higher Education and Training                    |
| DLST   | District Level Support Team                                    |
| DoE    | Department of Education  |
| DoH    | Department of Health   |
| DoSD   | Department of Social Development                               |
| DP     | Deputy Principal   |
| EFL    | English First Language   |
| FET    | Further Education and Training                                 |
| GDBE   | Gauteng Department of Basic Education                          |
| GDE    | Gauteng Department of Education                                |
| HOD    | Head of Department   |
| IE     | Inclusive education  |
| ILST   | Institutional Level Support Team                               |
| ISP    | Individual Support Plan  |
| ISS    | Inclusion and Special Schools                                  |
| NCESS  | National Committee on Education Support Services               |
| NCS    | National Curriculum Statement                                  |
| NCSNET | National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training |
| NPA    | National Protocol for Assessment                               |

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| NPAQ    | National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications               |
| OBE     | Outcomes-based approach to education                           |
| PMS     | Pupil monitoring system  |
| RNCS    | Revised National Curriculum Statement                          |
| SA      | South Africa   |
| SAT     | School Assessment Team   |
| SBA     | School-Based Assessment  |
| SBST    | School-Based Support Team                                      |
| SEN     | Special Education Needs  |
| SENDA   | Special Educational Needs and Disability Act                   |
| SIAS    | Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support              |
| SNA     | Special Needs Assessment                                       |
| TND     | Tshwane North District   |
| UCT     | University of Cape Town  |
| UMALUSI | The body responsible for quality assurance of schools          |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNISA   | University of South Africa                                     |

## **CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The study examined the importance of educators' assessment practices in inclusive secondary schools in Tshwane North district. The study focused on educators' assessment practices in inclusive classrooms, challenges they face when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning, how to alleviate these challenges, support from different stakeholders and the assessment methodologies that they use to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:46) describe assessment as an activity which involves gathering and analysing learner's achievement by comparing it with the expected performance outcomes stipulated in a learning area and phase. Classroom assessment is an important dimension in education. One good thing about assessment is that it is learner centred. After assessment educators can give learner achievement feedback to learners and educators to indicate their current level of performance. Assessment feedbacks indicate what has been achieved and the outcomes or deliverables which still need attention.

Hellen (2012:2) highlighted that classroom assessment practices assist the educator to collect data about each learner's achievement. Once the information is gathered and analysed decisions about the learner's progress can be made. Hence, Mäkipää and Ouakrim-Soivio (2019:24) underscored that educators should be skilled in selecting appropriate assessment practices because assessment plays an important role in educators' work. Different types of assessments help educators to understand how learners are progressing in the learning process. The outcomes of the assessment also allow educators to adjust their teaching approach and methods of delivering content to the learners. Hamlin (2016) identified different forms of assessment. These forms of assessment are used in different phases of assessment such as the diagnostic phase assesses what learners know at the very moment before the educator introduces new content and establish the gap in content as well. Educators indulge in formative and summative assessment. Summative assessment is crucial in establishing if learners have achieved all the learning outcomes in order for them to proceed to the next level of the curriculum content. Different forms of assessment will be discussed comprehensively in Chapter Three.



Assessment is one area that is part of an educator's everyday activities. Educators are responsible for assessing learners' learning and for guiding them towards appropriate future learning. Willis and Klenowski (2018:2) opined that educators should constantly review and adjust their assessment strategies to accommodate curriculum changes and different learners in their diversity. Hence, Sewagen (2013:2) advised that all educators must have assessment aptitudes to execute assessment methodologies viably. Maluma (2009:4) in agreement argued that educators must possess effective assessment skills to deliver successful assessment activities among learners. Unfortunately, Sewagen (2013:2) found that most educators lack effective assessment knowledge and skill when evaluating learners' achievements and, in trying to improve the situation, researchers realised that educators' attitude towards classroom assessment can positively or negatively affect the way assessment is conducted in the classroom. Additionally, Looney, Cumming, Van Der Kleij and Harris (2017:8) commented that the educator's emotional, psychological, and cognitive state affects the way classroom assessment is conducted. Sewagen (2013) highlighted that research is required for a deeper understanding assessment practices and assessment skills for effective classroom assessment to take place. Lumadi (2013:1) stated that assessment practices are vital elements of classroom reform.

Classroom assessment practices are not expected to be rigid since the curriculum is also ever changing due to the changes in the demand and need for education. Knowledge is ever changing hence the educators' assessment practices should also be transformed. Learners, through assessment must be equipped with the skills which make them to be relevant human capital in the economic arena of the country. Education should produce graduates who will be armed with relevant knowledge and skills. In this regard classroom assessment practices must be tailor-made to meet the demands of the society with regards to the graduates who will come out of the education system.

Before 1994, in South Africa, some learners were excluded from the mainstream due to the policy of a separate system of education. The education system was also arranged according to racial lines, ordinary learners in the mainstream and learners experiencing barriers in an alternative system. The methods, techniques, strategies and tools that educators use to assess their learners were investigated. Lumadi (2013:1) highlighted that these assessment methods depended on the curriculum

content. This is supported by Maluma (2009:4) who argued that inclusive education practices resulted in some changes in the assessment practices. Due to the requirements of inclusive education educators had to adjust their assessment methods and practices which are helpful to learners experiencing barriers to learning. These changes resulted in extra work on educators.

Before inclusive education was implemented educators used to follow a uniform and inflexible curriculum and inflexible assessment approaches. However, with the introduction of inclusive education educators are now required to accommodate learners encountering barriers to learning. The educator is expected to identify barriers that learners experience and to give them support to a certain level. Educators are encouraged to be diverse planners, diverse facilitators, diverse assessors, and creative inventors to overcome inclusive learning challenges and to create a favourable learning environment for all learners. Educators are expected to tailor-made learning objectives and content in a manner which cater for individual differences of the learners. Educators need to address the different learning and assessment needs of all learners.

White Paper 6 make it mandatory for schools and educators to accommodate learners encountering barriers to learning in normal schools (Maluma, 2009:1). This policy leads to several challenges for both learners and educators. From the onset it was observed that learners encountering barriers to learning have challenges in coping with the integration and as a result they spend more than four years in a particular grade. Unfortunately, according to Schoeman (2012:1) several years after the government gazetted the EWP6 (2001) in terms of the National Policy Act, there has been little progress in achieving the goal since there are still many learners who are failed by the system because educators are not skilled in inclusive education assessment.

Globally, education systems are constantly undergoing change. After 1994, South Africa also experienced high educational transformation and curriculum change. Assessment was one of the focus areas in the process of change. Beets and van Louw (2005:9) highlighted that reform has been associated with continuous changes which affected classroom assessment practices. Curriculum 2005 (C2005) which was supposed to be a vehicle to drive Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in South African

schools has been revised four times since its initial implementation in 1995. Assessment proved to be one of the fundamental problem areas in attempts to implement C2005, mainly because educators were unable to assess effectively, that is, in a manner that reflected OBE practices at their schools. This ever-changing curriculum brought with it more challenges to educators.

Coetzee (2014:1) explained that several curriculum changes were put in place, each version completely replacing the previous one. The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) was introduced to make the curriculum more accessible to educators. Every subject has a CAPS document which provides details of the content and assessment criteria. The CAPS document also provides an outline of the content to be taught in each subject. Furthermore, the frequency and mode of assessments throughout the term are also clearly indicated for each subject.

With the introduction of the CAPS educators were expected to adjust their assessment practices in line with the requirements of the new curriculum. Educators were expected to implement the new curriculum in a manner which effectively caters for learners experiencing barriers to learning. This new development necessitated that new assessment strategies have to be adopted. According to Sethusha (2012:5) since the implementation of OBE educators have been trained so that they will effectively implement the new curriculum but this endeavour did not yield positive results due to the challenges experienced by educators in the teaching and learning process.

Rault-Smith (2009:7) elaborated on the theme of assessment, saying that assessment is about collecting valid evidence of learning and about a learner's needs. Assessment for learners should provide information that:

- promote efficient learning by focusing the learner's attention on what is important.
- promote retention of knowledge and transfer of learning.
- promote self-evaluation and self-monitoring in accordance with well-defined expectations and criteria.
- provide feedback about the development of learning in the individual learner.
- motivate learning in a specific learner by communicating progress, or the lack thereof.
- show evidence of achievement that can be used to get jobs, bursaries, entrance to university. ( Rault-Smith, 2009:7).

Assessment of educators should provide information that may be used to:

- provide formative and summative data about a learner's learning and attainment.
- indicate competencies acquired by a learner.
- provide diagnostic data or information to guide learning.
- assist lesson planning by providing informed feedback on the results of previous lessons.
- help to determine teaching effectiveness.
- help to determine which approaches and methods produce the desired results.
- Provide answers to the questions: 'Am I teaching the correct content? How can I teach it better?'(Rault-Smith, 2009:8).

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

Various researchers (McMillan, 2003; Alkharusi, 2011; Hamidi, 2010) reported that educators need a thorough understanding of assessment concepts, principles, tools, techniques, strategies and procedures for them to be effective in inclusive classrooms. However, the challenges faced by educators in inclusive classrooms seem not to receive the due attention which they deserve. Furthermore, the impact of inclusion on educators' assessment practices is not fully known and this has an impact on the transformation of assessment in inclusive classrooms. The interest in conducting this study started when the researcher was an educator in a secondary school in Tshwane North District and a coordinator of the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST). During the interaction with learners experiencing barriers to learning, for example, some learners were unable to read and write, the researcher realised that there were problems being experienced by different stakeholders (educators, learners, parents, and the DBE).

- The educators had a problem in assessing and supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Learners failed to move along with the pace and methods that educators use for teaching and assessing them.
- The DBE was unable to provide educators with adequate teaching material and instruments appropriate for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

- Insufficient parental involvement in children's schoolwork is also an issue in inclusive classrooms.

Most learners especially in the researcher's school and other secondary schools were underperforming in inclusive classrooms, not because they were not good at what they were doing, but because they did not receive the relevant support that they really needed, such as relevant materials and access to relevant human resource (educational psychologists and speech therapists). The main reason for the underperformance of these learners could be the assessment practices which did not accommodate learners encountering barriers to learning.

The above arguments supported by Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:201) who indicated that barriers to learning do not originate from the deficit within the learner only, but also within the education context. It is clearly indicated that the problem that learners encounter in learning are because of inadequate support and accommodation given to learner diversity. In view of this scenario, Bothma et al. (2000:201) postulated that the education system must be flexible.

The researcher has realised that during the past years, curriculum differentiation was emphasised in primary schools more than in secondary schools. Reality is that learners experiencing barriers enrolled in a primary school progressed to secondary school even though they had not passed their grade seven examinations. The problem is that when these learners reach secondary school, they were confronted with many challenges, such as assessment practice that educators use, the methods of teaching that they apply, and the rigid curriculum which did not cater for all learner needs. It is important that the reason for their challenges be understood and ways of overcoming them be explored.

The above issues indicated that the education system is facing problems, especially with the assessment practices that educators use in accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning especially in secondary schools.

### **1.3 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM**

Assessment practices and processes at secondary schools are themselves barriers to the progression of learners. It appears to be difficult to assess learners in inclusive classrooms in secondary schools because educators are not qualified to handle the

problems experienced by learners. The classes are too large; hence, sufficient attention cannot be paid to individual learners and educators often have high expectations and standards of performance for learners experiencing barriers to learning. They may be taught age-appropriate content which is not part of the curriculum (Rault-Smith, 2009:7).

The above challenges have caused confusion to educators, learners, and parents. The inadequate in-depth skills training for these educators and lack of support services disempowered them from rendering a qualitative assessment and deliver quality education for all.

The researcher believes that contemporary learners should acquire different skills and competencies for them to be prosperous. Therefore, educators' assessment practices play an important role in equipping learners with adequate skills. Educators' assessment practices also help them to understand if learners are progressing as expected by the curriculum. Educators should review their assessment practices and revise them so that they reflect the expected deliverables.

Educators, who lack necessary assessment skills, cannot appropriately and effectively support learners. The problem for this study revolves around educator's assessment practices for learners encountering barriers to learning in secondary school classes in the Senior Phase (i.e., Grades 7–9). Gasant (2002:4) was very concerned about the issue of assessment. The findings indicated that secondary schools also gave attention to learners experiencing barriers. The learners acquire information from written material and the educator's oral lesson delivery as well as demonstrate knowledge acquisition by writing tests and examinations. These activities make it difficult for learners to achieve some of the learning objectives. Accordingly, Gasant (2002) noted that there is a lack of appropriate teaching methods, intervention programmes and assessment strategies that result in effective learning for the learners.

Department of Education (DoE) (2002b:105) stressed that the process of addressing barriers to learning included assessment. Through assessment, the needs and problems can be identified and understood, so that appropriate strategies can be developed to address these needs and problems. The DoE also indicated that educators' and parents' insufficient knowledge for identifying barriers to learning

prohibits timeous identification of learners experiencing barriers. Rault-Smith (2009:1) pointed out that assessment is the most valuable tool an educator can have when facing the task of teaching learners. Good assessment can make an educator a great classroom practitioner and can help learners to achieve excellent outcomes. Rault-Smith further explained that assessment is intended to inform teaching and to help the educator to deliver effective lessons and the learner to learn. This, however, showed that without relevant and effective assessment practices, educators experienced problems in accommodating all learners in their classrooms. This study explored educators' assessment practices in inclusive education classrooms in secondary schools.

## **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.4.1 Aim of the Study**

The primary goal for the study was to identify challenges that affect educators' assessment practices for learners encountering barriers to learning in the Senior Phase and to explore ways on how educators address these challenges in their assessment practices.

### **1.4.2 Objectives of the Study**

The secondary objectives addressed in the study were:

- To assess the assessment practices that educators use in their inclusive classrooms.
- To critically analyse assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary school.
- To examine the challenges educators experience in assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To analyse the assessment techniques used in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To examine how stakeholders support educators in addressing assessment related challenges they are confronted with.
- To critically examine the impact of inclusion on educators' assessment practices.
- To develop a model for alleviating the challenges faced by educators who assess learners experiencing barriers to learning.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The critical research question was formulated as follows:

- What is the importance of educators' assessment practices in the assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in Senior Phase?

The following were the research sub-questions:

- Which assessment practices educators use in their inclusive classrooms?
- Which assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary school?
- Which challenges do educators experience in assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning?
- Which assessment techniques are used in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning?
- How do stakeholders support educators in addressing assessment related challenges they are confronted with?
- What is the impact of inclusion on educators' assessment practices?
- Which model is required for alleviating the challenges faced by educators who assess learners experiencing barriers to learning?

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Hargreaves, Earl, and Schmidt's (2002) model guided the researcher in conducting the study. The model comprises of four perspectives (technological, cultural, political, and postmodern). These dimensions are used to describe, discuss, and justify educators' assessment practices. The model helps a lot in enhancing the comprehension of the factors that hinder educators' assessment practices. Furthermore, it offered a critical examination of the methods or strategies used for assessment as well as the justification for adopting certain assessment practices over others. The model highlighted that assessment practices comprises of a reflection of how effective is educators' assessment in enhancing teaching and learning (Lumadi, 2013:219).



### **1.6.1 Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education (IE) evolved and emerged as a form of education practice which embraces learners of different cognitive, social, physical and psychological abilities in the same school and classroom (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2015:1). In 1994 the Salamanca Statement postulated that all learners should be accommodated in inclusive classrooms. Inclusive education first evolved as a form of special education. Initially, the medical model was used to guide the implementation process. The medical model viewed disability as a pathology and problem. The perspectives emerging from the medical model necessitated the need to separate learners experiencing barriers to learning from the setting, activities, supports and curriculum available to other learners (Kafle, 2014). The medical model of disability was however, segregatory and discriminatory. In view of this weakness, in late 1960s academics proposed a position which advocated for an inclusive education practice which will enable learners experiencing barriers to learning to be educated in normal schools. France and Canada prioritised the integration of learners in public schools, but separate schools remained in existence (Thormazet, 2009).

United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO) (2017:7) described inclusive education as an education model which helps learners to overcome learning barriers. In this regard inclusive education increases the capacity of educators to make a meaningful impact to all learners. According to Phasha (2010) inclusive education provides equal educational benefits to learners despite their differences. Inclusive education ensured that learners are not excluded from the mainstream because of any form of learning barrier. Norwich (2013:3) identified nine key themes in inclusive education. These included, not leaving any learner out; accepting and valuing all learners regardless of their diversity; providing an enabling environment which allows all learners any opportunity to be involved in classroom activities and enjoy school life; and enhancing equal opportunities for all learners. From the definitions it is metaphorically and categorically stated that inclusive education caters for all learners despite their challenges to learning. Inclusive education can succeed if educators or the education system provide support and services which enable the learners to be successful in their quest for knowledge and development (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013; Artiles & Kozleski, 2016).

### **1.6.2 Inclusive Education Assessment Practices**

According to Nxumalo (2007) several educators do not have adequate knowledge on how to implement different types of assessments which are needed to cater for learners experiencing barriers. Pillay (2011) highlighted that educators do not cover all assessment standards when assessing their learners and this contribute to learners' failure since they are not exposed to all forms of assessments. As a result of insufficient knowledge of the different modes of assessment several educators administer summative assessment more than formative assessment (Nxumalo, 2007). The use of tests only disadvantaged learners who are incompetent in writing tests and provided advantages to those who are competent in tests. Vandeyar and Killen (2007:3) noted that educators have challenges in implementing alternative assessment and several educators failed to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. In corroboration, Ramsuran (2006) reported that South African educators were failing to address the learning needs of learners because educators had insufficient training in the NCS and CAPS assessment systems and practices.

Several studies also revealed that most educators in South Africa preferred summative assessment at the expense of formative assessment. Limited use of the formative assessment practices may be due to inadequate knowledge about the practice. Kuze (2009) conducted a study which highlighted that SAT members, educators and learners lacked knowledge of what formative assessment entails. This could be the reason most educators prefer summative assessment instead of formative assessment. Formative assessment required great effort and commitment and it will be time-consuming hence most educators do not apply it as required (Metzler & Woessman, 2010). All in all, empirical studies have revealed that formative assessment is rarely used by educators. Kuze (2009) and Metzeler and Woessman (2010) identified the factors which hindered educators from using formative assessment in the inclusive classrooms. The factors included lack of knowledge, inadequate training and limited pedagogical resources. Furthermore, it is highlighted that most learners do not study on their own because they just want to be spoon fed by the educators hence formative assessment has been difficult to implement. Over and above all, educators are hooked up to the traditional methods of assessment and they do not want to accept change and implement alternative assessment strategies in the classrooms.

Metzeler and Woessman (2010) noted that educators seem to be more inclined to summative assessment at the expense of the more progressive and helpful alternative formative assessment practices. Formative assessment is very important in effective classroom assessment practices. In view of this, William (2011:51) proposed five strategies which can promote the utilisation of formative assessment practices in inclusive classrooms. According to William (2011) educators can make use of the formative assessment by practising the following classroom practices:

- Educators should share and clarify the learning criteria with their learners.
- Learners should be engaged in discussions, formal and informal oral and written activities. The aim should be to gather evidence of learning.
- Educators should provide learners with immediate constructive feedback so that they recognised their errors and learn from these errors.
- Educators should also utilise brilliant learners to teach others who are experiencing barriers to learning through peer driven lessons or classroom activities.
- Learners should be empowered and become owners of their own learning.

The CAPS assessment policy considered assessment as the core feature of teaching and learning. Therefore, educators have recognised the need to plan for inclusiveness in assessment. Educators should learn and understand learners' different capabilities.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.7.1 Research Paradigm**

In this study interpretivism and constructivism paradigms regulated the qualitative research. Considering views from different scholars, constructivism allowed the researcher to make conclusions after analysing perceptions and experiences of the participants. According to Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah (2016:9), constructivism as a philosophical paradigm is more aligned to qualitative research techniques where the generalisation of findings is more dependent on personal experience which is not acquired or imposed from outside. Unlike positivism, constructivism does not have a predefined dependent or independent variable.

### **1.7.2 The Qualitative Approach**

The researcher utilised an interpretive paradigm and social constructivism as a methodological framework for guiding the study. The key focus was on understanding educators' views and experiences. The study gathered the views of the participants about the importance of educators' assessment practices (Scott, 2005:22; Creswell, 2013:24–25). Precisely the study adopted a phenomenological research tradition (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:108; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormiston, 2013:5; Creswell, 2012:50). The qualitative methods were appropriate for understanding educators' assessment practices.

### **1.7.3 Research Design**

The researcher utilised a case study design to explore the phenomenon investigated. This design was adopted because it can effectively capture the educators' experiences. Data was gathered through interviews, document analysis and observation methods. Yin (2017) stated that in the case study design, the findings are the basis of the data collected with a focus on the unique features of an individual and/or organisation.

### **1.7.4 Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study included all the senior phase educators, school management team members at the four schools involved in the study (N = 86) and district officials (N = 25). Sampling is a method of selecting participants from the target population (Maree, 2007:79). A sample was selected from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Four secondary schools in Tshwane North District were selected. Purposive sampling was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling method was used to select 16 participants from the four schools (n = 16) and 2 district education officials (n = 2). All in all, the sample include 18 participants (n =18).

### **1.7.4 Data Collection Methods**

Qualitative methods were used to acquire useful information needed to draw conclusions in a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:351). Three methods were triangulated so as to collect sufficient data which can enhance the trustworthiness of

the study. These methods are document analysis, observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews.

#### 1.7.4.1 Documents analysis

The researcher collected peer reviewed documents related to assessment processes. The documents included DBE assessment policies that educators and DBE officials use when assessing learners, books, journals, newspapers, articles, internet, dissertations, thesis and circulars which were relevant to the study.

#### 1.7.4.2 Observation

Observation involves looking at participants' behaviour and interactions and it does not involve verbal exchanges with the participants (Maree, 2007:83). Data collected from observations provided the researcher with sufficient information. The researcher collected data by observing assessment activities processes and procedures. Observation offered the researcher an undiluted set of information (Flick, 2009:282; Engelbrecht, Eloff, Lomofsky, Masipa, Oswald & Swart, 2003:17).

#### 1.7.4.3 Interviews

During an interview, a researcher is involved in a dialogue with a participant who provides information the researcher needs to address the research objectives (Scott, 2005:116). Interviews were conducted with educators, Deputy Principals, ILST Coordinators, and School Assessment Team (SAT) Coordinators. In-depth interviews were conducted with two DBE officials from the district being the Head of DAT and the Head of the DLST who deal directly with assessment methods, tools, techniques which help educators in assisting learners experiencing learning barriers.

### **1.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The analysis of data is a significant dimension of a qualitative study (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2009:465). The researcher analysed the data so as to make sense of the data (Engelbrecht et al., 2003:18). The content analysis method was used in the study. Kumar (2011:278) noted that content analysis is utilised when analysing qualitative data.

## **1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

To ensure trustworthiness the researcher employed triangulation. Triangulation is the use of different methods to gain in-depth insights about a phenomenon (Shenton, 2004). The study triangulated interviews, document analysis and observation to collect data and ensure trustworthiness. Shenton (2004) identified credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and authenticity as strategies for ensuring trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is ideal for ensuring rigour and quality in qualitative research (Mahlo, 2011:97).

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In conducting the study, moral principles were observed to uphold the human rights of the participants (Makhado, 2002:120). Effort was made not to harm the participants and treat them in a respectful manner. All the protocols for conducting a study were observed before the study commenced. The protocols included obtaining ethical clearance from the university (Appendix A) and permission to conduct the study from the Gauteng DBE (Appendix B and C). The research involved people hence issues of consent, confidentiality, privacy, and withdrawal from participating in the study were addressed by the researcher.

## **1.11 ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY**

The researcher's assumptions were captured as follows:

- Educators face challenges in secondary schools concerning their assessment practices for learners in Senior Phase.
- Educators have a problem in assessing and supporting learners in inclusive classrooms.
- Learners do not cope with the pace and methods that educators use for teaching and assessing them.
- The DBE is unable to provide educators adequate support as required for learners in inclusive classrooms.
- Parental involvement in learners' assessment is lacking and parents do not help their children with schoolwork.

## **1.12 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to add value to assessment practices that educators use when assessing learners experiencing barriers. The findings from the study can enable educators, school administrators, DBE and policy makers to formulate educational policies to improve the quality of classroom assessment especially when assessing learners. In conducting the study, the researcher endeavoured to make both the government and the DBE in particular aware of the challenges that educators experience in assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning and the frustrations that learners experienced when they are unable to meet the requirements stipulated by the policies.

The study was also undertaken to develop a framework to support educators in improving inclusive assessment practices. In this regard the study endeavoured to influence the development of theory and practice leading to effective educational interventions. The findings may also lead to improvements in stakeholders support in alleviating challenges faced by educators when assessing learners.

The findings gleaned from the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the assessment methods that educators utilise to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning. Considerable research has been done on how to help educators in primary school to accommodate these learners but there is little research on educators' assessment practices in the Senior Phase. The researcher provided suggestions and recommendations for improving the educators' assessment practices.

## **1.13 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Delimitations highlight boundaries of the study and the researcher can control them (Creswell, 2016). One of the delimitations is the selection of four secondary schools in Tshwane North District. The population used for this study was very small. The target population had to be managed and the researcher selected few participants who met the inclusion requirements.

## **1.14 LIMITATIONS**

Baron (2010) and Creswell (2016) suggested that limitations of a research study are factors that a researcher has no control over. The study involved four schools in Tshwane North District; findings will be mostly applicable and beneficial to the four

schools involved in the study. Trustworthiness was used to ensure that the study is credible, authentic, and transferable to other contexts.

## **1.15 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

### **1.15.1 Assessment**

Barkley and Major (2016:24) described assessment as appraisal of the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that learners have acquired, most often as the results of learning in their courses. Assessment involves making decisions about assessment, data collection and communicating with stakeholders (Cordiner, 2011:1). Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:46) described assessment as the process assessing, measuring and interpreting learners' achievement. Assessment provides feedback to learners and educators. The researcher views assessment as an endeavour of collecting, measuring and analysing evidence about a learner's achievement in a learning area.

### **1.15.2 Assessment Methods**

Assessment methods are techniques for collecting information in order to decide the level at which learners have achieved the learning outcomes. These methods are learner-centred (DoE, 2002b:4) for example self-assessment and peer assessment.

### **1.15.3 Assessment Practices**

Kipkorir (2015:10) maintained that assessment practice is a concept which includes several aspects such as educators' beliefs, perceptions, and values. In agreement, Singh, Lebar, Kepol, Rahman, Kurotol and Mukhtar (2017:30) supported the above description by highlighting that classroom assessment practice includes an extensive range of approaches. The assessment practices for South African educators are guided by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2002c). In this study assessment practices were contextualised as those alternative oral and written tasks or activities which educators administered to accommodate all learners when conducting baseline, diagnostic, criterion-referenced, formative and summative assessments which will lead to learners' progress.

### **1.15.4 Assessment Strategies**

Assessment strategies are plan of actions that are held in the classroom that provide educators with insights regarding what learners know best. Maguvhe (n.d:43)



indicated that assessment strategies can be considered direct or indirect. They are direct in instances where a learner's behaviour is measured or assessed and indirect assessment strategies include things such as surveys, focus groups and similar activities that lead or contribute to the gathering of impressions or opinions about a programme or its intended learning goals. According to Australian *Capital Territory Government* (ACTG) (2011:11-12) examples of assessment strategies are peer assessment, self-assessment, and portfolio assessments among others. The study adopted Samer's (2019:35) definition. According to Samer (2019) assessment strategies are those assessments that reflect the achievement of the learners and measure them in real situation, which makes learners engage in meaningful and useful tasks.

#### **1.15.5 Assessment Techniques**

Assessment techniques are also referred as assessment strategies (Angelo & Cross, 2002). Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:59) argued that assessment techniques included several forms of assessment Landsberg et al. (2016:59) highlighted few examples of assessment techniques, e.g., Portfolio assessment and checklists. In this study, assessment techniques encompassed formative evaluation tools that help educators to measure learners' achievements.

#### **1.15.6 Barriers to Learning**

Barriers to learning are internal or external impediments that have a negative impact on classroom interactions (Erradu, 2012:10). Mpya (2007:8) defined barriers to learning as factors which lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity. Extrinsic barriers emerge exterior to the learner and affect learning (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, and 2009:2). In South Africa the most preferred term is 'learners who experience barriers to learning' and this is term which adopted throughout the study instead of barriers to learning.

#### **1.15.7 Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements**

The CAPS is an acronym for Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (Variend, 2011:1). Throughout this study, CAPS was perceived as a curriculum document which guided and directed the education stakeholders, educators and learners' classroom discourses and assessment practices.

### **1.15.8 Classroom Assessment**

Classroom assessment is the method of measuring and evaluating learners' achievements. The assessment can be oral or written (Sethusha, 2012:11). In this study the researcher conceptualised and contextualised classroom assessment multidimensional process for obtaining information about learners' understanding of the learning content. It involves various activities including, developing assessment methods and performance measures, among others.

### **1.15.9 Classroom Practice**

Classroom practice refers to the behaviour and repeated way of conducting effective and efficient classroom assessment by the educator (Columba, 2001:372). In this study, classroom practice was operationalised as a process which involves the nature of interaction and collaboration between educators and learners.

### **1.15.10 Inclusive Education**

Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2016:8) described inclusive education as a comprehensive teaching framework that accommodated all children in their diversity. Kotele (2002:21) explained that inclusive education is a pedagogical approach which accommodates all learners. All children attend a regular school, and their diverse needs are met and accommodated. In this study, inclusion implies permitting all learners to take part completely within the assessment framework and giving them extra learning support for them to maximise their potential.

### **1.15.11 Learner**

South African School Act (SASA 1996) and Scott (2005:24) defined a learner as any person who is receiving education in any context. In this study, a learner was perceived as any school going child who attended classes daily in order to receive education.

### **1.15.12 Learning Strategies**

Learning strategies are techniques which enhances a learner's ability to learn and complete assessments independently (Gasant, 2002:79). In the context of this study, learning strategies include activities done by learners to enhance acquisition of knowledge in a more effective and efficient way.

### **1.15.13 Secondary School**

Nkosi (2003:30–31) described a “secondary school” as “any school that mainly focuses on learners in the junior and secondary phases of education, that is, in grades eight to twelve”. On the other hand, the term secondary school alludes to a place where learning takes place and is also commonly known as a high school. In the context of this study a secondary school is an institution which enrolled learners from grade 8 to 12.

### **1.15.14 Senior Phase**

Tee (2015:3) defined Senior Phase as learning which takes place in the final stages of compulsory education and beyond at around 15-18 years of age. Authors such as Du Toit (2016:12); Van Niekerk and Piennar (2016:350); Wilmot and Irwin (2015:138) and Mudau and Nkopodi (2015:128) described Senior Phase as a group of learners between the ages 13-15 years. In the context of this study Senior phase comprises of a group of learners between 13-15 years of age in Grade 7-9.

## **1.16 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

The chapter provided the introduction and reasons for conducting the study. The chapter also clarifies the key concepts in the study and outlined the research methodology. The structure of the final thesis was also provided.

Chapter Two reviewed literature on inclusive education practices. Views of different scholars on inclusive education and the challenges faced by educators during assessment were discussed.

Chapter Three provided the theoretical framework of this study. The researcher also discussed the principles of assessment, assessment method, assessment techniques, classroom assessment and assessment policies in South Africa. Effective assessment strategies for assisting and supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning were presented.

Chapter Four provided an outline of the research methodology.

Chapter Five analysed the research data and discuss the findings which support and answer the research question.

Chapter Six summarised the key findings, suggestions for further research, recommendations, and conclusion.

### **1.17 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter presented the research background about the importance of assessment practices of educators. Specifically, the researcher stated the objectives determining the current practices of educators in their classrooms, support from different stakeholders and the assessment methods that they use to assist learners experiencing barriers. The research problem, research design and methodology and a clarification of terms used in this research was done in this chapter. The next chapter focused on a review of literature on inclusive education experiences and practices in selected countries around the globe and South Africa in particular.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter One, the introduction and context to the study was provided. The focus of Chapter Two was on providing the definitions of inclusive education from different authors. Furthermore, it discussed the barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms and challenges faced by educators when assessing learners in inclusive classroom contexts. The chapter also provided inclusive practices and experiences from different countries as well as the South African experiences. Finally, this chapter discussed the ways in which different stakeholders support educators in addressing assessment challenges in inclusive classroom.

### **2.2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Empirical and theoretical literature related to inclusive education was reviewed. Points of agreement and disagreement were explored and discussed to highlight the gaps in knowledge as well as establish what is already known about the topic.

#### **2.2.1 CAPS Assessment vis-a-vis Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education (IE) evolved and emerged as a form of education practice which embraces learners of different cognitive, social, physical and psychological abilities in the same school and classroom (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & van Deventer, 2015:1). Anderson and Boyle (2015) highlighted that the World Conference on Education for All criticised the current global assessment practices because they excluded several learners from accessing education. Resolutions from the World Conference proposed that educational practices should be flexible, implement tailor-made assessment practices and teaching methods which accommodate all learners so that they will successfully access education in their diversity. Furthermore, in 1994 the Salamanca Statement proposed that it was ideal for all learners to receive education in inclusive classrooms. Inclusive education first evolved as special education and the medical model of disability was used to guide implementation processes. The medical model viewed disability as a pathology and problem. The perspectives emerging from the medical model necessitated the need to separate learners experiencing barriers to learning from learners other gifted learners (Kafle, 2014).

The medical model of disability was however, segregatory and discriminatory. In view of this weakness, in late 1960s academics proposed a position which advocated for an inclusive education practice which would enable learners experiencing barriers to learning to be educated in regular schools. The “principle of normalisation” was introduced in northern Europe (Nirje, 1969). The pattern of normal whereby people with disabilities and those without disabilities co-existed was advocated for. This principle was applied in European schools. France and Canada prioritised the inclusive education in public schools, but separate schools remained in existence (Thormazet, 2009). In early stages of integration learners experiencing barriers were only combined with the rest when they were able to compete in the same educational programs as their peers who do not have any barrier (Abosi & Koay, 2008; Hotulainen & Takala, 2014).

Kurth, Miller, Toews, Thompson, Cortes, Hari Dahal et al. (2018) noted that inclusive education and inclusion are terms which emerged to differentiate practices in the contexts where learners experiencing barriers to learning were accommodated. UNESCO (2017:7) stated that inclusive education helps to overcome barriers by placing all learners in general education classes. In this regard inclusive education is an approach which “strengthens[s] the capacity of the educator to reach out to all learners.” According to Phasha (2010) the main aim of inclusive education is to provide equal educational benefits to all learners despite their differences. Inclusive education ensures that not even one learner is excluded because of any form of barrier. Norwich (2013:3) identified nine key themes in inclusive education. These include, not leaving any learner out; accepting and valuing all learners regardless of their diversity; provide an enabling environment which gives all learners any opportunity to participate in the classroom and enjoy school life; and enhancing equal opportunities for all learners. From the definitions it is metaphorically and categorically stated that inclusive education caters for all learners despite their challenges to learning. Inclusive education can succeed if educators or the education system provide support and services which enable the learners to be successful in their quest for knowledge and development (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013; Artiles & Kozleski, 2016).

All in all, IE is an educational philosophy guided by social justice philosophy. Its main goal is to decrease classroom-based disparities and exclusions to embrace learners in a conducive classroom environment. IE is valuable in the education system because

it reduces educational inequality; it breaks the cycle of disadvantages experienced by learners and will improve the learners' skills and innovation capabilities (Snow & Powell, 2012; OECD, 2010). Furthermore, IE assists learners and educators to improve their degree of tolerance and value of differences.

CAPS assessment policy clearly indicates that educators' assessment is the core teaching activity. Because of this clause in the curriculum statement an educator has to recognise and plan to deal with inclusiveness in the classrooms. Therefore, educators should understand the different capabilities of learners.

### **2.2.2 Barriers to Learning in an Inclusive Classroom Context**

Contemporary educators daily are confronted with learners experiencing barriers to learning (George & George, 2016). Barriers to learning encompassed a plethora of difficulties and challenges which are internal or external to the learner. These challenges adversely prevented the learner from accessing learning in the most effective manner possible (DoE, 2010). Kurth et al. (2018) defined barriers as any factors which promoted inclusive education for some learners but also excluded other learners. In this regard, assessment procedures that curtailed the learners' educational advancement or advanced isolationist and exclusionary practices which were a barrier to learning as well. Most educators in inclusive pedagogical contexts do not have adequate training for providing expert assistance to learners experiencing barriers. According to Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2002:178) educators lack adequate training which can ensure equality and quality education for all learners. Zwane and Malale (2018) argued that educators are often not adequately trained or supported to effectively assess learners experiencing barriers to learning. Mahlo (2011:161) highlighted that most educators in inclusive schools needed intensive training for them to function effectively in inclusive classrooms through providing the learners with the support they needed to do well in their studies.

Despite the inadequacy of the education system to provide learners with adequate support there are other barriers which are worth to consider in inclusive contexts. The barriers which learners faced daily are a stumbling block towards effective learning.

The main barrier experienced by most learners is the curriculum. The curriculum content and medium of instruction are rigid (DoE, 2010). An inflexible curriculum does

not accommodate individual differences among learners, and this had an impact on effective learning in inclusive classrooms (Motitswe, 2012:39; Zwane & Malale, 2018). An all-encompassing curriculum had some adverse effects towards inclusive education because of insufficient learning materials and rigid assessment methods. The appropriate remedy will be to adapt the curriculum in line with learner needs and the promotion of learner centeredness should be a priority to alleviate the barriers learners experiencing difficulties are confronted with. In most cases learners experiencing barriers fail to cope with the demands of the rigid curriculum because the curriculum has extensive content which is demanding for them to cope with. Therefore, the curriculum does not address the learners' individual needs (Timmons, 2010).

In view of the challenges faced by learners, inclusive education can be successful if it is implemented by focusing and considering the unique context of each school (Menzies, 2008). It is also essential for educators to demonstrate the value of participation by addressing the disadvantaged learners' needs (Shuttleworth, 2012). Most public schools have overcrowded classrooms. Due to this overcrowding most learners experiencing barriers to learning are affected negatively due to inadequate individual educator attention offered to the learners (Materechera, 2014). Overcrowded classrooms are a barrier because individual learner support cannot be provided as required by these learners.

Research conducted in Australia identified several barriers in the implementation of IE. Connolley and Hausstatter (2009) and Graham and Slee (2008) noted that one of the barriers was lack of a precise definition of IE. The lack of a universal definition had led to contradictory practices among educators. The other barrier was related to the attitudes of educators. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found out that the attitudes of educators are significantly linked with the success or failure of IE.

Therefore, successful assessment in inclusive classrooms required transformation of educators' attitude (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Smyth, 2013). Lack of resources influenced the attitude of educators towards IE as well. In agreement, Boyle, and Topping (2012) noted that educators all over the world complained about lack of resources which effectively supported inclusive education classroom activities. Furthermore, educator training was also perceived as a barrier to IE, hence, Forlin,



Chambers, Loreman, Deppeler, and Sharma (2013:5) argued that educators need better preparation for inclusive education.

It is worrisome to note that those learners experiencing barriers to learning in Africa still face barriers when they try to access education (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2012:1). In South Africa learning had resulted in exclusion of learners experiencing barriers in accessing adequate education EWP6 (DoE, 2001). South Africa then adopted an inclusive education policy (commonly called the EWP6) to address barriers to learning. Inclusive education initiatives supported the curriculum adaptations. Educators are responsible for providing instruction which reduced barriers and meet the diversity needs of learners (Dalton et al., 2012:2). Ashman (2015) in corroboration with Dalton et al. (2012) maintained that educators are the core players in assessment therefore they should be adequately supported and trained in order to enhance assessment practices which accommodated learners with diverse needs within the inclusive classroom context. Furthermore, educators should effectively teach learners with diverse learning styles and needs through utilising effective teaching methods which addresses the different needs of the learners.

Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:363) stated that all schools enrol learners with diverse needs. Some educators are unaware of the different needs of these learners. Some learners are able to achieve certain outcomes easily, but others may require more time. In view of this, the aim of assessment should be *to improve* learners' performance and not merely to *audit* it. Landsberg et al. (2016:47) asserted that the purpose of assessing learning is to understand how effectively or successfully the learner has acquired knowledge. Such knowledge will help the educator to design appropriate strategies for effective learner support. Erradu (2012:10) described learning barriers as obstacles which prevent a learner from accessing learning material adequately.

### **2.3 A BIRD'S EYE VIEW ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES**

Universally, all governments agree that education is a right to all children despite their physical and cognitive diversity. Inclusive education systems, that is, policies and practices differ from one country to another (D'alessio & Watkins, 2009). However, it appeared that there are some similarities in the implementation of inclusive education

in different countries. According to Watkins (2007, 2009) inclusive education has been provided through two forms of education, that is, general mainstream and special education form.

All countries around the globe have adopted inclusive education policies (Kuyini & Desai, 2007:104). Each country interpreted and provided inclusive education in its own unique way. Mostly, inclusive education has been implemented around the globe in a manner which influenced the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. An overview of inclusive education implementation in some countries in Europe, other continents and Africa was briefly presented and lessons for South Africa were highlighted.

### **2.3.1 Inclusive Education Practices in Australia**

The meaning of the term inclusive education (IE) initially exclusively focused on disability and later evolved to encompass education to all learners (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). IE was adopted at first to provide education to learners experiencing barriers. The Melbourne Declaration (2008:6) outlined two goals of education; namely, to promote equity and excellence to make Australian learners to be creative and informed citizens. Australia lacked an explicit legal framework which supported the learners' rights to inclusive education; however, Australia had some legislations and policies which ensured that learners received inclusive education.

Willis and Klenowski (2018:1) pointed out that educators utilised both formative and summative assessment practices. Classroom assessment activities included both traditional and adaptive assessments. Therefore, educators provided assessment activities which cater for all learners. This practice was supported by Sebate (2011:85) who argued that educators should treat all learners equally and fairly. Willis and Klenowski (2018:2) added that for effective inclusive education, educators should give valid, reliable, and equal assessment opportunities to all learners. Australian educators evaluated and moderated the classroom assessment as well as adjust assessment activities to accommodate all learner needs.

### **2.3.2 Inclusive Education Practices in England**

In England, the legal framework prohibited discrimination and supported inclusive education. Lauchlan and Greig (2015) stated that inclusive education in England had

been heavily influenced by the country's legislative and political environment. The Warnock Report (DES, 1978) provided recommendation which were used to draw out the 1981 Education Act. The 1981 Education Act influenced the shift from special education to Special Education Needs (SENs). The education system moved from the integration perspective towards the implementation of the inclusion perspective. In England, inclusive education in its fullest development was perceived as adapting educational provisions to cater for diverse learners. Furthermore, the 1981 legislation proposed a more inclusive model of education which accommodated diverse and individualised learner needs in mainstream contexts. All in all, the Act promoted a more positive inclusive view to learning.

In 1997, the English government promulgated the inclusive education legal instruments (SENDA; DfES, 2001). These pieces of legislations were created to facilitate a greater commitment towards learners with Special Educational Needs (SENs) in regular schools. The SENDA emphasised the idea that all educators are SEN educators. The significance and need for inclusive education was reinforced by the Every Child Matters (ECM) legislation in 2004 (DfES, 2004). These legislative measures facilitated changes in the inclusive education practices.

