EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATORS AT A SCHOOL IN THE TZANEEN DISTRICT
IN SUPPORTING LEARNERS FACING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

BY:

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DECLARATION

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I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE   DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

DEDICATION

a) To my grandmother, who used every resource you had to raise me. What you wished was to see me being successful. Your strength inspired me this far. Therefore, I dedicate this to you.

b) To all my children, I dedicate this achievement to you. This degree must become your ambition to achieve more. Strive for the best in life.

c) To the youth of South Africa. Keep focused. Education must remain your objective in life.

SUMMARY

In South Africa, education White Paper 6 was introduced in 2001 with the aim of building an inclusive education and training system, and consequently, achieving equity, and promoting human rights as specified in the constitution (Act 108 of 1996, Section 1a). To ensure equity for learners experiencing barriers to learning, the national policy (EWP6, 2001) must be adopted, with educators in classrooms being at the forefront of the policy's implementation.

In light of this, and employing a case study approach, the aim of this research was to identify the experiences of secondary school educators in supporting learners facing barriers to learning at a school in the Tzaneen district. The findings of the study revealed that the responses of educators in helping learners overcome learning

barriers are hampered by various obstacles, demonstrating that South Africa still has a long way to go in achieving the objectives of EWP6.

Key Terms

Education White Paper 6, Equity, inclusive education and training system, human rights, Barriers to learning, case study approach, research findings, Experiences of educators, policy implementation, supporting learners.

NKATSAKANYO (XITSONGA)

E Afrika-Dzonga, *Education White Paper 6* yi simekiwile hi lembe ra 2001 hi xikongomelo xo aka dyondzo ni ndzetelo ya nkatsahinkwavo. Mbuyelo wa swona ku nga ku kuma ndzingano ni timfanelo ta ximunhu tani hi laha swi boxiweke eka vumbiwa (Nawu 108 wa 1996, xiyenge xa 1a). Ku tiyisisa ndzingano wa dyondzo eka vana lava nga ni swirhalanganyi eku dyondzeni,

pholisi leyi (EWP6) yi fanele ku landzeleriwa na swona vadyondzisi hi vona varhangamahlweni eka ku humelerisa ka yona.

Hikwalaho ke, laha ku tirhisiwile maendlelo ya ndzavisiso wo dzika (case study approach) ku kumisisa vutitwi bya vadyondzisi va xikolo xa sekondari loko va karhi va seketela vadyondzi lava nga ni swirhalanganyi eka swa tidyondzo, exikolweni xo karhi eka xifundzhantsongo xa dyondzo xa Tzaneen. Mbuyelo wu kombise leswaku vadyondzisi va koka exilogweni eka matshalatshala ya vona yo seketela vadyondzi lava. Leswi swi komba leswaku tiko ra ha langutanile na ntshava eka ku fikelela swikongomelo swa EWP6.

KAKARETSO (SEPEDI)

Ka Afrika Borwa, *Education White Paper 6* e tsebisittswe/phethagaditswe ngwageng wa 2001 ka nepo ya go aga lenaneo la thuto le hlahlo leo le akaretsago batho ka moka le go maatlafatsa ditokelo tsa batho tseo di lego ka gare ga molaotheo (Molao 108 wa 1996, karolo ya 1a). Go netefatsa tekatekano go barutwana bao ba itemogela mathata a go ithuta,molawana wa bosetshaba (EWP6, 2001) o swanetswe go phethagatswa ke barutisi ka phaposing ya borutelo ebago seo se swanetswego go bewa pele mosomong wa go phethagatsa molawana.

Ge go lebeletswe se, nepo ya dinyakisiso tse, e be e le go hlatha maitemogela a thuto ya sekolo seo se phagamego go thekga barutwana bao ba lebaganego le mathata a go ithuta ka sekolong sa kaseleteng sa Tzaneen. Dikutullo tsa dinyakisiso di tsweleditse gore magato a barutisi a go thusa barutwana go fenya mathata a go ithuta, a thibelwa ke dihlotlo tseo di fapanego, tseo di laetsago gore Afrika Borwa e sa na le tsela ye telele go fihlelela dinepo tsa EWP6.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

CAPS   Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements

DBST   District-Based Support Team

DoE   Department of Education

FSS   Full-Service School

IE   Inclusive Education

ILST   Institutional Level Support Team

ISP   Individual Support Plan

LTSM   Learning and Teaching Support Material

NDoE   National Department of Education

OBE   Outcomes-Based Education

SASA   South African Schools Act

SBST   School-Based Support Team

SGB   School Governing Body

SIAS   Screening Identification Assessment Support

SMT   School Management Team

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

WP6   White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The presentation of Education White Paper 6 (2001), which suggests solutions for multicultural classrooms and a modern model, demonstrates South Africa's contribution to inclusive education. According to White Paper 6 (2001), comprehensive schools must recognise and address all students' needs, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, comprehensive schools should be concerned with educating all students in a single setting, with a focus "on all learners that have historically been removed from educational opportunities, such as children with special needs and those with disabilities" (DoE, 2001:11). However, no substantial change has been made nineteen years since Education White Paper 6 (2001). (Human Rights Watch, 2015:2;3). Mkhuma (2012:2) argues that if Education White Paper 6 is not fully implemented by schools, inclusive education will be a pipe dream.

According to the research, in-service teachers do not understand Inclusive Education as a form of education for all students. In-service teachers, for example, associate Inclusive Education with a disability rather than all diverse learners, according to a study by Eloff and Kgwete (2007:354). According to Hay (2003:135), some teachers see inclusion as simply integrating students who require assistance in their regular classrooms. These teachers employ the individual model, which sees limitations in individual students rather than the educational system (Hay, 2003:136).

Although Idol (2006:93) discovered that teachers believed that more knowledge and instruction about how to help teachers in inclusive classrooms were required, Tebid (2010) noticed that even after teaching, teachers are sceptical of their abilities to apply the skills they have obtained in an inclusive classroom, citing insufficient funding and logistical support.

South Africa's educational focus is on schoolteachers (grade 12). That is why the study decided to use schools with significant dropout problems. For example, is the case that about 47% of students leave school once they do not complete grade 10. This suggests that school personnel might have difficulty helping learners with difficulties in learning.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Education White Paper 6 mandates that educators meet students' expectations who face obstacles to learning in regular classrooms, rather than referring them to "special schools" (DoE 2001:11). The South African education structure has improved dramatically in recent years (from OBE to CAPS), and educators are forced to make significant changes in their understanding of teaching and learning. They may therefore modify and enforce a policy on which they have little to no prior knowledge. They are further perplexed and frustrated by a lack of support from relevant structures.

Since learners who face various learning obstacles are admitted to this secondary school from primary school with no record of their obstacles already established, assistance for them may be delayed or never given. Educators agree that these students could have been accepted with academic achievement reports that identified their obstacles and the sort of assistance they need. On the other hand, the Department of Education mandates that learners of developmental disabilities are not discriminated

against and that they be taught in traditional schools rather than "special schools" as far as possible.

However, educators can become overwhelmed if they are unwilling to help these students, with the consequence that students' chances of graduating from high school are meagre. Such incidents point to a lack of funding and teacher training in inclusive education. Since inclusive education is based on the belief that education is a fundamental right (United Nations, 1989, article 28), these students' right to education would be ignored if they are not protected. Based on the above, the writer decided to do this analysis and look at high school teachers' perspectives in assisting students with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, educators' interactions must be recognised and evaluated since they are the ones that promote learning. Where there are obstacles, they must be overcome for equitable education to become a possibility.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION

1.3.1. Primary research question
What has been educators' experience in a Tzaneen district school in assisting students who are having difficulty learning?

1.3.2. Secondary research questions
• At a school in the Tzaneen area, how are educators assisting students with difficulty learning?
• What assistance does the Department offer to educators at a school in the Tzaneen district for them to adapt to the needs of students who are having difficulty learning?

- What has been the teacher's perspective of assisting students who are having difficulty learning?

- What are the educators' attitudes about differentiated instruction at a school in the Tzaneen district?

1.4. RESEARCH AIM

To identify secondary school educators' experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning at a school in the Tzaneen district.

Objectives:

- To explore if educators in the Tzaneen district are assisting students who are having difficulty learning.

- To determine what resources the Department provides to educators at a school in the Tzaneen district to adapt to students who are having difficulty studying.

- To investigate what motivates teachers to help students overcome obstacles to learning.

- To determine the educators' attitudes toward inclusive education at a school in the Tzaneen area.

1.5. RATIONALE FOR AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The belief that "the right to education is a fundamental human right" underpins inclusive education (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; United Nations, 1989, article 28). "It is associated with educating all pupils, with a particular emphasis on those that have been historically and generally removed from educational opportunity, such as children with intellectual disabilities" (DoE, 2001:11).

1.5.1. Inclusive Education (Internationally).

The World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, in 1994 provided the most significant push toward comprehensive education. That is where the ultimate policy changes required to endorse the comprehensive education solution, i.e., allowing schools to accommodate all children, including those with special educational needs, were considered. "... accommodate all infants, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, mental, linguistic, or other conditions," the conference concluded. Disabled and talented children, street and working children, children from rural or nomadic communities, children from linguistic, religious, or cultural backgrounds, and children from other poor or vulnerable places or classes should also be included." (UNESCO, 1994, Special Needs Education Framework for Action, p6)

1.5.2. Inclusive education (South African perspective)

South Africa is a part of the international community and is bound by all world conference agreements. These declarations have been adopted into law in South Africa (the 1996 constitution). The contribution to Education for All is further described in the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training and the 1996 South African School Act.

Although we recognise that inclusive education entails encouraging schools to represent all students, regardless of their characteristics, weaknesses, or difficulties (UNESCO,

1994: iii), are educators well prepared to help all learners as policy implementers?

Identification occurs before help because if educators cannot recognise obstacles that students encounter, it would be difficult to support them.

Educators often have no trouble recognising physical obstacles, but they have some trouble identifying socioeconomic and neurological barriers. Educators in schools must have the expertise to recognise all challenges, so it is impossible to aid if the obstacle cannot be identified. Some educators only use test scores as a criterion for identifying students. Since examinations are not conducted regularly, the recognition process can take longer. When a learner is recognised as having learning barriers, educators can adopt a pessimistic attitude toward the learner, seem dissatisfied, and see helping the learner as an extra burden.

According to the evidence presented in this chapter, inclusion has been embraced as an effective educational tool in South Africa and other developing countries to discuss social justice and equality. Furthermore, according to the literature reviewed for this article, the inclusion programme benefits are yet to be realised. Support for educators and learners and a shortage of funding are issues that must be tackled. Expecting educators to cope with these issues without the help of the government and other stakeholders is impractical. As a result, this research is essential because it will identify experiences of educators so that gaps in implementation of inclusive education are successful closed.

1.6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Despite its modest size, this study will offer insight into high school educators' perspectives in assisting students who are having difficulty studying. It would also provide the researcher and others with new information. The results will help the Department evaluate educators' assistance in their efforts to promote equitable education. Furthermore, the report can contribute to public discussions by providing evidence for lawmakers and planners to analyse before making decisions. This study's contributions would also add value to the field of inclusive education.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study's literature review aims to draw on perspectives specific to the study's subject, recognise gaps in previous research, and provide new material on similar studies conducted elsewhere. The published literature on the chosen topic has contributed to a better perception of the problem and has aided in developing reliable study findings.

Gay (1992:38) defines literature review as "The systematic discovery, place, and interpretation of records containing details relating to the study problem," The topic of inclusive education has been debated in light of recent research and publications by a variety of authors. On inclusive schooling, relevant Acts and new policy papers have also been examined.

1.7.1. Support for educators

Educators will face significant difficulties in helping learners who are experiencing learning obstacles if they do not receive assistance. White Paper 6 of the Department of Education aims to ensure that children's educational rights are secured (2001:29). At the district level, it offers a variety of technical support programmes. The District Based Support Team (DBST) 's critical role is to provide services, preparation, and growth of the School Based Support Team (SBST). In terms of educator preparation and advancement, Mbelu (2011:4) argues that advanced training for educators who educate students with learning disabilities is needed to incorporate inclusive education successfully. The concern is whether this type of assistance is accessible and sufficient for educators to prevent difficulties while assisting students experiencing learning difficulties.

1.7.2. Support for Learners

Suppose the Department provides little assistance to educators who are having difficulties, so quality support would be unavailable for students with difficulty studying. According to Matlala (2015:13), poorly educated educators and a lack of a supportive teaching and learning culture would have a detrimental effect on learners who face learning challenges. These learners will fail to achieve their full potential.

1.7.3. The attitudes of educators

The roles and expectations of schools and educators have changed. "Educators are being asked to manage classes with diverse educational needs such as disabilities, emotional disturbances, socio-cultural and linguistic disadvantage" (Di Genaro, Pace, Zollo and Aiello 2014:54-66). If educators are not adequately prepared for such situations, they will encounter challenges, and their attitudes will be negative.

1.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory provided the theoretical framework for this research. This hypothesis may be thought of as a multi-faceted paradigm of human growth. The macrosystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and microsystems are included in the model, which is defined by the overlapping and multi-faceted effect of the ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 21; Härkönen, 2007:16; Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2; Lewthwarte, 2011:9; Parke & Clarke Steward, 2011:2). A school setting would necessitate wellequipped educators who are unafraid to face obstacles to support students who have difficulty learning effectively.

The microsystem is the degree of the world in which the child (learner with learning barriers) has direct interaction (Nel, Nel, & Hugo, 2012:12). The layer

includes a child's relationships and interactions with their immediate surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). The family, neighbourhood, school, and child-care environments are examples of microsystem structures (Parke & Clarke Steward, 2011:26).

The mesosystem, the second stage in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, includes relations between microsystems. The interaction that occurs and persists between two or more microsystems is envisioned to be continuous (Bornman & Rose, 2010:9; Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010:40). According to Härkönen (2007:10), the mesosystem includes the relationships and procedures between two or more environments that make up the developing individual. Relationships between home and education, as well as school and the workplace, are instances of these. These microsystems' interactions are thought to influence how a learner with learning barriers reacts to the school education system. If educators' experiences in helping these learners are not marred by obstacles, a learner meets the learning barrier will react positively.

The exosystem, which is considered a broader sense connected with the immediate environment in which the child resides, is the third stage of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Exosystems are described as the extended family, family networks, job, neighbours, family members, neighbourhood structures, and other community resources (Bornman & Rose, 2010:9). Exosystems are relational environments that do not include children that influence their lives (Berk, 2005:28; Parke & Steward, 2011:26; Swick & Williams, 2006:372). Exosystems can be formal, such as organisations, institutions, health, welfare, or informal, such as a parent's social network, friends, and extended family who can help (Berk, 2005:28).

The macrosystem is Bronfenbrenner's fourth stage in his ecological systems theory. Within the "society and culture," the macrosystem includes perceptions, ideologies, ideals, and philosophy that may affect or be affected by other structures (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:12). What, how, and when individuals perform relationships is influenced by the macrosystem (Swick & Williams, 2006:372).

This theory is relevant to this study since it emphasises the interaction between the infant (in this case, a learner experiencing learning barriers) and the community (college), which includes other levels such as the educational system, instructors, the school itself, or the curriculum, both of which affect the child's growth and development. According to Mahlo (2011:21), a learner who is having difficulty learning can prosper if all the school processes are functioning correctly. If educators, as one layer in this scenario, face difficulties in assisting learners who encounter learning obstacles, these problems may influence the learners' progress.

1.9. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a case study research design, which enabled the researcher to conduct a detailed analysis of high school educators' experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning at a selected school in the Tzaneen District.

1.10. RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is described by Mouton (1996:203) as existing research traditions in a discipline. A research paradigm decides the researcher's perspective on the study and, therefore, the researcher's role in the study's topic (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:20).

This study will use the interpretive paradigm to generate knowledge by employing "systematic procedures while maintaining that there are multiple socially constructed realities" (McMillan & Schumacher 2014: 14). Besides, this study adheres to the interpretive paradigm because it allows the researcher to collect rich data from participant opinions.

Individuals in this model seek to comprehend the universe in which they exist and operate. The most critical goal of the study in this model is to focus on the people's perspectives in the scenario being analysed as often as possible. In this case, educators' interactions and perspectives from a specific school would be included.

1.11. RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach refers to "the plan and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumption to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation" (Creswell, 2014: 3).

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study to avoid interfering with the natural course of events and processes. this method of methodology attempts to "describe and interpret the participant's person and group behaviour, values, emotions, and expectations" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270)

There were several approaches to data collection. However, the researcher decided to communicate with six educators in their respective locations (school) to obtain pertinent documents. In the end, the researcher has understood the educator's thoughts and emotions and interprets the students' experiencing obstacles to learning.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) describe this perspective as contextual rather than universal interpretation. This is essential for this study because the aim is to find out what kinds of help does and does not work for learners who have obstacles to learning.

1.12. RESEARCH LOCATION

The research was done in a public school in the Limpopo district of the South N'wanedzi area in Tzaneen. The culture around the school is agricultural, because of which it is primarily commercial citrus orchards. In recent years, chicken and other farming have been included and most people in the community are employed on these farms.

The school has an enrolment of about 640 learners and 18 educators. The department of education classified the school as quintile three and all learners are exempted from paying fees.

1.13. SAMPLING

Purposive sampling has been applied when conducting this study. This is because it is the most significant type of non-probability sampling. Welman et al. (2005:69) described it as an action whereby researchers rely on participants' experiences, ingenuity and /or previous research findings to intentionally find units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they attain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population. The high school was chosen because it is the most accessible to the researcher and inclusive education is part of the curriculum.

A sample of a minimum of five educators and a principal at the chosen school has been taken. The composition of the sample was two Life Orientation educators and three Class Educators.

The two life orientation educators have been at the school for at least two years so that they would be able to respond to the interview questions based on their experiences at the school.