### **2.3.3 Inclusive Education Practices in Sweden**

Implementation of inclusive education in Sweden is similar to the implementation and practices in South Africa. The Swedish government initially adopted a medical perspective of disability and barriers to learning but later on adopted the social intervention perspective of barriers to learning. The social model supported the view that barriers to learning emanated from people and environment interactions (Booth, 2005:14). This implied that the pedagogical, systemic and physical environment have an effect on the learning process. The environments which have an impact on the progress of learners included education policies, traditions, infrastructure, socio-economic status and cultures among others. Sweden abandoned the concept of special schools and adopted a policy of integrating all learners experiencing barriers to learning in the society and school systems. The inclusive schools were referred as "comprehensive schools" or "common schools." All schools were expected by the legal system to be inclusive (Flem & Keller, 2000:198). Despite progress on policy formulation around inclusive education, the aspirations of inclusive education in

Sweden had not been fully met. Persson (2008:342) argued that the goal of IE in Sweden had failed to match the developments in practice in the schools. In corroboration, Jerlinder, Danermark and Gill (2010:4) maintained that there is a mismatch between inclusive education theory and practices at school level.

### **2.3.4 Inclusive Education Practices in Ghana**

At first inclusive education in Ghana focused on specific needs of learners. In recent years inclusive education in Ghana developed in a manner which was perceived as a process of ensuring educational fairness for learners experiencing barriers to learning. Different views emerged in the implementation of inclusive education in Ghana. Sharma, Forlin, Marella and Jitoko (2016) argued that IE should lead to the change of the conventional classroom so that it is equipped to cater for learners facing or experiencing barriers to learning. The other view was that IE implies creating a school which accommodates minority groups such as refugees, learners in rural communities, orphans and other disadvantaged learners. This view emphasised the social and economic nature of learners (Ashman, 2015; UNICEF, 2011). South Africa is more aligned to the view of Sharma et al. (2016) rather than on the perspective adopted by Ashman (2015) and UNICEF (2011). The policy makers and educationists in the South African context should also be mindful of considering the integration of disadvantaged people and communities in the inclusive education process. Learners in the rural communities experienced a substantial number of barriers to education as compared to learners in the privileged urban environments.

### **2.3.5 Inclusive Education Practices in Zimbabwe**

Mutepfa, Mpofu and Chataika (2007) noted that IE in Zimbabwe involved elimination of barriers to learning. The practice of IE also involved the learners' and their family's participation in regular classroom activities and meeting unique needs of the learners. The Zimbabwe School Psychological Services and Special Education (SPS & SE) support schools in implementing IE practices. In addition, SPS & SE provide in-service training and support to improve the effectiveness of educators. Zimbabwe lacks legislation for inclusive education; however, there are some policies which promote the implementation of IE. There is no policy which legally obliges the government to provide IE. This is a weakness inherent in the Zimbabwean inclusive education policy;

hence there could not be any form of meaningful inclusive educational services for learners in the country.

On the contrary, the EWP6 (DoE, 2001) in South Africa makes inclusive education mandatory and the nitty-gritties of how to implement or provide inclusive education are clearly stipulated in black and white. Despite, the lack of a mandatory regulatory framework for inclusive education in the country schools are required to provide equal access to education for all learners. Schools which refused to enrol a learner due to disability will face disciplinary action.

Learners are exposed to a common curriculum at all grades regardless of ability. This requirement indicated that the Zimbabwean education system had a rigid curriculum which does not cater for learners' individual differences. Hence, it is quite clear that the system had created some barriers to learners experiencing barriers to learning. The Zimbabwean education system adopted the medical model of inclusive education.

Zimbabwe had adopted four forms of providing inclusive education curriculum. The curriculum options for supporting learners experiencing barriers include locational inclusion, inclusion with partial withdrawal and unplanned inclusion (Mnkandla & Mataruse, 2002; Mpofu, 2001). A school can combine different forms of inclusive education when accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning. Locational inclusion catered for learners with severe disabilities. These learners attended ordinary schools and they are taught in secluded special rooms within the school. This type of curriculum catered for learners with physical disabilities. More importantly, locational inclusion provides access to basic education to all children in schools. Inclusion with partial withdrawal is a learning situation in which learners are taught reading and mathematics in separate classrooms and they attend regular inclusive classrooms for the other subjects. Learners with hearing and visual impairment for example are eligible for partial withdrawal from regular classroom settings. Inclusion with clinical remediation was meant to provide the full curriculum to learners experiencing barriers to learning in ordinary classrooms. In this context teaching and learning is designed in such a way that the process caters for the specific needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educators used the learners' performance to determine the areas in which intervention is required (Mutepfa, Mpofu, & Chataika, 2007).

According to Mutepfa, Mpofo and Chataika (2007) IE in the country is mostly unplanned. All learners are exposed to the same curriculum in ordinary classrooms. This form of IE does not fully provide the educational needs of diverse learners and in most cases learners do not receive sufficient education due to the lack of the trained educators and resources which catered for the needs of the learners experiencing barriers to learning. IE in Zimbabwe is not effective due to a lack of commitment by policymakers. Therefore, it is crucial that Zimbabwe's education authorities and stakeholders do not have a binding commitment to inclusive education due to the absence of an inclusive education legal framework.

### **2.3.6 Inclusive Education Practices and Experiences in South Africa**

Inclusive education transformation was largely guided by the country's historical background and the historical factors. During the apartheid era South Africa had separate education departments for four different population groups (Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites). Furthermore, the idea of separate departments resulted in duplication of responsibilities (Archer, Green & Pooler, 2002:29). Special education was also separated from the mainstream education provision and some disparities were also evident in both service delivery and overall administration. The divisive nature of the apartheid education prompted the policy makers after 1994 to prioritise the transformation of the education system.

The inclusive education agenda in South Africa was also influenced by the international education movement which also advocated for replacing a charity or medical perspective with the human rights perspective about learners experiencing barriers to learning. The rights of learners with disabilities in South Africa were identified and highlighted in *The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy* (Department of Education, 1997b). This White Paper focused on learners' experiencing barriers to learning hence Khumalo (2008) argued that emphasis should be given to system deficiencies in the education system as well as the rights of learners experiencing barriers to learning. In view of this, South African inclusive education activists argued for a system which will accommodate the unique needs of learners in mainstream classrooms (Swart & Pettipher, 2016:16).

Several legislative instruments provided the foundation for the development of inclusive education. Emphasis was on providing equal access to the curriculum for

learners experiencing barriers to learning as well as emphasising the need for the inclusive education paradigm to shift its focus from a medical model to a socio-critical model based on the idea that social transformation so as to accommodate the diversity which existed in the society.

Inclusive education is one of the panaceas towards an inclusive society (Swart & Pettipher, 2016:19; UNESCO, 2008:18). Through the provision of inclusive education all people are given an opportunity to reach their potential and participate fully in all dimension of the society. Respect for diversity is paramount in inclusive education so as to foster social integration. The implementation of inclusive education faced several challenges due to the prevailing status quo in the education system which had been inherited from the apartheid education system. Prinsloo (in: Landsberg 2016:28) noted that the post-apartheid education system has been bedevilled by a culture of inequalities and discrimination. Most schools did not have basic resources. Due to the shortage of resources some learners experienced mediocre teaching and learning. These challenges have an adverse effect on inclusion if they are not addressed. Addressing these factors will result in the elimination of major obstructions to learning and development and this will lead to the exclusion of several learners.

Like other countries which had been reviewed above at first South Africa adopted the medical model as the philosophy for implementing inclusive education. Learners were placed in special education institutions (Naicker, 2005:230). Sources of barriers were located within the learner and society. The medical model utilised the patient-diagnosis-treatment sequence. The learner experiencing barriers to learning was equated to a patient who needed a correct diagnosis and a dosage of treatment to function fully (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001:215). The medical model was dropped after realising its inadequacy to explain learner differences. Medical model was also abandoned due to the evolution of the post-modernism dimension of assessment which questioned the old paradigm of classifying learners' habit. Post modernists did not subscribe to the perception of a fixed identity of a learner. According to post modernism learners are unique and diverse depending on the physical, social, and environmental up bringing (Hay, 2003:122).

Currently, the South African education system had abandoned the medical approaches and the paradigm of academic deficiency to implement and promote inclusive classroom environments which embrace diversity.

In South Africa effort had been made through various legislative instruments to address barriers to learning rather than perceiving the barriers as disadvantages (Booth & Ainscow, 2002:79). After moving from the medical model, the South African education system focused on biological theories to provide insights of learning barriers. The ecological systems approach (Urie Bronfenbrenner) (Santrock, 2007) defined five dimensions of environmental systems. The environmental systems included:

- The microsystem includes systems or institutions which are closest to the child and it includes the relationships and interactions within the child's immediate environment.
- The mesosystem which comprised of two interacting or connected microsystems. For example, the connection or interaction of family experiences and school experiences, peer experiences and family experiences, religious affiliation experiences and school experiences, among others.
- The exosystem included the external environment which indirectly influences child development. It included connections between a social setting and the individual's immediate environment.
- The macrosystem, which is the bigger socio-cultural setting. This system depicted the culture in which people live. The cultural context included the level of industrialisation, the socio-economic status, destitution, and ethnicity among others. A child and all the people around him/her and the parents' workplace form part of the large cultural context.
- The fifth system is known as the chronosystem. This included aspects such as environmental events, life transitions as well as previous experiences, such as divorce.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model gave an account of the contrast in an individual's cognition and development through the provision of the support of the society in which an individual live. Basically, the theory focused on a young person's improvement among close people who form his or her environment. The theory helped individuals



to realise that people exist in an environment that influenced their existence and reaction to life situations. Ecosystems in a person's environment eventually affected the person significantly. This model was very significant as it allowed educators to treat various emotional and behavioural problems effectively.

The model can be used by educators to analyse challenges in a learner's life and to assist in stabilising a child's environment so as ensure that healing takes place.

Post-apartheid policy makers embarked on a mission to transform the South African education by eliminating past inequalities. The *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* (RSA, 1996) emphasised the rights to education for all children. The Constitution of South Africa in 1996 provided the dignity of all marginalised groups and the rights of access to basic education (RSA, 1996).

## **2.4 THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The requirement and stipulation for accommodating the diverse needs of learner are stated in the Constitution as well (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Section 29 of the Bill of Rights stated that it is illegal to discriminate against anyone on any grounds. The Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) laid the foundation for inclusive education. The policy highlighted the need of addressing the different needs of learners experiencing barriers. The policy laid out the following principles and guidelines:

- All children should be given the necessary learning support.
- Educators should respect the diverse learning needs of learners.
- The support for learners experiencing barriers was also highlighted.

Landsberg *et al.* (2016:16) identified policy documents which are very important for implementing inclusive education in South Africa. The policy documents include:

- *The White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa (1995)* which contains the basic programmes which were needed for creating a culture of responding to diverse learners needs.
- *The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* (RSA, 1996): It normatively stated that parents enrol their children in a school of their choice.

- *The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997b)*: It stated the strategies for enhancing access to the curriculum to all learners experiencing barriers to learning. Stofile and Green (2009:53) and Swart and Pettipher (2016:16) agreed that the policy was instrumental in the development of the current approaches to inclusive education.
- *The National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training, and the National Committee on Education Support Services (1997a)*: The findings and recommendations of the commission lead to the identification of barriers to learning and a response to the needs of diverse learners (Mpya, 2007:3; Engelbrecht, 2008:18; Green, 2008:12; Engelbrecht et al., 2016:17; Swart and Pettipher, 2016:17).
- *The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy for South Africa (1997b)*: Howell (2006) highlighted that the policy outlined the key concerns and the changes needed towards the realisation of equal rights and opportunities for learners with diverse needs.
- *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001)*: EWP6 (DoE, 2001:16) acknowledged that all children need support for them to be effective and successful learners. Learner differences were acknowledged by this policy and it emphasised the need for all learners to be respected since they have different learning needs.
- *Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programme (2005c)*: This document provides strategies on how to deal with diverse needs of learners.
- *Conceptual and Operational guidelines for implementation of Inclusive Education: Special Schools as Resource Centres (2005b)*: The document provided comprehensive definitions of key terms in the inclusive education lexicon specifically for the District Based Support Teams (DBSTs) (DoE, 2005b:6).
- *The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)(2014)* was used to improve the process of identifying learners who needs special and extra educator assistance (DoE, 2014:1). The document provided guidelines on early identification and support required by learners.
- *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning 2010* provided guidelines for supporting educators who work to create inclusive educational environments. It also provided information on what constitutes barriers to learning (DBE, 2010:10).

- *The Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements* (DBE, 2011b:2). The document provided guidance on planning and teaching in inclusive schools and classrooms.

## **2.5 CHALLENGES FACED BY EDUCATORS IN ASSESSING LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS**

Educators experienced several challenges or contextual factors in inclusive classrooms, and these are worth to be noted so that they can reduce or eliminate the barriers to learning. Educators in inclusive classrooms are expected to go an extra mile when assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning. In an endeavour to provide support the educators must research more on how to handle learners experiencing barriers to learning, attend several training sessions so that they are armed with appropriate knowledge to help learners experiencing barriers. When helping learners experiencing barriers educators are expected to utilise several inclusive education policies so that their effort will be in line with policy requirements. Susuwela-Banda (2005) reported that one of the challenges was related to educators' perceptions of inclusive classroom assessment. Most educators according to the study perceived classroom assessment as giving tests to learners after completing a chapter. In addition, Susuwela-Banda (2005) noted that some of the challenges confronting the educators are because of their experiences and qualifications. Mprah, Dwomoh, Opoku, Owusu and Ampratwum (2016) maintained that there are several challenges which educators are confronted with when implementing inclusive education. For instance, these researchers highlighted that educators are ignorant of the requirements of inclusive education and above all educators are confronted with a sense of unpreparedness to effectively teach and assess learners experiencing barriers.

Contextual factors such as duration of lesson periods, overcrowding in classrooms and the curriculum content to be covered per grade all have a tremendous contribution to classroom assessment practices. Webb (2005) opined that the time slots allocated for each lesson were very limited and this did not allow educators to fully complete the content planned for each lesson. The limited time also constrained the educators from engaging learners in classroom discussions as well as from conducting some reflection sessions for each lesson. More importantly, Sethusha (2012:26) noted that

the higher number of educator-learner ratio prevented educators from offering the learners constructive feedback.

Studies conducted in South Africa established how educators understand and implement curriculum assessment policies (Jansen, 1998; Khulisa, 2000; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003). The findings highlighted that South African educators struggled to implement the outcome-based assessment and they could not differentiate different forms of assessment. Vandeyar and Killen (2007:105) indicated that these educators had a strong inclination towards educator-centred assessment practices. The educators continued to implement assessment practices which were at loggerheads with the outcomes-based education curriculum statement. Generally, the study revealed that the educators were finding it so difficult to implement the outcomes-based education assessment and they were reluctant to accommodate learners experiencing barriers. The findings from the study clearly reflected the inability and lack of desire for educators to adjust assessment practices in line with the changes in the curriculum. The failure and reluctance of the educators to adapt to the demands of inclusive education was a crucial barrier to inclusive assessment. In this regard, Vandeyar and Killen (2007:112) concluded that educators should be trained for them to adapt to new assessment practices. In agreement, Hariparsad (2004) noted that educators do not clearly understand the assessment policy and they are reluctant to change their usual and traditional assessment practices in line with the recent policies.

Zwane and Malale (2018) conducted a study in the Kingdom of Swaziland to investigate barriers educators faced in implementing inclusive education in high schools. Lack of adequate training emerged as the key barrier which impeded educators' capacity when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Several studies indicated that similar challenges had been encountered by educators in several countries (Keen & Barret, 2008; Kalyanpur, 2014; Sharma, Simi & Forlin, 2015). In Portugal, Campos, Ferreira, and Block (2014) conducted a study which revealed that lack of resources is one of the barriers which compromised inclusive education implementation. Similarly, in Cameroon, a study by Arrah and Swain (2014) reported that major barriers for inclusive education include inadequate resources, poor educators' training, and educator anxiety among others. In this regard, this study investigated the extent to which lack of resources and educator training are barriers to implementing inclusive education in South Africa.

## **2.6 STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY EDUCATORS TO OVERCOME ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES**

William, Lee, Harrison and Black (2004) proposed that in order to accommodate learners experiencing barriers effectively educators should adopt assessment strategies and techniques such as varied questioning, marking which provided comments only without providing a rating mark, discuss the marking criteria with learners, allowing learners to indulge in peer assessment and self-assessment. On the other hand, Gilmore (2002:345) proposed some strategies which educators can utilise for effective assessment practices in inclusive education. Furthermore, Gilmore (2002) suggested the use of flexible and diverse assessment activities for individual needs of the learners. In addition, in inclusive classrooms there is a need for giving learners short and simple tasks. Furthermore, it is suggested that educators should make use of visual and written resources which allow learners to manipulate information and solve problems. The group work technique is also very useful in enhancing accommodation of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educators, therefore, should utilise diverse techniques to match the learners' diverse capabilities.

### **2.6.1 Curriculum Differentiation in Inclusive Classrooms**

Hattie (2009) argued that the most effective way of improving learners' achievement in inclusive classrooms occurs if educators help learners to develop self-reflection skills. In addition to differentiation or individualisation assessment practices should be more learner-centred (Sebba, 2010). This will set high participation and success for all learners (UNESCO, 2017). Learners in a classroom are not the same. According to Gregory and Chapman (2007:1) learners are different from one another in their physiology, background, and experience. Educators need to understand that every classroom has learners with diverse needs. This means that an educator needs to be flexible enough to adjust assessment activities to reach every learner. This is achieved through curriculum differentiation. Curriculum differentiation responds to different needs of the learners. The educator must modify and change teaching methodologies and assessment strategies (SIAS, 2014:8). Educators can offer differentiation in terms of content, the learning process and assessment (Henning 2015:39; Mzizi, 2014:8).

Gregory and Chapman (2007) argued that differentiation as a philosophy means that educators are aware that all learners need to be supported after realising their unique

needs. In corroboration, SIAS (2014:40) indicated that one of the educator's roles was to adjust the curriculum and simplify it to make it more manageable to all learners by accommodating the diversity of learning needs. This requires a paradigm shift in terms of the normal teaching approach, as DoE (2005b:7) argued that most learners do not experience the accessibility of the curriculum as much as they want it to be. Learners must be provided with support for them to access the curriculum effectively. Mzizi (2014:17) suggested that curriculum adaptations could make learning more accessible and relevant for all learners. However, it can be argued that an accessible curriculum can also contribute to a fair assessment. This was supported by several components in the NCS that should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations. Emphasis was on flexibility, making content relevant to the learner's reality, providing more time for assessment and providing flexible assessment strategies (DoE, 2003:10).

Therefore, if the above components are well executed and taken to a more practical level, the diverse needs of learners would be addressed, and they would have the opportunity to be fairly assessed. Accepting inclusive education in South Africa made educators realise that each learner in a secondary classroom has unique strengths and needs. In order to make sure that this happens, SIAS (2014:25) emphasised that when addressing barriers to learning educators should complete Support Needs Assessment form 1 (SNA1) where they capture among other things the needs of the learner in different learning areas. This involved the educator assessing each learner's learning style and needs and developing support aimed at enhancing each learner's learning and development.

The discussion above highlighted that educators cannot differentiate their curriculum in a little space of time. Teaching requires hard work, planning, time, and much energy. Therefore, using one strategy does not work in inclusive education classrooms. Educators should adapt the curriculum or decide to try a different one.

### **2.6.2 Differentiated Assessment in Inclusive Classrooms**

Assessment needs to be differentiated for it to be responsive to the diversity in the classroom. Educators should assess learners by utilising different techniques (SIAS, 2014). The sound assessment tools and methods should be those that can provide the educator with information about learners' knowledge, understanding, learning strategies, prior experiences, abilities and competences, learning styles, motivational

orientations, learning behaviours, interests, and attitudes to learning. Tools and techniques are dealt with in Chapter Three. Heacox (2018) and Stronge (2018) described differentiated assessment as an ongoing process of evaluating learner achievement. Implementing this process guarantees success for all learners in a diverse classroom as data will be gathered from different sources. Differentiated assessment gives learners different forms of tasks so as to enhance assessment validity, reliability and fairness.

DBE (2014:89) highlighted that differentiating assessment involves doing the same assessment tasks in a different form at the same time and in the same way. However, Lumadi (2013:220) suggested that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) should implement training of educators to assist them in increasing their skills in differentiated assessment. Maguvhe (2005:242) concurred by pointing out that educator training should provide practicing educators with a positive orientation towards learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educator-training institutions should place specific attention to preparing all educators to be flexible in differentiating learner assessment. Furthermore, teaching strategies can become obsolete therefore assessment methods and approaches should be updated and revised in line with educational transformations. Inclusive education educators need to be involved in training which allows them to practise a variety of assessment-related activities. They must have expertise in dealing with diverse needs of learners. Lack of in-service professional development resulted in negative influences on educators' assessment practices.

Reeves (2011:1) reminded educators that differentiated assessment should not be perceived as a practice of lowering the quality of educational standards but as a way of effectively improving the deliverables of the teaching and learning process. Differentiated assessment strategy essentially encouraged every learner to be assessed using the same assessment standards but in a different format. Maguvhe (2005:144) argued that skills to identifying learners experiencing barriers to learning are unhelpful if educators lack the expertise of skilfully accommodating their diverse needs. An effective assessment protocol considered learners' cognitive and academic differences (Fogarty & Pete, 2010; Stefanakis & Meier, 2010). As educators understand their learners' differences assessment needs to become more differentiated.

Noman and Kaur (2014:170) asserted that differentiation was recognised in a classroom based on the assumption that learners are diverse from each other in terms of capacity and social and cognitive background. Since it is accepted that different forms of assessment constitute the proper approach to report about the performance of different learners, assessment differentiation is similarly noteworthy to guarantee that correct progress reports are created to inform stakeholders about the learners' progress. Maguvhe (n.d.8) advised that educators should adjust or modify the assessment activities so as to suit the assorted needs that diverse learners have.

Differentiated assessment is supported by various South African education policies:

- National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the NCS: Grades R–12 (NPPPPR)(DBE, 2011d).
- National Protocol for Assessment: Grades R – 12(NPA) (DBE, 2011c).
- National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996. Draft Amendment Policy Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate. General Explanatory Note (DBE, 2019).

They are discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

SIAS (2014:92-93) highlighted some strategies to differentiate assessment, as follows:

- Learners must be provided with an opportunity for more time to complete the assessment task.
- Educators should make use of information communication technologies in some assessment tasks.
- Educators should keep on observing and monitoring the portfolios for learners who need extra support.
- Gather achievement / performance data through various assessment tools and techniques.
- The form of assessment should also be varied for different learners.
- Teaching Aids of different types should also be used.
- Pace or scaffold the assessment tasks and activities.
- Educator observation should also be used as an assessment technique.
- Learner self-assessment should be encouraged as well.
- Assessment should cater for different styles and cognitive levels.



- Both oral and written assessment tasks should be used as assessment tools.
- Low order questions should also be included in assessment tasks.
- Learners must be provided with accommodations and concessions. –
- Ensure that assessment tasks are authentic at most times, e.g., in literacy development, assessment activities they do reflect real life experiences.
- Adapt the learning outcome expected while using the same materials. For example, in geography one learner can locate just the provinces on a map, while others learn the main city or capital city in each province.

Norman and Kaur (2014) summed it up succinctly when they indicated that differentiated assessment practices respect and accommodate the learning needs of every learner.

## **2.7 STRATEGIES FOR HELPING LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

This section deliberated on strategies which can be adopted by educators so as to help learners experiencing barriers to learning. Views and insights were drawn from a variety of secondary sources.

### **2.7.1 Build Relationships**

Formal and informal interactions of individuals from diverse social identities or environments may impact on learners in inclusive classrooms (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar & Arellano, 2012). In this regard educators should make effort to build conducive classroom environments and relationships for the learners. Relationship building is very essential in inclusive classrooms. Santos, Sardinha and Reis (2016:950) argued that relationships are crucial in the development of practices in inclusive education. As it has been highlighted by Santos et al. (2016) an educator is considered the key player for effective assessment practices. In view of the above arguments, lack of rapport between educators and learners compromised the effectiveness of assessment practices.

Therefore, it is essential for the educator to build connections with each learner by striving to understand their interests, hopes and ambitions. These are crucial considerations that the educator should nurture for effective classroom assessments to prevail when handling learners experiencing barriers to learning. Building

relationships is the first strategy for establishing rapport between educators and learners.

### **2.7.2 Inclusive Education Lesson Planning Considerations**

George and George (2016) maintained that educators should plan for the lessons in a manner which caters for learner diversity in an inclusive classroom. In view of this argument, lesson plans which consider individual needs are an essential feature in inclusive education to enhance curriculum accessibility. Educators also must plan on how they can engage learners from the beginning of each lesson so as to establish if they are ready to learn. In a nutshell, it is also crucial for educators to have a warm-up session to settle the learners down and set the tone for the lesson. It is also very important for educators to plan for activities which promote active engagement of each learner. In view of this, Acharya (2009:87) believed that learners can learn effectively when they perceive that their schoolwork is valuable. Engaged learners apply effort which is required for acquiring knowledge and skills in their subjects. In corroboration with Archarya (2009), George and George (2016) advised educators to inform learners about the learning targets and maintain their motivation.

### **2.7.3 A Balanced Approach towards Inclusive Classroom Learners' Assessment**

Educators need to use a balanced approach during learner assessment. They should know more about learners and use this information to help drive their instructions and improve outcomes for learners. Educators should look for additional ways that they can help or support their learners. They should apply formative practices that will not only inform them of the learners' understanding but also inform their learners about their own progress.

Balanced assessment practices in inclusive classrooms are perceived as the key to reducing underachievement (Faubert, 2012). In view of this assertion, Muskin (2015:3) highlighted that inclusive assessment practices should be in harmony with the inclusive education curriculum, education training and support as well as the available textbooks. Formative assessment and feedback are the best way to promote the achievement of learners experiencing barriers to learning (Hattie, 2009; Husbands & Pearce, 2012; Mitchell, 2015).

Formative assessment is a balanced approach to inclusive assessment because it involves learners; it enables them to take more active part in their learning (Higgins, 2014; Dwyer & William, 2011). According to Looney (2011) formative assessment includes self- and peer assessment.

#### **2.7.4 Attitude to be adopted by Educators for Inclusive Classroom Assessment**

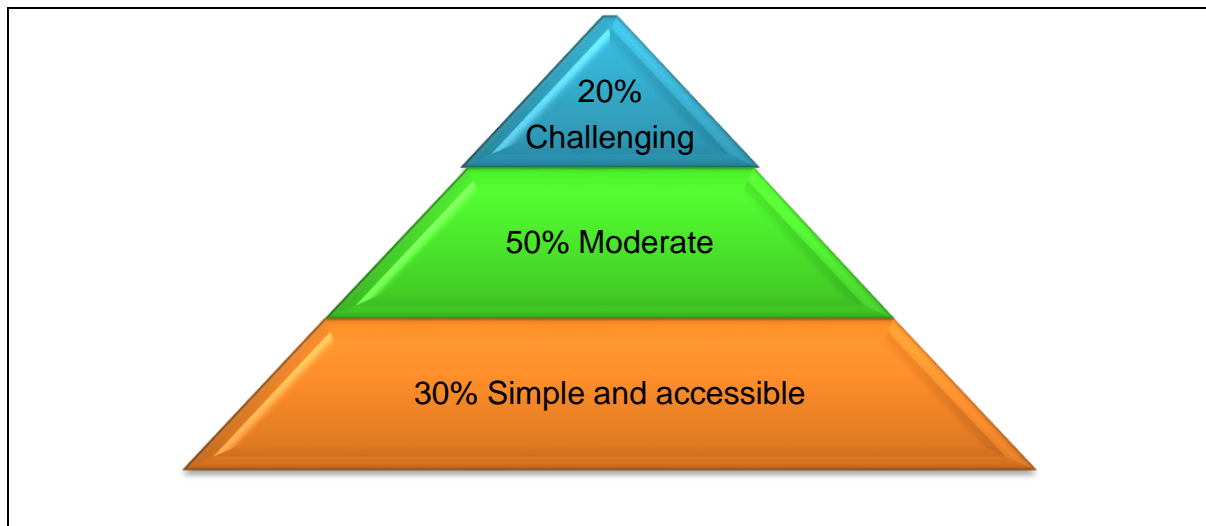
Implementing inclusive education is a challenge due to the educators' attitude towards inclusion and learners experiencing barriers to learning (Saloviita, 2018: 270-282). However, several researchers argue that positive educator attitudes are essential for success of learners (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996. European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE) (2003:15) highlighted that successful IE is determined by educators' attitudes towards IE requirements and processes. Saloviita (2020) Ewing, Monsen and Kielblock (2017) found that educators with positive attitude towards inclusion propels its successful implementation within inclusive classrooms and are more suitable to meet the expectations of all learners. George and George (2016) suggested that educators should have high expectations for learners. However, educators should not let their expectations limit their learners' achievements because some learners will reach and often go beyond their high expectations. Often their perception of possible achievements limited them. High expectations need to be part of the school culture. Expectations are set down in the context of the school and need to be communicated to all stakeholders. Acharya (2009:87) supported this idea by indicating that schools must introduce an enriched curriculum which provides at-risk learners with a learning experience that will enable them to achieve positive outcomes. Educators should engage learners in challenging assessment activities.

Furthermore, Acharya (2009:87) highlighted that schools should create support structures that provides a breeding ground for learners' success. Peer tutoring and mentoring programmes should be encouraged. George and George (2016) noted that learners from adverse backgrounds have difficulties in adapting to unique environments. However, Acharya (2009:87) believed organisational arrangements make sure that all learners have access to quality assessment.

### 2.7.5 Scaffolding Instruction to Grade Level Standards in Inclusive Classrooms

Scaffolding is essential for addressing the needs of diverse learners in inclusive classrooms (Pfister, Oplitz & Pauli, 2015). Pfister et al. (2015:1081) described scaffolding as a strategy of adjusting teaching and assessment in line with the individual needs of learners. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that scaffolding implies breaking down new content into small and manageable pieces so as to allow learners to master the pieces of content easily and at their own pace. Rault-Smith (2009:42) defined scaffolding as giving learners support.

Assessment tasks should be scaffolded so that learners can begin with the less challenging aspects of a task and work towards the most challenging aspects (Rault-Smith, 2009:43).



**Figure 2.1: Scaffolding assessment: (Source: Rault-Smith 2009:43)**

Scaffolding is very valuable for supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educators should indulge in catch up activities by working on lower-level concepts until learners are ready to be exposed to higher-level thinking. At the same time educators must expose all learners to subject content and standards by adjusting their learning for them to be able to achieve their best performance levels.

There are several goals for scaffolding of instruction. The first goal of scaffolding is to activate learners' thinking skills (Krammer, 2009; van de Pol, Volman and Beishuizen 2010). Secondly, adjusting learning content helps to stimulate discourse (Krammer, 2009). Thirdly, scaffolding is done so as to handle errors productively. The fourth goal of scaffolding is target orientation. In this case scaffolding involves the utilisation of

appropriate learning resources and appropriate assessment activities. The fifth goal of scaffolding is about using manipulatives. The way questions and content is presented is important for effective learning to take place.

There are several methods or techniques which educators can use to scaffold learning activities. Van de Pol et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of utilising assessment techniques which are relevant to the specific needs of the learners at a particular moment and subject. Van de Pol et al. (2010) identified the following methods of scaffolding learning in inclusive classrooms:

- Providing learners with feedback regarding their performance in an assessment activity.
- Giving learners some hints, clues, or suggestion before they answer both verbal and written activities.
- Give learners instructions on what to do, how to do it and the reason for doing it.
- Providing learners with more detailed information to clarify concepts and difficult content.
- Modelling: offering learners examples or behaviour for imitation; and
- Giving learners questions which require an active linguistic and cognitive answer.

Therefore, for scaffolding to be appropriate and effective in an inclusive classroom the educators should understand learners' strengths and weaknesses. The educator should provide a learner with necessary support to accomplish a task that is not otherwise possible (Nightingale, 2015).

### **2.7.6 Teaching Vocabulary Explicitly**

Butler, Urrutia, Buenger and Hunt (2010) defined vocabulary as the knowledge of words and word meanings. Academics use vocabulary as the kind of words that learners must know to reading increasingly demanding texts with comprehension. Therefore, vocabulary is that glue which holds communication and comprehension together. In view of this description, Kuder (2017) opined that educators should expose learners to new words, allow them to read a lot, use the new words on everyday basis and this will benefit them all especially learners experiencing barriers to learning. Many learners struggle with reading skills hence there need differentiated learning and vocabulary acquisition skills (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Snyder and Dillow (2015)

supported the previous statement by highlighting that on average learners experiencing barriers to learning also have reading challenges (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn, Edmonds, Wexler, Reutebuch (2007) identified 5 types of interventions which can be used to improve reading outcomes, comprehension and vocabulary of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educators should remember and make effort to assist learners coming from a poor background because they often experienced a lack of language development compared to their peers brought up in a middle-class home. The educator needs to expose learners to wide vocabulary. Learners need a vocabulary-rich environment to catch up. Educators should be intentional about this and constantly look for opportunities to build vocabulary.

### **2.7.7 Engage Learners in a Manner which Boosts their Morale and Desire to Learn**

In inclusive classrooms, all learners benefit including those who do not experience barriers of any form (visual, hearing or reading). It also makes an environment where all learners can flourish and nurtured to their best. In support of the previous statement, Pantić and Florian (2015:333) highlighted that educators are agents of change. In this endeavour, they reduce the educational inequalities as agents of social justice. Therefore, they need to engage with their learners at all levels (emotionally, psychologically, and socially) to boost their morale. According to George and George (2016) if educators are not engaged and excited, their learners will not be either. They need to look for ways and avenues that link the subject content and the learners' experiences. In addition to that, Watanabe-Crockett (2018) maintained that overcoming barriers to learning can be a reality if educators provide content which is relevant to the learners' needs and interests. Teaching relevant content ensured that real learning would take place. Acharya (2009:88) advised that it should be borne in mind that educators' dedicated support can instil learners' sense of motivation and attachment to their education. These learners will be encouraged to be active producers of knowledge, rather than passive recipients. Educators in the school need to assist with family related challenges and support learners' efforts to improve their performance. George and George (2016) suggested that educators should decide on how they can capture their learners' attention. Educators must show their enthusiasm for their subject.

### **2.7.8 Developing a Critical and Analytical Reflection Culture**

Gorski and Dalton (2020) viewed reflection as a significant aspect of transformative learning. They viewed it as a form of learning that transforms the learners' perspectives about their capabilities. The analytical reflection capability can be an integrated part of inclusive education in an endeavour to cater for learner diversity. Time needs to be made available for learners to engage in self-reflection of their learning experiences. Watanabe-Crockett (2018:1) maintained that providing continuous opportunities for self-reflection and thought-provoking assessment activities will guarantee learners' productive engagement and productivity.

When educators reflect on their learning process, it allows them to identify areas which still need attention, as well as critical areas where a measure of breakthrough has been attained. George and George (2016) emphasised that this is a good opportunity for thinking to be clarified. Simple responses written in a journal can be used in formative assessment activities.

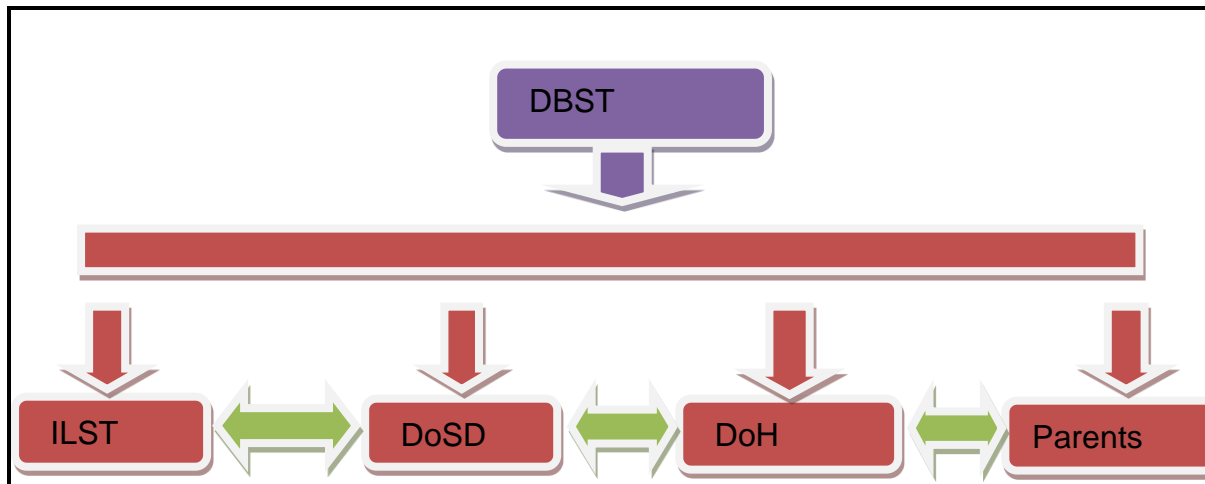
### **2.7.9 Provision of Multiple Opportunities to Embed Learning**

Durden and Truscott (2013) established that contemporary teaching require holistic educators to teach learners in totality. Education in inclusive classrooms should develop learners culturally, linguistically, and economically different from their status. Learners need to be taught how to develop sound judgements, how to examine and refine their judgement and how to evaluate whether the evidence they find is reliable. Learners may come to school with problems that educators are not aware of therefore allowing learners to retake tests makes them to learn from their mistakes. Educators should not confine it to a single class period and then move on to this next lesson. This will not be effective.

## **2.8 STAKEHOLDERS SUPPORT IN THE ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS**

A 'stakeholder' is anyone who has interest in the activities occurring at a school and its learners (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Stakeholders include key role players such as educators' unions, parent-educator organisations, principals, School Governing Bodies, or educators in a specific academic discipline. In other words, stakeholders have a share of interest in the school and its learners (Paine & McCann,

2009:4). The key stakeholders in inclusive education as depicted in Figure 2.2 below include the DBST, ILST, DoSD, DoH and parents.



**Figure 2. 2 Key inclusive education support structures in assessment**

**Source: Researcher's creation**

According to the researcher's understanding and experience of being an educator, educators will not achieve their goals in assessment when they do it alone: they need support from other stakeholders. Hence, it is the researcher's serious concern to explore ways in which different stakeholders support educators in addressing assessment challenges they are confronted with daily. However, the DoE (2002b:108) clearly maintained that the relevant people who should identify, assess and address barriers to learning are educators, learners, parents, ILSTs and DBSTs.

The DBST works hand in hand with the ILST. It is the responsibility of the DBST to see to it that the ILSTs are functioning well in schools. In addition, the DBST provide expert advice and services needed in the schools. DBST also assist ILST to utilise locally available resources to address educators' challenges and needs.

Stakeholder support is very valuable in inclusive education. The Glossary of Education Reform (2014) also highlighted that stakeholder-engagement support are also widely considered important for effective classroom assessment practices and learner achievements. There is need for more inclusive, community-wide involvement in school-assessment processes. The Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (DoE, 2001) provided guidelines for the development of inclusive education support structures.



The EWP6 (DoE, 2001) instructed schools to put in place a school-based support team (SBST). The SBST was expected to work with the District Based Support Team (DBST). Supporting frameworks for schools, educators and learners in South African inclusive education included the schools based and external structures at district, provincial and national levels.

### **2.8.1 Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)**

According to the EWP6 (2001) ILST is a School-Based Support structure. This team comprised of educators and other external stakeholders. The responsibilities include co-ordinating the support needed for learners, educators, and institutional needs. ILST also provide training for educators and encourages professional collaborations. The ILST liaise with the DBST for additional support for schools, educators, and learners (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016:3-4). Masango (2013:12) proposed that the ILST should assist with intervention strategies and provide resources that would enable the educator to support learners experiencing barriers to learning.

### **2.8.2 The District Based Support Team (DBST)**

The DBST is a management structure at district level. Makhalemele (2011:49) described DBSTs as multidisciplinary teams of experts. These teams comprised of IE experts from provincial and district offices (Johnson & Green, 2009:162; Muthukrishna, 2008:48). The DBST coordinate and ensure the most appropriate implementation of inclusive education. The DBST also provided professional support service in order to enhance a smooth implementation of IE. One of the crucial mandates is to provide adequate and accessible subject content (DoE, 2001:8).

Furthermore, the DBST coordinated and facilitated support from different stakeholders so that all schools are supported adequately (DoE, 2005b:22; Landsberg, 2016:64). The DBST also provide learning support to learners through supporting educators and administrators. This type of support will ensure that the teaching and learning environment is enriched and adequately resourced for effective IE to take place (DoE, 2002b:103; Johnson & Green, 2009:162; Landsberg, 2016:64). Learning support is only given in rare occasions when it is very necessary and possible (DoE, 2002b:103; DoE, 2005b:22; Landsberg, 2016:64).

The DBST is also mandated to provide resources at schools and surrounding communities to mitigate or alleviate inclusive education challenges that might arise in inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, the DBST provide advice to educators as well as evaluate programmes and suggests solutions to the challenge's educators are facing (Nel et al., 2016:3-4). Due to insufficient support received from the DBE, inadequate facilities, and infrastructure, the DBST is not performing its role effectively.

### **2.8.3 Parents' Role and Support**

According to SIAS (2014:30) parents played a vital role in assessment. Schools have to acknowledge the pivotal role parents play in inclusive education. Parents play a crucial role in identifying learners who experience barriers to learning. Furthermore, parents need to find out about their children's learning progress to assist the educator in finding remedies to alleviate the barriers to learning thereby improving children's academic performance. Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo(2015:63) pointed out that parents are interested stakeholders in the assessment and performance of a learner as parents are usually invited to school to assist in giving vital information that may assist educators to improve their assessment practices in inclusive classrooms.

### **2.8.4 Department of Health Services and Health-Care Practitioners**

The Department of Health (DoH) and supporting practitioners also play a crucial role in inclusive education. Several health professional's expert services are required to assess the capabilities and aptitudes of learners and inform educators about remedies which can be put in place to eliminate barriers to learning. Without the support of health professional's inclusive education will be a mammoth task for educators. In this regard, the DoH is pivotal in the identification and selection processes of learners experiencing barriers to learning (SIAS, 2014).

### **2.8.5 Department of Social Development and Social Workers**

The Department of Social Development (DoSD) also plays a crucial role in inclusive education. Social workers from DoSD provide social services to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Such services include providing psychological, morale and material support. Support is provided to the learners after assessing the magnitude and nature of their needs (SIAS, 2014:32).

## **2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter operationalises inclusive education from different authors. Furthermore, it discussed the barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms and challenges faced by educators when assessing learners in inclusive classroom contexts. The chapter also provided inclusive education practices and experiences from different countries and South Africa. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the ways in which different stakeholders can support educators in addressing challenges they are confronted with when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Finally, the chapter provided information regarding the support structures which can help educators and learners to mitigate and alleviate challenges associated with learners experiencing barriers to learning. The next chapter presented the models which guided the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical and empirical literature related to inclusive education assessment practices and experiences in different countries. The chapter also focused on the support groups which are essential for providing educators with the support they need to improve assessment. In this chapter, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study were provided and elaborated. A framework explained the rationale for doing a project in a particular way (Ngwenya, 2009:33).