The three-class educators have been at the school for at least two years. In addition to responding to the interview questions based on their personal experiences at the school, and since these educators are in direct contact with learners, they would be able to provide meaningful responses regarding their experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

The principal has been at the school for at least three years. As the manager responsible for implementing inclusive education at the school, he was able to provide valuable information on the experiences of educators in supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

1.14. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Since the primary data collection method is a case study interview, an interview guide was designed to guide the process. With the interview participants' permission, a notebook was used to record the interview responses, which were later consolidated. Using a pen and notebook, the researcher captured important comments, critical observation, and the interviewees' behavioural responses during the interviews.

1.15. DATA COLLECTION

In this study, data was collected through interviews, document analysis and observations.

1.15.1. Interviews

This is the process of simply asking people what they are thinking, doing, and doing. "Or put it that way, if scholars want to see what is going on with participants, they question them" (Given, 2008:190).

Interviews were used in this analysis because of the high quality of data they provide and the researcher's willingness to balance its advantages with observation. Since community interviews may be intimidating, one-on-one in-depth interviews were favoured. It was a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. The interviewer will see the phenomenon from the interviewee's point of view, which is an advantage of this interview method.
A private room was secured in the selected school for the interviews. During school hours, the interviews were held during each participant's free periods to avoid disturbing their schedules after school. Each participant was interviewed for 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the richness of the interviewee's data.

1.15.2. Document analysis

"Various procedures involved in analysing and interpreting data generated from the examination of documents and records relevant to a particular study" is referred to as document analysis. (www.drcath.net/toolkit/document.)

Documents on how learners facing barriers to learning should be supported by educators and how high school educators should be supported by the district were analysed. These documents include policies (on promotion and retention), departmental circulars, minutes and school records.

1.15.3. Observation

Creswell (2014:239) explains observation as "when the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site. In these field notes, the researcher records, in an unstructured or semi structured way, using some prior questions that the inquirer wants to know about activities at the research site".

Field observation was chosen for this analysis because it was "appropriate for the examination of certain attitudes and behaviours better observed in their natural environment, rather than the more unnatural environments of experiments and surveys" (Babbie, 2010:297). The researcher studied the physical atmosphere in the classroom and artefacts and pictures in classrooms and throughout the school during the data collection stage of the analysis. On class visits, the analyst noticed and took notes on the relationship between the educator and learners who were having difficulty studying. This demonstrated the educator's desire to assist students who were having difficulty studying. Observations will reveal something to the interviewer that the interviewee may not say during the interview. It may also aid in the formulation of follow-up questions for the researcher.

1.16. DATA ANALYSIS

Making sense of the language, audio, and photographs such that the researcher may effectively address the study question is referred to as (Creswell 2012: 236). Data analysis in a qualitative study is described by White (2005:168) as "the process of organising data into groupings and finding relationships within them." As a result, the data gathered at the school are analysed using qualitative content review. Creswell (2012: 238) recommended the following measures for data analysis:

1.16.1. Preparing and organising data for analysis.

In this step, the data collected from the completed interviews were collated and organised to facilitate transcription.

1.16.2. Explore and code the data.

The process of data coding commenced with identifying small pieces of data called segments, which are texts that are comprehensible by themselves, and which contain one idea or piece of relevant information. The first step of data analysis is called initial or open coding. It identifies essential words or groups of words in the data and then labelling them accordingly.

1.16.3. Coding to build description and themes.

A thematic analysis method was used, which, according to Braun & Clark (2006:174), "is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within the data". The segments were, therefore, examined in detail to develop themes and sub-themes from the data. Compelling quotes and extracts were selected to illustrate the themes.

1.16.4. Report qualitative findings.

During this process, findings were recorded in line with the identified themes and subthemes. This process also included an analysis of the identified documents.

1.16.5. Interpret the findings.

Data was interpreted to demonstrate their relevance to the research questions and the research objectives.

1.16.6. Validate the accuracy of the findings.

The researcher determined the exactness or trustworthiness of the findings through strategies such as triangulation. Triangulation was achieved by examining different sources of data. During the interviews, the researcher's information, documents related to the study and observation by the researcher during the class visit were examined.

These activities resulted in building themes of this study.

After the analysis, hard copies of data (documents) were stored in locked storage and will remain there for five years. Soft copies in digital format were stored on the researcher's password-protected computer hard drive and will also remain there for five years.

1.17. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The purpose of research ethics is to safeguard the rights of all stakeholders. This research was carried out under the auspices of the University of South Africa (UNISA). It has a research ethics policy approved by the council for the first time in 2007, and it aims to protect the rights and interests of all stakeholders.

In this research project, the researcher protected the participants' identities, the research site, and the research location. There were assurances that others' access to the recordings would be strictly limited. Because Western research ethical guidelines are not universal, the researcher consulted the research guidelines and conferred with experienced researchers in that location before acting.

Each participant was given an informed consent letter because they have the right to know if they are being studied in a study. Each participant was given a mandatory consent form to sign after the research objectives were explained to them.

As part of the study's ethical consideration, the interview guide was strictly followed during the interviews. The interviewer maintained a neutral tone and did not lead the interviewee toward any direction by agreeing or disagreeing with any response.

1.18. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY/TRUSTWORTHINESS

Validity (LeCompte et al., 1992:644*)* refers to the trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data. The researcher used validity strategies such as triangulation and prolonged time in the field. Creswell (2014:201) explains triangulation as "examining evidence from different data sources to build a coherent justification for a theme", and in this process, add validity to the study.

"The extent to which independent researchers could discover the same phenomena and to which there is an agreement on the description of the phenomena between the researcher and the participant is called reliability or trustworthiness" (dir.Unisa.ac.za). MacMillan and Schumacher (1993: 385) "explain reliability in qualitative research as the consistency of the researcher's interactive style, data recording, data analysis, and interpretation of the participant's meanings from the data". The researcher enhanced reliability in this study by documenting every procedure and every step taken. A detailed case study protocol and a database were established.

1.19. CONCLUSION

The chapter served as a foundation for the entire research. The chapter served as a roadmap for the research, but it also revealed that there is so much more work to realise the dream of inclusive education. No change has been made since the advent of comprehensive education reform (Education White Paper 6; 2001). Educators' interactions at a school where the research was conducted revealed that there was a void that hampered effective intervention for students with learning challenges. The next chapter will go through a more in-depth literature analysis on equitable education, with an emphasis on educators' perspectives in helping students who are having difficulty learning.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION

While the previous chapter covered the study's context, issue statement, research concerns, and research goals, this chapter looked at the theoretical framework underpinning the study and literature on inclusive education and educators' perspectives who are crucial to the policy's adoption. According to Gay (1992:38), "literature review is the systematic discovery, place, and interpretation of records providing knowledge relating to the research problem." The researcher examined applicable literature on the subject since the emphasis of this thesis was on the perspectives of educators at school in a Tzaneen district in assisting learners with learning barriers. In addition, prior studies' gaps have been found, and new research on related studies will be given.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
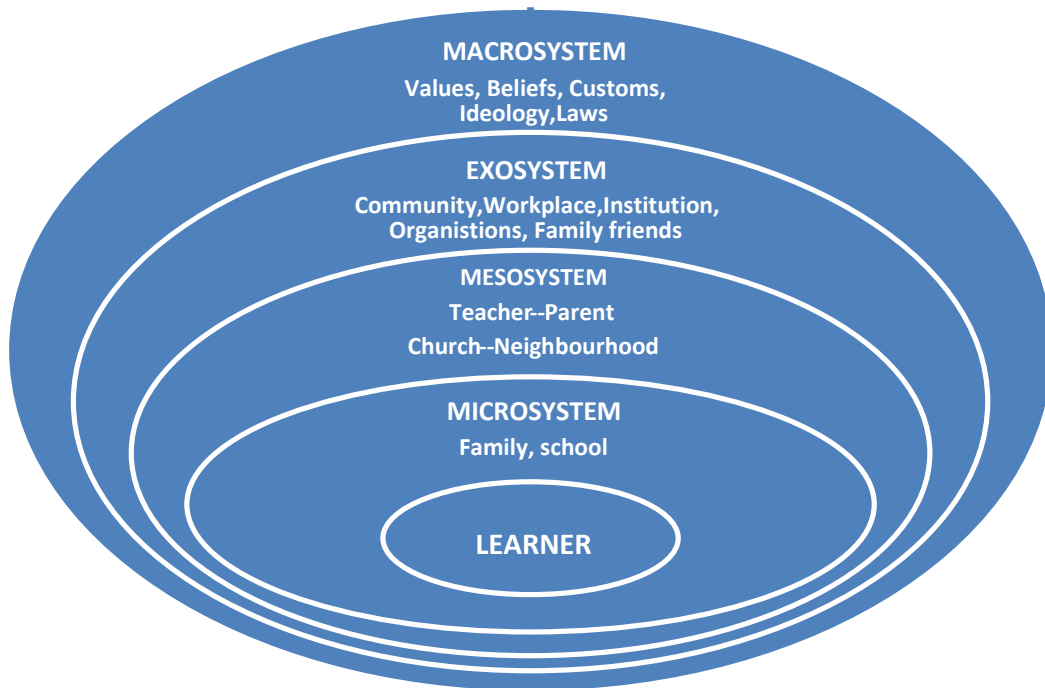
Figure 2.1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory served as the theoretical basis for this analysis, as described in chapter one. A multi-dimensional model of human development can be described as this theory. The macrosystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and microsystems are included in the model, which is defined by the world's overlapping and multi-faceted effect (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:21; Härkönen, 2007:16; Paquette & Ryan, 2001:2; Lewthwarte, 2011:9; Parke & Clarke Steward, 2011:2).