The study examined the importance of educators' assessment practices in senior phase classrooms. The study also explored the challenges affecting educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers in the Senior Phase. Furthermore, the study sought to establish ways educators can address inclusive education assessment challenges in their assessment practices. The critical objectives informing the study were:

- To assess the assessment practices that educators use in their inclusive classrooms.
- To critically analyse assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary school.
- To examine the challenges educators experience in assessing learners who experience barriers to learning.
- To analyse the assessment techniques used by educators when supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To examine ways different stakeholders support educators in addressing assessment challenges experienced by educators in inclusive classrooms.
- To critically examine the impact of inclusion on educators' assessment practices.
- To develop a model for alleviating the challenges faced by educators when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The critical questions above were drawn from the Interpretive Framework (Hargreaves et al., 2002). This framework focused on how meaning is made. In essence, Chapter Three provided a critical analysis and valuable insights on educators' assessment

practices in inclusive classrooms to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. Several issues related to assessment activities, strategies, methods and techniques were discussed from literature. The reviewed literature also focused on issues related to fairness and quality of assessment practices. The guiding philosophy furthermore highlighted the principles of assessment that educators need to adhere to in an inclusive classroom. In addition, the reviewed literature expatiated and elaborated on the assessment methods and the assessment techniques that educators use especially when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools. Finally, the relationship between inclusive education policies and assessment policies in South Africa were explored.

### **3.2 THE CONCEPT OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT**

Mmasi and Thinguri (2017:326) views classroom assessment as the most crucial issue in educational systems which is used to determine the quality of learning. Ndalichako (2017:1) explained that classroom assessment refers to a formative activity conducted to enhance teaching and learning. Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:46) described assessment as evaluating a learner's achievement. This process is guided by curriculum goals and learning outcomes in each subject. Kipkorir (2015:13) defined assessment as any procedure or activity that is designed to gather information about the learners' achievements. Assessment is also defined as a process of collecting and interpreting learners' encounter with subject content (Zaleski, 2015:14). According to Lynch (2016:1) assessment serves as an individual evaluation system. Educators use assessment information to evaluate each learner's level of achievement. Alkharusi (2011:39) highlighted that classroom assessment is an information gathering activity which involves developing assessment methods and performance measures. The main purpose of assessment is to improve learners' desire to learn. This opinion is supported by Kore (2013:18) who observed that classroom assessment covers a wide range of activities. In the researcher's view assessment refers to a process of collecting information which informs educators, learners, and all other stakeholders about the learners' progress.

If educators and learners understand what assessment is, they will be able to understand its importance and value in the classroom. Knowledge of the theory related to assessment will help educators to understand the value of accommodating those

learners experiencing barriers to learning especially in secondary school inclusive classrooms. In addition, Chang (2014:628) maintained that classroom assessment is used by educators for gathering information and for making interpretations and decisions based on this information.

### **3.3 PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM**

Assessment has several goals in the inclusive classroom. The purpose of assessment according to the Missouri State University (2018) is to measure learner performance and report to the interested stakeholders. Rault-Smith (2009:7) noted that assessment support learning and measure learning that has taken place. Education Scotland (2018:3) and Hart, Casserly, Uzzell, Palacios, Corcoran, and Spurgeon (2015:19) highlighted that assessment takes place to compliment the learning and teaching process. These authors warned that assessment should be done continuously. Their argument was that assessment reports provide an overview of the assessment process at one point in time. In one sense, they cannot ever be “finalised” because assessment is an ongoing process. According to Edutopia (2008:1) assessment is a barometer which indicates whether learning outcomes have been achieved. Decisions of learner progression are also affected by assessment. Assessment must support learning and measure the learning that has taken place. The researcher believes that a well-designed assessment can inspire active learning.

Education Scotland (2018:2) stated that educators assessed learners for them to be able to plan. Educators should share assessment information with parents to ensure that all learners are supported and have a positive experience. The DoE (2007) emphasised that assessment should be used to inform parents and other stakeholders about learner progress. Furthermore, Education Scotland (2018:2) recommended that information about a learner’s progress should be passed on to interested stakeholders. Furthermore, Education Scotland (2018:3) and Hart et al. (2015:19) believe that assessment takes place as a continuous process to evaluate the cognitive development of learners.

Despite the importance attached to assessment few educators receive much formal training in assessment design and analysis especially for learners experiencing barriers to learning. Daniyan (2015:41) noted that educators require training on assessing and addressing learners the plight of learners who are struggling in the

classroom. Zeiger (n.d) argued that assessments should be administered after careful thought and consideration. When choosing when to assess learners, educators and administrators must consider the teaching and the content to be taught.

Educators should not assess learners before they have fully mastered the content and they must give immediate feedback to the learners (Zeiger, n.d). Therefore, it is not ideal to give learners a summative assessment if learners have not fully grasped the learning content. It is very essential to give assessment after the learners are well prepared for the task. What this implies is that educators should schedule smaller benchmark assessments at the end of every unit or quarter, rather than waiting for a single assessment at the end of the year.

Several researchers and academics regard assessment as a very important variable in the teaching profession (Meier, Rich & Cady, 2006; Brookhart, 2001; Brown, 2004). The drive to learn for many learners emanates from assessment. Assessment must be effective, aligned with curriculum goals and it must be of high quality (Borghouts, Slingerland & Haerens, 2017). According to Chavalala (2015:40), the primary aim of assessment is to support learners in their endeavour to master the content.

Sethusha (2012:43) maintained that the basic reason educators conduct classroom assessment is to gather evidence. Assessment also provides learners with feedback (Mbelani, 2008; Murray, 2006) for them to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Jones and Tanner (2008) highlighted three aims for classroom assessment, namely: improving the teaching and learning standard, managing learner progress, and informing stakeholders about learner achievement. Chang (2014:629) also argued that educators make decisions about each learner based on assessment outcomes.

Educators use different methods of assessment to determine learners' progress in learning and difficulties encountered (Popham, 2008). In a nutshell, classroom assessment includes all processes and procedures used to collect useful information about the progress in teaching and learning (Ndalichako, 2017).

Meador (2017:1) concurred with other authors that effective and efficient classroom assessment practice is a crucial teaching and learning variable. In addition, Meador (2017:1) also advised that all educators should be data-driven decision-makers. Every individual assessment provided critical data that can potentially provide educators with

another piece of the puzzle to maximise a single learner's learning potential. Any time spent understanding such data will be a worthy investment and should lead to a dramatic increase in learners' learning. Therefore, classroom assessment is not one of the most glamorous aspects of being an educator, but it is the most important. Proper choice of classroom assessment can provide the roadmap which allows every learner to be successful. Ndalichako (2017) maintained that classroom assessment allowed educators to identify problems faced by learners in initiating desirable learning outcomes.

However, Sethusha (2012:4) indicated that the critical concern lies on the way educators align assessment practices to the requirements and deliverables of the CAPS. The other concern is about how educators deal with classroom assessment-related challenges which occur when educators accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. Mbelani (2008) expressed that educators have been exposed to current trends in assessment through in-service training. All the effort is done in the search for fast-tracking transformation. However, little has improved due to some contextual factors experienced by educators.

Koloi-Keaikitse (2017:2) emphasised that classroom assessments are important for stimulating learning. Assessment practices should be consistent and show a true reflection of learner performance. Lack of consistency and a true reflection of learner performance make assessment practices to be invalid and worthless. Educators need to gather more information about learners' cognitive capabilities and challenges for them to have an accurate understanding about their achievement.

Furthermore, Chang (2014:629) indicated three goals of classroom assessment. Firstly, assessment provides educators with an ability to make informed decisions about learners' cognitive development and acquisition of functional skills. Secondly, assessment provides educators with an opportunity to reflect upon their teaching approach to maintain the good practices as well as improve their teaching approach. Thirdly, assessment is a tool for improving classroom management and help learners to remain focussed in achieving the learning goals.

Earl and Katz (2006:5) articulated that continuous and diverse classroom assessment help educators to learn much about their learners. They will understand learners' current competencies and incompetencies. Educators can use assessment to identify



links between previous learning experiences and the new learning experiences. According to Kipkorir (2015:13) classroom assessment to a large extent is either summative or formative assessment.

### **3.4 MODES OF ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND TECHNIQUES**

The number of assessments differs according to researchers. Knowly (2020) highlighted major dichotomies in the literature of modes or types of assessment which educators must utilise when assessing learners in inclusive classrooms. However, researchers seem not to agree on the number of modes of assessment which are at the educator's disposal. Hussain, Tadesse and Sajid (2015) argued that there are six major dichotomies in the literature of classroom assessment. These modes are formative, summative, discrete, and integrative, objective, subjective assessment, traditional, alternative, norm-referenced and criterion referenced assessment. On the other hand, Baker (2009) identified 3 modes of assessment, namely, diagnostic, formative and summative. Prasanthi and Vijetha Inti, (2019) identified 8 types of classroom assessment, namely: diagnostics, formative, summative, norm-referenced, criterions-referenced, benchmark assessment, confirmative and ipsative. According to ACTG (2011:6) assessment improves by providing meaningful reports on learners' achievement. Assessment should be a continuous practice to help learners to learn better (Van Aswegen & Dreyer, 2010). Harlen (2006) emphasised that assessment is used in making judgement about the extent at which the learning goals have been achieved.

There are different types of assessment practices which play a role in assessment (DBE, 2011). ACTG (2011:7) stated that these assessment practices can be criterion referenced; formative; summative. Kore (2013:20) indicated that summative assessment is the main assessment mode which educators cannot overlook. In addition, Chavalala (2015:14) justified the utilisation of summative, formative, diagnostic, and baseline modes of assessment.

#### **3.4.1 Baseline Assessment**

Baseline assessment is conducted each year to give educators an opportunity to comprehend the learning level of each learner in the class. This assessment practice is very important in identifying learners experiencing barriers right from the beginning

of the year. Baseline assessment test assesses each learner's abilities and skills. This practice allows educators to identify a learner's potential. This knowledge will help educators to plan for the lessons as well as the assessment (ARG, 2002; DoE, 2002c:2). According to Taylor (2008) most educators and schools do not conduct baseline assessment as a result most educators in inclusive schools do not have a thorough understanding of the learners' prior knowledge as well as their abilities and skills development level.

Baseline assessment established a learners' understanding of concepts in a learning area. Mkhwanazi (2014:8) indicated that baseline assessment provides educators with insights about learners' cognitive strengths and weaknesses. The researcher concurs with Sebate (2011:61) who stated that baseline assessment is a prerequisite for any teaching programme. Therefore, effective lessons plans should be done after establishing the learners' current performance levels. However, Taylor (2008) indicated that in most schools very few educators implement baseline assessment. Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan and Brown (2010:323) emphasised the significance of baseline assessment as it provides educators of the knowledge of the learners' cognitive development.

### **3.4.2 Diagnostic Assessment**

Kore (2013:21) indicated that diagnostic assessment is used for formative purposes. Furthermore, Lombard (2010:50) indicated that diagnostic assessment is for establishing if learners face any barriers to learning. Diagnostic assessment is similar to formative assessment (Sethusha, 2012:162). James (2013) stated that the diagnostic assessment reveals the needs of learners and this will help educators to differentiate learning and assessment based on individual needs of the learners. Villamero (2014:46) argued that diagnostic assessment is very useful in identifying learners experiencing barriers to learning. Diagnostic assessment is normally conducted by education specialists (Orlich et al., 2010:323).

### **3.4.3 Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment referred to collecting and evaluating data about learners' progress (Kore, 2013:20). Sethusha (2012:19) maintained that formative assessment is used to determine learners' progress. Formative assessment is used throughout the

entire teaching process. ACTG (2011:7) argued that formative assessment includes assessment as learning. Büyükkarcı (2014:108) is convinced that formative assessment is concerned with assisting learners to improve their learning. Its goal is to improve education (McLean & Lockwood, 1996:1). Sethusha (2012:22) maintained that the educator plays a significant role in formative assessment. Kore (2013:21) highlighted that formative assessment and teaching-learning process cannot be separated. Büyükkarcı (2014:108) strongly believed that formative assessment has a significant impact on learners. Herman, Osmondson, Dai, Ringstaff and Timms (2015:1) highlighted that formative assessment is a powerful classroom intervention. In addition, Villamero (2014:37) maintained that formative assessment strategies constitute mainly some informal activities. Büyükkarcı (2014:109) further indicated that educators have to make judgements about how formative assessment can be implemented. Sethusha (2012:32) demonstrated the relationship between summative and formative assessment. Herrera, Murry and Cabral (2007) argued that formative and summative assessments are dimensions of genuine dynamic assessment.

#### **3.4.4 Summative or Confirmative Assessment**

Summative assessment, according to ACTG (2011:7) is used towards the end of a teaching period. It provides data about the effectiveness of the teaching. The purpose of summative assessment is to indicate what learners understand at a given point in time. Harlen (2008:139) pointed out that, in summative assessment, the concern is to evaluate achievement. Kore (2013:20) suggested that summative assessment is used to grade and select learners. McSweeney (2014:72) maintained that summative assessment fulfils key functions. According to Mansell, James, and the Assessment Reform Group (ARG) (2009) summative assessments involves the active participation of learners. Mansell et al. (2009:9) stated that summative assessment follows a set of pre-defined questions.

#### **3.4.5 Criterion-Referenced Assessment Practices**

Criterion-referenced assessment measures the achievement of set goals against the curriculum-based standards (Simpson, 1999). It ensures that learner performance in classroom assessment activities is aligned with the goals set in the curriculum statement. The criterion-referenced assessment practice is helpful in increasing learners' knowledge of a subject (Simpson, 1999; Mansell, James & ARG, 2009). The

implementation of the criterion-referenced assessment practice was very successful in Scotland (Sliwka, 2009). The success criteria were clearly specified for each school. However, the mode of assessment received heavy criticism because it promoted the use of summative assessment and teaching for test more often rather than promoting learning among learners (Sliwka, 2009). In a nutshell, criterion-referenced assessment is not adequate hence it should not overshadow the teaching process which is very pivotal in the holistic development of learners. Criterion-referenced assessment practice is also implemented in Norway and Netherlands (Beate, 2013; Kleintjies, 2008). The South African education system also utilised the criterion referenced assessment practice or the outcomes-based approach. The educator is expected to facilitate the teaching and learning process while the learner constructs knowledge. The National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2002c) and CAPS (2011a) highlighted the forms of assessments which must be used by educators. These forms of assessments include projects, assignments, storytelling, oral presentation and observation.

Learners who are skilled at reading should be assessed in that particular area so that they are not disadvantaged. In a nutshell, educators should place the learner at the centre of all teaching and learning processes.

### **3.4.6 Norm-Referenced Assessment**

It compares a learner's assessment with a certain set standard at provincial or national level in a particular learning area. An educator can also compare the average grade for his or her learners at school level. Hussain et al. (2015:2319) defined norm-referenced assessment as a test or assessment activity which measures how the achievement of a particular learner compares with the achievement of another learner or learners whose scores are given as the norm. Furthermore norm-referenced assessment is used to evaluate the learner's achievement by judging or ranking them against the performance of their peers.

### **3.4.7 Ipsative Assessment**

Ipsative assessment measures learner performance against previous performances of the learner. With this mode of assessment, the learner tries to improve academic achievement by comparing the current results with his or her previous results (Irvine, 2017; Hughes, 2014:31-44). Therefore, ipsative assessment is a self-referenced

assessment. According to Hughes (2014) ipsative assessment is compatible with self-assessment as learners have the most knowledge about their respective prior levels of knowledge. However, because accurate self-assessment requires the learner to be trained in assessment, it may entail a lack of reliability in the assessment. This section reviewed literature on modes of assessment at the educators' disposal. In the next section, the literature review provided an overview of classroom assessment techniques.

### **3.5 AN OVERVIEW OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES (CAT)**

Assessment is important in enhancing effective teaching in inclusive classrooms. Several assessment techniques are associated with evaluation of learning outcomes. Researchers seem not agree if the concept of assessment methods is different from assessment techniques. Rault-Smith (2009) indicated that assessment terminology is continuously evolving and for this reason different terms are used to mean the same thing. Some academics and educationists refer to assessment methods, others refer to forms of assessment and others refer to assessment techniques. These terms are used interchangeably even though there are some differences in their meanings. DoE (2002c:4) stated assessment practices should enable learners to evaluate their own learning. Rault-Smith (2009) maintains that assessment methods refer to who assesses an assessment and how evidence of learning is collected. Landsberg et al. (2016:57) noted that assessment techniques concern the nitty-gritty of selecting and applying methods for assessing learners. Angelo and Cross (2002) viewed assessment techniques as methods that help the educators to establish what learners understand on a topic.

Basically, CAT are those activities that give the learner and educator feedback on teaching and learning process. Angelo and Cross (2002) argued that classroom assessment instruments are designed to provide educators with information about how effective the lesson delivery strategies are. Haugen (2017:1) indicated that classroom assessment techniques (CAT) help the educator to measure learner understanding. These formative evaluations provided information that improves the subject content and teaching methods.

The British Columbia of Technology (2010:6) echoed the same sentiments when it described CAT as non-threatening ways of evaluating the learning experience of the

learners. Furthermore, Haugen (2017:1) asserted that assessment techniques provide immediate feedback. CATs provide information about what learners have learned which fosters good working relationships between educators and learners. Furthermore, CATs inspire educators to understand that teaching and learning has taken place. Learners experiencing barriers to learning need constant feedback that about their performance. This enables them to check whether they are on the right path or need assistance.

Van der Lubbe (2010) reported that monitoring of a learner's progress is carried out using a bouquet of assessment techniques. During secondary schooling summative and diagnostic assessments are conducted to evaluate the performance of learners (Van der Lubbe, 2010). Kipkorir (2015:16) pointed out that classroom assessment should address several dimensions of learning. Therefore, assessment techniques should focus on assessing both new and old knowledge acquired by the learners. Alternative assessment tools are necessary to determine what learners know.

Different forms of information about learners need to be collected using a variety of assessment techniques. The use of a diverse set of assessment techniques provides educators with insights of what learners have effectively learnt (Kipkorir, 2015:18). Haugen (2017:1) opined that assessment techniques help learners to increase understanding and ability to think critically. Kore (2013:51) advised that educators should have the ability to recognising inappropriate assessment techniques which does not yield positive results. They should also be aware of the limitations of assessments when taken in isolation.

### **3.5.1 Traditional vis-à-vis Alternative Assessment Techniques**

Assessment practices have shifted from traditional way of assessing learning to alternative or adaptive assessment techniques (DoE, 2002b:151). Demir, Tananis and Basbogaoglu (2018:73) and Curriculum 2005 Assessment Guidelines for Inclusion DoE (2002a:9) highlighted that alternative assessment involves activities that discover what learners can do with the knowledge and skills obtained through learning. Alternative assessment techniques emphasised learners' abilities and strength rather than focusing on their weaknesses and what they do not know. The researcher believes that assessment needs to be adapted to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom as no child should be left behind. Each learner who experience barriers to

learning is unique. Their strengths are not the same due to the barriers that they experience. Educators should understand their learner's needs to select the appropriate accommodation. DoE (2002a:9) stated that alternative or adaptive methods of assessment minimises the impact of several barriers which have an impact on learner performance. The researcher concurs with Venter (2012:8) who argued that educators seem to find it challenging to educate and assess learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Gronlund (2006) stated that assessment techniques are either traditional or alternative. Traditional assessments are easy to administer and mark. Alternative assessments require more time to administer and provide a mark for each learner (Gronlund, 2006). Assessment becomes even more relevant when learners become involved in their own assessment. Kipkorir (2015:17) indicated contemporary educators now utilised alternative assessment more than traditional assessments.

Educators should have the ability to identify barriers to learning to provide learners with fair assessment. Furthermore, DoE (2002a:9) suggested that barriers to learning can be addressed through alternative or adaptive methods of assessment. Rieck and Dugger-Wadsworth (2005:109) asserted that using more than one assessment is often indicated to enhance academic success.

The differences between traditional assessment and alternative/adaptive assessment were tabulated in **Table 3.1**

**Table 3.1: Traditional versus Alternative Assessment techniques**

| Traditional Assessment   | Alternative/Adaptive Assessment   |
|--|---|
| Does not provide learners with alternative choices. The educator is an authority and the learners have to take all the assessments as required by the educator. Assessment is mainly in written form | Learners are provided with alternative assessment based on the accommodation of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The assessment mode promote integration of various learner skills for measuring learner progress. The assessment output can be written, performed or presented orally |
| The assessment relies on indirect measures of the desired outcome which is itself strongly correlated to that outcome to represent target skills   | Assessment is based on direct measures of the target skills   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Promote recitation, rote learning and memorisation of learning content  | Promote divergent thinking and application of the learning content   |
| The primary goal is to objectively measure the quantity of the knowledge acquired by the learner  | The primary goal is to promote cognitive, psychological, behavioural, and social growth and development of the learner among others  |
| Special attention is given to acquiring content and developing the knowledge base of the learner  | Special attention is given to developing learner proficiency in mastering pragmatic and realistic community-based tasks  |
| The main goal is on ensuring that learners acquired the “what” type of knowledge  | The main goal is on making learners acquire the knowledge of how to solve problems   |
| Learner assessment is based on short-term based objectives to have an immediate understanding of the learner capabilities               | Learner assessment is based on long-term based objectives through which educators cannot base their judgement about a learner based on few assessments                               |
| Assessment is based on the philosophy of competition and grading  | Assessment is based on the philosophy of ubuntu, cooperation and democratic principles   |
| Assessments targets are simplified in a concrete and singular manner which makes learners to have a myopic and narrow view of the world | Assessment targets and tasks prepare learners for the ambiguities of the world as well as to function well in any context or a set of circumstances beyond the classroom environment |
| The main mode of assessment is the summative assessment and there is too much emphasis on tangible deliverables                         | The focus is on assessment for learning – teaching learners how to learn and be independent thinkers   |

**Source: Lombard (2008)**

### 3.5.2 Traditional Assessment Techniques

Traditional assessment deliverables include written documents. The assessment includes quizzes or exams. National School Certificate (NSC) is an example of traditional assessment. These comprise of tests given to learners by educators (Quansah, 2018). Educators prefer multiple choice assessments because it is easily scored. True/false assessment technique is also easy to mark and administer. Essays are used to assess high order learning skills and they are flexible. The disadvantages of essays are that it is time consuming to mark the essays. Traditional assessments are mostly standardised in nature; however, they assess only the lower order thinking skills. Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek (2000) argued that traditional assessment focus on learner’s ability to memorise.



### **3.5.3 Alternative/Adaptive Assessment Techniques for Inclusive Classrooms**

There is a shift among educators from traditional assessment toward alternative assessment (competence assessment). Competence-based assessment has been applauded by several researchers as a mode of alternative assessment which can enhance teaching and learning in inclusive classrooms (Ndalichako, 2015; Paulo, 2014; Black & William, 2012; William, 2006). This mode of assessment is designed to help educators to find what learners are learning and the best ways in which they are learning it (Bannon, 2010). Competence-based assessment certifies learners' progress on the basis of demonstrated achievement of the outcomes. Competence-based inclusive assessment techniques includes educator-learner discussions, observations, learner-to-learner interactions and educator-to-learner interactions, task differentiation and accommodation, investigative projects, extended or unit projects, self-assessment and peer assessment among others (Mokhtaria, 2015; Popescu-Mitroia, Todorescub & Greculescuc, 2015; Walde,2016; Landsberg et al., 2016). Kipkorir (2015:63) confirmed that educators need competency in using a variety of assessment options.

Traditional assessment is referred to as standardised assessment. Alternative assessment requires long-form responses and essay questions. An alternative assessment and evaluation are a learner-centred approach which requires to apply knowledge gained to solve practical problems. While traditional assessment and evaluation only considers the cognitive dimension, the alternative approach focuses on the developments in affective and psychomotor dimensions.

#### **3.5.3.1 Portfolio assessment**

Portfolio is a self-assessment tool which keeps a record of a learner's work which has been collected over time (Mokhtaria, 2015). Portfolio assessment helped to improve teaching and learning. It allows learners to present pieces of their work over an extended timeframe. Furthermore, it allowed learners to reflect on and self-asses their work and build their own knowledge and skills in different dimensions of learning, thereby providing opportunities for collaborative learning where educators and learners cooperatively set and evaluate learning goals (Ugodulnwa & Wakajissa, 2015). Kore (2013:21) indicated that the use of portfolio assessment is not a new phenomenon in the history of education. Wiesnerová (2012:22) supported the

previous statement when she asserted that portfolios record and keep a wide range of information about development and headway of the learner. Portfolios should, above all, reflect the learner's progress and effort so as to inspire him or her to self-assess his or her own progress and enrich the cooperation of the educator and the learner on assessment.

Portfolio assessment is a collection of a plethora of the learner's artefacts. Orlich et al. (2010) stated that portfolio artefacts show the assessment activities which have been completed in a learning cycle. The researcher believes that a portfolio of assessment fosters a culture of self-reflection among learners. Popescu-Mitroia, Todorescu and Greulescu (2015) described a portfolio as an alternative or complementary assessment tool which helps to assess learners correctly and adequately. Meador (2017:1) agreed that portfolios are effective assessment tools because they provide educators, learners, and parents with an in-depth look into learners' progression over the course of an entire year.

Portfolios naturally take time to build but can be relatively easy if an educator makes it a regular part of the classroom and encourages learners to help keep them up to date. In case the portfolio lacks evidence of learner self-reflection, it is necessary that the educator guides the learner to understanding what evidence is needed and then to creating such evidence. It is also important for the learner to be a part of the process of choosing both criteria and the materials that will be put into the portfolio. Hence the ACTG (2011:12) regarded it as a limited collection of the evidence of learning and assessments completed. Vik (2013:20) asserted that a portfolio of assessment provides feedback to learners as well as report what they have achieved in the academic year.

### 3.5.3.2 Continuous assessment (CA)

It is a technique used by educators in assessing learners' achievement. Through CA educators and learners are engaged in productive interactions. Continuous assessment is a technique which leads and contributes a lot towards the final summative grading (Walde, 2016:535). The definition highlighted that CA constitute a bouquet of assessment techniques and instruments. Key objectives of continuous assessment are to establish a regular system of managing assessment and utilise the

formative assessment mode (Abejehu, 2016) and it is ideal for enhancing the achievement of learning goals (Arega, 2014).

The effective use of continuous assessment by educators can have an impact on learners experiencing barriers to learning. The post-apartheid educational system brought changes to the curriculum and assessment practices. Beets (2012:69) commented that assessment changed from being traditional oriented to alternative oriented modes. Van Staden and Motsamai (2017:1) asserted that these traditional assessment practices were transformed to accommodate diverse learner needs. Mmasi and Thinguri (2017:328) stated that continuous assessments were founded on the schema theory which can be explained briefly as follows: learners should conceptualise information learnt and apply it during assessments.

Continuous assessments help learners to internalise what they have learnt. In South Africa, continuous assessment currently comprises of School-Based Assessment (SBA) and internal examinations. According to the Province of the Eastern Cape Education (2011:1) SBA was an assessment model designed to provide learners with continuous assessment opportunities throughout the year. Additionally, Fleisch (2008) indicated that assessment was initially an activity which was not given much attention by educators since they were also not adequately trained to implement it effectively. Furthermore, Kanjee (2007) contended that assessment was not given much attention in the transformation of the education sector. This anomaly resulted in an uncoordinated and irregular assessment practices as there was no clear policy to guide educators. Furthermore, lack of clear assessment practice stipulations is still a force to reckon with in the assessment of grade 1 to 11 learners since the learners are not subjected to a uniform external assessment.

The Province of Eastern Cape Education (2011:2) highlighted the key principles relating to SBA as follows:

- Transparency is a crucial aspect for learners and educators to have insights of what to expect in any assessment task.
- SBA provides information about learners' capabilities.
- SBA includes a variety of teaching and assessment methods.
- SBA is objective, valid and fair.

On the other hand, Van Staden and Motsamai (2017:1) warned that there is a problem with the quality, credibility, validity, and reliability of SBA. Long, Dunne and De Kock (2014) confirmed that there are no guidelines and standards for SBA to be a true reflection of learner performance. Poliah (2010) noted lack of uniformity in the implementation and scoring of SBAs among educators is an indication of lack of standardisation of the assessment process.

Continuous assessment policies in South Africa provided most educators with new and challenging dimensions of conducting their responsibilities. Vandeyar and Killen (2007) argued that educators still held very strong educator-centred conceptions of assessment. In this regard educators need to be trained execute assessments as prescribed by the new curriculum. Hariparsad's (2004) identified that most educators had limited understanding of the new assessment practices and this made them to emphasise the use of traditional assessment modes continuously.

In addition, Ramsuran (2006) noted that several educators are confronted by several assessment related challenges due to the large volumes of administrative work required before and after assessments were done (Education Labour Relation Council, 2003).

The researcher agrees with Maguvhe (2005:44) who argued that for change to be successful educators should be motivated and enthusiastic to implement the change. Positive attitudes and perceptions towards the change process are therefore crucial for effective educational transformations. Educators experience challenges in this ever-changing curriculum which did not give them confidence of believing in and appreciating what they will be doing. Nkosi (2014:14) argued that curriculum changes are not a unique experience in the South African because this is the norm world over. Most countries however, prioritised curriculum reform particularly in science education and described curriculum change as a complicated phenomenon which involved several components, which are difficult to manipulate. The components of curriculum change included educators' values, behaviours as well as their teaching approaches. Raselimo and Mahao (2015:1) concurred with Nkosi who stated that there were concerns about the relevance of school curriculum and the authenticity of public examinations in Lesotho.

Kirkgöz (2008) emphasised educators need to counteract difficulties in the curriculum change by having a better understanding about the curriculum. Attention should also be given towards educator training, provision of resources and addressing the issue of overcrowding in classrooms. The provision of educator support and educator training are vital in the way in which educators implemented the new curriculum.

Educator support and training significantly determine the way educators understand the curriculum and classroom practices. The educational transformation process also included changing the assessment practices of the educators.

Chavalala (2015:7) believed that a gap between policy and practice in schools contributed to poor learner performance. Additionally, DoE (2005d) noted that poor performance of learners in secondary schools was caused by limited resources required for effective teaching to take place. This scenario adversely had an impact on learners experiencing barriers to learning.

#### 3.5.3.3 Tests

Tests are valuable especially if utilised for positive feedback concerning correct and good answers (Landsberg et al., 2016). A test is either norm-referenced or criterion-referenced which is administered in a standardised manner. Norm-referenced test means that learners' performance is compared to the performance of other similar learners who have taken the same test. On the other hand, information gained from norm-referenced tests is used by educators and parents to establish the level of performance of each learner in comparison to other similar learners. The criterion-referenced test focuses at a learner's performance in relation to the mastery of certain specified content. Proficiency or adequate learning is established from this test.

#### 3.5.3.4 Work sampling

Choi (2019) noted that work sampling system encourages assessment-based observations. Work sampling focuses on the major seven development areas in the curriculum. Learners will demonstrate what they know, and the educator makes informed decisions about how to guide the teaching and learning process (Landsberg et al., 2016). This is often used for error analysis, but is also useful for identifying strengths, work habits and learning styles. Furthermore, the work sampling system allows educators to adjust the focus of their lesson plans and assessment activities.

This approach opens room for dialogue between educators and parents as they seek to find the best way of supporting the learner.

#### 3.5.3.5 Discussion techniques

Discussion methods provide a variety of forums for open-ended, collaborative exchange of ideas among an educator and learners or among learners (Wilkinson, 2009:330). Discussions between the educator and the learner serve to share ideas about what the support should focus on. The discussions enable the learner to explore preferred ideas about who he can be and strengthens the intention to utilise support. Discussion method provides learners with considerable agency in the construction of knowledge, understanding or interpretation.

#### 3.5.3.6 Observations

Classroom observation is a form of ongoing classroom assessment. Observation refers to the monitoring of learning behaviours and emotional responses. Educators will observe how the learner approaches tasks, check if the learner is able to focus attention easily and stay engaged. Smith (2005:18) defined observation as a visual analysis of everything done by a child or children over a defined period. The educator records everything seen and heard to gather information about children's capability. Focus is also on how challenges, problems and failure is dealt with. Educators can also take observational notes to describe the learner in terms of his or her development, reading, social interaction, communication skills and other dimensions of learner development. Educator observations can be incidental or planned. Incidental observation occurs during the teaching interactions between the educator and the learners. The educator observes some aspects of each individual learner. Planned observation involves deliberate planning of an opportunity for the educator to observe specific learning outcomes in the context of regular classroom activities or through the setting of an assessment task. Educator observations allow assessment to be more comprehensive, connected, contextualised, authentic, and holistic (The State of Queensland, 2001).

#### 3.5.3.7 Interactions (Learner-to-learner/ educator-to-learner)

Interactions involve reciprocity of actions among individuals. Through interaction, there is direct communication between the learners among themselves and between

the educator and the learners. Classroom interaction takes place between educators and learners. Interactions change a learner's behaviour towards an educational goal. Classroom interactions are programmed by the educator and are incorporated in the overall teaching and learning process. Achor (2004) highlighted that educator-learner interactions are important in developing cognitive and effective skills in learners.

#### 3.5.3.8 Task differentiation and accommodation

The educators can respond effectively to learner differentiation by providing differentiated assessment activities (Strogilos, 2017). Task differentiation and accommodation involves the balancing of tasks to keep the learner's interest. The educator can break tasks into smaller components and relate tasks to familiar experiences and situations. Task and curriculum differentiation are very essential to learners experiencing barriers to learning. Learners have different learning abilities therefore classroom discourses should be aligned to address the diverse capabilities of these learners (Bender, 2012). Task differentiation is also important because it recognises the uniqueness of each learner therefore no one will be left out. With regards to inclusive classrooms, educators are encouraged to prepare to accommodate divergent learning styles by differentiating the curriculum and assessment tasks (Bender, 2012). Hillier (2011) argued that by differentiating the curriculum and tasks educators proactively address the needs of individual learners as well as maximising the learning. Educators can differentiate instruction and the tasks by giving a learner more time to finish an assessment activity. According to Levy (2008) an educator can implement a systematic approach to differentiation. Hillier (2011) identified four principles of differentiated curriculum and assessment, namely: (1) it has to focus on the essential aspects of learner assessment and deliverables (2) it has to link assessment and the teaching and learning process (3) it should involve collaborative learning and (4) all learners should participate and be treated with respect. More importantly, differentiated learning adapts learning to learners' unique differences based on learners' abilities, understanding, personal interest and learning preferences (Chamberlin & Powers, 2010).

Result oriented differentiated learning include the setting of clear learning goals and challenging assignments for all learners (Chamberlin & Powers, 2010).

### 3.5.3.9 Projects

A project is a goal-oriented task which provides learners with an opportunity to use their acquired knowledge to solve a problem (Simonson et al, 2000). It is a constructivist and learner-centred method of teaching (Cakici & Turkmen, 2013; Harmer & Stokes, 2014). This kind of assessment calls for more responsibility on the part of the learners and more commitment on the part of the educators.

### 3.5.3.10 Checklists

Checklists are assessment tools which state specific criteria used to gather information and to make judgements in relation to learning outcomes. The importance of checklists lies in the fact that they offer systematic way of collecting data about specific learner behaviours, knowledge, and skills. These offer focus on problem areas, for example, behaviours indicating attention deficits. The items can also be formulated in a positive way. Learners can use a checklist to conduct self and peer assessment to make sure that they have met all requirements of an assessment activity or assignment. Furthermore, checklist can be used to clarify assessment task and the feedback associated with it.

### 3.5.3.11 Self-assessment

According to Reed (2009) self-assessment is a form of diagnostic assessment activity through which learners assess themselves. During self-assessment learners evaluate the extent to which their work reflects stated goals or criteria. This will allow the learners to be able to revise and improve their work. Self-assessment is ongoing in order to inform revision and improvement. Self-assessment can be forward-looking or self-evaluation. Forward-looking assessment requires learners to set targets about their learning achievement by the end of a certain learning period, for example, at the end of each quarter and self-evaluation is an approach which requires learners to grade their own work (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009:12-19). Herrera et al. (2007) believed that self-assessment is effective for evaluating learning.

In addition to that, the ACTG (2011:13) maintained that with self-assessment, learners check their work and reflect upon their past practice. Self-assessment developed skills in self- awareness and critical reflection. However, Kore (2013:22) noted that secondary schools learners do not have skills to self-assess or evaluate peers.



Herrera et al. (2007:7) argued that knowledge of assessment outcomes resulted in more committed to self-assessment.

Self-assessment allows learners to participate actively in their assessment (Wiesnerová, 2012:5). William (2011:147) claimed that the most obvious element seemed to be the learners' understanding of self-regulation. According to Fisher and Bandy (2019) the following aspects of self-assessment should be kept in mind:

- Self-assessment is not like self-grading. Self-assessment focuses on making evaluation and judgment about a learning experience while self-grading means a learner marks his or her own assignment using a rubric.
- Due to lack of confidence in evaluating their own work learners at first may feel uncomfortable, however, with much coaching and practice learners will evaluate and grade themselves.
- There is a range of self-assessment methods which educators can ask learners to utilise when engaged in self-assessment.

#### 3.5.3.12 Peer assessment

Reinholz (2016:1) stated that peer assessment includes several activities which allow individual learners to evaluate and judge each other's work. Implementing peer assessment helps learners to improve their learning as they will be more critical and reflective learners (Logan, 2009:30; De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012). The utilisation of the peer assessment makes learners to become aware of learning gaps. According to the ACTG (2011:13), peer assessment is used to evaluate other learners' work. Peer assessment provides opportunities for learners to identify targeted learning goals (Kore, 2013:23).

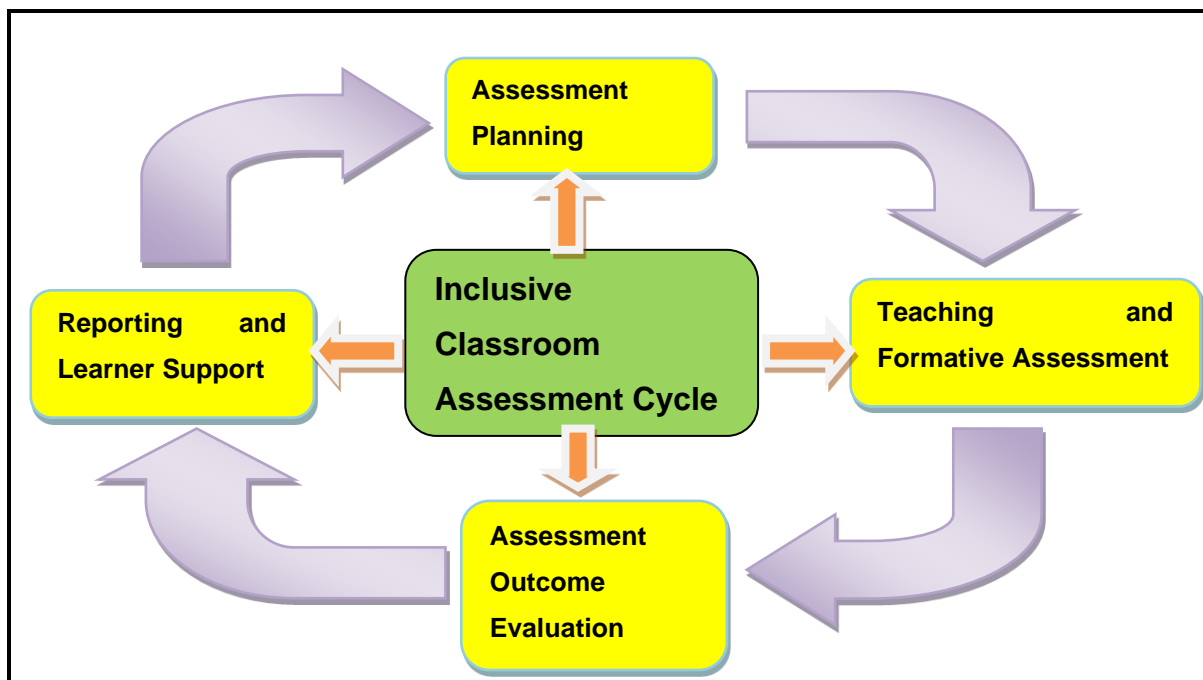
Bloxham and West (2004:722) highlighted that peer assessment provides opportunities for learners to adjudicate over their assessment. In addition, various authors stressed the importance of involving learners in assessment activities before, during and after the summative assessment (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Smith & Gorard, 2005). Fisher and Bandy (2019) maintained that peer assessment gives learners authority over their learning. The *Australian Capital Territory Government* (ACTG) (2011:13) confirmed that the advantages of peer assessment are similar to those of self-assessment. On the contrary, peer assessment has some flaws which

educators must be conscious of to use the technique effectively. Fisher and Bandy (2019) noted that if peer assessment is not used properly it will lead to antagonism or conflict among learners especially when learners give each other unmerited low evaluations or biased favourable evaluations for their friends. In addition, learners can apply inaccurate marks to their peers based on the character and behaviour of their peers. For example, extrovert learners may receive higher grades than the introverts.

### **3.6 INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT CYCLE**

Inclusive assessment should be viewed as a continuous cycle whereby each phase of assessment is informed by the previous phase and leads into the next phase. The cycle of assessment is ongoing. The preparation and implementation of an assessment can be perceived as a cycle from its inception phase, through the phases and sessions taken by the learners' right up to the phase when assessment outcomes are released. Educators must learn and improve from one phase or session to the next. Basically, there are four phases in the assessment cycle as depicted by the Missouri State University (2018:1). The Missouri State University (2018:1) described assessment as a constant cycle of improvement. From the definition, assessment is an iterative process with four phases.

Westminster College (n.d) stated that the assessment cycle encompasses planning, implementation, evaluation, and judgement to provide remediation or support for learners experiencing barriers to learning.



**Figure 3.1: The assessment cycle (Missouri State University, 2018:1)**

**Phase 1: Formulation of assessment objectives**

The first phase focuses on formulation the objectives of the assessment. According to the Missouri State University (2018:2) learning outcomes should describe the deliverables of the assessment programme. This idea is supported by Maguvhe (n.d.:56) who emphasised that the first phase involved making decisions about what to teach and determines learners’ needs relative to content, processes, skills or the combination of the three.

**Phase 2: Assessment of a learning**

There is need for multiple ways of assessing the learning outcomes (Missouri State University, 2018:2). The educator should design assignments, reports, tests projects to evaluate the success of learning which has taken place.

**Phase 3: Results analysis**

The School Assessment Team (SAT) should evaluate the results of the assessment. According to Maguvhe (n.d:58) the process of evaluating instruction involves reflecting on the effectiveness of decisions taken, namely, whether they were sound then and are still sound now. These are weighed against learners’ levels of mastery of the identified learning goals, objectives, and grading. This summative assessment phase

assist educators to evaluate the learners' mastery of content just studied. The summative assessment serves as a concluding unit for the current activities while it can also serve as a pre-assessment for the upcoming unit. This gives the educator an idea about learners' readiness for what will come next.

#### **Phase 4: Learner support**

The SAT together with the educator must have an action plan in order to improve the learners' assessment in a better way. Maguvhe (n.d:57) succinctly said: In the absence of carefully collected data, educators run the risk of unfounded assumptions, for example, that all learners are the same. Such assumptions may lead to making detrimental decisions that may (a) obstruct learners from mastering the intended learning objectives, (b) disengage learners from the process of learning due to inaccessible materials, (c) result in unacceptable learner behaviours, or negative attitudes and (d) propagate the achievement gap.

Missouri State University (2018:2) argued that educational transformations may take several years to be fully implemented. Maguvhe (n.d:59) advocated that carefully gathered and well-analysed data provide valuable information to various stakeholders including but not limited to learners' parents or guardians, administrators, other education professionals about learners' levels of mastery of goals or objectives. Summative assessment is also important for educators to adjust on teaching strategies if they are not working. The educator will know whether his or her instruction is working based on whether learners have acquired requisite knowledge and skills. That will serve as evidence or lack thereof. Summative assessment allows educators and learners to become reflective. Assessment practices should strive at improving the quality of the instructional decisions that are taken for learners.

### **3.7 PRINCIPLES OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

Sebate (2011:72) stated that the principles of assessment include beliefs and assumptions on which an educator assessment practices. Khoaeane (2012:37) indicated that assessment principles are made clear during the early years of education. According to Khoaeane (2012:37) the interest of learners must always be considered. The researcher believes that assessment must improve learning and development processes.

Harlen and Johnsons (2014:21) noted that educational values for the backbone of the aims of education. Harlen and Johnson (2014:21) have set out the key policy directions that are relevant to learner assessment, namely:

- Integrate learner assessment and school evaluation.
- Assessment and evaluation must be in sync with educational goals.
- Focus should be on improving assessment practices.
- Educator assessment must be accounted for to the stakeholders.
- The needs of the learner should determine the formative assessment strategies; and
- Measures of assessment performance must include all learning objectives.

Harlen and Johnson (2014:24) proposed the following principles to guide classroom assessment:

- Make assessment part and parcel of teaching process.
- All objectives should be unambiguous to learners.
- Both formative and summative assessment activities must be given in equal measures.
- Plan for peer and self-assessment.
- Educators should conduct baseline assessment before moving to new content.
- Give learners prompt feedback as a basis for future learning.
  - All assessment outcomes must be reported to parents.

Harlen and Johnson (2014:22) emphasised that assessment processes involve both educators and learners. Both educators and learners play a part in the formative assessment through setting assessment goals. SIAS (2014:8) recognised the following as key principles of assessment:

- Key stakeholders to be involved are educators, parents and learners.
- Assessment should be multidimensional and cater for barriers experienced by learners.
- Assessment should be varied.
- Tests should be fair and unbiased.
- Assessment procedures should show respect to all learners.
- The aim of the assessment should be unambiguous.

- Assessment must be fair, bias-free, and sensitive to learner diversity.
- Different stakeholders involved in assessment process should work closely together.

Astin, Banta, Cross, El-Khawas et al. (2012:2) advised that assessment of learning should be a cumulative process, and this process should eventually promote and improve learners' learning. They highlighted nine principles of good practice which they believe provide an opportunity for institutions to examine current practices and consider further development in alignment with desired learning outcomes.

### **3.7.1 Educational Values**

Assessment effectiveness depends on a vision of the objectives to be achieved. Educational values determine what educators choose to assess and the method of doing that. Maina (2014:1) puts it succinctly argued that educators cannot have effective teaching without skills related to good assessment.

### **3.7.2 Multidimensional**

Astin et al. (2012:2) argued that learning is a complex process which involves several dimensions. Assessment should utilise diverse and multiple methods.

### **3.7.3 Clear Purpose**

Assessment should have clear and explicit goals must be stated. Astin et al. (2012:2) argued assessment must be conducted if there is clarity on what it desired to achieve to determine the standards to apply.

### **3.7.4 Outcomes and Experiences of Assessment**

Astin et al. (2012) stated that learning outcomes are important. To improve learning outcomes educators, need have adequate knowledge about the curricula and kind of learners to be assessed. Assessment provides educators with information about learners' capabilities. With such knowledge the capacity to improve learner success is increased.

### **3.7.5 Ongoing and Cumulative**

Effective assessment must be a series of activities undertaken over time. This will be done to allow educators an opportunity to constantly monitor progress toward intended goals.

### **3.7.6 Involvement of the Educational Community**

Astin et al. (2012) suggested that assessment efforts should involve people from the educational community. It involves supporting staff such as librarians, administrators, and district facilitators.

### **3.7.7 Value of Information**

Information or data gathering is important for assessment to be useful. Educators should think about the people who will use the information and the method of doing so. Assessment should be a process that guides continuous learner improvement.

### **3.7.8 Promoting Change**

Assessment improves educational performance and the quality of learners in secondary schools. Information gathered from assessment is important for decision-making.

## **3.8 BEST ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS**

ACTG (2011:9) indicated that there are best practices in assessment which involve the following:

- Conducting assessment for learners with the purpose of improving learning.
- Using diagnostic tools to determine what the learners already know.
- Assessment should be ongoing and involve a variety of tasks so that adequate evidence is gathered.
- Learners should be actively involved.
- Learning goals should be unambiguous.
- Assessment tasks should be differentiated through offering quality methods for assessing learners.
- Assessment tasks and strategies should be fair and equal for all learners.
- Verbal or written feedback must be given to all stakeholders timeously.

- Learners' work should be discussed and moderated for quality assurance.
- Authentic assessment tasks which align with the skills development needs of the society must be given.

### **3.9 SOUTH AFRICAN ASSESSMENT POLICIES**

In 1994, the previous education systems and policies were transformed. The post-apartheid education philosophy attempted to reduce historical inequalities (Beets, 2012; Nkosi, 2014:15; Van Staden & Motsamai, 2017:1). This restructuring benefited people of all racial and class backgrounds. This process was implemented so as to provide high quality education. During this period, according to Magano (2009:2) educators endured many curriculum changes.

The transition to democracy led to the introduction of a series of curriculum changes which impacted on teaching and learning. A series of curricula which provided quality education to learners followed but, unfortunately, the implementation was not effective. Nkosi (2014:2) indicated that, after 1994, the government introduced C2005 (1998) which was followed by the NCS (2002c), and the RNCS (2008) and most recently the CAPS (2011a) which ushered in several changes in the assessment process.

Major changes were introduced four times over a period of 12 years and educators were expected to implement these changes. The CAPS (2011a) is used by educators in South Africa as a manual which normatively stipulated the processes and procedures for classroom assessment in both inclusive and non-inclusive classrooms (DoE, 2010:6). Educators assess learners both formally and informally. Adhering to the CAPS requirements is a prerequisite which will make classroom assessment to be accurate, objective, and fair. As a requirement, educators are also expected to plan formal assessments in a manner which accommodate learners of different capabilities by adhering to the Bloom taxonomy levels. Furthermore, CAPS required educators to provide learners with continuous assessment and support learners experiencing barriers to learning. CAPS assessment policy does not rely much on summative assessment to judge learner performance. In view of the CAPS requirements the study asked: What are the challenges which bedevilled senior phase secondary school educators' classroom assessment practices in Tshwane North District?



Nkosi (2014:2) highlighted that prior to the implementation of CAPS it was established that the curriculum has major implementation challenges (Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, 2012). The challenges include shortage of subject specialists to support educators and the shortage of educators for science subjects (Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, 2012).

### **3.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The study was guided by the conceptual framework developed by Hargreaves et al. (2002). The model comprises of four perspectives of educators' assessment practices and beliefs, namely: technological, cultural, political, and postmodern perspectives. The model clarifies the factors that hinder assessment practices in schools. The model indicated that assessment reflects educators' values and epistemological beliefs.

The technological perspective includes several aspects which can be manipulated by educators. Educators' capabilities in delivering effective teaching strategies also fall under this perspective as well. A deficiency or lack of a technical aspect can negatively impact on educators' assessment practices. The second perspective focuses on the cultural aspects of teaching and learning.

It encompasses the social aspect of learning as well as assessment (Hargreaves et al., 2002:81). This view also focuses on the role and interaction among stakeholders and the impact on assessment.

The third perspective focuses on the political aspects of assessment. Issues of power and authority are crucial under this perspective (Hargreaves et al., 2002:81). External assessment is given more prominence over the internal assessment and this power imbalance affect the internal assessment in schools. Assessment is basically a top-down affair since most of the assessment activities are generated and directed from the national and district offices. Educators influenced by the political aspect places emphasis on external classroom assessment. The political perspective as presented by Hargreaves et al. (2002) heavily influenced the educators' assessment practices in South African secondary schools. To large extent educators who conduct assessment according to external models neglect learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The fourth perspective is postmodern view. It views assessment from a diversity point of view. This view questioned the validity of assessment practices (Hargreaves et al.,

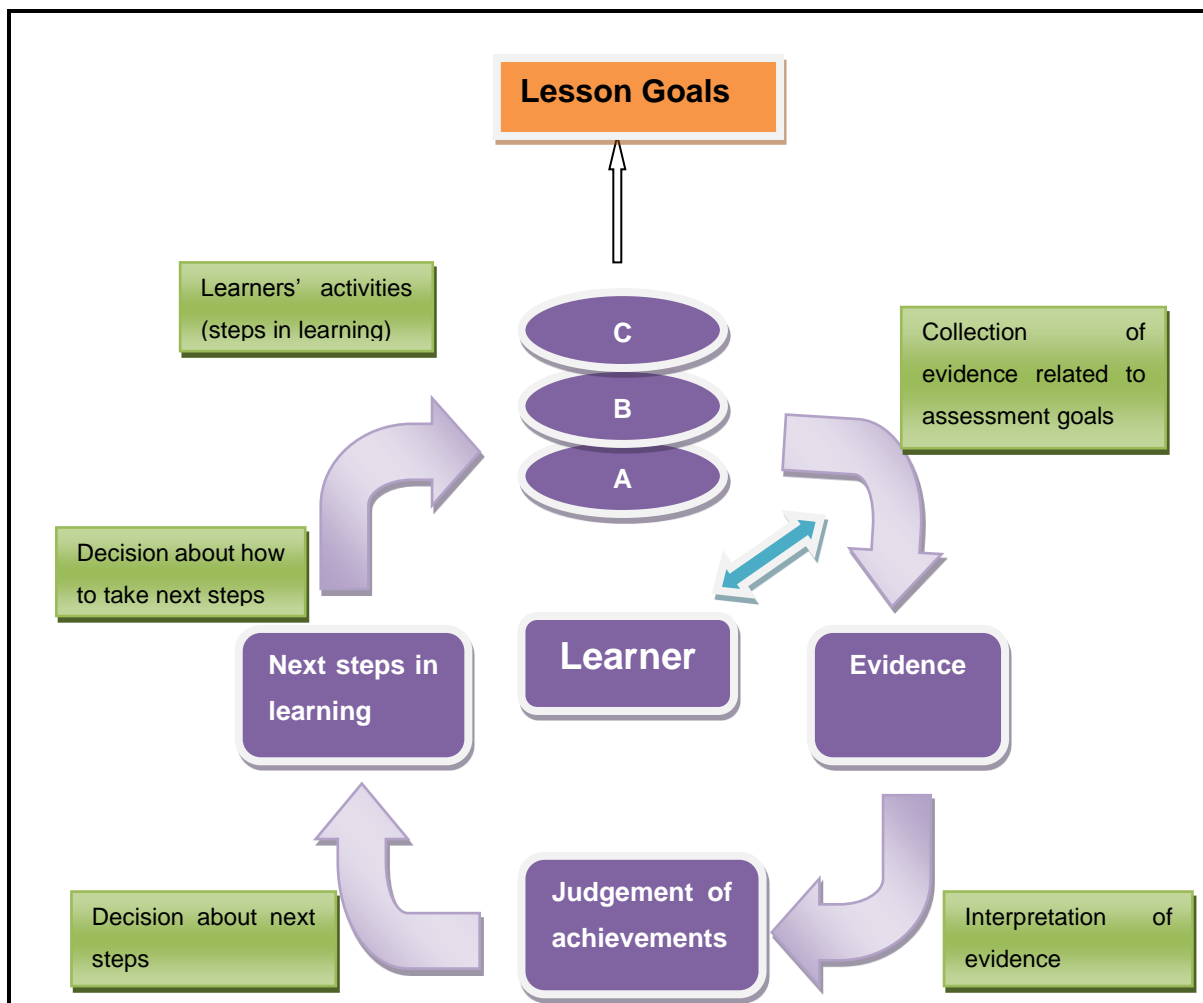
2002:81). This critical stance is important in the South African inclusive education context as it may assist educators to question the implementation of some of the assessment methods. The model incorporated social, political, and philosophical factors (Hargreaves et al., 2002). Davison (2007) argued that using different forms of assessment requires both technical and conceptual innovations. Because the Hargreaves et al. (2002) model was appropriate for examining inclusive education transformations and their impact on educators' assessment practices in inclusive classroom pedagogical contexts.

The study shed light on the factors that affected educator's assessment practices especially for learners experiencing barriers to learning in Senior Phase. Furthermore, the aim was to explore ways on how educators addressed challenges in their assessment practices. The study also explored the assessment strategies that educators used to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in their classrooms. The support educators received from different stakeholders in addressing their assessment related challenges were also established in the study.

### **3.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: KEY INGREDIENTS OF INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT**

Denzin and Lincoln (2003:33) perceived that a theoretical framework provides a blueprint which guided an investigation. Mampe (2016:57) affirmed that researchers are bound by epistemological and ontological premises when investigating. A theoretical framework reflected the stance the researcher embraced in a study. According to Okeke (2014:4-5) a theoretical framework is synonymous with a literature review. In agreement, Terre Blanche and Durkheim (2006:6) stated that a research paradigm is also viewed as a philosophy.

The aim of the investigation was to identify the challenges faced by educators when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Harlen (2006) provided the theory which guides this study (**see Figure 3.2 below**).



**Figure 3.2: Assessment for formative purposes (Source: Adapted from Harlen 2006)**

Formative assessment is mainly conducted to support learners experiencing barriers to learning. Harlen (2006) model in figure 3.1 above highlighted that formative assessment comprises of several layers and components. These components include: goal setting, educator's role in assessment in inclusive classrooms and learners' role in assessment in inclusive classrooms. These components are further discussed in the sub-sections below.

### 3.11.1 Goal Setting

Vanderbilt University (2010:1) explained that good assessment always begins with goal setting and involves transforming goals into objectives. It is emphasised that assessment practices should be clear and to the point.

As highlighted in figure 3.4 above, goal setting is an important aspect in inclusive education assessment practices. Clarke (2013:24) defined a goal as the aim which

has to be achieved. When learners learn to set goals and reach them, they can imagine their future, make decent choices, and make their dreams come true. Kodaldallow and Hobbs (2005) highlighted that goal-setting leads to the development of learner capacity to evaluate their own progress.

The educator ensures that learners understand the purposes of assessment. Educators must inform learners about the goals and expected quality in an assessment (figure 3.2). Harlen (2000) highlighted that learners who have knowledge of the assessment objectives perform the learning tasks on their own without the educator pushing them. This implied that assessment goals should be communicated to learners in advance. Furthermore, the researcher believes that it is also crucial for educators to own the assessment goals for effective learner performance in inclusive classrooms. Research underscored that learners need to participate in setting their own goals in order to improve performance (Clarke, 2013:15). Therefore, it is important for learners to set their own goals. Rault-Smith (2009) views assessment as important in learning because it provides a framework for establishing the progress of the learners and a basis for planning the next steps which can accommodate all learners.

### **3.11.2 Educators' Role in Assessment in Inclusive Classrooms**

The educator observes learners and assesses their learning deliverables. Educators have a responsibility to provide assessment and report the results to all stakeholders. All stakeholders have an obligation to support educators in their endeavour to improve learner assessment processes. Therefore, it is important for educators to share ideas and good practices in their meetings. Over and above these principles, assessment works well if it endeavours to address the unique assessment needs of all learners.

Educator role is important in the classroom more than they can imagine. Educators are irreplaceable. Educators do not only teach knowledge and skills of the unit, but also inspire their learners to learn more. Hence, Maguvhe (2005:54) stated that all learners are capable of learning if they are actively involved. Ho (2015:193) commented that if the educator only focuses on transmitting knowledge, it is not enough, and this is an obsolete educational style. Learners should be independent, and they need to know what their goals are, what they are making and how to achieve their goals. For this reason, educators need to set high but achievable expectations for their learners in their classrooms. In support of the above perception, Chavalala

(2015:41) pointed out that the educator observes the learners while learning. Harlen (2004:24) maintained that the judgement of an individual learner's work is based on recent progress and learner's desire to learn. Harlen and Johnson (2014:40) observed that effective assessment requires knowledge of assessment and utilisation of evidence about learners' progress. Ayeni (2010:36) summed it up succinctly by stressing that educators should have sufficient subject knowledge for effective assessment to take place.

### **3.11.3 The Role of the Learner in Assessment in Inclusive Classrooms**

Learners should not be passive recipients of knowledge. Willis (2011:48) argued that when learners are positioned as passive receivers, it implies that knowledge is external and unchangeable. On the other hand, Harlen and Johnson (2014) contended that learners can be reluctant to receive extra assistance. Interestingly, Harlen (2004:40) found that involving learners in self-assessment helps them to prepare for the next lesson. On the other hand, James (2013) stressed the importance of formative assessment.

## **3.12 SYNTHESIS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The model in Figure 3.2 depicts that assessment for learning consists of several aspects, namely, goal setting, educators' role, and learners' role. This represented the theoretical framework for the research. The researcher agreed with Harlen and Johnson (2014:34) who indicated that the activities represented by 'A', 'B', and 'C' in Figure 3.2 focused on the goals of learning. These goals are shared with the learners. For example, the goal of a Natural Science assessment activity might be to label the parts of the human heart and to discuss the functions of the human heart. To determine the learners' achievement of the assessment activity learners should be able to label the heart and provide its functions in their class activity books. Observation by the educators and discussion among learners in this activity provides an opportunity for both educator and learners to obtain evidence of progress towards the goal. In order to interpret the evidence from an assessment both educator and learners need some understanding of the criteria used for the assessment. Stimulating questioning helps the educator to decide about the next assessment activity. Learners are at the key figures in assessment. The two arrows linking learners to the various parts of the assessment cycle indicates that learners receive feedback from the educator and they

also actively provide information. Fisher and Bandy (2019) maintained that self-assessment can lead to better performance by the learner.

The use of self-assessment and peer-assessment can be important strategies that educators can use to accommodate their learners. Educators tend to use traditional forms of testing, for example, multiple choice questions which can be somehow tricky to some learners. Since self and peer assessment belong to the alternative assessment and are able to find out what the learner knows or what he/she can do they should be put into practice and this will give learners experiencing barriers to learning an opportunity to realise their potential. Wride (2017:3) maintained that self-assessment has different purposes in the classroom that is: to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes and goals, to evaluate understanding of the content and the self-development of the learner him/herself. However, authors such as Brookhart and Lazarus (2017:14), Thomas, Martin and Pleasant (2011:1), Rogers (2018:1) and Wride (2017:4) warned that self and peer assessment are effective strategies to support learners assessment feedback should be prioritised as well. Learners need to know the learning goals; understand the criteria they will be looking for in their work and that of their peers as well as how to apply the criteria to monitor and adjust the work. Educators should discuss with learners the reasons for utilising some of the assessments. Brookhart and Lazarus (2017:14) and Thomas et al. (2011:2) considered rubrics and checklists to be useful tools used in assessment. Brookhart and Lazarus (2017:22) further highlighted that peer assessment can be successfully used with learners experiencing barriers to learning. The above authors also asserted that learners benefit most from peer assessment if their behaviour is not challenging but those who struggle with behavioural issues may not be good candidates for this type of assessment.

Thomas et al. (2011:2) advised that educators should put in practice peer and self - assessment as inclusive strategies because learners' ability to self-assess can provide valuable clues to the educator about how learners have understood. Even though classroom assessment activities give a fair opportunity to all the learners in the classroom Thomas et al. (2011:4) argued assessment can be challenging for the educator observing the process. Self and peer assessment forms should not give learners an unfair advantage over their peers nor should the standard of assessment be compromised. Gielen (2007:98) argued that peer feedback can be challenging to

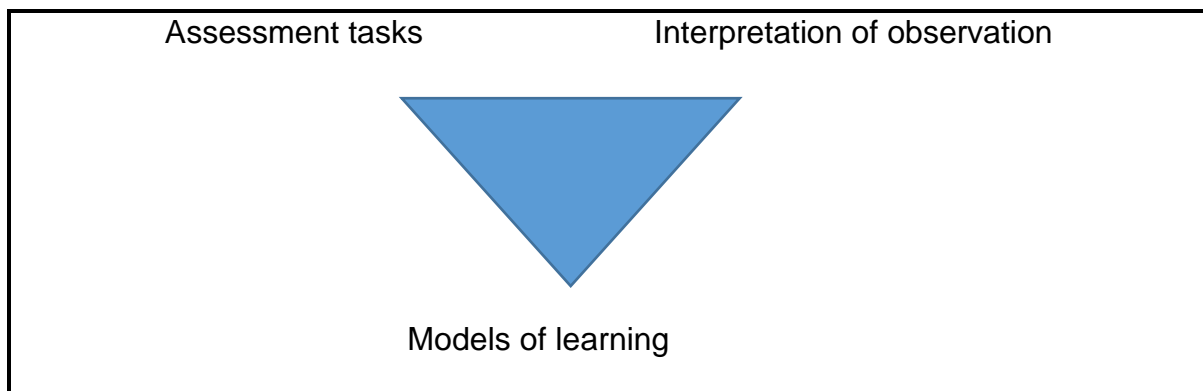
some learners. Gielen (2007:98) further stated that peer feedback can be more understandable than educator feedback. Those who experience difficulties can ask their peers questions more freely than asking their educators.

### 3.13 THE ELEMENTS OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

Harlen and Johnson (2014:10) describe assessment of all kinds as “reasoning from evidence”. This process of reasoning comprises of three key elements:

- Cognition refers to set of beliefs.
- Observation of the tasks which learners respond to; and
- Interpretation of the methods and tools used in assessment.

These elements are connected to the other two as in **Figure 3.3** (which is an adaptation of Pellegrino et al.’s original assessment triangle).



**Figure 3.3: The assessment triangle (Source: Adapted from Harlen and Johnson 2014:10)**

The relationship between the observation and the interpretation represented the dependence of what is assessed on both ends. Chang (2014:629) agreed with the above reasoning when stating that this triangle represented how an assessment can be designed and put into practice by an educator. The elements of this model predict how educators’ decisions about assessment are shaped by the learning environment. The model is important as far as analysing educator perceptions and choice of assessment techniques.

Educators’ approach to a large extent influenced the manner in which assessment can be conducted. Similarly, the methods of assessment can compromise the manner in which assessment is conducted (Harlen & Johnson, 2014:10). These are the factors which affects the admissibility of assessment. Harlen and Johnson (2014:11) also

spelt out the process involved in assessment when they described assessment as made up of several activities. Several decisions have to be made about: the types of activity in which learners are engage, the person to collect data, the data collection method, and the data interpretation method.

### 3.14 DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Educators committed to inclusive education can transform pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms because some of the learners in those classrooms challenge traditional practices of teaching (Bourke & Mentis, 2014). Educators therefore need to find for creative ways to improve learners’ learning. There is need for the development of an assessment framework which can support inclusive educators when implementing assessment in inclusive classrooms. According to Isingoma (2014:86), a framework for assessment outlined the elements of assessment, namely:

- What do educators assess from learners?
- Why do educators assess learners?
- How do educators assess learners?
- When do educators assess learners?

Each element requires educators to have expertise in assessment to carry them out effectively. Assessment-literate educators know how to engage learners in productive self-assessments that will support their learning success. **Table 3.2** below presents a framework for assessment.

**Table 3.2: Framework for assessment**

| Action Level of assessment | Description  |
|----------------------------|--|
| What do educators assess?  | Educators assess learners’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Attributes and capabilities</li> </ul>   |
| Why do educators assess?   | Educators assess learners in order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To share learning intentions and success criteria</li> <li>• To provide adequate interaction and feedback</li> <li>• To promote learner engagement</li> <li>• To involve learners in reflection and setting learning goals</li> </ul> |



| Action Level of assessment | Description  |
|----------------------------|--|
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote individual personal assessment</li> <li>• To ensure adequate provision of learner support</li> <li>• To be fair and impartial</li> <li>• To enable learners to have the best chance of success</li> </ul>  |
| How do educators assess?   | Educators learners in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By implementing diverse approaches</li> <li>• By collecting evidence for informing stakeholders on learner progress</li> <li>• Assessment designed for a specific purpose and need</li> <li>• Through collaboration with other stakeholders, for example parents and other educators</li> </ul> |
| When do educators assess?  | Educators assess learners at different phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout the learning and teaching phases (in each and every lesson – formative assessment)</li> <li>• Periodic (from time to time) – summative assessment</li> <li>• At transition – when learners progress from one grade to another</li> </ul>  |

**Source: Adapted from: The Scottish Government (2011:10)**

In developing the inclusive assessment framework, the researcher has taken into account previous model of assessment and has adapted it to develop a framework for effectively assessing learners in inclusive classrooms.

An inclusive education assessment guiding model has three key features: (1) all learners should be accommodated for effective assessment; (2) classroom assessment should be appropriate for the learners who have diverse capabilities and needs in inclusive classrooms; and (3) the curriculum should accommodate the unique needs of learners (Douglas, McLinden, Robertson, Travers & Smith, 2016).

The general aim of inclusive assessment is to apply assessment practices and policies which enhance and support the successful inclusion and participation of all learners (Watkins, 2007:47). Inclusive assessment should serve all learners without segregating some learners. To accommodate all the learners, educators must adopt the alternative assessment approach which ensure appropriate assessments for all groups of learners (Watkins, 2007). In addition to the alternative assessments inclusive educators must make use of the accommodated system of assessment.

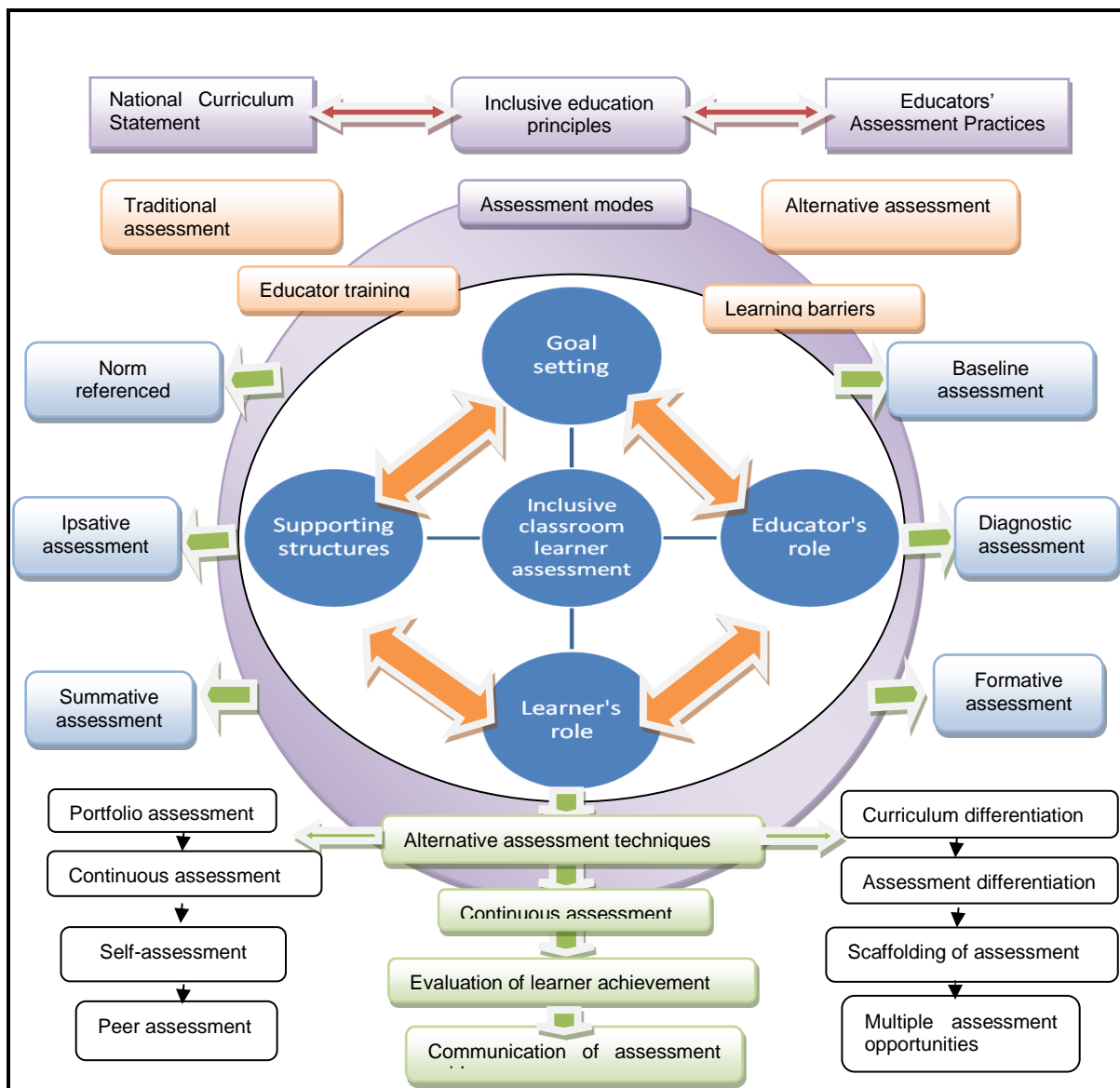
Through an accommodated system, assessment can be modified to accommodate all learners. Modifications are essential to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning. These modifications are also very vital to make assessment to be accessible to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. The inclusive framework clearly indicates that inclusive assessment caters for diversity by catering and valuing all learners. In a nutshell, inclusive assessment is inclusive in terms of the learners who will receive the assessment, the methods or techniques to be used when assessing learners in inclusive classrooms and the content or subject matter to be used when assessing learners (Douglas et al., 2016:103).

Kefallinou and Donnelly (2016) identified key elements in the inclusive assessment framework:

- Clear aims for assessment aligned with educational goals
- Placing learners at the centre of the assessment process
- Assessment should be fit for purpose
- Inclusive principles should be form part of the assessment
- All stakeholders should be involved in the assessment.

From the literature review and Harlen's (2006) model of assessment the researcher has developed the following framework for inclusive classroom assessment in South African secondary schools.

The framework is presented in Figure 3.4 below:



**Figure 3.4: Inclusive education assessment framework**

Source: Researcher

### 3.15 FACETS OF AN IDEAL ASSESSMENT

The quality of classroom assessment should meet three quality determinants, namely consistence, fairness and generating a true reflection of learning accomplished.

#### 3.15.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which an assessment reflects the true and uncompromised reality about each learner’s achievements in an assessment (Maree, 2010). Evidence gathered should reflect the skills an educator needs to know about (Tierney, 2006).

Harlen and Johnson's (2014:17) views validity providing the kind of information that is intended.

### **3.15.2 Reliability**

Reliability refers to how the findings are as accurate and replicable as possible (Harlen & Johnson, 2014:15). The assessment results should be of acceptable consistency. Hamidi (2010:5) defined 'reliability' as generating consistent results from assessment activities.

### **3.15.3 Fairness**

According to Sethusha (2012:46) fairness refers to providing equal treatment to all learners despite their differences. Brown (2005) argued that educators' emotions and character dispositions should not have an impact on assessment. Zaleski (2015) argued that bias has a negative impact on classroom assessment. According to Brown (2005) and Kunnan (2005:) learners should be accorded with equal opportunities during an assessment. Furthermore, Zaleski (2015) stated that bias can also happen due to a lack of alignment among assessment, the instruction, and the learning expectations.

### **3.15.4 Dependability**

To ensure dependability all stakeholders should have a clear understanding of the assessment decisions made by the educator. Harlen and Johnson (2014:17) explained that an assessment may have low dependability if it cannot be reliably judged, despite having high construct validity.

### **3.15.5 Synthesis of Issues related to Assessment Quality**

Zaleski (2015:27) stressed that quality classroom assessment provides accurate, dependable information about learners' learning. Sethusha (2012:46) reported that classroom assessment must be aligned to four quality-aligned criteria. An effective assessment should be consistent, dependable, implemented fairly without raising any criticism. Harlen and Johnson (2014:15) affirmed that the above principles guarantee effective assessment.

### **3.16 MODERATORS IN CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT**

Several researchers (Gatullo, 2000; Chen, 2003; Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004; Hsu, 2005) highlighted the factors which can promote or distract educators' assessment practices. The scholars identified the following variables as moderators in the assessment practices: educator's beliefs, cognition, educator training received by the educator, the number of learners in a classroom and educator's experience in the inclusive classroom. These previous studies highlighted the importance of understanding assessment systems and procedures as well as their perceptions of educators towards assessment because such variables influenced the assessment practices which will be adopted in the classroom. In view of these factors, it is crucial to understand the educators' perceptions, challenges and experiences in classroom assessment practices. This revelation provided essential knowledge which is essential in planning and implementing assessment. Mertler (2003) argued that most of the time in the teaching and learning process time is consumed while educators and learners are engaged in assessment activities therefore understanding the factors which have an adverse effect on assessment practices is very crucial.

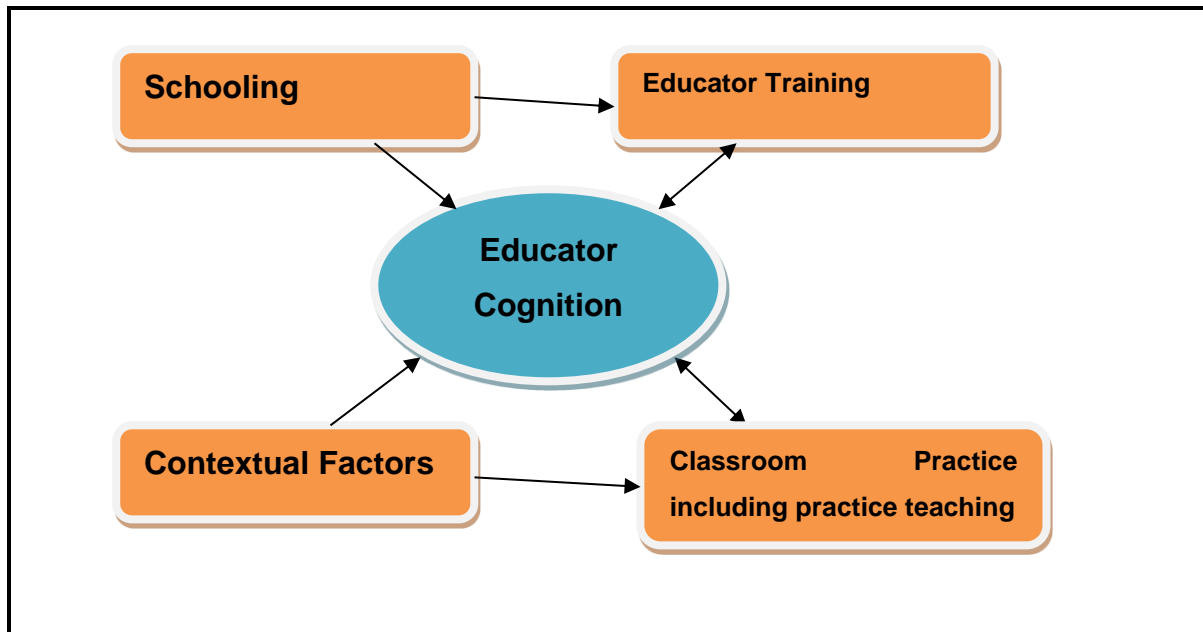
#### **3.16.1 The Educator's Cognition**

Educators' beliefs and values determine how assessment is conducted (Xu, 2012:1397). Educators tend to implement classroom practices that reflect their philosophical beliefs. According to Xu (2012:1397) beliefs serves guide educators' way of thinking, judgement, and behaviour.

Chew and Lee (2013:1) emphasised that in the 21st century educators play a pivotal role in transmitting values to the learners through assessment. Within this research, educator beliefs refer to the perceptions and judgements that educators hold about the assessment of learners in the classroom. Chang (2014:627) indicated that educators' cognitive and other behaviours are guided by beliefs, values and principles. Educators' cognition is important for improving assessment processes.

Furthermore Chang (2014:627) highlighted that several environmental factors influences educator cognition. (**See Figure 3.5**). If educator assessment, as one of the cognitive processes that educators engage in, is connected to a wider network of

beliefs and principles, it then follows that educator assessment is also influenced by a broad variety of factors.



**Figure 3.5: Influences on educator cognition**

**Source: Adapted from Borg (2003:82)**

### **3.16.2 Impact of Educator Training on Assessment Practices**

Maguvhe (2005:242) maintained that assessment training is essential for effective assessment to be conducted. However, training deficiency among educators has a negative effect on assessment practices. It is important that educators be trained to be effective assessors of learning through the provision of sufficient training. In addition, Kipkorir (2015:31) stated that insufficient educator-training programmes are negatively educators' assessment capabilities. The previous statement has been fully supported by Sikka, Nath and Cohen (2007) who found that many educator education programmes do not require prospective educators to take courses in classroom assessment, and in-service educators reported about insufficient preparation to assess learners' learning. Consequently, educators neither have knowledge of classroom assessment nor of large-scale testing. Sikka et al. (2007) further assert that pre-service educators know much less about assessment than their in-service counterparts. Hence the researcher believed that insufficient educator training has an impact on educators' assessment practices.

### **3.16.3 Impact of Class Size on Assessment**

Gashaw (2014:6) viewed class size as the number of learners enrolled in a class. Kipkorir (2015:30-31) asserted that a combination of factors explained why educators are unable to assess the learners effectively. Large class sizes make it impractical for educators to implement all required assessment practices (Khosi, 2009:62).

### **3.17 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter extensively covered the definitions of assessment from different authors. The literature review on educator's assessment practices was provided. It discussed the best practices that educators should use when assessing their learners, differentiated assessment and effective assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom. Support of learning from different stakeholders with the intention to support educators in addressing their challenges in their assessment practices in the classrooms was investigated. It was concluded that educators need more support from different stakeholders so that their classroom assessment practices can be of value to all their learners. The Hargreaves et al. (2002) model was discussed and related to the study. The researcher adopted the above-mentioned conceptual and theoretical models to formulate the framework that can be used to develop classroom assessment practices. Chapter Four comprises a detailed discussion of the research design and research methods adopted in this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter Three, the researcher presented the conceptual and theoretical framework and discussed the principles of assessment, assessment method, assessment techniques, classroom assessment and assessment policies in South Africa. The focus was more on the best assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning in Senior Phase.

This chapter outlined the research methodology adopted in the qualitative study. The rationale behind the chosen research design was presented along with a discussion about its related merits and limitations. Data collection and data analysis methods were also described. This chapter also discussed the methodological norms incorporating validity, reliability, credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and trustworthiness. The chapter also presented the limitations and ethical considerations for the study.

### **4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Denzin and Lincoln (2018) advised that scientific research should always be conducted with a specific paradigm namely a way of viewing the research material. Over many centuries schools of thought have emerged in the form of paradigms to regulate any form of research. The term paradigm refers to a collection of beliefs. A paradigm determines how researchers view the world (Rahi, 2017:1). Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011:97) defined a paradigm as a philosophy which comprises of ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises. Nieuwenhuis (2007:47) defined a paradigm as a set of assumptions or beliefs. In this study, a paradigm refers to a set of shared assumptions and practices (Creswell, 2009:6). Punch (2009:358) noted all studies are influenced and guided by a particular paradigm which represents a specific world view (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:22). Working within a particular paradigm determined choices such as the following:

- Type of questions to be asked?
- The focus of the investigation?
- Data collection methods?
- Data analysis and presentation?



A paradigm comprises assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), what constitute knowledge (epistemology) and methodologies (Maree, 2007:47).

Neuman (2014:10) precisely described the term paradigm as a set of assumptions, brought together in an organisational framework that guided social theory's empirical research in interpreting reality. Three assumptions in a paradigm were identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2018) as:

- Ontology (nature of reality and what is truth)
- Epistemology (how can we know?)
- Methodology (which research methods can be used to gather and analyse data).

Based on these assumptions, an empirical research project can be conducted in the context of positivism and constructivism paradigms. According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006:193) both positivism and constructivism can be viewed as forms of variable theoretical paradigms. Positivism assumed that reliable and valid research findings are objective and address the five senses (Du Plooy-Ciulliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014:25). This type of paradigm is more useful to researchers undertaking quantitative research studies as it is more scientific in nature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The features of positivism are experimental, manipulative, and hypothetical in nature making it more suitable for quantitative method (Aliyu et al. 2014:81). In view of this, data can be gathered, interpreted, tested and presented statistically. This paradigm was recommended by Neuman (2014:61) who agreed that positivist research can permit the measurement of facts through numerical conversions and statistical analysis to test relationships.

In this study interpretivism and constructivism paradigms regulated qualitative research. Considering views from different scholars, constructivism allowed the researcher to make conclusions after analysing perceptions and experiences of the participants. According to Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah (2016:9) constructivism as a philosophical paradigm is more aligned to qualitative research techniques where the generalisation of findings is more dependent on personal experience which is not acquired or imposed from outside. Unlike positivism, constructivism did not have a predefined dependent or independent variable.

This fact is based on the view that constructivism is rooted in the belief that researchers gather narrative reality which is subjective to continual change (Denzil &

Lincoln, 2013:304). Similarly, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26) concurred that the core belief of the constructivism paradigm is that reality emerge from people's experiences. Data is collected from within and knowledge is interpreted in the context of a given scenario or environment. In this study constructivism was applied when the researcher interacted with the Educators, SAT Coordinators, ILST coordinators, Deputy Principals and DoE District officials.

Interpretivism or constructivism paradigm was used to conduct a qualitative study. The interpretivists/constructivists strived to understand people's experiences. This study was situated in the interpretivist paradigm because it acknowledged that the experiences of educators, Deputy principals, ILST Coordinators, and SAT Coordinators, all from secondary schools, officials from the DBE being the Head of DAT and the Head of the DLST who deal directly with assessment methods, tools and techniques are one among many other experiences in the field of assessment. In addition, Nxumalo (2009) highlighted that an interpretivist research sought to understand cases by means of understanding participants' perspectives. Neumann (2006) indicated that an interpretivist focuses on understanding people's experiences.

#### **4.3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND STRATEGY**

The researcher adopted a qualitative approach. The researcher sought to understand the meanings that the research participants constructed about the challenges that affected educators' assessment practices (Merriam, 2009:13). Furthermore, the researcher explored ways on how educators addressed these challenges in their assessment practices.

Qualitative research is guided by constructivism philosophy to establish multiple realities (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:112). On the other hand, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argued that qualitative research is interpretive in nature. A qualitative research approach was appropriate for understanding participants' experiences (De Vos et al., 2011:64). Educators and the district officials expressed their views regarding assessment practices and different strategies used to assess learners.

The qualitative research approach attempted to comprehend and explain human nature. The researcher studied participants' experiences in their natural environment (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011:286). Hence the participants were interviewed in their natural settings. The researcher believes that each person experiences the world

differently. This thesis employed an exploratory and descriptive approach. Qualitative research often provided greater depth of information with a limited number of participants.

Barbour (2014:15) identified several advantages of the qualitative research:

- It allowed researchers to understand people's everyday experiences
- It helped researchers to understand people's views and experiences
- The study is conducted in specific context
- It allowed researchers to explore the impact of interactions
- It enabled researchers to gather detailed information about a phenomenon
- The research allows for flexibility
- It provides deeper insights and understanding of a phenomenon.

The qualitative approach has its disadvantages. Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012) argued that qualitatively generated findings may not be generalisable to wider populations. However, generalisation to all the secondary schools in South Africa is not a goal of this study. Instead, it intended to gain an insight into a 'slice' of interested stakeholders who are passionate about improving educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:60). The researcher did not wish to generalise the results beyond the group sampled (Broom & Willis, 2007:26).

In the current study the qualitative approach was equally used based on the constructivism assumptions. This is an epistemological view which assumed that human beings generate knowledge (Bryman, 2012:686). The view suggested that generalisation of findings should not be influenced by external factors but by the personal experiences of an individual. This implied that qualitative approach is associated with multiple realities because the generalisations are centered on the participants' perspectives which were also under different social influences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:101). It is believed that the qualitative approach is synonymous with interpretivist approach in which the researcher sought for methods to understand people's experiences and generate theories out of that (McQueen, 2002:17).