The microsystem is the stage of the child's world in which they have direct interaction (Nel & Hugo, 2012:12). The degree encompasses a child's relationships and experiences with their immediate surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:39). The home, neighbourhood, kindergarten, and

child-care settings are examples of microsystem systems (Parke & Clarke Steward, 2011:26).

The mesosystem, the second stage of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, involves relations between microsystems. The association that occurs and persists between two or more microsystems is envisioned to be continuous (Bornman & Rose, 2010:9; Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010:40). According to Härkönen (2007:10), the mesosystem consists of the relations and processes that occur between two or more settings that comprise the developing individual. Relationships between home and education, as well as school and job, are instances. The interactions of these microsystems are believed to affect how the infant responds to multiple circumstances.

The exosystem, which is considered a broader sense connected with the immediate environment in which the child resides, is the third stage of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The extended family, family networks, workplace, neighbours, family members, government systems, and other community resources are all indicators of what makes up the exosystem (Bornman & Rose, 2010:9). Exosystems are relational structures that do not include children that influence their interactions (Berk, 2005:28; Parke & Steward, 2011:26; Swick & Williams, 2006:372). Exosystems may be hierarchical, such as associations, agencies, health and welfare, or casual, such as a parent's social network, acquaintances, and extended family (Berk, 2005:28).

The macrosystem is the fourth stage of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Attitudes, opinions, traditions, and ideology within the "society and community, which could have an effect on or be affected by other systems"

are said to make up the macrosystem (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:12). The macrosystem influences what people do, how they do it, and when they do it (Swick & Williams, 2006:372).

This hypothesis is relevant to this analysis since it emphasises the communication between the child (learner) and the community (learning), which includes other layers such as an educational structure, instructors, the school itself, or the curriculum, both of which affect the child's growth and development. "Even a learner who is experiencing obstacles to learning will benefit if all the processes in the school perform well," Mahlo (2011:21). However, if one stage, in this case, educators, is having trouble helping learners who face learning barriers, these experiences can influence the learners' progress.

2.3. THE HISTORY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (INTERNATIONALLY)

According to Miles (1997) in Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler, & Guang-Xue (2013:4), "the past of special education and the integration campaign suggests that the principle emerged in western countries and then spread to countries of the East." The author goes on to say that "missionaries were the first to understand the need to educate children with disabilities, and as a result, several schools for children with disabilities were founded."

"Inclusive education is based on the belief that education is a fundamental human right" (World Education Forum, 2000, notes 19). To advance this right, Thailand hosted a world conference on Education for All in 1990, culminating in the Jomtien Declaration. The conference agreed that "more than a recommitment is required to achieve the goals of basic education for all" and that "an 'expanded horizon' is required to achieve the goals of basic

education for all" (World Education Forum, 2000 article 2.1). "Universalising access to all adolescents, teenagers, and adults, and fostering justice through, for example, ensuring that girls and women, as well as other underserved communities, have access to basic education" are the core elements of this extended vision (Article 2.2).

This ensures that schooling for everyone entails not only keeping schools accessible to all but also "being diligent about identifying the obstacles that certain groups encounter in attempting to obtain educational opportunities" (Unesco, 2002:18).

Walton (2018:33) defines inclusive education as "a rights-based approach to education that seeks social justice through resisting exclusion inside and from school communities and promoting access, participation, and achievement for all learners". "The most effective means to combat ethnic attitudes, build welcoming communities, develop an egalitarian society, and provide education for everyone is by inclusive schools" (UNESCO, 1994: ix). According to Ndinisa (2016: v), "education qualifies and equips an individual to go on in life with courage and skills to handle themselves" Since it is a right, not a privilege, it must be available to all, regardless of disability. Certain people, though, can face barriers that prevent them from practising this right.

In 2000, the World Education forum had drawn attention to the processes that deprived certain groups of people, such as women and girls, and other ethnic groups continued to experience. The forum declared that education for all:

> "… must take into account the needs of the poor and disadvantage, including working children, remote rural dwellers and normal, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults

affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health, and those with special needs" (World Education Forum, 2000:19).

In 1994, the Salamanca Conference on Special Needs Education provided a significant response to promoting comprehensive education, such as encouraging schools to accommodate all children, including those with special educational needs. The conference concluded that initiatives aimed at creating new programmes and schooling for children with intellectual disabilities would not address these children's problem. As a result, multicultural education organisations worldwide are questioning the concept of business as usual for colleges (Slee, 2013:3). When the Salamanca Declaration declared,

"An education framework that responds to the diversity of learners is needed."

"…Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs and therefore, to fulfill their right to education, the system should be designed to take into account the diversity of these characteristics and needs" (Unesco, 1994: viii).

To achieve this objective, the conference further resolved that schools should:

"… accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups" (Unesco,1994:6).

A "second generation" of countries began to accept inclusive education after the Salamanca Statement was published. "The majority of these countries are emerging, and they are also grappling with the consequences of promoting inclusive schooling in underdeveloped contexts, as well as imperial legacies" (Kozleski, Artiles, & Waitoller, 2011: 4). One of these countries is South Africa, which is implementing and promoting inclusive education.

There is no legislation or policy in some developing countries, or if there is, it is mostly rhetoric (Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler & Guang-xue, 2013:4). Educators in these countries are expected to recognise and respond positively to all students' diverse needs in their classrooms.

Readily available financial and technological resources have enabled inclusive education in wealthy countries in the Global North. This progress was aided by legal frameworks, qualified and experienced educators, and parental involvement practises. "The rapid expansion of scholarship in the field, which has focused on its conceptualisation and implementation, has accompanied the growth" (Walton, 2018:32). This policy, however, has yet to be translated into classroom practice in many developing countries. "Rhetoric of inclusion is strong," according to Slee (2013:3), "but definitions and procedures of inclusive education remain contradictory and distant from other facets of social and educational policy that drive exclusion in both stark and subtle manifestations."

2.4. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION - SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

South Africa has a responsibility for the global order and its citizens as a member of the international community. As a result, South Africa is affected by all declarations and resolutions made at international conferences. As a result, South Africa has codified all these declarations into law (the 1996 constitution).

The inclusive education approach in South Africa is based on "a rights-based perspective informed by liberal, critical, and progressive democratic thought" (Engelbrecht 1999:7). "Inclusion is dependent on access to education enrolment and educational achievement by all learners," claim Di Gennaro, Pace, Zollo, and Aiello (2014:59). As a result, educators must learn to respect students' differences and determine the best way to respond to this diversity.

Because South Africa's education system is changing, policies are being developed from time to time to make schools more inclusive of all children. The following are some of the policy documents and legislation that have resulted from such processes and are related to the development and implementation of inclusive education in South Africa:

- White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa (1995).

- The South African Schools Act (1996)

- White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997)

- Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001)

- Conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education: District support teams (2005a).

- Curriculum adaptation guidelines of the revised national curriculum statement (2005b).

- National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (2008).

- Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools (2009).

The South African Schools Act (1996) decreed the prospect of inclusive education by legislating that "where it is 'practically possible', learners with 'special educational needs' should be taught in the same classroom with other learners, and that support should be provided for these learners" (section 12.4). The White Paper (EWP6) further described inclusive education as an inclusive concept that covers all facets of the life of a learner, and among others:

"... recognising that both children and youth should read and that both children and youth are capable of learning. Accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different in every way and have different learning needs that are equally valued and a regular part of our human experience; enabling education structures, systems, and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners; acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, et cetera; enabling education structures, systems, and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners; enabling education structures, systems, and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners; enabling education (DoE,2001:16).

There are already "more than 200 000 children and young people of school-going age who are not in school" (DoE, 2001:09), with disability among others cited as one of the reasons. As a result, the government needed to devise a mechanism to accommodate these students, so the Education White Paper 6 was introduced.

2.5. EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6 (EWP6)

This guide was created in 2001 to help schools and educators realise all learners' privileges to be represented in a single educational framework. Though we recognise that change is sweeping South African classrooms, it is essential to remember that this "policy is not an extension to such systems, but rather a mechanism through which this transition can be achieved" (DoE, 2010:20). The policy's goal was to "offer help to learners rather than send learners to where support is accessible" (Matlala, 2015:21). The strategy promotes a learning environment in which "diversity is appreciated, recognised, and promoted in the classroom." (Tebid, 2010:19).

According to EWP6 DoE 2001(KZNDEC-PGSES:6), It is the system that:

- "Acknowledges that all children can learn, and all children and youth need support.

- Acknowledges, accepts, and respects differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, or HIV status.

- Empowers learners by developing their strength and maximise their participation and minimises barriers to learning".