The research mainly gathers narrative data instead of statistical data (Walia, 2015:124). This approach is attractive because it follows an inductive approach

(Mohajan, 2018:24). In contrast to the quantitative approach, qualitative research is characterised by detailed context-based generalisations which do incorporate any form of statistical tendencies. Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2014:27) applauded the qualitative approach to research because it is inductive, flexible and can generate theory. Researchers tend to enjoy this approach as they also participate and become immersed in the social setting of the environment where the study is being undertaken. Based on this background, the qualitative approach in this section of the study presented a narrative description and interpretation of data. The qualitative data gleaned enabled the researcher to analyse, describe and understand the perceptions of the educators and district officials regarding assessment practices in inclusive classrooms in schools in Tshwane North District in Gauteng Province.

The researcher's intention was to identify the challenges that affected educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning in secondary schools. This method of data collection provided insight into how educators addressed these challenges in their assessment practices and helped to understand the assessment strategies that educators used to help learners.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research process involves several systematic processes and activities to enhance the understanding of a phenomenon about which a researcher is interested in or concerned about (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:99). The researcher must follow a blueprint which would outline and control the procedures and factors to ensure validity of the study. A research project in the 21st century is regarded as scientific and systematic uncovering of hidden things (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016:5). Creswell (2014:74) advised that researchers have to ask themselves about the knowledge and theoretical views they are bringing forth to a research and they need to think carefully on the strategies they intend to employ in the study. Therefore, a suitable research design should be selected to satisfy the requirements of a particular research project. A research design is a written plan of what the researcher wants to investigate and it provides direction for all the stages of the study (Babbie, 2014:10; Vogt, 2012:105; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:21).

The design must be selected to suit the nature of the research being conducted. Leedy and Ormrod (2013:74) presented it succinctly when they describe research design as a blueprint for addressing the research objectives or questions.

The researcher utilised the phenomenological case study research design to observe and analyse the actual assessment practices in natural inclusive classroom contexts. Phenomenology is the study of individuals' experiences of and perceptions. Okeke and van Wyk (2015:45) stated that phenomenology emphasised the participants' perspectives. A qualitative study is conducted without manipulating variables and the participants (Mahlo, 2011:85). Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010:171) highlighted that in phenomenological research examine the interviews of each participant. This study made use of the phenomenological design to observe the actual assessment practices.

The study utilised a phenomenological case study framework to explore the challenges bedevilling educators when assessing learners in inclusive classrooms as well to establish the importance of educators' assessment practices. Case study design is a comprehensive investigation method which allows the researcher to gather magnified data which helps the researcher to comprehend and establish meaning of a situation of the case in its natural setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2002). Basically, a case study design falls within the constructivist or interpretivist paradigm. Vohra (2014) argued that case studies can facilitate an in-depth study of a phenomenon in its natural context. Drew (2014) noted that interviews are mostly used in qualitative case studies.

Baxter and Jack (2008) indicated that an exploratory case study design is ideal for obtaining a deeper understanding of a case. In agreement, Denscombe (2017) argued that the case study design allows a researcher to have a deeper a thorough understanding. On the other hand, Yin (2014) maintained that it is useful in answering the "how" or "why" questions. The qualitative case study design helped the researcher to establish the educators' assessment practices (Charmaz, 2014). The unit of analysis for the study was the educators' assessment practices when assessing the senior phase learners (Grade 7-9). In addition, the researcher specifically utilised the single case with embedded units. The same issue was explored in four different schools (Stake, 2005:445). A case study design was used to establish inclusive

education assessment practices and challenges encountered by educators through the voices of the educators (Cohen et al., 2000).

#### **4.5 TARGET POPULATION AND THE UNITS OF ANALYSIS**

A target population refers to individuals or objects which may be involved in research. Early researchers shared similar views on the research population. Saunders et al. (2016:276) defined a research population as the “full set of cases from which a sample is taken”. Babbie (2010:193) viewed the research population as all the objects, subjects or members with specific qualities required by the researcher. Similarly, Neuman (2014:166) considered the population of study as the totality of the cases or units of analysis with which the research problem is concerned. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:59) identified sampling as a process of selecting participants for the study. Purposive sampling was utilised to select participants who have the key knowledge or information needed in the study (Lodico et al., 2010:34). The sampling process involved a deliberate selection of schools which participated in the study. The institutions involved were selected based on learner performance in the previous year, geographical location and proximity or accessibility convenient to the researcher.

Four secondary schools in three different clusters in Tshwane North District were purposively selected. A cluster according to the Department of Education constitutes a geographical grouping of schools. Each cluster comprises of approximately 30 schools. Cluster 1 (City schools) comprised of 34 secondary schools; Cluster 2 comprised of 32 secondary schools in Soshanguve and cluster 3 comprised of 36 secondary schools in Temba and Hammanskraal. The researcher selected Tshwane North District because it has a wider representation of learners from city, township, and rural schools. From 102 secondary schools in Tshwane North District (TND) the researcher selected 4 schools (one school was chosen from the city schools (suburban), one from Soshanguve schools (Township) and two schools were selected from Temba/Hammanskraal schools (one rural and one independent school) because it has the highest number of secondary schools. The criteria for including the schools in the study were based on the 2015 end of year results. All schools had achieved 100% passes at senior phase level (Grade 7-9) were considered for the study.

From the four schools selected for the study 16 participants participated in the study. Four educators (deputy principal; SAT coordinator; ILST and subject educator) were

selected from each school. These educators manage the curriculum and assessment in the schools. The coordinators of the ILSTs were selected to participate in this study due to the role they play in supporting educators and different programmes in the schools, most importantly the ILST support educators experiencing the challenges when assessing learners.

It was considered appropriate to choose the educators as well as SAT coordinators as they are involved with assessment on a daily basis. The SAT supports educators and conducts internal workshops on assessment and recording. The Eastern Cape Provincial Assessment Instruction division (ECDBE, 2011:5) ensured that SAT was operational. In addition, SIAS (2014:34) emphasised that the role of educators included adjusting classroom methodologies.

Two district officials from Tshwane North that is, the Head of DAT and the Head of the DLST participated in this study because they have an understanding of the challenges that affect educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom and they have more knowledge on assessment methods, tools, techniques assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners to improve their performance. All in all, the researcher thus selected 18 information-rich participants for the research.

The four purposively selected schools, that is, a township, a suburban, a rural and an independent school, were chosen because each of their excellence in assessment. They were also chosen because they have good assessment practices as their learner performance was better than those of other schools. Since this study needed to find out about the assessment strategies that educators utilise to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning and how they address challenges in their assessment practices.

#### **4.6 SAMPLING DESIGN**

Generally, a sample can be viewed as a group of participants, treatments or situations selected from the population. Flick (2009:115) pointed out that sampling means selecting participants from the population that represents the entire population. It is a subset of a population and it represents the entire group (Kendra & Lacey, 2013:1). This implies that, the researcher determines who and how many people or subjects should take part in study. The sample for this study consisted of four secondary

schools in Tshwane North District. Purposive and convenient sampling was used to identify four educators, four IST members and four SAT members participated in the study. Purposive sampling was adopted to select easily accessible and knowledgeable participants who provided rich and sound data.

#### **4.7 DATA SOURCES**

Data collection gathered information which addresses the research questions (Creswell, 2007). The research question was: *What are the challenges that affect educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools in Senior Phase?*

Further questions probed were:

- What assessment practices do educators use in their classrooms?
- What assessment methods do educators apply to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools?
- What are the challenges faced by educators in assessing learners who experience barriers to learning?
- Which assessment techniques are used by educators when supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning?
- How do different stakeholders support educators in addressing their challenges when assessing learners?
- What is the impact of inclusion in the educators' assessment practices?
- What can be done to alleviate the challenges faced by educators when addressing learners experiencing barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms?
- What can be done by the DBE to address the assessment challenges educators face in inclusive classrooms?

The data sources used were influenced by the interpretivist paradigm. Three data collection instruments were used (semi-structured interviews, observations and documents analysis). The use of several data sources was in line with the requirements of the qualitative case study design adopted for this study. Using multiple data sources was also attractive to the researcher because of the rigor associated with the use of triangulated sources of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The use of multiple data



sources to collect data in the study is valuable as this will allow the researcher to make generalisations from the findings.

In this study triangulation was used as a method of enquiry owing to its several benefits in the field of study. Creswell (2014:43) believed that triangulation is an efficient method in data gathering because it uses different data sources. The use of the triangulation approach was essential to allow the researcher to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. This fact was reinforced by Tashakkori and Teddlie (in Cameroon, 2011:100) who indicated that triangulation helps to complement data and create a bigger picture as seen from all angles in a research. The adoption of multiple data collection methods was insightful in providing multifaceted responses and data in this study.

#### **4.7.1 Observations**

Data was collected through observing lessons, educators, and learners' portfolios. Johnson and Christensen (2008:211) indicated that observation is effective in establishing behavioural patterns. The observed lessons were audiotaped to provide a database for analysis. Observations resulted in a holistic interpretation of the data without being obstructive. The researcher was a complete observer and did not have conversations with participants (Lodico et al., 2010).

#### **4.7.2 Document Analysis**

Document analysis involves analysing written records (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:426) Bertram and Christiansen (2014:97) suggested that researchers can use various documents as sources of data. Mertler (2009:35) argued that document analysis is less time-consuming. For this study, the researcher analysed assessment related documents to explore assessment challenges and practices. These documents included portfolio files and lessons plans, among others.

#### **4.7.3 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were the main sources of data. The researcher was involved in one on one conversation with participants guided by the interview protocol (Maree, 2010:87; Merriam, 2009:87). The advantage of an interview is that it provides feedback immediately (Greef, 2007:287). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:409) noted that interviews are sources of authentic data. In this study, the researcher

interviewed knowledgeable participants' e.g., educators, Deputy Principals, ILST coordinators and SAT coordinators. The interviews were conducted after working hours. In-depth interviews were also conducted with two officials from the DBE being the Head of DAT and the Head of the DLST. The interviews were scheduled for approximately one hour thirty minutes per participant. No incentives were provided for the interviewees. The interviews were recorded to offer room for a reliability check (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:360; Simons, 2009:52). Interview questions were used to gather opinions of officials from the DBE, being the Head of DAT and the Head of the DLST, who deal directly with assessment methods, tools and techniques on how they support the secondary schools educators in assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Issues from observations were also discussed during the interviews to validate observations made. The researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with the departmental officials which stimulated interaction (Tracy, 2012:160).

The interviews explored whether the Tshwane North District Officials scrutinised portfolios of the secondary school educators in terms of skills and expert knowledge in assessing learners experiencing barriers. Open-ended interviews were used in the study to allow for flexibility, probing to clear up any misunderstanding (Creswell, 2012:220). Furthermore, they enabled the interviewer to achieve an authentic assessment of the participant's perceptions and views (Mertler, 2014:132).

Drew, Hardman and Hosp (2008:190) explained the advantages of interviews as follows:

- They are used to generate large volumes of information in a flexible manner allows the researcher to have direct contact with participants during interviews.
- The response rate is very high.
- They allow meanings and feelings of the participants to be captured in detailed.
- Rich, extensive, and in-depth information will be collected.
- Guaranteed the generation of valuable insights.
- There is provision for follow-up questions.

Interviews have weaknesses as captured below:

- They are costly because they involve a lot of travelling and need much time.

- The interviewer must have skill and expertise to conduct the interviews (Drew et al., 2008:190).

Qualitative data was provided by an interview schedule which enriched data collected from the observations and document analysis (Appendix E and H). One on one interviews created a platform for the educators and district officials to express their opinions, experiences and feelings with regard to the assessment practices in an inclusive classroom which comprised of learners experiencing barriers (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Minhat (2015:292) opined that semi-structured interviews comprised of major questions for addressing the objectives of the study. Saunders et al (2016:600) noted that semi-structured interviews started with a set of interview topics, but the interviewer can change the order of the questions to suit the situation in which the research is being undertaken. This implied that a semi-structured interview schedule is not as rigid as other forms of data collection. There is need for the researcher to build a rapport for the interaction to be healthy (Maree, 2012:87; Annum (2015:2). Such an interaction provided the information that the researcher had not thought of. The interview as a data- collection method was instrumental in this study because it was flexible in creating a platform to ask follow-up questions, observing attitudes and understanding the individual perspectives and experiences of interviewees (Bryman, 2012:477).

The benefits of semi-structured interviews were further elaborated by Patton (2002:343) who recommended that semi-structured interviews elucidate and illuminate the phenomenon under study. An interview as is part of the self-report data-gathering method and the researcher is advised to develop an interview schedule as a data-gathering instrument (Wright 2007:28). The interview schedule was aimed at consolidating findings from the observation checklist and document analysis. A comprehensive and effective interview schedule should be aligned with research questions, should construct an inquiry-based conversation and should be pilot tested (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The interview questions were developed from the observation checklist and document analysis which was conducted in schools and it sought to enquire on into the assessment practices in inclusive schools. The researcher manually transcribed all the responses from the interviewee.

However, interviews have got their own drawbacks. They are known to be expensive in terms of time, they are susceptible to interviewer bias. Nevertheless, if conducted by a skilful interviewer in a more interactive manner with flexibility, interviews can be rewarding (Rahman, 2017:102). Appointments were adhered to by the researcher to avoid possible inconveniences. The researcher also used individual interviews to enable the participants to reflect on the information they gave and to verify if the data captured by the researchers was genuine.

To ensure credibility and relevance of interview questions and the observation checklist, two research experts were requested to check the instruments. Recommendations made by the experts were implemented by the researcher before conducting the interviews. All the participants involved in the interviews were given an opportunity to conduct a member check on their recorded interview data. This was done to ensure that the captured data correctly reflect the interviewees' views (Shenton, 2004).

#### **4.7.4 Pilot Testing**

The interview was piloted with a group like the participants involved in the actual study to ensure that the questions were appropriate and unambiguous. Lodico et al. (2010:217) believed that any research endeavour should be piloted with a few people. Given (2016:84) encouraged researchers to do pilot testing as it helps in resolving challenges in advance.

### **4.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data analysis process focuses on analysing and discussing data (Mpya, 2007:61-62; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:531). According to Mahlo (2011:102) the process involves organising and identifying patterns emerging from the data. Data obtained was analysed using content analysis based on Kumar (2011:278). Content analysis is appropriate for analysing qualitative data. Themes can be established from the content.

#### **4.8.1 Semi-Structured Interviews Data Analysis**

The researcher utilised the content analysis method to establish patterns and generate themes (Anderson, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:98; Rugg & Petre, 2007:157).

According to Kumar (2011:278) the first step involves the identification of the main themes. Secondly, codes were assigned to the themes. Codes are words, phrases or whole paragraphs which are connected to the setting or themes of the study. Coding was done to reduce the data from the transcripts. Open coding was utilised in the study. The third step clarified responses from the participants and the fourth step integrated themes into the report.

Furthermore, a triangulation technique was used. Triangulation was used to check the relationships between the identification of assessment strategies that educators used to assist learners. The main reason for using the technique of triangulation was to ensure that quality data is collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367).

The data analysis process followed in this study was as follows:

- Data was organised into a few meaningful themes. These themes emerged from the interview questions, research objectives and literature.
- Data was transcribed after the interviews. Broad themes were broken down into smaller meaningful sub-themes.
- Data transcripts were read and analysed repeatedly. This was followed by data coding.
- After coding the researcher determined categories from the codes. Thematic categories were created.
- Data was analysed and discussed thematically.

#### **4.8.2 Document Data Analysis**

The researcher analysed educators' documents and jot down challenges that they faced. A summary is presented below.

***Table 4.1: Summary of the assessment documents analysed***

| <b>Document analysed</b>   | <b>Rationale for the analysis</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Assessment plans           | To get an idea of how educators plan their formal and informal assessments |
| Recording sheets           | Provide an overview of how learners perform                                |
| Classroom monitoring tools | To check what monitors, look for when assessing educators                  |
| Moderation tools           | To establish the focus of educator moderations                             |

| Document analysed                                   | Rationale for the analysis  |
|---|---|
| Educators and learners' workbooks and tests records | To establish the educator's assessment practices  |
| Learner and educators' portfolios                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators' assessment portfolios were analysed to establish the assessment methods.</li> <li>• Learner portfolios were analysed to determine the type of assessments they are subjected to.</li> </ul> |

## 4.9 ENSURING RIGOUR AND QUALITY

Given (2016:76) defined trustworthiness as a method of ensuring validity and reliability in a qualitative study. The researcher adhered to the principles of trustworthiness throughout the research. Shenton (2004) suggested four overarching criteria to ensure trustworthy results which have credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and authenticity.

### 4.9.1 Credibility

Given (2016:74) described credibility as the ability to represent the participants' multiple realities in the findings of the research so that they are authentic and genuine to people holding similar beliefs. Lodico et al. (2010:169) indicated that credibility focuses on establishing if the participants' perceptions agree with the researcher's presentation. The researcher conducted member-checking through verify the participants' contribution. The above discussion was supported by Creswell (2009:190-191) who stated that credibility can be established through checking transcripts for mistakes. Furthermore, Bertram and Christiansen (2014:188) indicated that credibility can be enhanced during data collection. They suggested that the researcher may use mechanical means to record the data.

### 4.9.2 Transferability

The study was conducted in four schools in Tshwane North District of the Gauteng DBE. According to the researchers' understanding, transferability is one of the ways of making the findings of a qualitative study generalisable to other contexts or groups. The study provided information that should lead to understanding of the assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in

the classroom in secondary school and the ways in which different stakeholders support educators in addressing their challenges in their assessment practices in the classroom.

#### **4.9.3 Dependability**

Given (2016:74) defined dependability as the degree to which the findings would be repeated if conducted with the same participants or in similar settings. The researcher used multiple sources of data to understand the challenges that affect educator's assessment practices for learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools (Senior Phase) particularly in Tshwane North District in Gauteng, in an attempt to achieve dependability. Lodico et al. (2010:172) understood and regarded dependability as a criterion for qualitative research that indicated the processes used to collect data.

#### **4.9.4 Confirmability**

According to Given (2016:74), confirmability is about ensuring that the findings emerge from the participants. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:190) maintained that confirmability can be improved by making the research process acceptable. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:192) stated that self-reflexivity is also relevant in the analysis process, where the researcher has to be vigilant to read the data in a way that reflects power issues, not just how they may appear to the researcher.

### **4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The crucial ethical issues observed in this study included protection of participants from harm. The participants were ensured of voluntary participation. They could pull out of the study at any time. Participants were also given the right to privacy and honesty. Mamosa (2010:78) emphasised that researchers must adhere to ethical stipulations for conducting research. The researcher applied for ethical clearance certificate from the university (Appendix A). A request for permission to conduct research in secondary schools was also made from the Gauteng Department of Basic Education (GDBE), which was also granted (Appendix B) and from the District Manager (Appendix C).

Consent letters were given to school principals (Appendix D) for educators to give their written consents (Appendix E). The purpose of the study was explained to all participants. The participants were informed about their rights of participation. Participation was voluntary and all participants were allowed to withdraw at any time (Glesne, 2006; Mamosa, 2010). All participants were treated with respect in all the stages of the research (British Educational Research Association, 2011:3). Anonymity and confidentiality were assured and maintained for all participants. They would only be referred to as Schools A, B, C and D. Any information that could give rise to easy identification of a school was avoided. The researcher also promised them that hard copies of their answers were to be stored for a period of five years.

#### **4.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The research methodology was explained in this chapter. The reasons for selecting this approach were discussed in detail, as was the research design. The chapter also described an interpretivist approach which underpins certain assumptions in this study. This research design involved a qualitative study centred on educators and other stakeholders specifically, the planning and focus of the study were decided based on the researcher's observations and experiences in support of assessment for learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The research methods outlined the research sites and methodological norms. In the next chapter data will be presented and analysed.



## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research methodology was provided and discussed. This chapter focused on presenting the findings which emerged from the study. The study examined the importance of educators' assessment practices. The study examined the importance of educators' assessment practices. The study contributed to an understanding of assessment strategies that would address the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The study extended the discussion on responsive approaches towards inclusive education; it also highlighted the systemic and institutional challenges that hamper efforts to transform the education system to ensure that all learners have access opportunities of learning that is of high quality, and equitable regardless of background or ability.

The chapter analyses the findings of interviews conducted with the educators, ILST coordinators, SAT coordinators and deputy principals from four schools (independent, township, suburban and rural schools); semi-structured interviews conducted with two District Assessment coordinators; observations made in the classrooms and document analysis. Qualitative data analysis was conducted. The findings emerging from this study were guided by the literature study which was conducted in Chapters 2 and 3.

To empirically examine the importance of educators' assessment practices in the classroom and explore the challenges experienced by educators, objectives were set out in order to contribute to an understanding of assessment methods, strategies and practices in the inclusive classrooms.

The objectives addressed in the study were:

- To assess the assessment practices that educators use in their inclusive classrooms.
- To critically analyse assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To examine the challenges educators experience in assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning.

- To analyse the assessment techniques educators, apply when supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- To examine ways in which different stakeholders support educators in addressing assessment challenges experienced by educators in inclusive classrooms.
- To critically examine the impact of inclusion on educators' assessment practices.
- To develop a model for alleviating the challenges faced by educators when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms.

These objectives were instrumental in understanding the importance of educators' assessment practices in the inclusive classrooms. The objectives were also useful in the formulation of and development of the data instruments which utilised to analyse the data collected. The exploration and examination of data provided the researcher with an empirical foundation to present findings which highlight the importance of educators' assessment practices in ensuring that learners experiencing barriers receive fair, reliable, and valid assessment activities.

This chapter is structured in four parts based on the interview schedule administered to the educators, ILST coordinators, SAT coordinators, deputy principals, the head of the DLST and the head of the DAT. Furthermore, data was analysed from lesson observation checklists and document analysis schedules.

## 5.2 PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide a profile of the participants who took part in the study. They have been coded P1–P18 to preserve their anonymity.

**Table 5.1: Participants' profiles**

| Participants | School | Designation | Qualification                               | Gender & age | Teaching experience |
|--------------|--------|-------------|---|--------------|---------------------|
| P1           | A      | E           | UDES and BA                                 | M-38         | 10 yrs              |
| P2           | A      | IC          | UDES & ACE                                  | F-47         | 23 yrs              |
| P3           | A      | DP          | UDES; BA & B.Ed.                            | F-50         | 25 yrs              |
| P4           | A      | SAT         | UDES; BA & PGCE                             | F-42         | 20 yrs              |
| P5           | B      | E           | UDES & ACE                                  | M-50         | 26 yrs              |
| P6           | B      | IC          | UDEP & BA                                   | M-46         | 22 yrs              |
| P7           | B      | DP          | UDES; BA & B.Ed.                            | F-46         | 22 yrs              |
| P8           | B      | SAT         | STD; BA & B.Ed.                             | F-54         | 28 yrs              |
| P9           | C      | E           | UDES; BA & B.Ed.                            | F-41         | 12 yrs              |
| P10          | C      | IC          | UDEP; ACE & B.Ed.(Hon)(Inclusive Education) | F-48         | 19 yrs              |
| P11          | C      | DP          | UDES; ACE; BA & B.Ed.                       | F-52         | 28 yrs              |
| P12          | C      | SAT         | UDES; BA & B.Ed.                            | F-40         | 17 yrs              |

| Participants | School | Designation | Qualification                                  | Gender & age | Teaching experience |
|--------------|--------|-------------|--|--------------|---------------------|
| P13          | D      | E           | UDES; ACE & BA                                 | M-35         | 9 yrs               |
| P14          | D      | IC          | UDES; BA & B.Ed.(Hon)<br>(Inclusive Education) | M-44         | 14 yrs              |
| P15          | D      | DP          | UDES; BA & B.Ed.                               | F-46         | 20 yrs              |
| P16          | D      | SAT         | UDES; BA & B.Ed.                               | F-46         | 21 yrs              |

**Table 5.2: Profiles of participants from the District Office**

| Participants | District | Designation | Qualifications        | Gender & age | Teaching experience | Years' experience in the post |
|--------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| P17          | TN       | DAT         | STD; ACE,BA & B.Ed.   | M-55         | 22                  | 9                             |
| P18          | TN       | DLST        | STD; BA & B.Ed. M.Ed. | F-56         | 23                  | 10                            |

Key to abbreviations of the qualifications

P = Participant; UDES: University Diploma in Education Secondary; UDEP: University Diploma in Education Primary. ACE: Advance Certificate in Education; PTD: Primary Teachers Diploma; STD: Senior Teachers Diploma, BA: Bachelor of Arts; B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education; PGCE: Post Graduate Certificate in Education; MEd: Master's in Education.

The researcher was impressed most by the qualifications and the years' experience the participants possess. All of them have obtained more than one qualification. However, only P14 and P18 had obtained a B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) specialising in Inclusive Education. This qualification serves as an added advantage for these educators as it helps them to deal with learners who experience barriers to learning in a deeper level. The overall qualifications presented are remarkable and there is no cause to query educators' lack of qualification as a potential cause for challenges they experienced in their assessment practices. In addition, educators' qualifications are instrumental in describing their roles, specialities, their level, the learners they can educate, their employability and articulation routes. Qualifications should also be in line with local, national and international needs. An educator who is both professionally and academically qualified could be an excellent source of ideas and information for all learners.

There were 18 participants who were interviewed. They included 6 men and 12 women; 10 of the participants declared that they were above the age of 40, 6 were above 50 and only two participants were 35 and 38 years of age respectively. In School A, the researcher interviewed a 38-year-old male educator (P1) with 10 years' experience as a teacher in a secondary school teaching Senior Phase Grades 8–9.

He held a UDES level and a BA degree which he obtained in an ODL University. P2 was a 47-year-old female educator with 23 years' experience as a teacher. Her qualifications were a UDES and an Advance Certificate in Education. During data collection, she was upgrading her qualifications at an ODL University. She said she had enrolled for a Bachelor of Honours Degree specialising in Inclusive Education as she had a passion for helping learners who experience barriers to learning. She indicated that she wanted to learn more about how to accommodate them and how to truly assess them in a way that she would be doing justice to them as she felt that often things were not done correctly. P3 was the Deputy Principal, a woman, 50 years of age with 25 years' experience and 10 years' experience as a Deputy Principal. She held a UDES level, Bachelor's Degree (BA) and B.Ed. in Management and was teaching Grade 8 and 9. She was once in an SAT when she was the Head of Department of Social Science. P4 was a female educator of 42 and a Head of Department for Languages for 14 years in Senior Phase, teaching Grades 8–10. She was the Coordinator of the SAT.

School B's interviewees comprised a 50-year-old male educator (P5) with 26 years' teaching experience in Mathematics (Grade 7–9). He held a UDES and an ACE specialising in Mathematics. P6 was a 46-year-old man with 20 years' teaching experience in Senior Phase. He taught Grade 8–9. He spent the first 2 years teaching at a primary school as his qualifications were a University Diploma in Education at a Primary Level. He then relocated to the current village where he got a post in a nearby secondary school where he taught Setswana Home Language and Life Orientation. He also held a BA degree which he obtained through correspondence. He had been the coordinator of the ILST for more than 10 years because of passion. In his initial training, he was not trained to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning but he attended workshops and seminars on Remedial Education and Inclusive Education. He was also the chairperson of the cluster committee around his area during the time of data collection. P6 in school B was a 46-year-old female Deputy Principal with UDES Level, Bachelor of Arts Degree and a B.Ed. (Honours) Management Law and Policy. She said that she decided to register for a qualification in policy and law because she realised there was a concern with the implementation of policies in South Africa. She had taught for 22 years in the Senior Phase. She mentioned that she had been a teacher for five years then a Head of Department for six years before she was

appointed as a Deputy Principal, where she had 11 years' experience. She was oozing with confidence about how she understood her job well.

The last interviewee in School B, P8, was a 54-year-old woman with 28 years' experience in Senior Phase and five years' experience as a Head of Department for Science and Technology and a SAT coordinator. She held a Senior Teachers Diploma which she did before 1985 which was later phased out of the system. She also had BA degree and B.Ed. in Management.

In School C, P9 was a 41-year-old female educator who had had 12 years' experience in Senior Phase. Her qualifications comprised a UDES, a BA degree and a B.Ed. P9 was one of the active staff members who showed interest in the ILST and was one of members in the team. P10 was a 48-year-old woman with 19 years' experience teaching in the Senior Phase. She also had a University Diploma in Education at a Primary Level, BA Degree, an ACE and a B.Ed. (Honours) with specialisation in Inclusive Education. Even though her Diploma was for primary school, she never had a chance to teach in a primary school. She had been vocal about learners with barriers to learning long before the SBSTs were introduced in schools. P11 in school C was a 52-year-old female Deputy Principal. Her qualifications comprised UDES, ACE, BA and B.Ed. She had been teaching for 28 years in Senior Phase and had been a Deputy Principal for 11 years. P12 was a 40-year-old female HOD and a SAT Coordinator with 17 years' experience in Senior Phase (Grade 7–9).

The last group of interviewees was in School D. P13 was a 35-year-old man with nine years' experience in Grade 7–9. He had a UDES, ACE and BA degree. P14 was a 44-year-old man with 14 years' teaching experience and an ILST coordinator. His qualifications were a UDES, BA and a B.Ed. (Honours) in Inclusive Education. He had been teaching in Senior Phase for the past 14 years. P15 was the third participant in school D. The interviewee was a 46-year-old female Deputy Principal with a UDES, BA and B.Ed. Degree with 20 years' teaching experience and 12 years' experience as a Deputy Principal. She started her teaching career at this school. The last participant at a school level (P16) was a 46-year-old female educator with 21 years' teaching experience. She had been an SAT coordinator for 10 years and a Head of Department for 14 years in Senior Phase.

Two participants in the Tshwane North District office were interviewed. P17 was a 55-year-old man with 22 years' teaching experience at a secondary school and 9 years' experience as a Head of DAT. He held an STD, ACE and B.Ed. in Management. P18 was a 56-year-old woman with 23 years' teaching experience and 10 years' experience as the Head of DLST in the District. Her qualifications were an STD, BA, B.Ed. (Honours) in Inclusive Education and M.Ed. in Inclusive Education. She had a Remedial Diploma and had undertaken a Short Learning Programme in Inclusive Education.

### **5.3 IDENTIFICATION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES**

The researcher scanned through and carefully read through all the data which was collected to get a general idea of the content. The researcher identified some key ideas emerging and these served as a basis for defining or representing categories (Brown, 2004:104). To identify the units of information, the researcher read and re-read the transcripts and listen to the taped recordings of the interviews over and over again so as to formulate reality from them.

After the second reading the researcher coded or developed initial themes and sub-themes from the data. During the third reading final themes and sub-themes were generated (Creswell, 2012:247). This process of developing themes and sub-themes provided the information for content analysis (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009:216).

The major themes identified were:

- Assessment practices in the inclusive classrooms
- Training needs for educators
- Challenges experienced during assessment
- The efficacy of stakeholder's support provided to educators
- Impact of inclusion on educators' assessment.

The main themes identified from classroom observations were as follows:

- Educators' assessment policy interpretation and implementation
- Assessment goals
- Educator's role in inclusive classroom assessment process
- The role of the learners during assessment

- Methods and strategies of assessment utilised in the classrooms
- The alignment of the educator's assessment practices to the values and principles of assessment
- Challenges faced by educators in an endeavour to accommodate learners experiencing barriers
- Strategies adopted by the educators to overcome the challenges.

The main themes identified from document analysis were as follows:

- Classroom assessment goals
- Type of assessment activities given to learners
- Quality assurance of the assessment processes.

The main themes which emerged from the study were outlined as shown above. Some themes were omitted because the participants did not mention them much during the interviews. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011:469) confirmed that data analysis involved identifying the important themes or meanings.

#### **5.4 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS, SAT, ILST AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS**

The participants interviewed had different roles and responsibilities in their schools (educator, SAT coordinator, ILST coordinator and deputy principals). The participants included four educators, four school assessment team (SAT) coordinators, four deputy principals and four Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) coordinators.

Themes were developed from literature sources which have been integrated in this study. Each interviewee was allocated an identity code to enhance the identity and anonymity of the interviewees. The identity codes were numbered starting from P1 to P16. The interviews were conducted to establish the challenges which educators and managers are experiencing when assessing learners experiencing barriers. The researcher critically reflected how inclusion has impacted on educators' assessment and determines if there is a need for training for the educators to be effective.

#### 5.4.1 Assessment practices in the inclusive classrooms

Item 2.1 in the interview schedule sought to establish the assessment practices which were implemented or utilised by the educators in inclusive classrooms to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning.

When asked: *Which assessment practices do you generally use in your classrooms to cater for learners experiencing barriers to learning?* The participants provided the following responses which are transcribed, discussed, and supported with findings from previous studies.

The following responses were given:

Interviewees **P1, P5, P8, P10, P11 and P13** expresses a similar view that portfolio of assessment is one of the assessment techniques they are using in inclusive classrooms when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning.

- Interviewees **P1, P8 and P13** agreed in their responses:

*Portfolio of assessment helps educators to assess learners' development over time.*

- Interviewees **P5 and P10** cited a similar response

*Portfolio of assessment is a type of assessment whereby the educators put the learner's formal assessments in a file for future reference*

- Interviewee **P11** provided a response which indicated clear understanding of the use of the portfolio as an assessment technique

*The interviewee said that portfolios are effective assessment tools because they provide educators, learners, and parents with an in-depth look into learners' progression over the course of an entire year.*

Generally, the interviewees perceive portfolio assessment as an ideal technique for assessment in the inclusive classroom. The views presented by the educators resonated with the definition of portfolio assessment provided by Mokhataria (2015). Mokhataria (2015) described portfolio assessment as a tool which keeps a record of a learner's work which has been collected over time. The use of portfolio assessment is considered as one of the best assessment tools in adaptive or alternative



assessment which caters for the diverse needs of learners. Popescu-Mitroia, Todorescu and Greculescu (2015) described a portfolio as an alternative or complementary assessment tool. Meador (2017:1) agreed that portfolios are effective assessment tools because they provide educators, learners and parents with an in-depth look into learners' progression over the course of an entire year.

Interviewees **P2, P5, P7, P8, P12 and P16** indicated that they also use self-assessment technique to assess learners.

The participants gave the following responses:

- Interviewee **P2, P7 and P12** echoed similar sentiments:

*Self-assessment provides learners with time to reflect on their performance and evaluate their performance against set goals.*

- Interviewees **P5, P8 and P16** responded in a similar manner:

*Self-assessment is used to enable learners to identify their own strengths and weakness and work to make improvements to meet specific needs.*

Interviewee **P2** said:

*The strategy that I use is that of learners to do self-assessment which is used to enable them to identify their own strengths and weakness and work to make improvements to meet specific needs. I also scale down the assessments to suit the learners with barriers though sometimes time constraints become an issue.*

The responses from the interviewees indicated that self-assessment is an essential assessment tool which can be used to assist learners in inclusive classrooms. Self-assessment is forward looking. The findings are corroborated by ACTG (2011:13) which maintained that with self-assessment, learners check their work, revisit assignment drafts and texts, and research and reflect upon their past practice. Learners in inclusive classrooms, therefore, should not only be evaluated and granted points or grades but should also be hooked up in their learning. Self-assessment also provided the chance for a dialogue with the educator which can reveal to learners what they should do to make their learning more effective. (Wiesnerová, 2012:5).

From the interview sessions it also emerged that educators have adopted the use of projects as an assessment technique.

### Interviewees **P3, P6, P9 and P15**

- Interviewees **P3 and P9** provided a similar response:

*Projects or authentic assessment can assess learners' ability to apply knowledge acquired.*

- Interviewees **P6 and P15** in agreement said:

*Projects are assessment tasks provide ways for learners to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills these cater for all my learners as they are not one sided. Some learners are good with using their hands and they can really score high on this type of assessment."*

The sentiments provided by interviewees **P3, P6, P9 and P15** indicated that project based is related to the inquiry-based learning and problem-based learning (Cakici & Turkmen, 2013; Harmer & Stokes, 2014). However due to its cumulative nature, this kind of assessment calls for more responsibility on the part of the learners and more commitment on the part of the educators. It is laborious on the part of the educator as it consumes more time and energy to make decisions on the values of the diverse products that the learners present.

The other assessment technique which emerged from the interviewees was the peer assessment technique. The interviewees **P4, P10, P14 and P16** responded as follows:

- Interviewee **P4 and P16** both agreed that:

*Peer assessment is ideal for checking the understanding of learners after teaching them by asking learners to evaluate each other's work.*

In agreement Reinholz (2016) stated that peer assessment include several activities which allow individual learners to evaluate and judge each other's work. Furthermore, the researcher noted that peer assessment help learners to improve their learning experiences (Logan, 2009:30; De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012).

- Interviewee **P10 and P14** stated that:

*Peer assessment is ideal for inclusive classrooms because it makes learners to be actively involved.*

This view is corroborated by Bloxham and West (2004:722) who highlighted that peer assessment provided with opportunities to be active participants. This view is supported by several researchers (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Smith & Gorard, 2005).

Interviewees **P5, P8 and P11** stated that they also use games as assessment techniques.

*We sometimes use games when assessing learners. Role playing tasks also give them opportunities to showcase their talent. It also gives a learner a chance to contribute to the group.*

The assessment practices mentioned and implemented by interviewee **P5 in school B** were in line with the requirements of the CAPS.

Interviewees **P6, P9, P12, P14, P15 and P16** expressed that they used task differentiated and accommodation assessment techniques. The educators' assessment practice is ideal since learners in all-inclusive classrooms have different learning abilities therefore classroom discourses should be designed to meet the unique and diverse capabilities of these learners (Bender, 2012). Task differentiation is also important because it recognises the value and worth of each learner.

Interviewee **P6** said:

*I always allow my learners to have a varied scope of vocabulary to allow their minds to be broad when faced with differentiated assessment.*

Interviewees **P9 and P12** in agreement disagreed with interviewee **P6**. They said:

*Task differentiation is difficult since the curriculum cannot be finished, and learners will write external exams which does not cater for individual differences.*

**P15 and P16** also indicated that differentiated assessment is followed even though they need continuous support from different stakeholders from the DBE.

The educators interviewed highlighted that they are doing their best to accommodate all learners despite their differences. The educators are using alternative methods of assessment to accommodate all the learners in their diversity. These educators' practices resonate with the rationale of inclusive education. Inclusive assessment practices are expected to be flexible and provide tailor-made assessment practices

which accommodate all learners despite their diversity (Engelbrecht, Nel Smit & van Deventer, 2015:1; Anderson & Boyle, 2015).

The use of alternative assessment methods also reflects educators' willingness to provide equal education benefits to all learners despite their differences (Phasha, 2010). It is also very crucial for educators who assess learners in an inclusive classroom to be guided by principles of social justice and provide learners with a conducive environment which eliminate all forms of educational inequalities and exclusions. The NPA (DoE, 2011c) instructed all educators to recognise and plan for inclusiveness and diversity in the classrooms. In view of this requirement participant P12 said, "*we should not assess our learners with one method*".

Responses provided by **P13, P14, P15 and P16** reflect that the educators are making effort to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classroom assessments.

Findings from educators portrayed above indicated that most educators do not utilise alternative assessment methods when assessing learners in the inclusive classrooms. Individual assessment and peer assessment are some of the methods which are commonly used by the educators in an endeavour to improve assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Interviewee **P8** said:

*I also use peer assessment as it helps me to quickly give feedback because our classes are overcrowded.*

Most educators interviewed utilises appropriate assessments methods which caters and accommodate the learning needs of learners.

Interviewee **P2** said:

*The strategy that I use is that of learners to do self-assessment which is used to enable them to identify their own strengths and weakness and work to make improvements to meet specific needs. I also scale down the assessments to suit the learners with barriers though sometimes time constraints become an issue.*

Interviewee **P13** said that:

*we should not assess our learners with one method.*

This response shows that this educator is aware that for assessment to be fair, valid and reliable the educators must apply inclusive principles such as collaboration and curriculum differentiation. In School D, participants showed that even though they did not have many resources as a school they did their best to use different assessment strategies to make learning a possibility to all learners.

This practice agrees with SIAS (2015:70) which indicated that assessment needs to be differentiated.

P15 and P16 also indicated that differentiated assessment is followed even though they need continuous support from different stakeholders from the DBE. In supporting the above statement, SIAS (2014:40) indicated that one of the educator's roles is to understand the curriculum and make it accessible to all learners. In addition, a differentiated curriculum, according to the DBE (2010:22) offered a variety of assessment methods.

#### **5.4.2 Training Needs for Educators in Inclusive Education**

**Item 2.2** tried to establish if the educators have already received assessment training. When asked: *In your experience how did your previous educator training adequately prepare educators to assess learners in an inclusive classroom?*

The following responses were gleaned from the participants:

Interviewees **P1, P2, P3, P4** provide responses which show that they did not receive enough training in inclusive assessment training.

Interviewee **P1 and P2** said:

*We received one day training in inclusive assessment.*

Interviewee **P3** said:

*At our school, we normally organise private or independent service providers to come and assist us because the DLST took time to workshop us on this issue.*

Interviewee **P4** said:

*We did not receive any intense training, but we try by all means to support our learners who experience barriers to learning e.g., providing extra lessons for these learners and they are taught by different educators.*

The literature review conducted in this study and interviewees' responses indicated that most educators have received insufficient training in inclusive education assessment. Training is very essential for educators to do well in inclusive classroom assessment.

According to Florian and Rouse (2009:594) inadequately trained educators cannot effectively address the assessment needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The responses gathered from the educators involved in the study fully support the viewpoints of Engelbrecht (2006:253) and Johnstone (2010:40) as they argue that educators' lack training can effectively threaten the successful implementation of inclusive assessment practise.

The sentiments from **P2, P3 and P4** clearly indicated that several educators are not fully trained to be competent in inclusive assessment.

Interviewee **P7** said:

*I received training when I was an educator in Mpumalanga Province, and I have never attended a workshop on inclusive education assessment in Gauteng Province.*

Interviewees **P5, P6, P7, P9 P11, P12 and P16** similarly said:

*Training was conducted for a day and in the afternoon at 14h00 and we knocked off at 16h00. The timing was totally wrong.*

Lack of knowledge and training in inclusive education has been identified as the main stumbling block towards inclusive education (Chao, Forlin & Ho, 2016). Hong Kong, for example, in 2007 introduced an innovative strategic plan to provide training to 10% of the educators in government schools. This was done through an in-service teaching training programme. This programme was a critical preparation for educators to meet the challenges of inclusive classroom assessment.

These findings were also corroborated by Zwane and Malale (2018) who revealed that lack of adequate training emerged as the key barrier which impedes educators' capacity to effectively assess learners.

Interviewees **P8, P10 and P13** contradict views presented by Interviewees **P5, P6, P7, P9, P11, P12 and P16**:

*Training received was inadequate but enough to give me an idea on how to do it.  
Only two weeks' training was given*

Interviewees **P10** and **P12** further went on to say:

*As ILST and SAT coordinators we need to get more information to share with other educators.*

Interviewees **P9** and **P10** indicated that they did not get enough training especially on assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Interviewee **P9** stressed:

*The training the district gave us was just one day and only two hours of which this was not enough as me personally don't have any training of learners with special needs. I am also worried that the training did not say much about the assessment of these learners."*

Interviewee **P10** said:

*I was trained for only 2 weeks, but I am happy that I did my B .Ed Honours Degree and specialised with inclusive education which is now coming in handy."*

Interviewees indicated that they are aware of alternative assessments for learners experiencing barriers to learning, e.g., oral assessment for a learner with functional difficulty and for those who have difficulty with spelling or grammar. They could arrange a scribe or even ask multiple-choice questions and short answer questions other than long ones, but the challenge was that the district officials from the assessment unit and Inclusion and Special Schools (ISS) unit seem not to have common agreement when it comes to learners with barriers.