The document indicates how learners facing barriers to learning must be identified, assessed, and supported in an ordinary school. "It has further introduced strategies and interventions that will assist teachers in managing the diversity of learning and teaching needs to ensure that barriers to learning are overcome" (DoE,2005, conceptual and operational guidelines for implementing inclusive education particular school as resource centres).

While the law mandates inclusive education policy (EWP6,2001) as the fairest and most equal solution for learners meeting learning challenges, it is also unpalatable to those who may enact it (educators). In his article "Inclusive schooling: if it's so sweet, why is it so hard to market," O'Rourke (2014:530) explains why the programme is so difficult to enforce because overwhelming facts back it. "Like climate change, inclusion means various things to different citizens in different situations" (O'Rourke, 2014:531). It involves improving how things are conducted in classrooms and would prompt educators to react in the same way as the community responds to climate change concepts. From afar, integration sceptics and opponents may seem motivated by a need for a haven, refusing learners with obstacles to learning their civil education privileges (act 108 of 1996, chapter 2).

2.6. NATIONAL STRATEGY ON SCREENING, IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSING AND SUPPORTING (SIAS).

After 2001, the Department of Education published "The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support" to support the logical approaches needed by

EWP6 to ensure that all learners have access to and engage in the curriculum (DoE 2008). The department sees this policy paper as a tool for early detection. "The SIAS approach is being implemented in the school sector with the aim of overhauling the framework of recognising, evaluating, and delivering programmes for those learners that need extra assistance in order to increase enrolment and inclusion" (EWP6, 2001:7). This paper outlines how schooling for all learners (inclusive education) can be accomplished in South Africa.

The SIAS protocol is designed to assess the degree and depth of assistance needed to improve learners' involvement who are experiencing learning difficulties. The protocol for defining and overcoming learning challenges that affect individual learners' success in the classroom is outlined in the guideline. The responsibilities of educators and other partners are clarified, so this research looks at their perspectives.

Ladbrook (2009:2) suggests that "the introduction of comprehensive education in South African schools' current educators with different experiences", and this report would discuss some of them. Inconsistent with Education White Paper 6, which directs the transition from exclusion to inclusion, the document emphasises "the systematic moving away from using disability to segregate learners with disability, and instead finding ways to include them at any stage of educational practise" (DoE 2005:5). (DoE 2005:5). It also explains the first phase of getting away from the old paradigm,

which is to shift our practice of perceiving disabilities in medical terms, to perceive it in terms of the rights of a learner who need to be realised, and obstacles to the education of this learner being recognised in the system and interventions being made.

This EWP6 is waiting for a complete introduction by educators. Nevertheless, educators also suspect that this programme would not help learners experience obstacles to learning since most of them (educators) are not initially qualified to recognise and assist them. The National and Provincial departments of education, the district-based support teams (DBST) and the Institutional level-based support teams (ILST), inclusive support education.

"The SIAS toolkit primarily focuses on screening and identification of learners, as well as development of a support package to address barriers," according to Mkhuma (2012:12). This makes educator's work much more difficult because of too much paperwork contained in it. A further complication is that it requires scores from assessments to identify learners facing barriers to learning instead of the root of the barrier. "The results of the difficulties, not their nature, can only be reflected in the scores" (DoE 2008:47).

Support system on Inclusive education in South Africa
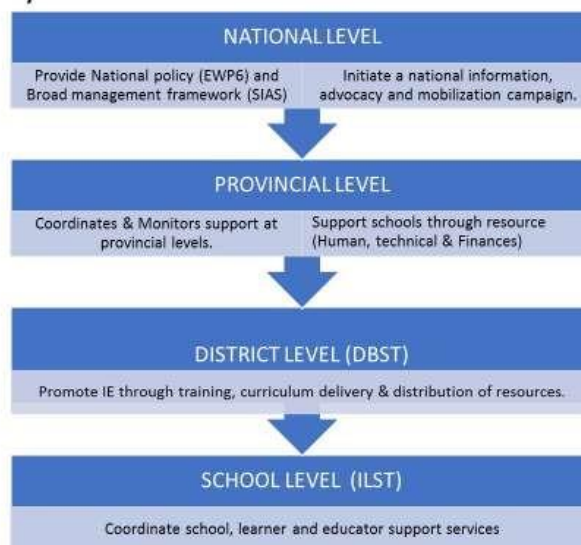
Figure 2.2. The inclusive education support system in South Africa.

2.7. NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The provincial department of education is responsible for "supporting schools through both human and technical resources, such as school buildings, distribution of funds and resource materials, teacher employment, and admission of learners, including those with learning disabilities" (Matlala 2015:25). The needs of educators, which arise from their experiences in the classroom while supporting learners facing learning barriers, should inform this decision at this level, which is why this study is so important. "Internationally, policy proposals and reports on the funding of programmes for students with disabilities stumble over key issues such as how to:" Slee (2013:11).

According to EWP6, DoE 2001 (KZNDEC-PGSES:8), the above structures are responsible for, among others:

- To improve education support services provided by the district.

- Launch a national campaign of information, advocacy, and mobilisation.

- Ensure that employees receive appropriate professional development.

- Resolve the conflict between stated inclusive education goals and system performance drivers such as high stakes testing and school and system rankings.

- Develop rich curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy based on building teacher professional knowledge and incorporating universal design principles that are evaluated to satiate the exponential demand for individual containment resource models rather than attempting to satiate the exponential demand for individual containment resource models • Develop rich curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy based on building teacher professional knowledge and incorporating universal design principles that are evaluated to satiate the exponential demand for individual containment resource models (Slee, 2013:11).

2.8. THE DISTRICT BASED SUPPORT TEAMS (DBST)

The "District Based Support Team (DBST) is a group of departmental professionals whose responsibility is to promote inclusive education through training, curriculum delivery, resource distribution, identifying and addressing learning barriers, leadership, and general management," according to their website (DoE, 2008:3). The "core purpose of these teams is to foster the development of effective teaching and learning, primarily through identifying and addressing barriers to learning at all levels of the system," according to the Department of Education (2005:21). The following are some of the core functions that help to achieve this goal:

- "The *primary* key focus for district-based support teams in developing and ongoing *support of local institutional-level support teams* in schools, colleges, early childhood and adult learning centres. In this regard, the key focus areas of these teams are:

  - supporting the *capacity building* of schools/education institutions. - identifying and prioritising learning needs and barriers to learning in their local contexts; and

    It will identify the support needed to address these challenges and pursue these within a strategic planning and management framework.

  - ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all the above" (p21).

- "A *second* key focus of these teams is to link these institutions with formal and informal support systems in the surrounding community so that these needs and barriers can be addressed.

- The main focus for district-based support teams would be to provide indirect support to learners by supporting educators and school management, focusing on curriculum and institutional development, to ensure that the teaching and learning framework and environment are responsive to the full range of learning needs.

  This indirect support role is often referred to as 'consultancy'. A secondary focus would be to provide direct learning support to learners where necessary, and possibly, where institutional-level support teams are unable to respond to learning needs" (p22).

Education White Paper 6 (2001:28) also affirms that these teams must "evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modification." In the process, these teams will also build the capacity of schools. They will offer the full spectrum of education support services such

as professional growth in curriculum matters to the ILSTs. "Support services accessible within the community surrounding the school will also be provided by this team" (SIAS, 2008:20). Educator professional development to help them support learners facing barriers to learning will also be facilitated by the DBST.

2.9. INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUPPORT TEAMS (ILST)

Collaboration between scholars and practitioners has been critical in transforming South African schools into comprehensive schools, emphasising the growth of individual schools" (Engelbrecht, 2006:257). Institutional level support teams (ILST), or School Based Support Teams (SBST) in certain situations, are committees formed by schools in general, further and higher education, as institutional level support means, with the primary purpose of planning support resources for the school, learner, and instructor. The success in the comprehensive education system would only be possible if schools commit to being more inclusive by forming Institutional Level Support Teams to assist students with difficulty learning. This will also function as a means of bringing legislation (EWP6) into effect. The ILST's efficacy influences the success of a comprehensive curriculum in classrooms. Consequently, "dedication and engagement are critical in the ILST since it is the central team of inclusive education that is centred at the school and interacts directly with teachers and learners" (Ndinisa, 2016:36).

According to the national plan for screening, recognition, evaluation, and assistance (SIAS, 2008:88), "educators with advanced expertise and experience in fields such as learning support, life skills / instruction, or counselling" can be critical members the Institutional level support, team. Educators with advanced information on a specific need or mission may also

be listed. However, for the team's success, representatives of the ILST should have explicit knowledge of their positions and obligations.

ILST's primary goal is to provide well-coordinated learner and instructor support programmes. The team would also be accountable for "identifying challenges and obstacles to learning, designing together plans to overcome needs and barriers to learning, collecting support from both inside and outside the organisation, and tracking and reviewing progress" (DoE 2005a, 35). These programmes are designed to aid in the learning and teaching process. According to DoE (2005a), the ILST also has the following functions: "Study the report provided by the education on barriers identified and support provided, and the impact of the support.

- Assess the degree of assistance needed and formulate a curriculum for educators and parents.
- Help in-classroom implementation by offering instruction and encouragement.

- Assess and monitor the implementation of the assistance package.

- To integrate the institution's learner, tutor, and academic growth assistance.

- To come up with a solution to overcome specific needs and obstacles to learning as a community. This may involve an emphasis on instructor development" (page 35).

The ILST has a pivotal position in assisting educators and encouraging students who are experiencing trouble studying at colleges. "The whole school community and schedule must be changed to meet the additional time and obligations required by the ILST members," Tebid (2010:30) adds. The

value of this exercise lies in lowering learning obstacles and, as a result, increasing all learners' involvement.

According to Walton and Nel (2012:13), this framework "is an example of service provision" and "is a significant way staff cooperation can be accomplished in an egalitarian school." "However, if this critical component of the support system lacks the skills and capabilities to assist educators in defining and delivering support, as well as providing support to learners, then its presence is pointless" (Mkhuma 2012:26). Consequently, this system must be well-equipped to help learners address obstacles to learning while simultaneously helping students.

The province keeps an eye on and maintains the district, which keeps an eye on and supports the colleges. Insufficient funding and supervision by the province and the district can result in inadequate support for students with learning disabilities and educators. A straight line should be drawn between the duty of schools (ILSTs), the department by DBST, and educators.

2.10. SUPPORT TO EDUCATORS

"Developing countries might have followed the concept of inclusion, but there is frequently inadequate financing, assistance, or expertise to expect an appropriate system-wide inclusive strategy for all learners," according to Sharma et al. (2013:5). Educators "in
South Africa struggle with the remains of an inherited education structure focused on apartheid and alienation of classes of learners," according to the study (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:351). Most educators as implementers do not like comprehensive education policies (EWP6,2001), which is enforced by statute and recognised as the fairest and most equal solution for learners confronting obstacles to learning (O'Rourke,2014:531). As a result, an

analysis of educators' interactions helping these students will help determine whether this is the case.

According to Du Toit & Forlin (2010:644), "significant cultural transition, backed by an improved education system that can provide the required facilities, services, and funding to allow school to shift, must occur for inclusion to become a fact in South Africa." According to existing studies, the practical introduction of a creative educational programme like EWP6 "depends, among other aspects, on stakeholders' detailed understanding of the strategy" (Ntombela, 2009:113). One of these stakeholders is kindergarten. Such awareness will only be reached in classrooms by giving technical instruction to educators who would be the policy's implementers.

Educators "associate inclusive education with the inclusion of a learner with disabilities in the school," according to Eloff and Kgwete's research (The South African teacher's voices on assistance of inclusive education, 2007:364), rather than describing it as education for all learners, not "unique education" in the classroom. This severe confusion may contribute to an equitable education policy failure. As a consequence, the "most challenging task of training teachers for inclusive education is to make them grasp what inclusive education is all about and how to incorporate it in their own classes and schools" (DoE, 2002:12).

Although "a transition toward comprehensive education has been embraced as the chosen paradigm in many countries around the world," "some countries do not have the requisite capacity to embark on such a significant growth" (Du Toit & Forlin, 2010:644). "Providing comprehensive education is costly because it necessitates a low educator-learner ratio, extremely trained staff, and advanced instructional resources, among other things" (DoE,

2001:18). It is important to recognise different aspects in which educators can be supported to contend with equitable education complexities in the classroom. Educators play a vital role in influencing learners' potential by imparting awareness and maintaining the sustainability of comprehensive education centres in their neighbourhoods. Consequently, their perspectives in helping students with intellectual disorders can educate the department's policymakers.

"Educators have gained no coverage in the various empirical reports on equitable schooling in South Africa" (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:352). Besides, some South African reports on inclusive education (Ndinisa 2016:65 and Mahlo 2011:1) have created questions regarding introducing integration without concurrent arrangements for educator assistance.

2.10.1. Status

Over the past decade, changes in education have raised the pressures placed on educators. Therefore, educators' capacity to deal with the demands of educating learners has been harmed. Teaching a dynamic programme to a diverse group of students necessitates increased time commitment, cooperation with other educators, and understanding of the types of resources available. Educators are now leading classrooms with a range of instructional difficulties, including disability, complex cognitive conditions, emotional disturbances, and socio-cultural concerns. Therefore, "traditional educator centred structures must be turned into distinct teacher-learning paths that help learners that encounter learning barriers" (Di Gennaro, Pace, Zollo and Aiello, 2014:54). Tebid (2010:7) notes that "lack of engagement, lack of funding, and a weak perception of how to promote effective integration are some of the key challenges faced in adopting an equitable education system."

Educators must "find ways to include learners facing barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms despite system constraints" (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:352).

Considering this, educators should be supported to face the challenge. The correct approach in supporting educators would be to consider their experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning. One of the difficulties that educators encounter is inexperience in recognising learners who face barriers to learning. Currently, educators seem to be using their limited understanding to identify learners facing barriers to learning.

2.10.2. Training

In Sharma et al. (2013:5), Forlin, Earle, Loreman, and Sharma (2011) argue that "one of the greatest problems confronting developed countries is educators' lack of preparedness in integrating comprehensive education in schools." Therefore, educators must undergo adequate instruction to become successful inclusive practitioners who recognise and address all students' expectations. Sharma et al. (2013:10) learned that when "educators become more conscious of how to build egalitarian classes and more attentive to the desires of all learners, they became more secure in their ability to educate learners facing barriers to learning," they "became more confident in their abilities to educate learners facing barriers to learning."

Pre-service educator education frameworks may also be evaluated to provide educators with innovative methodologies for ultimately assisting learners with learning disabilities.

Forlin, Kawai, and Higuchi (2015:328) performed research in Japan and found that "all pre-service and in-service teachers are not equipped for

integrating Inclusive Education." A separate Australian report on teachers' views of integration, Forlin, Keen, and Barrent (2008:261) described instructor competence to serve these learners as a core question. Educators asked whether the preparation they got to cope with the situation was sufficient. According to Ndinisa (2016:19), the effects of this inadequacy of preparation and empowerment led them to question themselves. "Educators appear to cite a shortage of experience as one of the primary reasons that they find inclusion impossible to implement" (Sharma et al., 2013:6).

"The consistency of an instructor leads more to learner achievement than any other aspect, such as class size, class structure, or background," according to Horn and Sanders (1998) in Suleymanov (2015:15). Reynolds (2009) goes on to say that an educator's "intelligence, attitudes, and principles will build an effective learning experience for all learners" (European Agency for Development of Special Needs Education, 2010:7). All of this portrays a teacher as a critical player in a child's education and the advancement of a comprehensive curriculum. Consequently, the Department of Education must provide educators with appropriate instruction to acquire the expertise and skills they need to help children with developmental difficulties and, ideally, meet the objectives of comprehensive education. Educators must acquire a "broad spectrum of expertise, behaviours, and pedagogical skills to be able to assist learners in achieving their full capacity by adapting to the needs of each learner utilising a variety of teaching techniques," according to the study (European commission communication Improving the quality of Teacher education, 2007:15).

"Before the educational model of autism was generally adopted in South Africa, educators were qualified to teach either general education or special education," according to Donohue and Bornman (2014:4). Amid this, the EWP6 went into practice. Because of this method, many mainstream

educators lack the requisite expertise to educate children with intellectual difficulties. Only a handful of educators have completed formal curriculum qualifications in inclusive education at this period. Therefore, there is a "lack of expertise and awareness to recognise learners who encounter learning challenges, as well as a significant detrimental influence on delivering meaningful assistance to them" (Mkhuma, 2012:11). If educators want to help learners overcome their obstacles to learning effectively, they must be trained in inclusive education.

According to DoE (2006:5), while educator preparation and orientation are at the centre of inclusive framework adoption, only a few hours of seminars have been held to date, which only orientated educators to policy aims and objectives, which is insufficient. If educators are not adequately assisted, learners may continue to obtain inadequate support. "In-service instruction for educators in South Africa is sporadic which short-term and does not take into account the background in which schools operate," says the paper (Engelbrecht, 2006:257). In his research (2013:10), Sharma et al. discovered that "the absence of any formal national teacher education schemes was directly voiced as problematic in countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and Pakistan." "Effective in-service and pre-service training in the awareness, skills, and attitudes of educators is needed for inclusive education to be delivered successfully," according to South Africa studies (Walton & Nel, 2012:13). Professional learning is also essential inequitable education, according to the "Guidelines of 2009," which "provide many benchmarks for schools in this regard" (DoE, 2009:17;18).

"The primary duty of the Community Based Support Staff is to determine and develop school capacity." (Matlala, 2015, p. 26). "The DBST should ensure that the full-service school provides the physical, physical, and human capital listed in the SIAS framework of supporting inclusive schools," says the declaration. (Department of Education, 2010). The DBST should guide

schools in developing ILSTs to organise instructor and student resources. As a result, educators' experiences in assisting learners with developmental disabilities will help both the ILST and the DBST plan the required resources. Both educators and SBSTs must be trained in using the SIAS technique to help students who are having difficulty studying.