Interviewee **P11** said:

*I personally had no training at all about assessing learners with barriers I only picked the issue of accommodating them in our assessments when we went to workshops and heard some facilitators indicating that we have to support these learners and shouldn't leave them behind."*

The views and sentiments from Interviewee **P11** indicated that educators are not well equipped to conduct assessments in inclusive classrooms. This view is well supported

in previous studies. Most educators in inclusive pedagogical contexts do not have adequate training. According to Swart et al. (2002) educators cannot deliver quality and effective assessment because they are inadequately trained to achieve that.

Ashman (2015) in corroboration with Dalton et al. (2012) maintained that educators are the core players in the implementation of inclusive education therefore they should be supported and trained adequately. In addition, Susuwela-Banda (2005) noted that some of the challenges confronting the educators are as a result of their experiences and qualifications. Mprah, Dwomoh, Opoku, Owusu and Ampratwum (2016) maintained that there are several challenges which educators are confronted with when implementing inclusive education. For instance, these researchers identified that educators do not fully understand inclusive education and above all educators are confronted with a sense of unpreparedness to effectively teach and assess learners experiencing learning difficulties.

Interviewee **P11** also indicated that as a Deputy Principal with 28 years' experience it is only through her long period being in the Department that she tried different assessment strategies to teach and assess these learners.

Her frustrations were felt when she said:

*Eish, learners with barriers are frustrated because they are not assessed the way they should be assessed according to inclusive education principles, they are left out and eventually they drop-out especially in Senior Phase at FET.*

These views clearly indicate that learners experiencing barriers are at a risk. The reasons these learners are left out is that they are exposed to a curriculum which is rigid in terms of content and medium of instruction. A rigid and inflexible curriculum affects effective learning in inclusive classrooms (Motitswe, 2012:39; Zwane & Malale, 2018).

Interviewee **P12** further stressed that as a SAT coordinator and also a Head of Department she felt pressure and she was frustrated because educators blamed her for not being realistic when she stresses the importance of support of the learners in all respect especially in assessment, accommodation and concessions. On the other hand, the district officials feel that she is not doing her job as expected.



Interviewee **P12** also indicated:

*Learners who experience barriers to learning cannot complete tasks in the stipulated time slot and cannot recall information.*

All in all, the research revealed that all the participants interviewed lack comprehensive knowledge of assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning due to inadequate training. Similarly, all the schools echoed the same sentiments about how training was done. In view of lack of adequate training for educators Lumadi (2013:220) suggested that the DHET needs to train and prepare educators adequately for inclusive education. Maguvhe (2005:242) concurred by pointing out that educator training should provide practising educators with a positive orientation towards inclusive education.

The above findings suggested that educators should be trained in such a way that they can be independent in inclusive assessment practices. Badugela (2012) noted that inadequate training and lack of resources compromises educators' effort towards inclusive assessment practices.

In summary, the above findings indicated that lack of training for educators in assessing learners with barriers to learners impeded the effectiveness of educator assessment practices in the classroom. Interviewee **P16** highlighted that it would serve them well if training of parents and other stakeholders was done so that as an educator she could get support from parents of these learners because they would know what was expected of them and they would move away from the feeling of denial that their children had a challenge of some sort which delayed their chances of getting help.

The educators' inadequate training was one of the categories that emerged under the theme of 'Challenges that affect educators' assessment practices. According to Zwane and Malale (2018:392) educators need adequate training and support. The above authors further recommended that, if the DBE wanted to see improvement and progress towards quality basic education, educators should receive appropriate training.

It is obvious that lack of training in assessing learners with barriers in the classroom is a disaster to educators.

Interviewee **P16** said:

*I find it difficult when it is that time to assess learners with barriers ... it was difficult for me to use different assessment method especially oral method because when the district facilitators come for monitoring they want evidence of where all learners have written their activities.*

The findings indicated that most educators in inclusive pedagogical contexts do not have adequate training (Swart et al., 2002; Zwane & Malale, 2018; Vandeyar & Killen, 2007:112; Hariparsad, 2004). Vandeyar and Killen (2007:112) concluded that educators should be trained for them to adapt to new assessment practices.

### **5.4.3 Challenges Experienced by Educators during Assessment Procedures**

**Item 2.3** explored the challenges experienced by educators when assessing learners in inclusive classrooms. The question asked was: *Which challenges do you experience in your assessment?* The following responses were provided:

Interviewee **P4** indicated that he lacked the basic skills in designing inclusive assessment tasks because he was not trained to do that in the college, he attended for educator training.

#### **5.4.3.1 Overcrowding**

Except in School A, all participants in School B, C and D highlighted overcrowding as a challenge that had an impact on effective teaching and learning. Their assessment practices were compromised. This concern was stated as follows:

Interviewee **P5** stated:

*I feel like I am not that good educator that I was before. I give a learner feedback after some weeks because they are so many. Individual attention for the struggling learners is not easy anymore.*

Interviewee **P14** gave the following comment regarding the issue of over crowdedness.

*Overcrowding hampers my progress in assessment. I teach 55 learners in my class and marking all their activities is not easy.*

The interviewee looked very angry and frustrated when he uttered this statement.

*I have more than four classes to attend to with more than 55 learners in each... no way... is tiring.*

Interviewee **P5** also indicated that he tried to give individual attention which it was not as good as he would like, but he was trying his best in that difficult situation.

Interviewee **P15** indicated that overcrowding in their school was a challenge. What was most problematic and hindered progress was lack of parental support:

*Some assessments need parental support. I give my learners homework and sometimes projects, but learners do not put efforts as their parents do not help them.”*

Interviewee **P15** further argued:

*Teaching is like a three-dimension structure; if one dimension is broken, the structure will never function as expected so parents have to play their part too.*

When responding to the question on what hindered their assessment practices, Interviewee **P9** complained about teaching four different classes with 58 learners each in Grade 8 and 9, respectively. She mentioned that in her 10 years of teaching, she had had overcrowded classes, but it was not like the classes she had now. She further said:

*I sometimes feel I am not treating the learners well because I concentrate much on the intelligent and average learners, [and] those with learning problems are somehow left behind because of inadequate individual attention. Assessment does not get its full attention and differentiated assessment is not at its best.*

Interviewees **P10 and P11** also mentioned the issue of over crowdedness but what they seemed to be concerned with was inadequate support from the district when it comes to learners experiencing barriers to learning as it can be seen in this comment:

*We have learners who cannot read and write, some have difficulty imitating speech sounds, and some speaks dysfluently. These learners need speech therapist. Being referred to those therapists, they need educators to complete Support Needs Assessment 1 and 2 as per SIAS instruction. They are then referred to the district and it is its responsibility to refer the learners to the therapist which takes a very long time sometimes even more than a year or two if the learner is lucky, for the*

*unlucky ones they are always progressed to the next class until they kick themselves out of the system when they see that they are no longer coping.*

Interviewee **P12** said that her workload was excessive. Her comments were:

*I am overloaded and when I try to complain I am told that I have applied for the post and this is the package. I even struggle with monitoring educators' files. My managerial duties are not up to standard. I also have classes to attend to.*

She also mentioned quality assurance of good assessment practices for educators was not on par with other schools that she regretted not being able to do a quality job. She acknowledged that they lacked good quality when it came to good assessment practices though compared to their neighbouring schools were better off.

Most public schools in South Africa have overcrowded classrooms. Due to overcrowding in the classrooms most learners experiencing barriers to learning are affected negatively due to the lack of individual educator attention offered to the learners (Materechera, 2014). Overcrowded classrooms are a barrier because individual learner support cannot be provided as required by these learners.

#### 5.4.3.2 Limited parental support

In Interviewees **P7, P11, P13, P14 and P16** responses indicated parents were not so supportive. The following sentiment was common among the interviewees indicated above:

*Parental support is very limited in our schools.*

SIAS (2014) stated that schools must acknowledge the pivotal role parents play in inclusive education because they help in the identification of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Parents' observations assist the educator to understand the needs of the learner. These views are in contradiction with the little support parents are offering to educators.

#### 5.4.3.3 Paperwork

Interviewees **P3, P8, P9, P11, P14 and P16** lamented:

*There is a lot of paperwork that the Department is expecting from us. I am so tired about too much paperwork that the Department want us to do every day which*

*does not help the learner to grasp information. We do not have time to teach our learners. When facilitators come and visit us, what they want to see is completed forms and up-to-date files. They don't realise that yes file can be up to date, but learners are empty headed. We only rush the ATP and up-date the files.*

#### 5.4.3.4 Availability of resources

DoE (2005c) reported that poor learner performance in secondary schools was associated with lack of resources. The researcher believes that teaching aids are a necessity in the educators' profession because they stimulate learning and enable learners to concentrate better especially for those experiencing barriers to learning because they use all their senses to acquire knowledge.

When participants in **School A** were asked about the availability or non-availability of resources in their school and the impact they have on their assessment practices, all participants indicated that their school, as an independent school, was well resourced so they did not experience any challenges.

Interviewee **P1** commented:

*I have been here for almost a decade and I get all what I need to go and teach my learners.*

Interviewee **P2** said:

*I enjoy my teaching because my learners are able to see, hear and even touch the objects that they work with using concrete objects reach my learners who experience barriers, so availability of resources plays a most important role in improving learners understanding of different concepts. Slow learners are not left behind.*

Interviewee **P3** said:

*I love this school because teaching is made easier with the teaching aids that we have. We also have visual and auditory resources e.g., smart board, with sound and a projector. Learners of this era love technology. The computers are accessible to all who need to use them.*

Interviewee **P4** was very confident when responding to this question. She said:

*Our School Governing Body and the principal go out to look for sponsors and donations to buy resources. Some companies donate those resources. Different schools in our area come to our school to look for help in terms of resources – it can be academic or sports.*

With pride, she said:

*I don't want to lie, we excel.*

In **School A** it was evident that they had sufficient resources, used them responsibly and that their learners enjoyed teaching and learning.

In **School B**, when participants were asked about the availability or non-availability of resources they commented as follows:

Interviewee **P5** said:

*I teach Grade 8 and 9 Life Orientation, so we lack textbooks because not each learner has his own textbook.” [but added that] “It is not because of the government not supplying us with textbooks; it is the method that we use to retrieve books from learners which is not so strict. The government gives us enough books but some learners do not return them at the end of the year and parents decides not to buy those books to replace the lost ones as they know that learners will not be punished for not replacing the books so we end up having shortage of books.”*

Interviewees **P6 and P8** indicated that they lacked textbooks for all their learners in their classrooms. Most learners had to share a textbook which was not an ideal situation.

Interviewee **P7** indicated that she did not think the challenges that they had were that serious, as she remarked:

*We used to have much [worse] problems than we have today, we used to work with limited resources, bad structures and overcrowded classes yet we made plans to teach our learners and get the best out of those difficult situations. I believe we can still try and do our best if everybody can put more efforts and stop complaining about everything.*

The researcher found that there were mixed responses about the topic with regards to assessment practices in inclusive classrooms.

Interviewees **P6 and P8** indicated that they both taught maths and it is important that they should have resources to make their learners understand maths. They both indicated that some learners did not understand abstract maths concepts without concrete examples so they needed teaching aids that they can manipulate to understand the concepts.

Interviewee **P8** said:

*We do not have enough teaching aids. Sharing textbooks is a serious challenge because maths needs them to do exercises every day, so their lack of textbooks affects our assessment. I have several learners who fail to correctly solve problems using measurement.*

She gave a solution, thus:

*If I had some relevant resources, I would allow them to practise basic measurement skills using measurement devices in the classroom.*

Interviewee **P7** acknowledged that they did lack some teaching aids which makes their work difficult. She commented saying:

*An educator should be somebody who comes up with more plans on what to use if one does not have ready-made teaching aids. One needs to improvise to make the teaching and learning enjoyable.”*

This interviewee indicated that now that their classes were overcrowded, their learners with barriers had serious challenges because educators had limited time to try and repeat the topic many times until they understand.

*I think with teaching aids it would be easier.*

In **School C**, participants indicated that people sometimes wondered how they managed because they did not always have resources.

Interviewee **P9** said:

*We are not like our independent neighbouring secondary school that is in our area which has all resources that you can wish to have in your school, but we are not*

*as poor like other township schools around us. We have basic resources that make our learners enjoy lessons.*

Interviewee **P10** said:

*Even though our classes are overcrowded but we do have a well-resourced library which takes care for our slow readers, our visual, auditory, and tactile learners. Learners with barriers can go to the library and the librarian advises them on how to become good readers. To add on that Madam, we have library monitors who read books for them to understand step by step how to blend words until they become fast readers. In turn the library monitors sharpen their reading skills which benefit both learners.*

In the same vein, Interviewee **P11** mentioned that teaching resources are the lubricants for effective learning this was reflected by her comment:

*The Department of Science and Technology have a laboratory where we conduct our experiments, and you can see that learners enjoy their lessons. ... We always enter competitions on science Expo that [are] organised by the district and we don't come back empty-handed.*

She said this pointing to the display where there were trophies won in those competitions.

Interviewee **P12** highlighted that as the HoD and coordinator of SAT, she encouraged educators to use alternative types of assessment or adaptive methods of assessments; for example, audio-type assessment tasks, enlargement of print for those with visual impairments and additional time for those who needed and deserved it. The same participant further said:

*The availability of adapted learning and teaching aids at our school give learners motivation especially to those with learning difficulties.*

In **School D**, it seems lack of resources play a big role in the negative teaching process. When they were asked about availability of resources, Interviewee **P13** said:

*Our school is in a rural area where the government seemed to have forgotten us. Our learners are overcrowded. We have limited number of textbooks. I teach Natural Science which needs learners to have textbook to constantly refer on them.*



*We also lack scientific apparatus. In most cases learners rely on what I say in the class, this does not accommodate all learners because they need to refer to their textbook now and then for information. Learners learn differently, some are visual and some tactile. They need to see and touch the learning materials for them not to forget what they have been taught. Assessment is not easy without resources.*

Interviewee **P14** remarked:

*Learners who experience barriers are challenged more than we could think when they lack resources. Those who have difficulties in developing reading fluency have trouble remembering what they have read. They read word for word and forget the meaning of the words. They also do not understand what they have read. As an educator, I need to make regular reading times until they can decode the words automatically and can concentrate on the meaning. This needs different reading materials for different grades to put them on the level of their peers.*

Interviewee **P15** said:

*The DBE intends for every learner to own a textbook. We have insufficient funds, so it is impossible for them to be all covered. We give them assessments in terms of assignments and projects but due to lack of textbooks and other important resources our assessments practices are not up to standard.*

Lack of resources has also been found as an impediment in most countries' education system. In Portugal, Campos, Ferreira, and Block (2014) revealed that lack of resources is a serious barrier which compromised effective implementation of inclusive education. Similarly, in Cameroon, Arrah and Swain (2014) reported that educators faced several barriers which adversely affect learning.

The researcher believes that lack of resources jeopardises opportunities of reaching the desired effect/s in the teaching. Something that gave the researcher hope was that even though participants in **School B** cited lack of resources as one of their challenges, they were positive about doing more to make their learners perform better.

#### 5.4.3.5 Educators' understanding of assessment policy

Based on the opinions of the participants, it was clear that participants understand the inclusive assessment policy and they value it.

Interviewee **P1** remarked that:

*Assessment policy at our school is formulated in accordance with the CAPS and NCS for all their Grades and deals with the procedure to be followed by educators in curriculum delivery and dealing with assessment practices in the classrooms.*

Interviewee **P2** stated that:

*Assessment policy is that policy that provides guidance to learners, educators, and parents on different assessment tasks. It assists in making decisions about the progress of the learner.”*

Interviewee **P3** said:

*In my opinion assessment policy describes the principles, practices and regulations governing the assessment at a school. This document is designed to guide and assist educators in conducting assessment to provide principles and procedures for both staff and learners that support the development, meaningful, valid, reliable, and fair assessment.*

Interviewee **P4** said:

*Assessment policies include assessment practices and approaches that are used by the school to guide all assessment.*

Relating to this question on assessment policy, the responses were also encouraging.

Interviewee **P5** highlighted that:

*Assessment policy ensures that there is continuous process of gathering and diagnosing information about learner performance.*

Interviewee **P6** said:

*It is that document that stipulates the aim, content, and assessment practices*

Interviewee **P7** argued as follows:

*Assessment policy is an essential element in education because it guides educators on how to achieve assessment outcomes*

Interviewee **P8** indicated:

*Assessment policy is a blueprint for providing the right direction for assessment*

Educators' knowledge and understanding of policy plays a vital role in assessment. It was also evident that the participants had knowledge about the assessment policy. Both interviewee **P9** and **P10** indicated that assessment policy is a guideline designed for educators by the government to guide educators' assessment practices. It guides schools on drawing up assessment programmes.

Interviewee **P11** said:

*It describes what assessment is, how and when assessment should be done. Educators are guided by this document when assessing their learners.*

Interviewee **P12** also highlighted that:

*Assessment policy is that policy which provides guidance to learners, educators and parents on different assessment tasks. However, the inclusive assessment policy is not fully implemented in the school as stipulated in the Education White Paper 6.*

The researcher realised that most of the participants have a thorough knowledge of the assessment policy. The DoE (2011) stated that assessment policy provides details of what educators teach and assess.

## **5.5 THE EFFICACY OF STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT PROVIDED TO EDUCATORS**

Educators on their own cannot be effective in inclusive classrooms as they have the responsibility to support their learners in school. According to SIAS (2014:30) educators need support from a variety of stakeholders who can support them to deal with learner assessment. These stakeholders include parents, the ILST, DLST, Department of Health and Department of Social Development, among others. Four questions were asked to establish and evaluate the essence of the stakeholder support provided to educators as well as establish the shortcomings of the support required by educators.

### **5.5.1 The Efficacy of Parental Involvement**

**Item 2.4** examined how the support provided by stakeholders helped educators to be effective assessors in inclusive classrooms. The participants were asked: *How helpful*

is the support provided by the parents? The following responses were gleaned from the participants:

When participants were asked about the involvement of parents in assessment of their children, interviewee **P1** replied:

*I think assessment should involve parents because they are the important part of the equation. Hence our learners perform well it is because they get support from home. I do not want to lie our parents are highly involved in education of their kids.*

Interviewee **P2** highlighted that parents must be involved in assisting learners with homework and correcting their learners' mistakes.

*Education today unlike years back, need parental input more than ever". As a school we do not experience challenges when it comes to parental involvement. Most of the parents are learned hence they understand their role and their importance in scholastic achievement of their children.*

Interviewee **P3** also shared her colleague's thoughts when she said:

*We are fortunate that our parents are responsible and support their children in totality. Even if there are those who need a push before they try, they do try their level best to be involved. I can say assessment is a continuous method for learners so parents should be part of the team to see that their children get the best education ever.*

Interviewee **P4** stated:

*As a SAT committee, we have an assessment programme that we share with parents during parents' meetings about the important details of assessment. What can help them [parents] and other stakeholders to know what learners will be assessed on, when and why. It is, however, easy for parents to follow our programme and to understand when and how to help their children. High performance of our learners is highly supported by the unconditional parental involvement.*

Interviewee **P5** said:

*I think many parents are ignorant. This is not happening in our school only. It is from Cape to Cairo. They are not aware of the importance of their role. Parental support is far from the expected or required support.*

Interviewee **P6** said:

*...in our school parental support is very limited, they say that they are not educators and it's not their job'. One could realise that they are so naïve because this is about their kids.*

Interviewee **P7** mentioned that:

*... Parents are illiterate. They also complain about mathematics that the standard is too high, so they are just lost. They rely on their children's little knowledge.*

Interviewee **P8** argued it from another angle when she said:

*The DBE must teach them what we expect from them.*

Some participants showed that parental involvement is lacking. Most of them complained about the lack of parental support. Some participants indicated that some parents work too far away, and they come back late so they did not have time with their children to check their homework and to help them doing it.

Interviewee **P9** said:

*Very few parents help and support their kids in their schoolwork. Most of the parents are not learned and some are unfamiliar with other subjects like Technology and some are poor with maths.*

She further showed concern when she said:

*I think most of them do not go an extra mile for their kids to get good results with their assignments and homework.*

Interviewee **P10** said:

*In my case, I always discuss the importance of parental involvement during parents' meetings. I make them realise that they should be part of their children's work especially for learners experiencing barriers to learning. If they do not support them which ever barrier their children have will become worse and for those whose*

*children are brighter and intelligent, without support their performance will drop. That is the power of parental support.*

In School D, parental involvement seemed to be a problem as interviewee P13 indicated that, in rural areas, parents seemed to feel that learners at Senior Phase were independent and they did not need them anymore like in primary school. He quoted one parent as saying: "My son is old enough to do his homework".

Interviewee **P14** indicated that the level of support from parents was insufficient, especially parents of those learners with barriers:

*When I call them to discuss their children's underperformance and other challenges, they do not come as they themselves feel intimidated by the information as they are illiterate themselves.*

Interviewee **P14** felt that this lack of involvement from parents causes slowed academic progress for the school. She added:

*We could do better than we are doing now if our parents were cooperating.*

Interviewee **P15** indicated that in her experience as educator in primary school, she saw parents being highly involved in their children's schoolwork but now in Senior Phase, she experienced something different. She said:

*In Senior Phase, it seems there is a lot of work. Educators are busy chasing to complete the ATP, so they don't give much time to parental workshops and one-on-one meeting with the parents. I am in a process of implementing some good strategies that I saw one of the good schools around us practising.*

Furthermore, interviewee **P16** said:

*Parents in our community do not care about the education of their children.*

Interviewee **P16** complained that if parents do not to take responsibility for children's education, they made their work difficult as educators. In addition to these comments, she said:

*Some parents cited their socio-economic status as an issue for not being involved in school matters. They argue that time and again educators need some resources*

*that need money to support their learners and because they are not working, they feel bad and irresponsible for not being able to support their children financially.*

SIAS (2014:36) indicates that parents make provisions for early-intervention programmes for their children. This shows how important a parent is in the education and assessment of their child. **P11** and **P12** both indicated that two out of 10 parents gave support. Others do not agree that their children experience barriers to learning. When summoned to school to discuss learner performance, they indicated how tired they were from work. They also added that some learners stayed with their grandparents who could not help them with their schoolwork.

### **5.5.2 The Efficacy of the Support from the Institutional Level Support Teams**

Landsberg et al. (2016:66) stated that every school should have a school-based support team for the provision of learning support. The primary function of these teams is to coordinate learner and educator support services.

The question asked was: *How effective is the support provided by the ILST at your school?*

Interviewee **P1** said:

*Our ILST is not up to that standard that White Paper 6 of 2001 and SIAS preaches but the team tries its utmost best to help us with barriers.*

Interviewee **P2** being the ILST coordinator herself argued that:

*We are not as functional as other teams in the school because we still lack the support from the district which is not happening. We only use the information that we have as educators who are passionate about our learners. Sometimes we are unable to do so due to so many things that are happening in the school.*

Interviewee **P3** said:

*As a school we feel it is not up to the standard that we expect it to be. I think the DBE need more strategies to make this work. For now, there is a lot that still needs to be done. Educators are encouraged to attend workshops to acquaint themselves with how to support and assess learners with barriers so that they could benefit optimally as their peers.*

Interviewee **P4** said:

*We are trying as a school, but we still need to do more because these learners need the best.*

In School B, interviewee P5 lamented:

*I think ILST's roles and responsibilities are very good on paper and policies but practically it is a different story. There is over crowdedness in our classrooms. Learners with barriers are many and there is no good system in place to help these learners. I am not blaming the team I am just blaming our system of education that they only thought of some systems to be put in place but fail to implement them in the right way."*

Interviewee **P6** said:

*I am out of words because we always ask the district to come and help us with assessment of learners with barriers. Some speak of adaptation and alternative assessment and some facilitators need same activities for all learners.*

Interviewee **P7** showed a loss of confidence:

*I have lost confidence in our system of education. We try the best that we can but our learners with barriers are in trouble.*

Interviewee **P8** was also not so pleased with the ILST. The interviewee P8 said:

*The ILST in our school is not helping educators to understand the implementation of inclusive education assessment*

When asked about support received from their ILST, responses of all participants in School C except interviewee P9 suggested that there was inadequate support from the ILST.

Interviewee **P9** said:

*I think our ILST do try to support us, but they lack support from the district. Some learners need psychologists and some need audiologists and even social workers and when these officials are called for support they don't come, they always tell us about a long...long list of schools that need their attention and they are understaffed, shortage of human resource.*



Interviewee **P11** said:

*We need more support from the ILST unfortunately is not enough.*

Interviewee **P12** said:

*The team is there by just a name. I think the DBE has a lot of work to do when it comes to these teams [referring to ILST and DLST].*

In School D, participants did not indicate that they receive support from the ILST.

Interviewee **P13** said:

*In our school, we do have the ILST, but it is only there by name just to add numbers; there is no time where you can see them sitting around assessing learners and giving us feedback.*

Surprisingly interviewee **P14** confirmed that they are a team (ILST) but they do not have time to assess and discuss learner scholastic challenges and give feedback to educators.

*What we do most is to individually support those learners mostly who experience health problems because it is easy for us to refer them to health centres.*

Interviewees **P15 and P16** confirmed that they do not regard the ILST in their school as doing what it is supposed to do. The policy (DoE, 2001:48-49) indicates that at the institutional level, they should assist general and FET institutions in establishing ILSTs.

The researcher realised that ILST only existed in theory since it was not functioning in practice. However, SIAS (2014:25) specifically indicates that schools should have ILST for in case where the support given by educators proves to be ineffective. Likewise, Mahlo (2011:198) noted that ILST assist in identifying problems faced by educators and learners, however, ILSTs are not fully functional in most schools. Nel (2014) revealed that the ILST are not as functional in many schools.

### **5.5.3 The Efficacy of the Support received from District Level Support Teams**

In School A, interviewee **P1** said:

*I am teaching Senior Phase; it is somehow difficult to understand that a learner at this stage cannot read simple words and has also writing difficulties. How do you*

*go on with the ATP when you have to teach learners reading and writing skills? This was supposed to be done at Foundation Phase. Due to the system that says a learner can fail only once in a Phase is one of those issues that causes problems. Learners reach Senior Phase by being progressed or pushed to the next class but not capable of meeting the assessment standards of a particular class. Even if the DLST can visit but I do not see how they will solve this issue. They are not regular in our school.*

Interviewee **P2** said:

*I only see them when there are urgent documents that need to be submitted at national level.*

Interviewees **P3** and **P4** supported their colleagues saying they did not get regular support from the DLST as indicated in the policy.

In School B, interviewee **P5** reported:

*We have the DLST, but it does not support us as we need them to be. Many of our educators in the mainstream lack expertise and skills to deal and assess learners with experiencing barriers. We are not qualified to do it hence we need the district intervention on this one. You know what I realised that it seems as if they [referring to district officials] do not to understand it themselves.*

Interviewee **P6**, the ILST coordinator, said:

*The DLST does not play its role they always complain about shortage of transport and human resources.*

Interviewee **P7** argued that:

*Curriculum differentiation does not need a once-off training. It should be an ongoing process until the DBE and the educators feel it is enough but the way they are doing it, it is a total disaster. The DLST does not come regularly for support unless at the end of the year which is not helping at all.*

Interviewee **P8** said:

*Our school is in a suburban area where everybody flocks in for work or nearer workplaces. Our classes are overcrowded. It is not easy to prepare different*

*activities for different learners in trying to adapt the curriculum. We end up not adapting the curriculum and not doing differentiated assessment. Those schools with few learners in class maybe they might try it. What am trying to say is that the district is not winning the battle at all.*

It was heart-breaking to realise that the participants in School Chad similar views. They highlighted lack of support from the DLST.

Interviewee **P9** said:

*The district does not send officials in school to help and support learners experiencing barriers to learning instead they always complain about being understaffed.*

This suggests that the level of support was compromised.

SIAS (2014:30-31) states that it is the responsibility of the DLST to support the ILST. Unfortunately, according to interviewee *P13*, seldom see facilitators from the DLST visiting the school addressing issues of learner barriers.

Interviewee **P14** said:

*The DLST only comes to our school where there is a memo from the National DBE looking for statistics of the progressed learners or something connected with these learners.*

Interviewee **P15** responded as follows:

*When I need help from the DLST, especially with learners who struggle with reading, writing, and others' challenges, the answer that I always get is that they are understaffed so they cannot be able to attend them, [and] as a school we should rather make a plan on how we can help those learners.*

Interviewee **P16** also shared the same sentiments as her colleagues when she said:

*I do not have any comment about the district because it let us down many times when it comes to them (referring to the district) taking responsibility for these learners. Educators have completed SNA forms, but nothing is happening with these learners. These learners need help, Ma'am.*

Furthermore, interviewee **P16** complained:

*As the HoD and a SAT coordinator, it is difficult for me to support educators when they do not have relevant resources.*

The findings emanating from the study indicated that even at the school level educators are not fully supported. According to Chavalala (2013:116), it is the duty of the ILST to ensure that educators and learners are supported.

## **5.6 IMPACT OF INCLUSION ON EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS**

To establish the impact of inclusion on the educators' assessment practice in inclusive classrooms research participants were asked to highlight the pros and cons of inclusion in the assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The following responses were gathered from the participants on item 2.5:

Interviewees **P5**, **P7**, **P11**, **P12** and **P14** highlighted that assessment in inclusive classrooms is difficult for educators since they have to differentiate the assessment activities that they give their learners because learners are different in terms of their abilities.

The interviewees indicated that:

*Differentiated assessment has an impact on the curriculum coverage. The educator will be always behind schedule.*

Generally, the study revealed that the educators were finding it so difficult to implement the outcomes-based education assessment and they were reluctant to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms. The findings clearly reflected the inability and lack of desire for educators to adapt to the changes in the curriculum. The failure and reluctance of the educators to adapt to the demands of inclusive education was a crucial barrier to inclusive assessment.

## **5.7 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH DISTRICT OFFICIALS**

Two officials from the DBE being the Head of DAT (**P17**) and the Head of the DLST (**P18**) were also interviewed. The two officials were relevant to this study as they were individuals who deal directly with assessment methods, tools, techniques, and

assessment strategies in assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning. In Chapter One, it was pointed out that the researcher selected the DLST and the DAT because one of their key purposes is to support educators.

### **5.7.1 Perceptions on the Assessment Policy Documents**

When asked about what assessment policy is, it was clear that (Head of the District Assessment Team) interviewee **P17** deals with it on daily basis. He said:

*“Assessment policy is that policy that provides guidance to learners, educators and parents on different assessment tasks. Assessment policy describes the principles, practices and regulations governing the assessment at a school. This document is designed to guide and assist educators in conducting assessment.”*

The response from interviewee **P18** was that assessment policy is a guideline designed for educators by the government.

*It provides guidance on drawing up assessment programmes. It describes what assessment is, how and when assessment should be done. The document stipulates assessment protocols and management.*

### **5.7.2 Challenges that Affect Educators’ Assessment Practices**

The question was: *What are the challenges which affect educators’ assessment practices?*

#### **5.7.2.1 Crowdedness**

The school-based participants indicated that their classrooms have a minimum of 55 learners per class which makes the classrooms too big for effective inclusive assessment. The large size of the classes was portrayed as a stumbling block for effective inclusive assessment practices.

Interviewee **P17** said:

*We have big numbers in our schools, and it is a challenge for educators to provide differentiated assessment activities as well utilising alternative assessment methods.*

In response to the question interviewee **P18** remarked that:

*The issue of over crowdedness in educators' classrooms is one of the biggest challenges we are confronted with.*

The findings emanating from the study support Korkmaz (2011:182-183) who highlighted that overcrowded classrooms can be a barrier towards successful implementation of inclusive and differentiated assessment practices.

Isingoma (2014:149) revealed approaches that can be used in schools for quality teaching and assessment to take place in overcrowded classes. These include in-service training for educators, professional development workshops and provision of adequate resources and infrastructure.

#### 5.7.2.2 Availability of Resources

When asked about the impact resources in schools the participants they indicated that inclusive assessment practices depends on the availability of adequate resources and facilities. The responses from the interviewees P17 and P18 highlighted that the schools under study did not have enough facilities and resources.

Interviewee **P17** indicated that:

*Schools do not have enough resource to teach the learners which the government has to step up and buy them. Learners are still sharing textbooks. Four learners have to share a textbook and this prevent them to complete homework on time as they have to keep exchanging books until they are all covered.*

Interviewee **P18** said:

*Most schools that we service do not have enough resources due to constant burglary and vandalism.*

She further indicated that:

*In some subjects, educators have resources, but they are not adequate for all learners.*

The information gathered from the participants agreed with the literature which stated that sufficient resources and facilities are essential for successful implementation of inclusive assessment practices (Engelbrecht, 2006:253; Johnstone, 2010:41).

Furthermore, Beyers and Hay (2007:396) highlighted that educators' low morale is also caused by lack of resources.

### **5.7.3 Assessment Methods used in Inclusive Classrooms**

Peer assessment and self-assessment, portfolio assessment emerged as the most common alternative methods of assessment as indicated by the district assessment officials.

Interviewee **P17** indicated:

*Peer assessment allows learners to work in pairs and support each other in their learning. If learners are actively engaged with assessment criteria, I believe in it because it saves time.*

Interviewee **P18** said:

*Peer assessment allows learners to evaluate the work of their classmates.*

When responding to the question on self-assessment interviewee **P17** responded as follows:

*Self-assessment gives learners an opportunity to assess their own work whether it's class work or assignment. I sometimes feel that educators are abusing it wherein they are no more marking learner's books. They shift their responsibility to the learners to mark their work. If well managed, I believe it to be a good exercise."*

**P18** indicated that:

*Self-assessment empowers learners to participate actively in their assessment.*

Portfolio assessment, according to P17, records and keeps a wide range of information about development of the learner and makes things easy for the facilitators to see the work of the individual learner in totality.

**P18** regards it as:

*A collection which provides feedback to learners, making them able to improve their performance during the term ...*

This is supported by Mokhtaria (2015) who noted that portfolio is a self-assessment tool which keeps a record of a learner's work which has been collected over time. Wiesnerová (2012:22) supported the previous statement when she asserted that portfolios record and keep a wide range of information about development and headway of the learner. Portfolios should, above all, reflect the learner's progress and effort to inspire him or her to self-assess his or her own progress and enrich the cooperation of the educator and the learner on assessment. Meador (2017:1) agreed that portfolios are effective assessment tools because they provide educators, learners, and parents with an in-depth look into learners' progression over the course of an entire year.

#### **5.7.4 EDUCATOR TRAINING IN ASSESSING LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

When asked about educators' training in relation to assessment of learners experiencing barriers, interviewee **P17** responded as follows:

*I feel bad that educators are not well trained. The report that I always receive is that they feel helpless about the situation at school. They are unable to deal with these learners as they are not well trained to assess them.*

Despite the importance attached to assessment few educators receive much formal training in assessment design and analysis. Daniyan (2015:41) noted that educators require training on ways of identifying and addressing learners who are struggling in the classroom to achieve the aims and objectives of teaching and learning.

**P18** said:

*Honestly speaking, educators need more training on this issue and as the DBE we need to consider ways on how to deal with this issue quickly because learners are just 'micro-waved' and be allowed to progress to another class without mastering the assessment standards of the previous class. These learners need alternative assessments rather than being pushed to the next level being empty headed.*

Competence-based assessment has been applauded by several researchers as a mode of alternative assessment which can enhance teaching and learning in inclusive classrooms (Ndalichako, 2015; Paulo, 2014; Black & William, 2012; William, 2006). Vandeyar and Killen (2007) in agreement argue that educators need to be trained.



Similarly, Hariparsad's (2004) argued that educators who do not have competence in inclusive education assessment policies will be incompetent.

### **5.7.5 Stakeholder Support**

#### 5.7.5.1 Parental Involvement

On the issue of parental involvement in schools, interviewees **P17** and **P18** highlighted that when they visited schools, they always advise educators to involve parents in whatever they do because parental involvement is key to a successful learner performance. They also advise educators to plan and to have quarterly assessment programme meetings where they indicate tasks and dates for assessments e.g., assignments or projects. They need to give these programmes to the parents during parents' meetings and explain to them why they should have such programmes, one of the reasons being to support their children.

In relation to the views of the participants on support that they receive from parents on assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning the DoE (2005) stipulated that educators need to be skilled to work with other professionals and parents. It is therefore important to highlight that parents play a pivotal role in assessment of their children.

#### 5.7.5.2 Institutional Level Support Teams

Masango (2013:12) stressed that the ILST should assist with intervention strategies and provide resources that would enable the educator to support learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The researcher asked interviewee P17 about the responsibility of the ILST. His response was:

*According to SIAS (2014) the functions of the ILST among others is to coordinate all curriculum and school development support at school level. Madam (referring to the researcher), I feel bad that ILST is non-functional in most schools. Educators always indicate that their ILST is not supporting them in any way that it was supposed to do. Most schools indicate that it is there only on paper."*

When asked about the functionality of the ILST, interviewee P18 indicated that she was the Head of the unit but confessed that the ILST as a structure was not functioning. Some of the reasons that she highlighted were lack of knowledgeable people to run the structure and lack of passion from the team members. When she asks the members of the team why there is no commitment in their duties, some gave the following reasons:

- Too much workload.
- Too much paperwork.
- Lack of trust from the district as they send the completed SNA forms, but they take a year or two with no response.

#### 5.7.5.3 District Level Support Teams

When he was asked about the duties and the responsibilities of the DLST, P17 said:

*It is heart-breaking to hear educators saying that the DLST is not supporting them as it should. I think we have the same reasons of being understaffed in our district.*

Interviewee P18 took a deep breath before she could answer the question and responded as follows:

*Our reasons for not being there when we are needed are that we are understaffed. As we speak now we have only one permanent psychologist who is expected to support more than 80 schools of which is impossible. I just hope that one day the Department will take it seriously and employ more personnel.*

Participants were asked to explain how the DLST support them in addressing the challenges they encounter with learners who experience barriers to learning.

This study found that educators are unhappy as district officials do not evaluate or monitor them regularly as well as provide support to reduce learning barriers.

## **5.8 FINDINGS FROM INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM LESSON OBSERVATIONS**

### **5.8.1 Educators' Assessment Policy Interpretation and Implementation**

In conducting classroom assessment educators are guided by two fundamental policy documents which are the NPA (2011c) and CAPS (2011a). Educators observed at

school A, B, C and D implemented the National Protocol for Assessment (DoE, 2011c) to ensure that assessment practices achieved the desired outcomes. The educators used assessment to gather and organise evidence of learning as well as make decisions about the success and development of the learners. This is in line with Landsberg, Kruger and Nel's (2016:46) perspective that assessment is the process of gathering information about a learner's achievement. However, the educators did not use assessment for diagnostic purposes. This contradicts recommendations made by Ndalichako (2017) that assessment helps educators to identify problems faced by learners to devise appropriate remedial measures to redress the situation.

Educators used assessment to make decisions about each learner's performance. However, the educators failed to implement the assessment activities as prescribed by SIAS (2014). The assessment tasks and activities were not paced or scaffolded. There was no room for individualised timeline for completing a task.

### **5.8.2 Assessment Goals**

George and George (2016) advised that educators should constantly review the learning targets for the lesson to inform the learners and keep them interested. Therefore, it is important to communicate learning goals to learners.

Observations made at school A, B, C and D revealed that all the educators observed do not communicate the criteria for assessment to learners. Learning outcomes and assessment standards were not provided or communicated to the learners. However, the learning outcomes were used as a basis upon which assessment was planned, developed, and administered. In addition, the educators did not discuss the assessment criteria with the learners. Learners need to know the learning goals, understand the criteria educators will be looking for in their work and that of their peers, then to apply the criteria to monitor and adjust the work. The educators were not prepared to spend enough time discussing with learners the reasons for using these assessments.

The conduct of the educators violated the stipulations of the NPA (2011c) and CAPS (2011a) which advocated that classroom assessments should aim at evaluating the performance of learners in line with the assessment outcomes.

Prior discussion of the assessment tools with the learners was also limited in the observed lessons. Such practices also make learners to be ignorant of the assessment criteria and this contributed to their poor performance in most cases. Brookhart and Lazarus (2017:14) and Thomas et al (2011:2) consider rubrics and checklists to be the useful tools for learners to understand the assessment criteria that will be used to assess their own work and they will also assist them to assess the work of their peers.

### **5.8.3 EDUCATOR'S ROLE IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

SIAS (2014:40) indicated that the educator should understand the curriculum and make it accessible to all learners.

The educators observed in the study focused on transmitting knowledge without assessing each learner's learning style and developmental support needs. In view of this anomaly educators did not go to the level of learners experiencing barriers to learning. This practice is criticised by Ho (2015:193) who commented that if educators only focus on transmitting knowledge, it is not enough, and this is an obsolete educational style. Learners should be independent. They need to know what their goals are, what they are making and how to achieve their goals. For this reason, educators need to set high but achievable expectations for their learners in their classrooms.

### **5.8.4 The Role of the Learner in Inclusive Classrooms**

From the observed lessons the researcher found out that all the educators perceived learners to be passive recipients of knowledge. The educators were mainly focused on ensuring that learners are prepared for the examinations rather than on the process which ensures that these learners acquire the skills as stipulated by the learning-outcome-based CAPS curriculum. According to Willis (2011:48) when learners are positioned as passive receivers this reinforces the notion that knowledge is external and unchangeable, and learners have little control over the construction of meaning. The educator-centred approach proved to be dangerous as learners become reluctant to seek help or receive extra assistance because it was interpreted as evidence of their low ability (Harlen & Johnson, 2014).

Due to the educator-centred approach the educators in their assessment practices failed to show signs of supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom. These findings agree with the findings of Vandeyar and Killen (2007) who found that educators still dominate in the classroom discourses. This was manifested in the educators' classroom practices which conflicted with the outcomes-based approach of that time.

### **5.8.5 Methods and Strategies of Assessment used in the Classrooms**

At the beginning of each lesson, the educators started by writing the topic on the chalkboard and instructed the learners to take out their exercise books so that they will write some key points emerging from the educator's presentation. Some of the educators just instructed learners to open their textbooks on a certain page so that they will read and answer activity questions and then hand over their books to the educator for marking. The assessment practices emerged to be more of testing than teaching and providing instruction to the learners.

There was literally very little engagement and interaction during the lessons. At the beginning of each lesson educators are expected to engage learners in oral questions and discussions. This was not the case in the lessons observed. In corroboration to these findings Vandeyar and Killen (2007:105) noted that educators have had a strong inclination towards educator-centred assessment practices. The educators continued to implement assessment practices which were at loggerheads with the competence and learning outcome-based education CAPS curriculum statement.

The findings emanating from this study are also globally corroborated. The World Conference on Education for All criticised the prevailing global educational practices because they exclude several learners from accessing education in a manner which will lead to their positive development (Anderson & Boyle, 2015). Resolutions from the World Conference proposed that educational practices should be flexible, implement tailor-made assessment practices and teaching methods which accommodate all learners so that they will successfully access education in their diversity.

The educators observed during the study did not make use of self and peer assessment. This practice contradicts Fisher and Bandy (2019) who maintained that self-assessment facilitates a sense of ownership of one's learning and can lead to better understanding by the learner.

The educators observed failed to adopt the use of self-assessment and peer-assessment as strategies to accommodate and support learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educators tend to use traditional forms of testing, for example, multiple choice-based tests which were somehow tricky to most learners. The assessment was merely knowledge based as learners' assessment was based on testing the learners' acquisition of knowledge. This assessment practice disagreed with the expectations of the Department of Education (DoE, 2002b:33).