2.10.3. Resources

"The promotion of inclusion in South Africa, as in other emerging African countries, is delayed by a lack of political funding in terms of preparation and resource provision" (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002:115). To promote comprehensive schooling, resourcefulness remains a significant obstacle. "Schools tend to be less accepting of learners meeting obstacles to learning until there is the possibility of additional tools to deploy in the management and schooling of these learners," according to Slee (2013). Due to a lack of funding, educators often face learning difficulties are left unsupported by educators, isolating and frustrating them. Infrastructures are often critical in assisting educators in addressing the difficulties of assisting students with intellectual disabilities. According to Hassan, Parveen, and Riffat-un-Nisa (2010:62), "inclusion in overcrowded general education classes and without at least minimum needed services just raises tension for educators."

However, the dilemma is exacerbated in rural schools, which are often understaffed and under-resourced. As a result, "educators are finding it difficult to have the required resources for all students in the classroom" (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:354). "As reported in the EWP6, the Department of Basic Education has not yet given the required specifications to Full-Service Schools" (DOE 2001:30). Because of educators' insufficient or absent resources, certain students failed or were sent to special schools for placement.

2.10.4. Way forward

Because of the various environments in which educators operate and their difficulties, a one-size-fits-all approach to implementing this strategy would struggle. "For inclusion to be effective, schools must consider and adapt to the needs of their pupils, embracing all various types and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to everyone by acceptable curricula, operational structures, instructional methods, resource utilisation, and collaborations with their communities," according to UNESCO (1994:11-12). "The one-size-fits-all approach to inclusion is mostly because in developed countries like South Africa, policymakers push the goal towards inclusion without engaging educators" (Engelbrecht and Green, 2001:25). Educators argue over their loss of influence over the programme and their lack of involvement in decision-making. Educators encounter implementation problems because of this.

Consequently, researching educators' interactions will serve to strengthen their service in a meaningful way. Since inclusive education is a process, educator development for inclusive education must also be a long-term process that reflects educators' expectations and cooperation with stakeholders (UNESCO, 2003:15). "One approach to resolve any of the big problems that developed nations face is to reform teacher education" (Sharma et al., 2013:13).

2.11. SUPPORT TO LEARNERS

Supporting learners facing barriers to learning in achieving fair access to a simple, inclusive education system and curriculum for all learners is promoting justice in society (chapter 2 of South Africa's constitution (Act 108 of 1996 section 3). This section makes it clear that "any form of unfair discrimination in is outlawed." Although the talk of physical integration of learners facing barriers to learning in the same classroom with learners without barriers to learning is so loud, it is equally vital to note that a mere

inclusion without support is not enough; support for these learners should be provided. "The department of education recommended that the education and training system should promote education for all and enable learners to participate actively in the education process to develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society" (DoE, 2001:19).

Forlin 2010 in (Sharma 2013:5), assert that "Educators in developing countries are mostly judged by the results of their learners, so there is little motivation for them to devote additional time with those who are unlikely to achieve good results". Therefore, learners facing barriers to learning might not be supported by educators. Furthermore, the intensification of competition among schools to be "The best performing school" may help identify learners facing barriers as a risk to the school's good performance. Instead of supporting them, these learners may end up being dissuaded from enrolment or recommended to special schools to avoid a school's poor performance (Slee, 2013:9). One of the first issues that learners face learning challenges is being recognised and embraced. Today, educators who lack the expertise and abilities to recognise and provide assistance are in control, and "as a consequence, quality support is not often accessible for learners, particularly those who are experiencing obstacles to learning" (Mkhuma, 2012:11). The department introduced Individual Support Plans, which "can be used by schools to ensure that individual learners receive the support they require" among various approaches to support learners facing learning barriers (DoE 2009:26). "ISPs will guarantee that training is personalised to the needs of each person, and additional lessons and language assistance can help individuals succeed" (Walton & Nel, 2012:15). Appropriate assistive devices, ranging from digital translators, computers, Braille translators, and hearing aids, must be made available to specific students. Learner facilitators or assistants can support certain students with accessing the programme and engaging in school events. Accessibility of the school's physical infrastructure is often critical, particularly for students with disabilities.

Help must be developed from the ground up in an egalitarian system. Educators, via the ILST, play an essential role in offering support to learners in their local schools when referring them to professionals since speciality resources may be expensive time consuming. Strong ILST support for educators could translate to positive learner support, but this hope is yet to be realised since educators have not received it well.

Accommodation for learners with a disability must be located within the instruction rather than placing on learners the onus of finding support outside the environment's course (Grabinger, Aplin and Ponnappa-Brenner, 2008:64). The authors further stress that instruction should be designed to be flexible enough to support a wide variety of learners.

Engelbrecht et al. in Engelbrecht (2008:74) says that "inclusive education is perceived to place additional demands on educators and to cause stress, which impacts negatively on the support progress of all children in the classroom." However, Tebid (2010:19) argues that "an inclusive system will be considered successful when all learners are provided with appropriate educational opportunities and support and also when structures, systems and overall beliefs are changed." Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:307) suggest the following points in supporting learners facing barriers to learning:

- Educators must be empathetic towards learners by developing a welcoming and positive environment; • Educators must be adaptive with one programme for everyone with learning outcomes and events that can be tailored to suit learners' needs.

- Learner marking should be avoided because it makes it impossible for learners to develop outside the mark's limits. Teachers need to pursue supportive attitudes about those who encounter learning obstacles. • Home language should be accepted as a language for teaching and learning.

- Parents and the whole society should be actively engaged and educated about the mechanism of recognising and intervening with

learners who require extra support; • Coordination between departmental governments, such as transportation, wellness, and welfare, in order to provide the essential needs of learners facing obstacles to learning and development.

2.12. ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

There is a "strong conviction among educators in regular schools that expert special educators and therapists can best serve children diagnosed with disabilities, and that regular children are the business of regular educators" (Slee, 2013:8). This belief causes educators to have a negative attitude toward students who are having difficulty learning.

"Educator attitudes are a more important predictor of successful inclusion than educator training," according to Eloff and Kgwete (2007:354). The more positive educators' attitudes toward inclusion are, the more successful the support of students with learning disabilities will be. Furthermore, the class educator's attitudes toward students have a significant impact on all students' achievement, particularly those who face learning challenges. "Support for learners can only be successful if educator attitudes are taken into account," says Ndinisa (2016:30). This means that positive attitudes and a passion for work and learning are critical in ensuring that students receive the help they require. Aside from managing the class, this educator is critical to the learner's success because, as a member of the ILST team, they are expected to provide extra support to students who are having difficulty learning. All of this necessitates the presence of a teacher who is enthusiastic about inclusive education.

"Educators are the prime agents of change in the societies in which they offer their services," writes Mkhuma (2012:37), "and thus the successful implementation of inclusion policy rests on their changing negative attitudes toward it." "Inclusion should not be seen from the disability perspective, but

as a reform that responds to the diversity of all learners," writes O'Rourke (2014:537). An educator must play a vital role in this reform, including identifying and determining support for students who are having difficulty learning, regular communication with parents, collaboration with other educators and health professionals, and ongoing professional development in inclusive skills to help these students. Educators are currently not rewarded for their extra efforts. As a result, educators are hesitant to take on this additional workload without additional compensation, resulting in negative inclusion attitudes.

To effectively support learners facing barriers to learning, educators are expected to adopt positive attitudes toward inclusion. "Educators' positive attitudes toward inclusion are strongly influenced by experience with learners with special educational needs, teacher education on inclusion and its purposes, availability of support from the department, parents, and colleagues, manageable number of learners in class for face-to-face assistance, and workload focusing solely on learners," according to Ndinisa (2016:32). "Enforcing power by adjustment at the macro level cannot change human behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes," Welgemoed and Engelbrecht (2006:261) conclude. Some educators "establish pessimistic attitudes against inclusion policy because they do not have adequate expertise and skills to support them in confidently enforcing the policy," according to Gwala (2008) in Mkhuma (2012:37). It will be unfair to blame educators for their loss of motivation and pessimism because the government fails to have proper instruction and funding. Educators must be aware of inclusive practises, which are established through both training and ongoing professional development activities.

"Educators' attitudes toward integration can strengthen if, in addition to instruction, they are provided with adequate service support for their students

who are experiencing learning difficulties" (Donohue & Bornman, 2014:5). Daily seminars for educators and the availability of services will go a long way toward improving educators' perceptions toward the inclusion method. "Educators require constant guidance and motivation to unlearn biased attitudes and behaviours regarding teaching and studying, pupils, and the curriculum," according to Ntombela (2006:121). This re-culturing can assist educators in cultivating constructive perceptions about inclusive education.