The educators had challenges in implementing the alternative assessment practices. Self and peer assessment were neglected even though it was going to be a strategy which will help educators to find out what the learner knows or what he/she can do best. The implementation of these assessment practices provides learners experiencing barriers to learning an opportunity to realise their potential. According to Wride (2017:3) self-assessment helps to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes and goals, to evaluate understanding of the content and the self-development of the learner him/herself.

Various researchers recommended that in order to support learners experiencing barriers to learning educators need to model the process of these assessment by giving feedbacks (Brookhart & Lazarus (2017:14); Thomas, Martin & Pleasant (2011:1); Rogers (2018:1); Wride, 2017:4). In the observed lessons, educators gave a written assessment activity at the end of each lesson. Furthermore, the assessment was used to provide learners with feedback on errors they have made and insights on how to improve them. Nevertheless, the feedback from the assessment did not lead to remedial action or intervention. The educators did not fully utilise the assessment as a diagnostic tool to identify learner challenges and areas of difficulties. Despite failing to use assessment for diagnostic purposes the educators observed also practice continuous assessment.

Brookhart and Lazarus (2017:22) further highlighted that peer assessment can be successfully used with learners experiencing barriers to learning and learners who have many different characteristics and needs, including learners who have intellectual barriers. The above authors also asserted that learners benefit most from peer assessment. The significance of alternative assessment is also highlighted by Thomas et al. (2011:2) advised that educators should put in practice peer and self -

assessment as inclusive strategies. Alternative assessment also gives learners a fair opportunity in assessment.

The educators who participated in the study also failed to utilise opportunities for peer feedback. According to Gielen (2007:98) peer feedback can increase the social pressure on learners to do their best in assignments. Gielen (2007:98) further stated that peer feedback is often perceived as more understandable and more useful. Those who experience difficulties can ask their peers questions more freely than asking their educators.

#### **5.8.6 The ALIGNMENT of the EDUCATOR'S ASSESSMENT PRACTICES to the VALUES and PRINCIPLES of ASSESSMENT**

Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (2011a) clearly indicates that assessment is the core feature in the teaching and learning process in South African schools. Because of this clause in the curriculum statement an educator must recognise and plan for how to deal with inclusiveness and diversity in the classrooms. Educators are expected to learn and understand the diverse needs of the learners.

The fairness and reliability of the assessment activities in the observed classrooms was questionable as learners were not given extra time to complete the assessment task and evidence of additional support was limited. In view of these observations Koloji-Keaikitse (2017:2) argued that when educators misinterpret essential assessment principles their assessment practices are more likely to be worthless.

The educators did not provide learners with expanded opportunities even though the assessment policy indicated that learners should be given an opportunity to learn at a varied pace. The educators should increase opportunities for every learner to achieve and improve as individuals (DoE, 2007). In view of this observation, several researchers (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013; Artiles & Kozleski, 2016) argued that inclusive education can succeed if educators or the education system provide support and services which enable the learners to be successful in their quest for knowledge and development. Therefore, inclusive education assessment practices should be guided by the principles of social justice by reducing educational inequalities and exclusions to embrace all learners.

The researcher also observed that most of the educators seem unwilling to adapt their assessment practices to the CAPS. The observation is also supported by Vandeyar and Killen (2007) who noted that many educators have an inability or unwillingness to adapt their assessment practices to the educational transformation requirements.

### **5.8.7 Challenges faced by Educators in Inclusive Classrooms**

The findings revealed several challenges which are faced by educators when assessing learners. First and foremost, the researcher observed that inclusive education assessment is time consuming and requires much paperwork. The researcher noted that most educators were mostly involved in completing paperwork than supporting learners who needed the support.

Overcrowded classrooms also emerged as a challenge which hinders inclusive education assessment. In school B, C and D the number of learners in each classroom were between 50-68 and school A which was an independent school has only 35 learners per class. From these figures it is indicated that overcrowding is a barrier to inclusive education assessment practices and principles in public schools as compared to independent schools. Due to overcrowding in the classrooms most learners experiencing barriers to learning are affected negatively due to the lack of individual educator attention offered to the learners (Materechera, 2014). Overcrowded classrooms are a barrier because individual learner support was not provided as required by these learners.

Time allocated per lesson was also observed as factor which inhibited the educators' effort to accommodate learners experiencing barriers. Webb (2005) opined that the time slots allocated for each lesson is very limited and this will not allow educators to fully complete the content planned for each lesson. The limited time also constrained the educators from engaging learners in classroom discussions as well as from conducting some reflection sessions for each lesson. More importantly, it is crucial to note that the higher number of educator-learner ratio prevents educators from offering the learners constructive feedback.

School A and C were well resourced to provide varied assessment, while B and D did not have enough resources. Lack of resources influences the attitude of educators towards IE as well. In agreement, Boyle, and Topping (2012) noted that educators all over the world complained about lack of resources which effectively support inclusive



education classroom activities. Resources needed for effective assessment included textbooks, library facilities, laboratories, computers. In school D, for example, the school did not have enough resources for use when teaching the learners. In some cases, four learners must share a textbook and this prevent learners to complete assessment on time.

#### **5.8.8 Strategies adopted by the Educators to Overcome the Challenges**

Sethusha (2012:4) advised that educators should align their assessment practices with the curriculum stipulations. Some of the educators involved in the study attempted to provide curriculum differentiation to respond to the needs of all learners. They tried to modify, change, adapt, extend, and vary teaching methodologies, teaching strategies and assessment strategies but this was not done regularly across the board. Effort was also made to make assessment activities flexible and make the context relevant to learners' needs. These strategies are in agreement to the proposal made by William et al. (2004) who stated that in order to accommodate learners experiencing barriers effectively educators should adopt assessment strategies and techniques such as varied questioning, marking which provides comments only without providing a rating mark, discuss the marking criteria with learners, allowing learners to indulge in peer assessment and self-assessment. Furthermore, Gilmore (2002) proposed the use of a variety of assessment tasks and techniques to cater for individual needs of the learners.

#### **5.9 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The researcher analysed several documents to establish how the educators cater for learners experiencing barriers to learning. The documents analysed included: assessment plans; recording sheets; classroom monitoring tools used by head of departments; working mark sheets; formal assessment moderation tools; learners' work books; school assessment policies; educator's portfolio files and learners' portfolio files(Appendix H). The analysis was guided by the following themes: classroom assessment goals; types of assessment activities given to learners; the monitoring of the assessment processes.

### **5.9.1 Classroom Assessment Goals**

Assessment in inclusive education is done to achieve several goals, namely baseline assessment goals, diagnostic assessment goals, formative assessment goals, continuous assessment goals and summative assessment goals. The analysis of the learners' workbooks, school assessment policies, educator's portfolio files and learners' portfolio files in all the four schools revealed that the assessment goals of the educators were mainly biased towards achieving formative and summative assessment goals. Not even one of the analysed documents indicate that baseline and diagnostic assessment was done by the educators. The focus was on generating assessment evidence which determines whether the learner can advance to the next grade or not. According to Hargreaves et al. (2002) model of assessment the political dimension of assessment was given more prominence in all the schools. The political dimension of assessment argues that classroom assessment is influenced much by the external evaluation.

In School A the educators' goal was to see to it that every learner achieves a minimum of level 4, that is 50% pass mark and above. Further, the educators in School A demonstrated that they used assessment opportunities to improve teaching and learning. It is evident in the educators' portfolios that assessment results were analysed to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning however evidence of remedial action or support given to the identified learners was missing in the educators' files.

In School B, the main goal of assessment established was to diagnose and identify learners experiencing barriers to learning so that they will be provided with learning support. However, evidence of the support provided to the learners experiencing barriers was not found in the documents analysed. Furthermore, the assessment of learners at school B was mainly done for summative purposes. Learners' workbooks and portfolios revealed that assessment constitute mainly of classroom tests, informal activities and school based formal assessment tasks which were used as evidence of learner achievement. The evidence gathered indicated that the traditional forms of assessment are implemented to a large extent as compared to the alternative assessment methods.

Educators at School C and D failed to produce the school assessment policy as well as the subject assessment policy. Most learners did not have workbooks for informal assessment as well as portfolios for formal assessment. Failure to produce assessment documents suggested that the educators did not administer assessment with the guidance of the school assessment plan. Several gaps were found in the recording sheets and the learners' workbooks had little content coverage. This finding agrees with findings made by Nxumalo (2007) and Vandeyer and Killen (2007). These researchers also identified gaps in educators' assessment practices.

### **5.9.2 Type of Assessment Activities given to Learners**

From the documents analysed from all schools the type of assessment activities given by educators included standardised tests, oral exams, portfolios, and practical exercises. Little was done as far as self-assessment and peer-assessment was concerned. In a nutshell, the assessment was not varied as well. Earl and Katz (2006:5) stated that frequent and diverse assessment help educators to understand learners' needs. The assessment activities given to the learners were also not differentiated. This makes the assessment to be not adequate enough to accommodate the needs of the learners who were experiencing barriers to learning. This process ensures success for all learners in a diverse classroom with data provided from different sources. The assessment provided to learners was also not authentic due to a lack of variety. Gregory and Chapman (2007:1) supports the above statement by using the analogy of "One size doesn't fit all" to explain that learners are different from one another in their physiology, background, and experience. As with clothing, people would not buy or make the same garments for all learners (even school uniforms, although they look the same, are sized and adjusted and accessorised for the wearer) because they would not fit, suit, or be comfortable. Learners differ from each other in physical abilities, mental and social development as well.

### **5.9.3 Quality Assurance of the Assessment Processes**

The researcher analysed classroom monitoring tools and the assessment tasks moderation tools found in the educators' files. The analysis revealed that the HoDs observed lessons as well as approve each formal task before it has been administered to the learners. At school A the HoD provided both verbal and written comments after

observing lessons as well as monitoring an assessment activity. This is in line with the NPAQ (2007a) which states that HoDs are required to moderate all assessment before and after they are administered. A closer look at the record sheets at school A indicated that most learners were performing well in the subject and this can be attributed to the proper implementation of moderation procedures as stipulated by policy.

Discussion of the moderation tools was also done, and this provided an opportunity for educators to reflect on their assessment practices. According to George and George (2016) discussion of assessment practices provided educators with an opportunity for reflection.

The analysis of moderation tools at school B, C and D indicated that moderation was irregular. The assessment practices should be quality assured as directed by the policy (NPAQ, 2007a; NPA, 2011c). Moderation is very important as it provides a way of checking alignment of practices with standards outlined in the policy documents. Analysis of assessment documents suggested that the moderation policy was not complied with since there was no evidence of moderation and this was also seen in the number of gaps in the educators' record sheets.

## **5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter mainly analysed and interpreted the data which was collected during the data collection process. The chapter captured a detailed account presented by the participants. The findings revealed that educators' assessment is impacted by a wide variety of factors. This chapter managed to capture several variables which impacted the quality of assessment to address barriers to learning. The qualitative data was gathered using two different semi-structured interview schedules which were administered to the educators, SAT coordinators, ILST coordinators and deputy principals of four selected schools as well as the head of DAT and DLST in Tshwane North District. Data was also gathered through classroom observations and document analysis of assessment tools used by educators and learners.

The data presentation in this chapter was divided into 4 parts focusing on the responses from educators, SAT coordinators, ILST coordinators and deputy principals of four selected schools as well as the head of DAT and DLST in Tshwane North District.

The next chapter presents conclusions reached and recommendations made to improve educators' assessment practices in inclusive education. The contribution of the study to the body of knowledge is presented and discussed in Chapter Six.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on presenting and discussing the findings which emerged from the study. Chapter Six provides a general overview to demonstrate that the aim and objectives originally expressed in Chapter One have been addressed and achieved. The investigation examined the importance of educators' assessment practices. Furthermore, the study identified the challenges that affect educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools in Senior Phase and to explore ways on how educators addressed these challenges in their assessment practices. This was done with the intention to develop an Inclusive Education Alternative-and-all-embracing-Assessment Framework for improving educators' assessment practices when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning in Tshwane North District.

An exploratory and evaluative case study design was adopted. Three data collection tools namely, interviews, observations, and document analysis, were employed to obtain data from the research participants. The study utilised phenomenological research to conduct the investigation in four diverse school settings. Through the qualitative research inquiry, the researcher identified assessment strategies that educators can use to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools. Furthermore, the study explored ways in which different stakeholders support educators in addressing challenges they face when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning.

This chapter summarised and discussed the main findings that emerged from the literature survey and the empirical investigation. The discussion provided a concise interpretation of the research findings. The chapter highlighted conclusions made in the study. Recommendations were also made.

### **6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

This section provides a summary of the contents of each chapter which was presented in the study.

### **6.2.1 Chapter One Synopsis**

Chapter One provided the introduction, background and rationale for the study. Specifically, the researcher focused on the current practices of educators in their classrooms, support from different stakeholders and the assessment strategies that they use to assist their learners who experience barriers to learning. It outlined the statement of the research problem and provided a clarification of terms as well as the structure of the thesis.

### **6.2.2 Chapter Two Synopsis**

The main goal of Chapter Two was to discuss the concept of inclusive education as well as its evolution to lay the foundation for understanding the role of assessment in inclusive classrooms. The discussion started with the definition of inclusive education from different authors and organisations (Phasha, 2010; Norwich, 2013; UNESCO, 2017; Kurth, Miller, Toews, Thompson, Cortes & HariDahal et al., 2018) It further provided a report on the literature review conducted. It also discussed the best practices that educators used when assessing learners such as differentiated assessment. The discussion pays special attention to effective assessment strategies that educators can use to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in the inclusive classroom. The chapter also expatiated and elaborated on the barriers to learning in an inclusive classroom context. The discussion also provided the global and continental overview of inclusive education practices in selected countries around the globe as well as in South Africa. Finally, the researcher envisaged exploring ways in which different stakeholders support educators in addressing their challenges in their assessment practices in the inclusive classroom.

### **6.2.3 Chapter Three Synopsis**

This chapter extensively covered the definitions of assessment from different authors (Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2016; Kipkorir, 2015; Zaleski, 2015; Mmasi & Thinguri, 2017; Ndalichako, 2017). It gave a report on the literature review on educators' assessment practices. It discussed the best practices that educators use when assessing their learners, differentiated assessment, and paid special attention to addressing effective assessment strategies that educators can use to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom. Support of learning from different

stakeholders with the intention to support educators in addressing their challenges in their assessment practices in the classrooms was investigated. It was concluded that educators need more support from different stakeholders so that their classroom assessment practices can be of value to all their learners most importantly to those experiencing barriers to learning. Hargreaves et al. (2002) model examines innovations in education. The researcher drew on this model as illustrated and located in the literature to highlight the importance of assessment in the classroom which accommodates learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools, and to formulate a framework for classroom assessment practices. In this chapter the principles of assessment that educators adhere to in the classroom, the assessment methods, and the assessment techniques that educators use especially when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools were explained and discussed. Finally, the researcher discussed inclusive education and assessment policies in South Africa and their relations to learners who experience barriers to learning.

#### **6.2.4 Chapter Four Synopsis**

In this chapter, the research methodology used was explained. Such methodology was defined as a tool used for answering a research question using essential skills and instruments appropriate to the qualitative research approach. The reasons for selecting this approach were discussed in detail, as was the research design (being the actual blueprint of how the research was done). It also described an interpretivist approach which underpins certain assumptions in this research study. This research design involved a qualitative study centred on educators and other stakeholders' perceptions of the challenges that affect educators' assessment practices for learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools in Senior Phase. Specifically, planning and focus of the study were decided based on the researcher's observations and experiences in support of assessment for learners experiencing barriers to learning. In conclusion the chapter outlined how trustworthiness was ensured as well as ethics adhered to in conducting the study.

#### **6.2.5 Chapter Five Synopsis**

The chapter focused specifically on the data collected at the four different secondary schools in Tshwane North District. Data was collected from 16 participants at the



schools and two participants from the district office. Individual interviews were conducted with four educators, four DPs, four ILST coordinators, and four SAT coordinators, all from four different secondary schools types (i.e., a township school, suburban, rural and an independent school), plus 2 officials from the DBE being the Head of DAT and the Head of the DLST who deal directly with issues related to assessment methods, tools, techniques and assessment strategies. An analysis of the research findings was done, and the data collected were interpreted. The research participants were given the opportunity of expanding on their answers as might be required by each individual participant. During the individual interviews, the researcher carefully observed the research participants in order to determine the underlying issues that might be determined from their reactions including their conceptions of assessment.

### **6.3 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim was achieved by addressing several objectives which were outlined in Chapter One.

#### **Objective 1: To assess the assessment practices that educators use in their inclusive classrooms**

Findings indicated that all participants generally enjoyed teaching as a career because it gave them fulfilment in life. The study revealed that educators made every effort to implement differentiated assessment. However, most educators in practice are facing challenges when implementing the differentiated curriculum due to lack of resources, excessive paperwork, limited facilities, time constraints, overcrowded classrooms and limited support from the DLST and ILST as well as limited training with regards to assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. It was observed that educators came up with different strategies to accommodate all learners in the classroom. Even though the educators are facing challenges in their assessment practices, from the data collected, the educators made effort to utilise diverse assessment strategies in different assessment contexts. Erradu (2012:38-39) concurred that the curriculum has to be differentiated in an endeavour to support all learners.

**Objective 2: To critically analyse assessment strategies that educators use to assist learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools.**

In the study it was discovered that there is need for educators to utilise alternative or adaptive strategies which will assist learners experiencing barriers to learning. Few educators used self-assessment and peer-assessment as strategies to accommodate learners experiencing barriers. However, it was also noted that some educators have a tendency of using traditional forms of testing e.g., multiple choice based tasks which were somehow tricky to some learners. The findings indicated that peer assessment and self-assessment helps the learner to know what he/she can do. Therefore, these assessment practices should be put into practice as they will give learners experiencing barriers to learning an opportunity to realise their potential. Self-assessment helps to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes and goals, to evaluate understanding of the content and the self-development of the learner him/herself. However, the findings show that even though self and peer assessments are effective strategies to support learners experiencing barriers to learning educators do not utilise these assessment techniques. Learners need to know the learning goals, understand the criteria they will be looking for in their work and that of their peers, then apply the criteria to monitor and adjust the work. Educators should be prepared to spend enough time discussing with learners the reasons for using these assessments. Furthermore, the findings highlighted that peer assessment can be successfully used with learners who have many different characteristics and needs. The findings revealed that learners benefit most from peer assessment if they do not have any behavioural challenges. Therefore, those who struggle with behavioural issues may not be good candidates for this type of assessment.

The findings also show that educators should put in practice peer and self - assessment as inclusive strategies because they are effective in enhancing teaching. The findings are corroborated by Reinholz (2016) who stated that peer assessment include several activities which allow individual learners to evaluate and judge each other's work. In agreement with the findings several researchers acknowledged that peer assessment gives the learners a better understanding of the assessment criteria (Logan, 2009:30; De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012).

**Objective 3: To examine the challenges educators experience in assessing learners who experience barriers to learning.**

From the findings, lack of resources emerged as one of the challenges that affect educators in their assessment practices. The participants highlighted the importance of resources especially to those learners experiencing difficulty in learning who rely on concrete substances to learn better. Therefore, effective curriculum implementation and assessment depends on the availability of resources (Daniyan, 2015:2).

The researcher concluded that one of the greatest challenges surrounding assessment is overcrowding hence educators have difficulties in providing the much-needed individual attention for positive learner performance.

**Objective 4: To analyse the assessment techniques used by educators when supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning.**

It is indicated through the research findings in Chapter Five that educators utilise several modes of assessment. The findings revealed that educators utilise the criterion-referenced assessment practice or the outcomes-based approach whereby the educator is expected to facilitate the teaching and learning process while the learner constructs knowledge. On the other hand, the findings show that there is limited use of the baseline assessment and diagnostic assessment by the educators. Baseline assessment practice is very important in identifying learners experiencing barriers right from the beginning of the year. Baseline assessment test assesses each learner's abilities and skills. This practice will allow educators to identify a learner's potential. This knowledge will help educators to plan for the lessons as well as the assessment (ARG, 2002; DoE, 2002c:2). According to Taylor (2008) most educators and schools do not conduct baseline assessment as a result most educators in inclusive schools do not have a thorough understanding of the learners' prior knowledge as well as their abilities and skills development level.

The analysed data also revealed that the use of diagnostic assessment is very minimal in the schools. Based on the findings, formative and summative assessment techniques are the most utilised in the inclusive classrooms and this causes the underachievement of learners experiencing barriers to learning since they are not well supported and accommodated by the educators' assessment techniques. Educators should take note of diagnostic assessment as it plays a significant role in identifying

the strengths and weaknesses of learners experiencing barriers to learning before conducting a lesson. The whole idea of using diagnostic assessment is reflected in the Individualised Support Plan (ISP) process.

**Objective 5: To examine ways in which different stakeholders support educators in addressing challenges in their assessment practices in the inclusive classroom**

In this study the role of the parents in inclusive classroom assessment was examined. Participants involved in the study highlighted that parents of learners involved also need to be part of the assessment process.

This study found that all participants highlighted that they did not receive any support from the ILST coordinators. Coordinators of the ILST of the schools are expected to have a strategic plan when it comes to assisting educators in assessing learners experiencing barriers in the classroom. They are expected to do follow-ups and make sure that educators are given the necessary training and support in their assessment practices. They should advise educators to attend workshops and encourage them to further their studies in the field of inclusive education. According to SIAS (2014:29), the responsibility of the ILST is to identify learners' needs.

This study found that the educators are experiencing frustration and helplessness as district officials do not evaluate or monitor to check if they are doing what they are supposed to do. However, the DLST, as emphasised by the policy on inclusive education, is not yet functional in the way it was set out, therefore schools are not receiving adequate support from the district. Educators can only be more committed to helping learners from diverse backgrounds and different abilities if support is forthcoming from all stakeholders. Unfortunately, according to participants, facilitators from the DLST seldom visited the school addressing issues of learner barriers.

**Objective 6: To critically examine the impact of inclusion on educators' assessment**

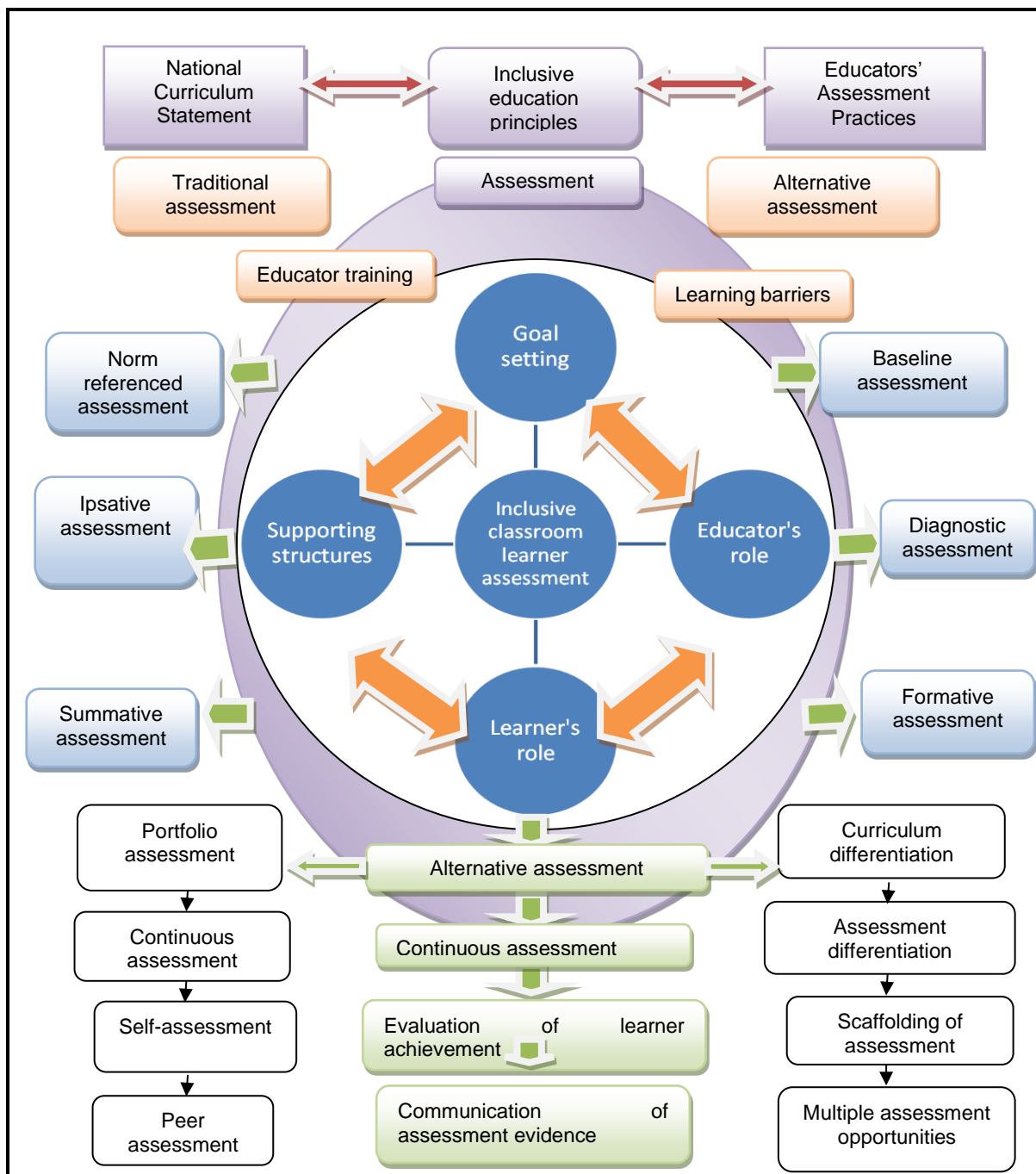
The study established that assessment in inclusive classrooms affects decisions about instructional needs, and curriculum in some cases. Findings also indicated that learners are not passive recipients of knowledge. Learners must be involved in all assessment stages.

The findings also revealed that learners are not at the centre of the assessment process. Teaching and learning has been found to be mostly educator centred. Inclusive classrooms require educators in their endeavours to meet the unique assessment needs of learners with barriers.

Despite its importance in the classrooms today, few educators receive much formal training in assessment design and analysis especially for learners who experience barriers to learning which create more challenges in the classroom. This is supported by Daniyan (2015:41) who believes that educators require training on ways of identifying, assessing, and addressing learners who are struggling in the classroom to achieve the aims and objectives of teaching and learning

**Objective 7: To develop a model for alleviating the challenges faced by educators when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms**

To alleviate the challenges faced by educators when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms the researcher developed the model illustrated in Figure 6.1 below. The Inclusive Assessment Framework for Educators (IAFE) portrayed in Figure 6.1 has been developed by the researcher so as to illustrate the key components and aspects which are required to improve educators' assessment practices when engaging with learners experiencing barriers to learning. The core features of an effective inclusive learner assessment comprises of actively involving learners in pre and post assessment activities (learners' role); the educator's role should be more of a facilitative and guiding role rather being a disseminator of information; goal setting should be a priority in inclusive classrooms and the assessment goals should be set by the educator and the learners together – learners should be aware of the goals of each assessment activity; more importantly, stakeholder support should also be an important feature of inclusive learner assessment. Educators should be supported by the District Education Specialists and they also need parental support for assessment to be effective.



**Figure 6.1: Inclusive assessment Framework for Educators (Source: Researcher)**

In addition, inclusive education assessment should be a blend of traditional assessment methods and the alternative assessment methods. Training of educators should also be prioritised as many educators seem to be struggling in effectively assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educators need to be fully equipped with skills and strategies of assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Alternative assessment techniques should also take a central role when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Finally, as suggested in the

model, learning barriers which has an impact in the assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning should be identified and overcome as well.

**Objective 8: To establish if educators are fully trained to assess learners experiencing barriers to learning**

The findings show that educator training in assessment is a crucial element that affects educator assessment practices. Lumadi (2013:211) also highlighted classroom assessment as one of the most important educator professional development needs. Du Plessis (2013:55) stressed that ongoing professional training development of educators is good for the welfare of any educational system. All participants did not have sufficient training on assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Vandeyar and Killen (2007:112) concluded that educators should receive training in assessment. The DoE (2005) stated that if educators are the chief players while identifying and addressing barriers to learning, then they require training on what barriers to learning are, and ways of identifying and supporting them. It was further reported by Mpya (2007:105) that educators need training to be effective in inclusive education. Sethusha (2012:2) believed that educator training is a significant element for effective teaching.

## **6.4 DISCUSSION AND CRITICAL REFLECTION OF KEY FINDINGS**

This study highlights the importance of assessment practices of educators in secondary schools in Tshwane North District, South Africa. Specifically, the researcher focused on the current practices of educators in their classrooms, the challenges the educators face when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning, how they deal with these challenges, support from different stakeholders and the assessment strategies used to assist learners who experience barriers to learning.

### **6.4.1 Importance of Educators' Assessment Practices in the Inclusive Classroom**

Based on the research findings, educators' assessment practices in the inclusive classrooms were found to be very important in a number of ways:

According to Lynch (2016:1) assessment should be used to determine learners' needs. Educators should reflect on each learner's cognitive development and skills to plan effectively for the lessons and assessments.

Findings gleaned from the present study indicated that inclusive classroom assessment assist educators to make decisions based on gathered facts hence diagnostic assessment is a prerequisite for effective assessment. Assessment should also be viewed as a teaching tool as well as an instrument for classroom management. Earl and Katz (2006:5) articulated classroom assessment should be frequent and diverse for educators to develop a thorough understanding of each learner. According to Danielson (2008) and Vadar (2010) assessment establishes how well the learners have learned as well as for promoting higher levels of learning.

The findings also revealed that as far as inclusive classroom assessment is concerned the role of the educator is undergoing transformation in the changing landscape of assessment. In concurring with the above-mentioned findings, Lumadi (2013:211) stressed that educator assessment practices are essential elements of classroom reform. Assessment needs to be seen both as an instrument and an agent for educational reform. Lumadi (2013) also reported that different scholars reveal that demographics, educator beliefs, educator training, class size and educator experience in actual classroom teaching may influence assessment practice.

Alternative assessment practices are important assessment methods and techniques that educators apply when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools.

#### **6.4.2 Factors which Impact on the Quality of Inclusive Classroom Assessment**

The study established that educator training is essential for educators to be competent in assessment. The findings also show that educator training is inadequate. It is important that educators be trained to assess and support learners who experience barriers to learning because there is no turning back on inclusive classrooms. The findings emanating from the study are corroborated by Kipkorir (2015:31) who argued lack of educational resources and inability to develop suitable assessment instruments had a significant impact on assessment. Several educators involved in the study cannot apply the principles of diagnostics assessment.

These findings are fully supported by Sikka, Nath and Cohen (2007) who found that many education training programmes do not require prospective educators to take courses in classroom assessment, and in-service educators reported that they were not well prepared to assess learners especially those experiencing barriers to learning.



As a consequence, educators do not have knowledge of classroom assessment. Sikka et al. (2007) further asserted that pre-service educators know much less about assessment than their in-service counterparts. Hence the researcher believes that lack of training on assessment has an impact on educators' assessment practices.

The findings from the study also highlighted that large numbers of learners in a class has a significant impact on the educators' inclusive assessment practices. Kipkorir (2015:30-31) asserted that overcrowded classrooms negatively affect educators' assessment practices. Khosi (2009:62) revealed that educators were failing to practise all the principles of formative assessment due to overcrowded classrooms.

#### **6.4.3 Stakeholders Support towards Effective Classroom Assessment**

Based on the research findings, stakeholders support towards effective classroom assessment is of paramount importance. DoE (2007) stressed that assessment should be used to report to parents and other stakeholders. Astin et al. (2012) suggested that assessment also include librarians, administrators, and district facilitators. Findings from the study assisted the researcher to conclude that educators need more support from different stakeholders so that their classroom assessment practices can be of value to all their learners, most importantly to those who experience barriers to learning.

#### **6.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE**

The findings in this study are crucial for improving the assessment of learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools because, while many studies concentrate on primary schools, little research has been done on secondary school learners. The study has also revealed that educators experience challenges on finding strategies to assist their learners who experience difficulty in learning so this research project will give them an elaborate description of assessment methods and how to employ them in their teaching to accommodate all the learners in the classroom. On the other hand, curriculum developers and different stakeholders will find it useful in making decisions about effective assessment practices that educators need in improving performance of their learners experiencing barriers to

learning. Lastly the study has helped to highlight the principles of assessment and how they determine barriers to learning.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON EMPIRICAL FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY**

### **6.6.1 Educators' Assessment Practices in Inclusive Classrooms**

- Inclusive assessment practices should be flexible and provide tailor-made assessment practices which accommodate all learners despite their diversity. According to Bender (2012) learners in all-inclusive classrooms have different learning abilities therefore classroom discourses should be adjusted to meet the unique and diverse capabilities of these learners.
- Educators should use alternative assessment methods such as peer assessment, self-assessment, projects, and portfolios among others in a manner which indicate that the educators are willing to provide equal education benefits to all learners despite their differences.
- Educators who assess learners in an inclusive classroom should be guided by principles of social justice and provide learners with a conducive environment which eliminate all forms of educational inequalities and exclusions. Kore (2013:51) advised that educators should be aware of the limitations of assessments when taken in isolation.
- Educators should recognise and plan for how to deal with inclusiveness and diversity in the classrooms.
- Assessment should be differentiated. Hillier (2011) argued that by differentiating the curriculum and tasks educators proactively modify the curriculum.
- Educators should make the curriculum accessible to all learners by accommodating the diversity of learning needs. This requires a paradigm shift in terms of the normal teaching approach.
- Educators should offer differentiation in terms of what learners learn and the methods of learning.

### **6.6.2 Assessment Goals**

- Educators should communicate assessment goals and standards to all learners before they embark on an assessment activity.

- Learners should participate in setting assessment goals. Koda-Dallow and Hobbs (2005) highlighted that goal setting is beneficial for learners because it leads to academic success and development of learners.
- Goal setting should be a continuous activity.

### **6.6.3 Educators' Role in Inclusive Assessment Process**

Educators should identify the learners' strengths and weaknesses.

- Educators should assist learners by differentiating the curriculum as well as the methods used to deliver it.
- Educators should share and clarify the learning criteria with their learners.
- Educators should provide learners with immediate constructive feedback so that they recognised their errors and learn from these errors.
- Educators should also utilise brilliant learners to teach others who are experiencing barriers to learning through peer driven lessons or classroom activities. This is supported by Brookhart and Lazarus (2017:22) who emphasised that peer assessment can be successfully used with learners experiencing barriers to learning and learners who have many different characteristics and needs, including learners who have intellectual barriers.

### **6.6.4 The Role of Learners in Inclusive Classrooms**

- Educators should not only focus on transmitting knowledge but should guide learners to be independent critical thinkers.
- Learners should not be passive recipients of knowledge. Acharya (2009:88) opined that it should be borne in mind that educators' dedicated support can instil learners' sense of motivation and attachment to their education. These learners will be encouraged to be active producers of knowledge, rather than passive recipients.
- Learners should be engaged in discussions, formal and informal oral and written activities. The aim should be to gather evidence of learning.
- Learners should be empowered and become owners of their own learning.

### **6.6.5 Methods and STRATEGIES used by EDUCATORS to ASSIST LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS**

- Assessment in inclusive classrooms should be adapted to ensure that assessment practices meet the needs of all learners in the classroom as no child should be left behind.
- Assessment should also cater for different learning styles of the learners.
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning are unique therefore their strength and needs are not the same due to the barriers that they experience. Educators should know and understand their learner's needs to select the appropriate accommodation, and
- Alternative or adaptive methods of assessment should be regarded as the panacea to address the learning barriers (DoE, 2002a:9).

### **6.6.6 Challenges EDUCATORS EXPERIENCE in ASSESSING LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

- Resources are essential for effective assessment therefore DBE should provide adequate resources to the schools.
- Educator-learner ratio should be addressed in a manner which could allow educators to provide individual attention to the learners.

### **6.6.7 Assessment TECHNIQUES used in SUPPORTING LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS to LEARNING**

- Formal assessment activities should include alternative and competence-based tasks.
- Informal assessment should be conducted through observations, discussions, and peer-to-peer interactions.
- Educators should design valid and credible assessment programmes.
- All assessment tasks should accommodate diverse learning needs of the learners.

### **6.6.8 Quality Assurance of the Assessment Processes**

- The roles of SAT and ILST members should be clarified as far as assessment at schools is concerned.

- All stakeholders in education should work together with assessment facilitators to assist schools in quality assurance practices.

#### **6.6.9 Training Needs for Educators in Inclusive Education**

- Educators should be thoroughly trained and assisted by inclusive education facilitators in assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. Proper training can give educators clarity about what is expected of them in assessing learners with barriers.
- Educators' development and an ongoing support from the DBE should become a priority.
- Educators should be well equipped to conduct assessments in inclusive classrooms.
- Constant professional development should be prioritised to prepare educators for collaboration and support in the inclusive education assessment practices.
- All educators in both private and public schools should be trained in assessment for learners experiencing barriers to learning so that, should they admit such children, they would know how to do assessment differentiation.
- Educator training should provide trainee educators with a positive orientation towards inclusive education; and
- Educators should be trained in such a way that they can be able to stand on their own when it comes to assessing and accommodating learners who experience barriers to learning.

#### **6.6.10 The EFFICACY of STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT in INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

- Educators need support to make the paradigm shift to inclusive education to understand its philosophy towards learners who experience barriers to learning and to welcome such learners in their mainstream classrooms.
- DBE should engage all stakeholders such as parents in curriculum implementation and assessment processes.
- The assessment process should include educators, parents, school and District Level Support Team and other relevant professionals from the community.

- Parents should be educated about their exact roles especially in assessment and what is expected from them to support the learning of the children who experience barriers to learning. Such education should encompass the full spectrum of educational needs, including curricular, assessment and behavioural support.
- The ILSTs should intensify their role of liaising and planning for learner assessment with educators on the ground. They should encourage educators to attend formal and informal training courses on assessment for learners who experience barriers to learning to improve their assessment practices and approaches in the classroom.
- ILSTs should organise more workshops and allocate time for in-service workshops on inclusive education.
- For the ILSTs to function properly, they need constant monitoring and support from the District Level Support Team.
- Regular meetings on educator and learner challenges should be held with district officials to reach better solutions on assessment modifications and curriculum adaptations. For these meetings to be held, they should be included in the school timetable. Meetings could be held once a week with the institutional personnel and once or twice with the district official depending on their availability.
- Educators with inclusive education qualifications should be a priority employment criterion at inclusive education schools as they would know and understand learners they are teaching.
- The DBE should make sure that the educator/learner ratio of 1:35 is ensured so that educators give special attention to each learner.

## **6.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE**

The research touched on a very pertinent issue of contemporary society, the importance of educators' assessment practices in the classroom for the learners who experience barriers to learning in Senior Phase. The study aimed at adding value to education especially to the assessment practices that educators use when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools. It is expected that the findings will enable educators, school administrators, the DBE and other policy

makers to formulate educational policies for educational assessment that will improve the quality of assessment in secondary education in South Africa.

The originality of the study is in its use of the model suggested by Hargreaves et al. (2002). The Hargreaves theory has been previously used by other researchers/scholars for different assessment purposes. The uniqueness of this study is specifically in the application of this model in different settings. The researcher has identified the gap where considerable research has been done on how to help educators in primary school to accommodate these learners but there is limited research done on the challenges educators experience in assessment practices in the Senior Phase. The study shed light on the challenges that affect educator's assessment practices especially when dealing with learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools in Senior Phase.

The study also explored ways on how educators addressed these challenges, the assessment strategies educators use to assist learners who experienced barriers to learning in their classrooms and the support they received from different stakeholders in addressing their challenges when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning. Thus, the study contributed to the teaching fraternity in terms of accommodating learners who experience barriers to learning in an inclusive classroom.

Although the Department of Education has introduced Inclusive Education with its assessment standards and its learning outcomes, the understanding of assessment practices that educators should use to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning and the assessment exercise especially in secondary school has lacked behind. Through literature review and interviews this study illuminates how educators adhere to the principles of assessment, good practices that educators adhere to in the classroom, the assessment methods and the assessment techniques that educators use especially when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools were explained and discussed.

Findings from the study could serve as the foundation for training programmes for educator training colleges to develop and provide a framework to support educators to be competent in new assessment approaches found in the CAPS document. In addition, the findings may also influence the development of theory and practice

leading to effective interventions. More importantly, the findings may improve how stakeholders can support educators in alleviating the challenges they are confronted with when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning. The findings in this study are crucial for improving the assessment of learners who experience barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools because, while many studies concentrate on primary schools, little research has been done on secondary school learners. The study has also revealed that educators experience challenges on finding strategies to assist their learners who experience difficulty in learning so this research project will give them an elaborate description of assessment methods and how to employ them in their teaching to accommodate all the learners in the classroom.

On the other hand, curriculum developers and different stakeholders will find it useful in making decisions about effective assessment practices that educators need in improving performance of their learners experiencing barriers to learning. This study has helped to highlight the principles of assessment and how they determine barriers to learning as discussed in SIAS (2014) policy.

This study contributed to existing literature on curriculum differentiation. The researcher highlighted that it is important for educators to note that no classroom has a completely homogenous group of learners. The researcher used Gregory and Chapman (2007) analogy of "One size doesn't fit all" to explain that learners are different from one another in their physiology, background, and experience. As with clothing, people would not buy or make the same garments for all learners (even school uniforms, although they look the same, are sized and adjusted and accessorised for the wearer) because they would not fit, suit, or be comfortable. Learners differ from each other in physical abilities, mental and social development as well. Through this study, the researcher also realised that it is not an easy task for educators to assess learners in a diverse classroom, but it must happen because we are all equal.

## **6.8 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The strengths and limitations of the study are presented hereafter:



### **6.8.1 Strengths of the Study**

- The study lies in the exploratory and evaluative case study which adopted a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to enter the participants' life world and study their life experiences (De Vos et al., 2011:64). It also confirmed Merriam's (1998) assertion that it is useful for the study to gain understanding of the case under investigation.
- The other strength of this study is that the researcher purposefully selected four schools which covered most of the types of school found in South Africa: a township school, a suburban, a rural and an independent school. The results can be transferrable to similar contexts or settings.
- Even though the results of the current investigation cannot be generalised to the whole district, it may have value in pointing to potential problems that could have wider ramifications over a wider area.

### **6.8.2 Limitations of the Study**

- This study cannot be considered exhaustive since it was conducted only in four schools in the above district in Gauteng Province.
- There are nine provinces in South Africa; Gauteng is but one province. Thus, the weakness of the study is that other educators, coordinators of the ILSTs and coordinators of the SATs in another province may have different opinions and experiences regarding the challenges that affect educators' assessment practices for learners who experience barriers to learning in their classroom in secondary schools in Senior Phase. A limitation might be that the purposefully selected secondary schools are presently practising inclusive education, which the researcher felt would help her to observe them truly assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in their classrooms and answering the research questions about the practices they are presently applying in their schools. The fact the study was done only at those schools practising inclusion might create tensions as the voices of other schools which are not practising inclusive education were not heard.
- The other limitation is that this study cannot be reproduced because the conditions under which the phenomenon was investigated cannot be the same in a study in another setting. In other words, the results are applicable to educators of only four

schools in the Tshwane North District of Gauteng Province, an area to which the study was confined.

## **6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Based on the research findings in Chapter Five, recommendations are now made based on the importance of educators' assessment in inclusive classrooms. The following recommendations are made accordingly:

- Based on the limitations of this study, the researcher recommends that the study should also be conducted in other schools which do not practice inclusive education so that they can also benefit on how to assess learners with barriers because all the schools do have them as they are protected by EWP6.
- Further research is needed on establishing effective programmes to engage different stakeholders that is, educators, ILST, DLST, parents or guardians and other interested stakeholders in education when assessing learners experiencing barriers, focusing on their roles and responsibilities and the benefits for all who are involved.
- A study can also be done on training of educators to provide accommodations, modifications, or alternate assessments that are most appropriate for learners who experience barriers to learning on a regular basis for all types of classroom assessments.
- Further research should be conducted for assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in post-secondary school institutions because the reality is that learners with barriers who were enrolled in a primary school and have moved to or have already advanced to secondary school will have difficult accessing qualifications at tertiary institutions.

## **6.10 CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the importance of educators' assessment practices for learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom in secondary schools in Senior Phase. The research was conducted in Tshwane North District. The findings showed ways on how they (educators) address these challenges in their assessment practices. The research enabled educators to relate their experiences regarding the assessment

strategies they use to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms.

The study revealed various barriers that hinder assessment practices when assessing learners with barriers. Amongst others overcrowding, non-availability of resources, lack of training of educators in assessing learners with barriers, lack of parental involvement, lack of support from the ILST and the DLST. Although SIAS (2014:28) introduced some good ideas such as the establishment of ILSTs and DLSTs with their roles and responsibilities, it became apparent that this existed only in theory since they seemed not to be functioning properly in practice. The implementation of the policy is still problematic.

The objectives of the study were addressed thoroughly and comprehensively through the data collected. The participants gave feedback on what they thought affected their assessment practices in the classroom especially for learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools in Senior Phase. They also shared their strategies that they use to assist these learners.

The researcher believes that if educators are given the necessary training to assess and support learners experiencing barriers, and they are provided with the necessary resource and get support from ILST, DLST and parents, they could excellently support learners and accommodate all learners in inclusive classrooms.

The study contributes to improvement of educator assessment practices. Finally, this thesis has raised issues that have the potential to take the findings of this study further. In conclusion, South Africa still needs to put extra effort to transform secondary education so that it is more inclusive and accommodating to learners experiencing barriers to learning. In this endeavour the department of education have to focus on the issue of training educators, equipping all schools with the primary resources and facilities needed to improve the educators' assessment practices so that they are effective and cater for diverse learners. If the challenges and ideas presented and highlighted by this study are not addressed or attended to the efficacy of the pedagogical ideals and values of inclusive education might remain a utopia in secondary education realm.

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# APPENDIX A: PERMISSION FORM UNISA ETHICS COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



## UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/09/12

Ref: 2018/09/12/07388381/21/MC

Dear Mrs Mpya

Name: Mrs NG Mpya

Student: 07388381

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2018/09/12 to 2023/09/12

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mrs NG Mpya  
E-mail address: gladnessm@exclusivemail.co.za  
Telephone: 1 27 82 319 1908

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof MO Maguvhc  
E-mail address: maguvmo@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 1 27 12 481 2768

### Title of research:

**Examining the importance of educator's assessment practices for Senior Phase learners who experience barriers to learning**

**Qualification:** D. 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 2018/09/12 to 2023/09/12.

*The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/09/12 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:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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Fax: +27 12 429 4122  
www.unisa.ac.za

## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION FROM THE GAUTENG DBE TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH

### 1. PARTICULARS OF THE RESEARCHER

|     |  |                  |
|-----|--|------------------|
| 1.1 | Details of the Researcher                  |                  |
|     | <i>Surname and Initials:</i>               | MPYA N.G         |
|     | <i>First Name/s:</i>                       | NWACOYE GLADNESS |
|     | <i>Title (Prof / Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms):</i>  | MRS              |
|     | <i>Student Number (if relevant):</i>       | 07388381         |
|     | <i>SA ID Number:</i>                       | 6701270243089    |
|     | <i>Work permit no. (If not SA citizen)</i> | N/A              |

|     |                          |  |
|-----|--------------------------|--|
| 1.2 | Private Contact Details  |  |
|     | <i>Home Address</i>      | <i>Postal Address (if different)</i>             |
|     | 229 Chrysler Street      | P.O.Box 271                                      |
|     | Renstown                 | Hammanskraal                                     |
|     | Hammanskraal             |  |
|     | <i>Postal Code: 0400</i> | <i>Postal Code: 0400</i>                         |
|     | <i>Tel: 012 711 0105</i> | <i>Cell: 0823191908</i>                          |
|     | <i>Fax: 012 711 0105</i> | <i>E-mail:<br/>gladnessm@exclusivemail.co.za</i> |

### 2. PURPOSE & DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

|     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 2.1 | Purpose of the Research (Place cross where appropriate)                           |     |
|     | <i>Undergraduate Study - Self</i>   | N/A |
|     | <i>Post graduate Study - Self</i>   | X   |
|     | <i>Private Company/Agency–Commissioned by Provincial Government or Department</i> | N/A |
|     | <i>Private Research by Independent Researcher</i>                                 | N/A |
|     | <i>Non-Governmental Organisation</i>  | N/A |
|     | <i>National Department of Education</i>   | N/A |
|     | <i>Com missions and Committees</i>  | N/A |
|     | <i>Independent Research Agencies</i>  | N/A |
|     | <i>Statutory Research Agencies</i>  | N/A |
|     | <i>Higher Education Institutions only</i>   | N/A |

|     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| 2.2 | Full title of Thesis / Dissertation / Research Project   |  |
|     | ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR LEARNERS EXPERIENCING LEARNING BARRIERS IN THE SENIOR PHASE IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM |  |

|     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| 2.3 | Value of the Research to Education (Attach Research Proposal) |  |
|-----|---|--|

|     |   |             |
|-----|---|-------------|
| 2.4 |   | Date        |
|     | <i>Envisaged date of completion of research in GDE Institutions</i>                 | 01 DEC 2018 |
|     | <i>Envisaged date of submission of Research Report and Research Summary to GDE:</i> |             |

|     |  |                     |
|-----|--|---------------------|
| 2.5 | Student and Postgraduate Enrolment Particulars |                     |
|     | <i>Name of institution where enrolled:</i>     | UNISA               |
|     | <i>Degree / Qualification:</i>                 | Doctor of Education |
|     | <i>Faculty and Discipline / Area of Study:</i> | Inclusive Education |
|     | <i>Name of Supervisor / Promoter:</i>          | Prof Maguvhe        |

|     |          |  |
|-----|----------|--|
| 2.6 | Employer |  |
|-----|----------|--|



|                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Name of Organisation:          | Rethabile P. School        |
| Position in Organisation:      | Learner Support Educator   |
| Head of Organisation:          | Mr Sefike S.               |
| Street Address:                | N/A                        |
| Postal Code:                   | 0400                       |
| Telephone Number (Code + Ext): | 0127114008                 |
| Fax Number:                    | N/A                        |
| E-mail:                        | rethabileprimary@gmail.com |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 2.7 | PERSAL Number (GDE employees only) N/A |
|-----|--|

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

### 3. PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD/S

(Please indicate by placing a cross in the appropriate block whether the following modes would be adopted)

3.1 Questionnaire/s (If Yes, supply copies of each to be used)

|     |  |    |   |
|-----|--|----|---|
| YES |  | NO | X |
|-----|--|----|---|

3.2 Interview/s (If Yes, provide copies of each schedule)

|     |   |    |  |
|-----|---|----|--|
| YES | X | NO |  |
|-----|---|----|--|

3.3 Use of official documents

|     |   |    |  |
|-----|---|----|--|
| YES | X | NO |  |
|-----|---|----|--|

If Yes, please specify the document/s:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

3.4 Workshop/s / Group Discussions (If Yes, Supply details)

|     |  |    |   |
|-----|--|----|---|
| YES |  | NO | X |
|-----|--|----|---|

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

3.5 Standardised Tests (e.g., Psychometric Tests)

|     |  |    |   |
|-----|--|----|---|
| YES |  | NO | X |
|-----|--|----|---|

If Yes, please specify the test/s to be used and provide a copy/ies

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

### 4. INSTITUTIONS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

4.1 Type and NUMBER of Institutions (Please indicate by placing a cross alongside all types of institutions to be researched)

| INSTITUTIONS      | Write NUMBER here |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Primary Schools   | N/A               |
| Secondary Schools | 4                 |
| ABET Centres      | N/A               |
| ECD Sites         | N/A               |
| LSEN Schools      | N/A               |

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| INSTITUTIONS   | Write NUMBER here |
| <i>Further Education &amp; Training Institutions</i> | N/A               |
| <i>Districts and / or Head Office</i>                | 1                 |

4.2 Name/s of institutions to be researched (Please complete on a separate sheet if space is found to be insufficient)

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| Name/s of Institution/s |
| 4 Secondary Schools     |
| Tshwane North District  |
|                         |
|                         |

4.3 District/s where the study is to be conducted. (Please indicate by placing a cross alongside the relevant district/s)

| District/s                |     |                             |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|
| <i>Ekurhuleni North</i>   | N/A | <i>Ekurhuleni South</i>     | N/A |
| <i>Gauteng East</i>       | N/A | <i>Gauteng North</i>        | N/A |
| <i>Gauteng West</i>       | N/A | <i>Johannesburg Central</i> | N/A |
| <i>Johannesburg East</i>  | N/A | <i>Johannesburg North</i>   | N/A |
| <i>Johannesburg South</i> | N/A | <i>Johannesburg West</i>    | N/A |
| <i>Sedibeng East</i>      | N/A | <i>Sedibeng West</i>        | N/A |
| <i>Tshwane North</i>      | X   | <i>Tshwane South</i>        | N/A |
| <i>Tshwane West</i>       | N/A |                             | N/A |

|  |
|--|
| If Head Office/s (Please indicate Directorate/s) |
| ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT(DISTRICT ASSESSMENT TEAM)  |
| ISS (DISTRICT LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM)                |

4.4 Number of learners to be involved per school (Please indicate the number by gender)

| Grade         | 1 |   | 2 |   | 3 |   | 4 |   | 5 |   | 6 |   |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Gender</i> | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G |
| <i>Number</i> |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

| Grade         | 7 |   | 8 |   | 9 |   | 10 |   | 11 |   | 12 |   |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| <i>Gender</i> | B | G | B | G | B | G | B  | G | B  | G | B  | G |
| <i>Number</i> |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |   |    |   |    |   |

4.5 Number of educators/officials involved in the study (Please indicate the number in the relevant column)

| <i>Type of staff</i> | <i>Educators</i> | <i>HODs</i> | <i>Deputy Principals</i> | <i>Principal</i> | <i>Lecturers</i> | <i>Office Based Officials</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Number</i>        | 12               | N/A         | 4                        | N/A              | N/A              | 2                             |

4.6 Are the participants to be involved in groups or individually?

|               |  |                     |   |
|---------------|--|---------------------|---|
| <i>Groups</i> |  | <i>Individually</i> | X |
|---------------|--|---------------------|---|

4.7 Average period of time each participant will be involved in the test or other research activities  
(Please indicate time in minutes)

| Participant/s   | Activity                   | Time    |
|---|----------------------------|---------|
| 4 educators, 4ILST, 4SAT,<br>4 Deputy Principals and two<br>District officials. | Semi-structured Interviews | 1h30min |
| 4 Classroom educators   | Observations               | 45min   |

4.8 Time of day that you propose to conduct your research.

|   |          |                                    |          |
|---|----------|------------------------------------|----------|
| <i>During school hours (for limited<br/>observation only)</i> | <u>X</u> | <i>After School Hours (mostly)</i> | <u>X</u> |
|---|----------|------------------------------------|----------|

4.9 School term/s during which the research would be undertaken

|                   |  |                    |  |                   |   |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| <i>First Term</i> |  | <i>Second Term</i> |  | <i>Third Term</i> | X |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|-------------------|---|

**Permission may be granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and permission may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:**

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB.) must be presented with a copy of this letter.
2. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;
3. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
4. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
5. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
6. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGB/s; principal/s, educator/s, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.
7. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution/s, staff and/or the office/s visited for supplying such resources.
8. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.
9. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template).
10. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned;
11. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director/s and school/s concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

| <b>DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. I declare that all statements made by myself in this application are true and accurate.</b>                              |  |
| <b>2. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.</b> |  |
| <b>Signature:</b>  |  |
| <b>Date:</b>   | 20 March 2018  |
| <b>DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER / LECTURER</b>   |  |
| <b>I declare that: (Name of <u>Researcher</u> Mpya Nwacoye Gladness</b>  |  |
| <b>1. is enrolled at the institution / employed by the organisation to which the undersigned is attached.</b>                  |  |

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>2. The questionnaires / structured interviews / tests meet the criteria of:</b>   |                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Accountability;</li> <li>• Proper Research Design;</li> <li>• Sensitivity towards Participants;</li> <li>• Correct Content and Terminology;</li> <li>• Acceptable Grammar;</li> <li>• Absence of Non-essential / Superfluous items;</li> <li>• Ethical clearance</li> </ul> |                                   |
| <b>3. I will ensure that after successful completion of the degree / project an electronic copy of the Research Report / Thesis / Dissertation and a Research Summary (on the GDE template) will be sent by the researcher to the GDE.</b>   |                                   |
| <b>Surname:</b>  | Maguvhe                           |
| <b>First Name/s:</b>   | Obert Mbulaheni                   |
| <b>Institution / Organisation:</b>   | University of South Africa        |
| <b>Faculty / Department (where relevant):</b>  | Department of Inclusive Education |
| <b>Telephone:</b>  | 012 481 2768                      |
| <b>E-mail:</b>   | maguvmo@unisa.ac.za               |
| <b>Signature:</b>  | Prof. M.O. Maguvhe                |
| <b>Date:</b>   | 04/09/2018                        |

#### **ANNEXURE A: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR GROUP RESEARCH**

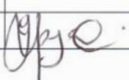
This information must be completed by **every** researcher/ student who will be visiting GDE Institutions for research purposes.

By signing this declaration, the researcher / students accepts the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research in GDE Institutions and undertakes to abide by them.

Prof. M.O. Maguvhe

**Supervisor/ Promoter / Lecturer's Surname and Name.....**

#### **DECLARATION BY RESEARCHERS / STUDENTS:**

| <b>Surname &amp; Initials</b> | <b>Name</b> | <b>Tel</b> | <b>Cell</b> | <b>Email address</b>          | <b>Signature</b>  |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Mpya N.G                      | Gladness    | 0127110105 | 0823191908  | gladnessm@exclusivemail.co.za |  |

**APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM DISTRICT OFFICE**

229 Chrysler Street

Renstown

Hammanskraal

0400

20 March 2018

The Director

Tshwane North District

Wonderboom Junction

Pretoria

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT FOUR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN YOUR DISTRICT

**TITLE: EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT**

Sir/Madam

I Nwacoye Gladness Mpya am doing research under supervision of Prof Maguvhe a Professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. My research is entitled: EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT

The aim of the study is to examine educator's assessment practices for learners experiencing learning barriers in the Senior Phase in an inclusive classroom.

Your District has been selected because it is one of the best that embrace diversity and accommodate all learners irrespective of their barriers. The good assessment practices in your District need to be shared with others to improve assessment for all learners especially those who experience barriers to learning. The study will do the following:

Add value to education especially to the assessment practices that educators experience when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools.

Enable educators, school administrators, Department of Education and other policy makers implement, use or formulate educational policies governing educational assessment to improve the quality of assessment in secondary education in our country, especially when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning.

Encourage the Government and the Department of Education to play a constructive role which fosters changes in administering assessment and accommodating all learners irrespective of their barriers not only on policy but in principle.

I request you to grant me permission to visit your learning site to conduct the research which would involve doing some observations and interviews with Educators, Deputy Principals, ILST coordinators, SAT coordinators and two Departmental Officials (one head of the District Assessment Team and one of the District Level Support Team). My data collection plan included various methods to obtain information from the research sites. The researcher will use three methods of data collection, namely document analysis, observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews. It will involve audio taping and semi-structured interviews which are frequently used in qualitative data collection and are well documented in qualitative research. I will ask open-ended questions for all participants individually so that they could best voice their experiences freely. Each of this interviews will last for one hour and thirty minutes (1h 30 min). I will also use observation, as this is an important process by means of which researchers establish a link between reality and their theoretical assumptions. The researcher will observe educators on a series of 45-minute session twice in a week as they presented their lessons and assessing their learners in the classroom and the researcher will be taking notes during the process. The lesson will be audio recorded and with the consent of the participants. The purpose of using the tape recorder is to capture valuable auditory information from the lessons so as to form a database for analysis. This study will also use document analysis, a technique that relies heavily upon a variety of written materials for data, insights and judgements about programmes or events (Sethusha, 2012).

I will share knowledge and results of this study not only with participants in the study, but also with the broader community by publishing it as a thesis in an accredited and peer-reviewed scientific journal, since the results are of public interest. There are no harm or injuries that may occur as it is only an interview that does not include any dangerous material. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail discussion of the final results with the participants.

Yours sincerely

---

Mpya N.G



## APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTERS TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

229 Chrysler Street

Renstown

Hammanskraal

0400

20 March 2018

The Principal

Mr Rangwashe C.L

Department of Education

012 717 4002, rangwashec@gmail.com

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT X SECONDARY SCHOOL**

TITLE: EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT

Dear Mr C.L Rangwashe

I, Nwacoye Gladness Mpya, am doing research under supervision of Prof Maguvhe a Professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. My research is entitled: **EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT.**

The aim of the study is to examine educator's assessment practices for learners experiencing learning barriers in the Senior Phase in an inclusive classroom.

Your School has been selected because it one of the best schools that embrace diversity and accommodate all learners irrespective of their barriers. The good assessment practices in your school need to be shared with others to improve assessment for all learners especially those who experience barriers to learning. The study will do the following:

Add value to education especially to the assessment practices that educators experience when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools.

Enable educators, school administrators, Department of Education and other policy makers implement, use or formulate educational policies governing educational assessment to improve the quality of assessment in secondary education in our country, especially when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning.

Encourage the Government and the Department of Education to play a constructive role which fosters changes in administering assessment and accommodating all learners irrespective of their barriers not only on policy but in principle.

I request you to grant me permission to visit your learning site to conduct the research which would involve doing some observations and interviews with Educators, Deputy Principals, ILST coordinators, SAT coordinators. My data collection plan included various methods to obtain information from the research sites. The researcher will use three methods of data collection, namely document analysis, observations, and in-depth semi-structured interviews. It will involve audio taping and semi-structured interviews which are frequently used in qualitative data collection and are well documented in qualitative research. I will ask open-ended questions for all participants individually so that they could best voice their experiences freely. Each of these interviews will last for one hour and thirty minutes (1h 30min). I will also use observation, as this is an important process by means of which researchers establish a link between reality and their theoretical assumptions. The researcher will observe educators on a series of 45-minute session twice in a week as they presented their lessons and assessing their learners in the classroom and the researcher will be taking notes during the process. The lesson will be audio recorded with the consent of the participants. The purpose of using the tape recorder is to capture valuable auditory information from the lessons so as to form a database for analysis. This study will also use document analysis, a technique that relies heavily upon a variety of written materials for data, insights and judgements about programmes or events (Sethusha, 2012).

I will share knowledge and results of this study not only with participants in the study, but also with the broader community by publishing it as a thesis in an accredited and

peer-reviewed scientific journal, since the results are of public interest. There are no harm or injuries that may occur as it is only an interview that does not include any dangerous material. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback procedure will entail discussion of the results with the participants.

Yours sincerely

---

Mpya N.G

## **APPENDIX E: CONSENT TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS**

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Nwacoye Gladness Mpya. I am doing research under the supervision of Prof Maguvhe a Professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards a D Ed at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled:

### **EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT**

This study is expected to collect important information that could:

Add value to education especially to the assessment practices that educators experience when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning in secondary schools.

Enable educators, school administrators, Department of Education and other policy makers implement, use or formulate educational policies governing educational assessment to improve the quality of assessment in secondary education in our country, especially when assessing learners who experience barriers to learning.

Encourage the Government and the Department of Education to play a constructive role which fosters changes in administering assessment and accommodating all learners irrespective of their barriers not only on policy but in principle.

You are invited because you are the relevant person who is currently dealing with assessment in the classroom and you are supporting learners with barriers to learning and you also have the knowledge on how to apply different intervention strategies to support them, so you are a valuable participant in this study. I obtained your contact details from your District facilitator from indicating how good you are with application of assessment strategies for learners with barriers in your classroom. There are other 17 participants who will join us to try and make this research a valuable project in our community, District, Province, Country and most importantly the world at large.

My data collection plan included various methods to obtain information from the research sites. The researcher will use three methods of data collection, namely

document analysis, observations, and in-depth semi-structured interviews. It will involve audio taping and semi-structured interviews which are frequently used in qualitative data collection and are well documented in qualitative research. I will ask open-ended questions for all participants individually so that they could best voice their experiences freely. Each of these interviews will last for one hour and thirty minutes (1h 30min). I will also use observation, as this is an important process by means of which researchers establish a link between reality and their theoretical assumptions. The researcher will observe educators on a series of 45-minute sessions twice in a week as they presented their lessons and assessed their learners in the classroom and the researcher will be taking notes during the process. The lesson will be audio recorded with the consent of the participants. The purpose of using the tape recorder is to capture valuable auditory information from the lessons so as to form a database for analysis. This study will also use document analysis, a technique that relies heavily upon a variety of written materials for data, insights and judgements about programmes or events.

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 free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you agree to participate in this research you will be assured of complete confidentiality and anonymity, your details will be known to the researcher only.

Participants will not incur any cost. I will also share knowledge and results of this study not only with participants in the study, but also with the broader community by publishing it as a thesis in an accredited and peer-reviewed scientific journal, since the results are of public interest.

There are no harm or injuries that may occur as it is only an interview that does not include any dangerous materials. You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. 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.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, 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. Any information obtained from the conversations will be used solely for the purpose of this research. It may also be used for other purpose, such as research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings.

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard for future research or academic purpose; 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 there is a need. If the information is not needed anymore, I will shred the hard copies and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of relevant software programme. Participants will not be paid or rewarded financially or otherwise. This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Nwacoye Gladness Mpya on 0823191908 or email me at [gladnessm@exclusivemail.co.za](mailto:gladnessm@exclusivemail.co.za). Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof Maguvhe telephone no 0124812768 at [maguvmo@unisa.ac.za](mailto:maguvmo@unisa.ac.za)

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

Thank you



---

**N.G Mpya**

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name): 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 interviews and observations. I am aware that the classroom observations will be audio recorded to capture valuable auditory information from the lessons so as to form a database for analysis. Interviews will only be audio recorded.

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

Participant Name & Surname (please print) BONOLO MAJA

**APPENDIX F: SCHOOL-BASED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS/DEPUTY PRINCIPALS / INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM COORDINATORS/SCHOOL ASSESSMENT TEAM MEMBERS**

RESEARCH TITLE: EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATOR' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM : A CASE STUDY FOR LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN SENIOR PHASE IN TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT

**1.0 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

1.1 Kindly indicate your gender

Male Female

1.2 Kindly indicate your age range

Below 30 31-35 36-40 41-45

46 – 50 50 +

1.3 What is the highest qualification do you hold?

|             |         |                   |                |         |            |
|-------------|---------|-------------------|----------------|---------|------------|
| Certificate | Diploma | Bachelor's degree | Honours Degree | Masters | PHD degree |
|-------------|---------|-------------------|----------------|---------|------------|

1.4 Indicate your role in assessment at school level

**2. Inclusive classroom assessment practices**

2.1 Which assessment practices do you generally use your classrooms?

2.2 To what extent do the assessment practices cater or accommodate learners with experiencing learning barriers?

2.3 From your experience how did your previous teacher training prepare you to assess learners in an inclusive classroom?

2.4 How do you plan your assessment in such a way that you accommodate your learners experiencing barriers to learning?

2.5 Which assessment methods do you utilise when assessing learners experiencing learning difficulties? (Peer assessment; self-assessment; portfolio etc.)

**3. Strategies used to assist learners who experience barriers to learning**

3.1 Which assessment strategies do you use to assist learners who experience barriers?



3.2 Which alternative assessment strategies have you used to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning?

3.3 When assessing learners in your classroom how do you accommodate those experiencing barriers to learning?

3.4 What kind of support do you need in improving your assessment strategies in order to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning?

#### **4. Challenges experienced by educators when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning**

4.1 Which challenges do you experience in your assessment?

4.2 How do you address those challenges?

4.3 What factors hinders your assessment practices in your classroom?

#### **5. Assessment techniques in inclusive classrooms**

5.1 Which assessment techniques do you prefer to use when supporting learners who experience barriers to learning? Why?

#### **6. Stakeholder support provided to educators**

6.1 Which stakeholders support educators in addressing learning barriers?

6.2 How helpful is the support provided by the stakeholders?

6.3 What are the shortcomings in the support provided?

6.4 Suggest ways in which stakeholders can provide adequate support to the educators in inclusive classrooms.

#### **7. Impact of inclusion on the educators' assessment in inclusive classrooms**

7.1 What are the pros and cons of inclusion in your view with regard to inclusive classroom assessment?

7.2 To what extent are you equipped for inclusive education?

#### **8. Measures to alleviate the challenges faced by educators**

8.1 What do you think should be done to alleviate challenges faced by educators when assessing learners experiencing barriers to learning?

## **APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DISTRICT OFFICIALS**

1. How long have you been in that portfolio?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your highest academic qualification and what were the major subjects in your qualification?
4. What is your understanding of the assessment policy?
5. What is Inclusive Education?
6. How does the policy serve as a vital instrument in shaping educators assessment practices?
7. Do you see any inconsistencies between the assessment policy and educator's classroom assessment practices?
8. How important is the policy when assisting teachers planning and implementing assessment?
9. Which assessment documents do you use when assisting educators to support learners who experience barriers to learning?
10. Which departmental circulars, Government assessment policies do you highly recommend to educators as references for accommodating learners who experience barriers to learning?
11. How does the availability and non-availability of resources affect your assistance to educators in assessment practices?
12. What do you understand by the following forms of classroom assessment?
  - Self-assessment
  - Peer assessment
  - Portfolio
13. To what extent do the educators in your school use the classroom assessment practices mentioned above?
14. What is the best Classroom Assessment strategy that you would recommend to educators and why?
15. What suggestions would you make so that educators can improve on the use of Classroom Assessment strategies?
16. Which assessment methods, tools and techniques do you encourage educators to use in their classrooms? Why?

17. Why do you think the current way of assessing learners is making a difference in the way learners are taught?
18. How often do you discuss learner's workbooks with educators?
19. Which challenges do you encounter when supporting educators in assessing learners with barriers to learning?
20. How do you address those challenges?

Thank you!!!

## APPENDIX H: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS CHECKLIST/GUIDE

To critically examine the importance of educators' assessment practices in the classroom so as to assess the challenges of inclusion and its impact on educators' assessment practices the following documents were analysed at the four schools which participated in the study:

| Documents analysed        | Rationale for the analysis | Findings |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Assessment plans          |                            |          |
| School assessment plans   |                            |          |
| Assessment guidelines     |                            |          |
| Lesson plans              |                            |          |
| Monitoring and moderating |                            |          |

**ABSTRACT FOR TRANSLATION INTO THREE AFRICAN LANGUAGES:**

**Si Tsonga**

**Si Venda**

**Setswana**

Leina: **Nwacoye Gladness Mpya**

Nomoro ya moithuti: 07388381

Dikirii: Doctor of Philosophy

Setlhogo sa patlisiso GO SEKASEKA BOTLHOKWA JWA DITIRAGATSO TSA TLHATHOBO TSA BARUTABANA MO PHAPOSIBORUTELONG: THUTOPATLISISO E E LEBELELANG KGETSE YA BARUTWANA BA BA ITEMOGELANG DIKGORELETSI TSA GO ITHUTA MO LEGATONG LE LEGOLWANE, MO KGAOLONG YA BOKONE JWA TSHWANE

**TSHOBOKANYO**

Thutopatlisiso e lebeletse bomaleba jwa ditiragatso tsa tlhathobo tsa barutabana malebana le barutwana ba ba itemogelang dikgoreletsi tsa go ithuta mo Legatong le Legolwane, mo dikolong tsa sekontari mo Kgaolong ya Bokone jwa Tshwane. Maikemisetso a thutopatlisiso e ne e le go lebelela dikgwetlho tse di amang ditiragatso tsa tlhathobo tsa barutabana ba barutwana ba ba itemogelang dikgoreletsi tsa go ithuta mo Legatong le Legolwane. Thutopatlisiso e dirisitse tsamaiso ya dikakanyo, e e ikaegileng ka letlhomeo le le atlenegisitsweng ke Hargreaves, Earl le Schmidt (2002). Letlhomeseo le na le dintlhaponi di le nne, tse di akaretsang ditekanyetso tsa thekenoloji, setso, sepolotiki le morago ga sekwalekwale. Sekao se mosola thata mo go tlhaloseng le go amogela ditiragatso tsa tlhathobo tsa morutabana.

Go dirisitswe thadiso ya thutopatlisiso ya kgetse ya ditiragalo mo thutopatlisisong eno. Go dirisitswe didiriswa tsa kokoanyo ya *data* tsa molebo o o lebelelang mabaka go kokoanya *data*. Banni-le-seabe ba akareditse barutabana ba le 4, batlatsabagokgo ba le 4, bagokaganyi ba setlhophatshegetso sa legato la setheo (ILST) ba le 4 le bagokaganyi ba setlhopho sa tlhathobo sa sekolo (SAT) ba le 4. Go tlaeleletsa, go nnile le banni-le-seabe ba ba tlhophilweng go tswa kwa Kantorong ya Kgaolo, go akarediwa Tlhogo ya Setlhopho sa Tlhathobo sa Kgaolo (DAT) le Tlhogo ya Setlhophatshegetso sa Legato la Kgaolo (DLST). Go dirisitswe tokololo ya diteng go lokolola *data* e e kokoantsweng mo

thutopatlisisong. Thutopatlisiso e senotse dikgoreletsi di le mmalwa tse di kgoreletsang ditiragatso tsa tlhatlhobo fa go tlhatlhabiwa barutwana ba ba itemogelang dikgoreletsi tsa go ithuta. Mo thutopatlisisong, go tlhageletse gore go tlaa go feta tekano, go tlhokega ga ditlamelo, tlhaelo ya katiso ya barutabana ya tlhatlhobo ya barutwana ba ba itemogelang dikgoreletsi tsa go ithuta, go se nne le seabe go go lekaneng ga batsadi, le go se nne le tshegetso e e lekaneng go tswa go ILST le DLST ke dintlha dingwe tse di amang ditiragatso tsa tlhatlhobo tsa barutabana ka tsela e e sa siamang mo diphaposiborutelong tsa thuto tse di akaretsang botlhe. Dipholo tsa thutopatlisiso eno di dirile gore go tlhamiwe sekao se se akaretsang sa tlhatlhobo ya phaposiborutelo e e akaretsang botlhe (CICAM) go dirisiwa ke barutabana ba Legato le Legolwane mo dikolong tsa sekontari mo Kgaolong ya Bokone jwa Tshwane. Mmatlisisi o tlhamile sekao se se tsamaelanang le ditlhokego tsa barutwana ba ba itemogelang dikgoreletsi tsa go ithuta, gore ditlhokego tsa bona tsa thuto le tlhatlhobo di kgotsofadiwe mo go lekaneng. Sekao se bontshitse go kopana ga baamegi ba ba farologaneng, ba ba tlhokegang gore maitemogelo a tlhatlhobo ya thuto e e akaretsang botlhe e nne bokgoni le nonofo mo barutabaneng le mo barutwaneng. Go atlenegisitswe gore ditiragatso tsa tlhatlhobo e e akaretsang botlhe e tshwanetse go obega mme e tlamele ka ditiragatso tsa tlhatlhobo tse di diretsweng lebaka tse di tlaa amogelang barutwana, go sa kgathalesege dipharologano tsa bona. Mo ntlheng eno, go atlenegisitswe gape gore tlhatlhobo mo diphaposiborutelong tse di akaretsang botlhe e tshwanetse go fetolwa go netefata gore ditiragatso tsa tlhatlhobo di samagana le ditlhokego tsa thuto le tsa seemo sa tlhaloganyo tsa barutwana botlhe mo phaposiborutelong. Mmatlisisi o dumela gore katiso ya boamaaruri le e e lekaneng e ka sedimosa barutabana malebana le se ba tshwanetseng go se solofela fa ba tlhatlhoba barutwana ba ba itemogelang dikgoreletsi tsa go ithuta. Nngwe ya dikatlenegiso ke gore katiso ya barutabana le tlamelo ya tshegetso e e tsweleng pele go tswa kwa Lefapheng la Thuto ya Motheo (DBE) e nne setlapele.

**ABSTRACT FOR TRANSLATION INTO THREE AFRICAN LANGUAGES:**

**Si Tsonga**

**Si Venda**

**Setswana**

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Topic of research: EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATORS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN THE SENIOR PHASE, IN THE TSHWANE NORTH DISTRICT

**MANWELEDZO**

Ngudo yo wanulusa ndeme ya nyito dza ndingo dza vhadededzi zwi tshi ya kha vhagudiswa vhane vha tshenzhela zwithivheli zwa u guda kha Vhuimo ha Ntsha, zwiKoloni zwa sekondari Tshithirikini tsha Tshwane Devhula. Tshipikwa tsha ngudo ho vha u wanulusa khaedu dzine dza kwama nyito dza ndingo dza vhadededzi kha vhagudiswa vhane vha tshenzhela zwithivheli zwa u guda kha Vhuimo ha Ntsha. Tshodiso yo shumisa sisteme ya mutalukanyo, yo disenekaho nga furemiweke yo themedelwaho nga Vho Hargreaves, Earl na Schmidt (2002). Furemiweke yo bvedza mbonalo nna, dzine dza katela thekhinolodzhi, mvelele, polotiki, maga a nga murahu ha zwino. Tshiedziswa tshi shumiswa nga maanda kha u talutshedza na u kwhathisedza nyito dza ndingo dza vhadededzi.

Ho shumiswa maitete a zwiitei kha ngudo heyi. Zwishumiswa zwa u kuvhanganya data ya kwhalithethivi zwo shumiswa u kuvhanganya data. Vhadzheneli hu katelwa vhadededzi vhaana, vathusa thoho dza zwikolo vhaana, vhapfananyi vhaana vha thimu ya thikhedzo kha levele ya tshiimiswa (ILST) na vhapfananyi vhaana vha thimu ya ndingo ya tshikolo (SAT). U dadzisa kha zwenezwo, ho vha na vhadzheneli vho nangwaho u bva Ofisini ya Tshithiriki, hu tshi katelwa thoho ya Thimu ya Ndingo dza Tshithiriki (DAT) na thoho ya Thimu ya Thikhedzo kha levele ya Tshithiriki (DLST). Ho shumiswa musaukanyo wa manwalo u khethekanya data yo kuvhanganyiwaho kha ngudo iyi. Tshodiso yo wanulusa uri zwithivheli zwinzhi zwine zwa thivhela nyito dza ndingo musu hu tshi khou lingiwa

vhagudiswa vhane vha tshenzhela zwithivheli kha u guda. Kha ngudo, ho wanuluswa uri u galesa, u sa wanala ha zwishumiswa, u shaya vhugudisi kha vhadededzi kha u linga vhagudiswa vhane vha tshenzhela zwithivheli zwa u guda, u sa didzhenisa lwo linganaho nga vhabebi, na u sa wana thikhedzo yo fhelelaho kha ILST na DLST ndi zwiñwe zwiñaluli zwe zwa kwama lu si lwa vhuḍi nyito dza ndingo dza vhadededzi kīlasini ya pfunzo yo katelaho vhagudiswa vhoṭhe. Mvelelo kha ngudo heyi dzo bveledza mveledziso ya tshiedziswa tsho fhelelaho tsha ndingo ya kīlasi yo katelaho vhagudiswa vhoṭhe (CICAM) kha Vhuimo ha Nṭha, vhadededzi vha tshikolo tsha sekondari Tshiṭirikini tsha Tshwane Devhula. Muṭodīsisi o bveledza tshiedziswa tshine tsha fhindula kha ṭhoḍea dza vhagudiswa vhane vha tshenzhela zwithivheli zwa u guda, uri ṭhoḍea dzavho dza u funza na dza ndingo dzi katelwe nga ṅila yo teaho. Tshiedziswa tshi sumbedza u ṭanganelana ha vhadzhamukovhe vho fhambanaho, hune ha ṭoḍea kha tshenzhelo ya pfunzo ya ndingo yo katelaho vhagudiswa vhoṭhe u vha yo teaho na u kona kha vhadededzi na vhagudiswa. Ho themendelwa uri nyito ya ndingo yo katelaho vhagudiswa vhoṭhe i tea u konisa na u ṅetshedza nyito dza ndingo dzo itelwaho ṭhoḍea dzine dza ḍo katela vhagudiswa vhoṭhe, zwi si na ndavha na u fhambana havho. Kha heli sia, ho dovha ha themendelwa hu tshi iswa phanḍa uri ndingo kha kīlasi yo katelaho vhagudiswa vhoṭhe i fanela u khwiniswa u vhona zwauri nyito dza ndingo dzi khou fhindula ṭhoḍea dza u funza na dza muhumbulo kha vhana vhoṭhe vha re kīlasini. Muṭodīsisi u tenda kha uri u khwaṭha na vhugudisi ho teaho zwi nga ṅetshedza vhadededzi u vha khagala kha zwine zwa tea u lavhelelwa musi vha tshi linga vhagudiswa vhane vha tshenzhela zwithivheli zwa u guda. Inwe ya themendelo ndi ya uri mveledziso ya mudededzi na mbetshelo ya thikhedzo i yaho phanḍa u bva kha Muhasho wa Pfunzo ya Mutheo (DBE) zwi fanela u dzhielwa nṭha.



**ABSTRACT FOR TRANSLATION INTO THREE AFRICAN LANGUAGES:**

**Si Tsonga**

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Vito: **Nwacoye Gladness Mpya**

Nomboro ya Xichudeni: 07388381

Digiri: Dokodela wa Filosofi

Nhlokomhaka ya ndzavisiso: KU KAMBELA NKOKA WA MAENDLELO YA MAKAMBELELO YA VADYONDZISI EKAMARENI RO DYONDZELA: NDZAVISISO WA MHAKA YA VADYONDZI LAVA VA HLANGANAKA NA SWIRHALANGANYI EKA KU DYONDZA EKA XIYIMO XA LE HENHLA, EKA XIFUNDZATSONGO XA TSHWANE-N'WALUNGU

**NKOMISO**

Ndzavisiso wu valange vutivikani bya maendlelo ya makambebelelo ya vadyondzisi hi mayelana na vadyondzi lava hlanganaka na swirhalanganyi eka ku dyondza eka Xiyimo xa le Henhla, eswikolweni swa sekondari eka Xifundzatsongo xa Tshwane-N'walungu. Xikongomelokulu xa ndzavisiso lowu a ku ri ku valanga mitlhontho leyi yi khumbaka maendlelo ya makambebelelo ya vadyondzisi ya vadyondzi lava hlanganaka na swirhalanganyi eka ku dyondza eka Xiyimo xa le Henhla. Ndzavisiso lowu wu tirhise sisiteme ya xinongoti, leyi simekiweke eka rimba leri bumabumeriweke hi Hargreaves, Earl na Schmidt (2002). Rimba leri ri vumbiwa hi mune wa mavonelo, lama ya katsaka mipimo ya swa thekinoloji, swa mfuwo, swa tipolitiki na swa le ndzhaku ka ximanguvalawa. Modlolo lowu wu pfuna hi ndlela ya kahle swinene eka ku hlamusela na ku tiyisisa maendlelo ya makambebelelo ya vadyondzisi.

Dizayini ya ndzavisiso wa mhaka ya ntivomichumu yi amukeriwile eka ndzavisiso lowu. Switirho swa nhlengeleto wa data ya risima swi tirhisiwile eka ku hlengeleta data. Vatekaxiave va katse 4 wa vadyondzisi, 4 wa swandla swa tinhloko ta swikolo, 4 wa vakondleteri va swipano swa nseketelo swa levhele ya nhlango (ILST) na 4 wa vakondleteri va swipano swa makambebelelo ya swikolo (SAT). Hi ku engetela, a ku ri na vatekaxiave kusuka eka Hofisi ya Xifundzatsongo, ku katsa na Nhloko ya Xipano xa Makambebelelo ya Swifundzatsongo (DAT) na Nhloko ya Xipano xa Nseketelo wa Levhele ya Swifundzatsongo (DLST). Nxopaxopo wa vundzeni wu tirhisiwile eka ku tlhantlha data leyi a yi hlengeletiwile eka ndzavisiso lowu. Ndzavisiso wu paluxe swirhalanganyi swo hambanahambana leswi

swi kavanyeteke maendlelo ya makambebele loko ku kamberwa vadyondzi lava hlanganaka na swirhalanganyi eka ku dyondza. Eka ndzavisiso lowu, swi tumbulukile leswaku ku tala kutlula mpimo, nkavukona wa swipfuno, mpfumaleko wa vuleteri bya vadyondzisi eka ku kambela vadyondzisi lava hlanganaka na swirhalanganyi eka ku dyondza, ku khumbeka ka vatswari loku nga ringanelangiki, na nseketelo lowu nga ringanelangiki kusuka eka ILST na DLST a ku ri swin'wana swa swiphemu leswi khumbaka hi ndlela yo hamboloka maendlelo ya makambebele ya vadyondzisi eka tikamara to dyondzela ta dyondzo to katsa hinkwavo. Mivuyelo eka ndzavisiso yi tumbuluxe nhluvukiso wa modlolo wa makambebele ya kamara ro dyondzela ro katsa hinkwavo ro katsakanya (CICAM) eka Xiyimo xa le Henhla, vadyondzisi va le swikolweni swa sekondari eka Xifundzatsongo xa Tshwane-N'walungu. Mulavisisi u hlulukise modlolo lowu wu angulaka eka swidingo swa vadyondzi lava hlanganaka na swirhalanganyi eka ku dyondza, ku endlela leswaku swidingo swa vona swa madyondziselole na swa makambebele swi tirhiwa hi ndlela yo ringanela. Modlolo lowu wu kombe nhlungano wa vakhomaxiave vo hambanahambana, lava va lavekaka eka ntokoto wa makambebele ya dyondzo yo katsa hinkwavo leswaku yi tirha kahle na ku nga tlangisi swipfuno eka vadyondzisi na vadyondzi. Ku bumabumeriwile leswaku maendlelo ya makambebele yo katsa hinkwavo ya fanele ku cincacinceka na ku nyika maendlelo ya makambebele lama endleriweke xikongomelo xolexo lama nga ta amukela vadyondzi hinkwavo, hambiloko ku ri na ku hambana. Eka mhaka leyi, ku tthele ku bumabumeriwa leswaku makambebele eka tikamara to dyondzela to katsa hinkwavo ya fanele fambelanisiwa ku tiyisisa leswaku maendlelo ya makambebele ya tirhana na swidingo swa madyondziselole na swa le miehleketsweni swa vadyondzi hinkwavo lava nga ekamareni ro dyondzela. Mulavisisi u kholwa leswaku vuleteri lebyi amukelekaka na ku va byo ringanela byi nga kota ku nyika vadyondzisi ntwisiso hi mayelana na leswi swi faneleke ku languteriwa loko ku kamberwa vadyondzi lava hlanganaka na swirhalanganyi eka dyondza. Xin'wana xa swibumabumelo hi leswaku nhluvukiso wa vadyondzisi na ku nyikiwa ka nseketelo lowu yaka emahlweni kusuka eka Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo ya Masungulo (DBE) swi fanele ku rhangisiwa emahlweni.