2.13. CONCLUSION

"For inclusion to be significant, schools must understand and react to their students' varied interests, embracing all learning patterns and rates, and maintaining high-quality education for all students by adequate curricula, operational structures, instructional methods, resource utilisation, and community partnerships" (UNESCO, 1994:11-12). Classrooms and classroom systems must be multicultural for classrooms to be deemed inclusive. Inclusive curricula necessitate changes in school governance and management in certain regions. These improvements, according to Ainscow (1999) (as cited in Eleweke & Rodda, 2002:115), are "a process of growth involving, among other things, the use of existing practises and knowledge as a starting point for development, acknowledging differences as opportunities to learn rather than problems to be fixed, examining barriers to learner's participation, effective use of available resources to support learning, and examining barriers to learners' participation." However, in most developing countries, such as South Africa, these inclusive programmes are still in the pilot stage. This study (educator's experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning) will hopefully contribute to inclusive schools' success and inclusive education in general. The research methodology for this study will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Since "research methodology is a tool for addressing the core study question in a structured way" (Kothari, 2004:8). This chapter describes the study's research methodology, including the research design, the paradigm used, the study's place, population, and sample, research ethics and ethical clearance, data collection and analysis methods, and measures to ensure reliability and validity/trustworthiness.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The case study design was used, described as a "type of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provides clear guidance for the procedures in a research design", as stated in chapter one (Creswell, 2014:12). "A research design" is characterised as "decisions on whether, where, where, how much, and by what means an investigation or analysis is conducted" (Kothari, 2004:31). This rational objective is completed to ensure that the researcher's data is adequate to have an effective response to the study query. This decreases the probability of erroneous causal inferences being made from evidence. This conceptual framework, according to Kothari (2004:31), acts as a "blueprint for the compilation, calculation, and interpretation of data," and "the template describes what the researcher can do from writing the theory and its practical consequences to the final analysis of data." According to the explanations, a study design must contain the following elements: a clear statement of a research issue, procedures and strategies to be utilised, the community to be analysed, and data processing and analysis methods.

The researcher conducted a comprehensive analysis of high school educators' experiences supporting learners with learning barriers at a selected school in the Tzaneen District for this study. The motivation for this action was rooted in Kothari's (2004:113) definition of qualitative research as "a careful and comprehensive observation of a social unit, whether that unit is a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group, or even the entire community." In this scenario, the social unit was chosen as the school where educators help students who are experiencing trouble studying. The study concentrated on a single unit rather than a wide overview. Therefore, a stronger focus can be put on recognising educators' backgrounds in helping students who are experiencing trouble studying. Other advantages of this study design, according to Kothari (2004:115), are:

1. "Every reasonable effort is made to collect data on all aspects of life. As a result, a case study broadens our perspective and provides a clear picture of life.

2. The case study method allows us to fully comprehend the concerned unit's behaviour pattern because it is an exhaustive study of a social unit.

3. A researcher can obtain an accurate and enlightened record of personal experiences through a case study, which reveals man's inner strivings, tensions, and motivations that drive him to action, as well as the forces that direct him to adopt a specific pattern of behaviour.

4. It aids in the formulation of relevant hypotheses and the data that may be useful in testing them. As a result, case studies enable generalised knowledge to become increasingly rich.

5. The researcher can use several research methods under the case study method, depending on the circumstances. In other words, the case study method allows for the use of various forms such as depth

interviews, questionnaires, documents, individual study reports, letters, and the like.

6. Case studies are the ideal type of sociological material because they represent an authentic record of personal experiences that most skilled researchers using other techniques often overlook; 7. The case study method broadens the researcher's understanding, which improves his analytical ability and skill."

Considering the statements mentioned earlier regarding case study design, the researcher gathered data first-hand from actual participants (educators) in a real situation (school) without altering or adjusting the problem.

3.3. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Acknowledging that there are several socially created realities, an interpretive paradigm was selected for this study to generate knowledge by using systematic procedures, and consequently, collecting rich information in respect of the opinions of the educators regarding their experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning at a school in the Tzaneen District.

3.4. RESEARCH SITE PROFILE

The study took place in a rural public school in N'wanedzi, Tzaneen District, in Limpopo. Because of its rural setting, the department of education has classified it as a quintile three school, and all learners are exempted from paying fees. The school is also benefitting from the department's National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP feeding scheme), whose aim is "to enhance the learning capacity of learners through the provision of a healthy meal at schools" (DoE, 2009:1).

The school's enrolment stands at about 640 learners and 18 educators.

The villages around the school are neighbouring by commercial citrus farms that characterise this local community's economy and lifestyle. Chicken farming is also gaining momentum, and most people in the community get employed there.

3.5. SAMPLING

The research participants were selected using a purposive sampling process, so knowledge could be gathered from those who possessed the requisite characteristics concerning the study's objectives. "Purposive sampling" essentially implies that subjects are chosen based on any distinctive attribute that qualifies them as data holders for the analysis (Maree, 2010:79). In sampling, choices are reached primarily to provide the most accurate source of data available to address the study questions effectively. "The process of choosing a few individuals (called a sample) from a broad community in such a way that the individuals chosen reflect the wider society from which they come from," Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012:142) demonstrate.

A sample of five educators and a principal from the school were chosen for this analysis. Two Life Orientation educators and three Class Educators comprised the study. These educators relied on their combined knowledge of teaching at the school for more than two years and maintaining close interaction with students who were having trouble studying. The instructors were willing to provide thoughtful responses about their interactions assisting students who were having difficulty studying. The principal, who has been at the school for more than three years, is also in charge of programme implementation, including inclusive education.

3.6.   PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

Five educators and a principal from the school were selected as participants in the study. The composition of the sample was two Life Orientation educators and three class educators. These educators combined the experience of having been employed at the school for more than two years and directly contacting the learners facing learning barriers. The principal has also been at the school for more than three years and is the supervisor of curriculum and inclusive education implementation at the school.

Below is the table representing the profiling of educators. As part of the ethical agreement, fictitious names were used for participants to protect their identity.

Table 3.1. Profile of participants

Participant	Teaching experience	Qualifications	Subject/s teaching	Grade/s teaching	Class enrolment
BALOYI	32	Degree	Maths Literacy	12	67
NGOBENI	14	Diploma	English	11	54x3 classes
SITHOLE	23	Degree	Xitsonga	11	54x3 classes
DLAMINI	18	Degree	Physical Science	12	15
KHOSA	24	Diploma	Life Orientation	11	54x3 classes
MOKOENA	24	Degree	Life Orientation	12	81

3.7.   EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPANTS

From the above table (table 3.1), the participants' experience as educators ranges from 14 to 32 years. This suggests that participants have long been in

the teaching profession. This may indicate that the curriculum they were trained on did not include inclusive education and may be unable to support learners facing barriers to learning if they are not supported. Generally, people who are long in the profession are complex to develop than those who are younger. The appetite for learning new things belongs to those who are younger and new in the job. This confirms that if learners facing barriers to learning are to be successfully supported, educators' reskilling is paramount.

3.8. QUALIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Qualification percentage %

33,30%

66,70%

■ Diploma ■ Degree
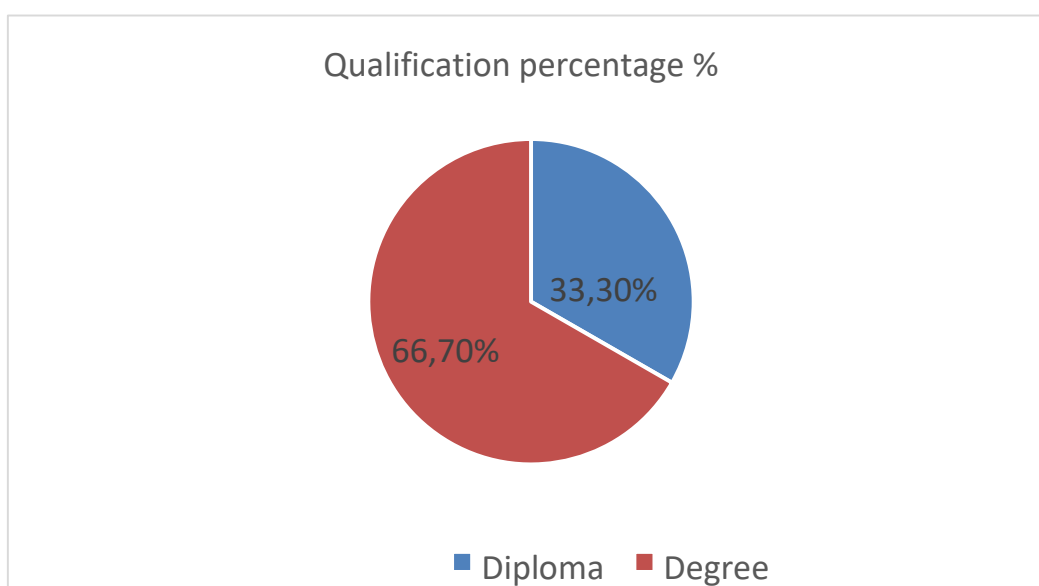
Figure 3.1 Qualifications of participants in percentage

As stated in the above pie chart (Figure 3.1), data obtained through the interviews indicate that few educators had a teaching diploma only, which is an entry qualification for the teaching profession. The majority of educators had reached a degree level. This suggests that educators at this institution are better qualified and can easily cope if trained in inclusive education.

The importance of training in Inclusive education was emphasised by Cooke (2015:160) and Jali (2014:60) as paramount if we want to address challenges

experienced by educators in providing support to learners facing barriers to learning.

3.9.   CLASS ENROLMENTS
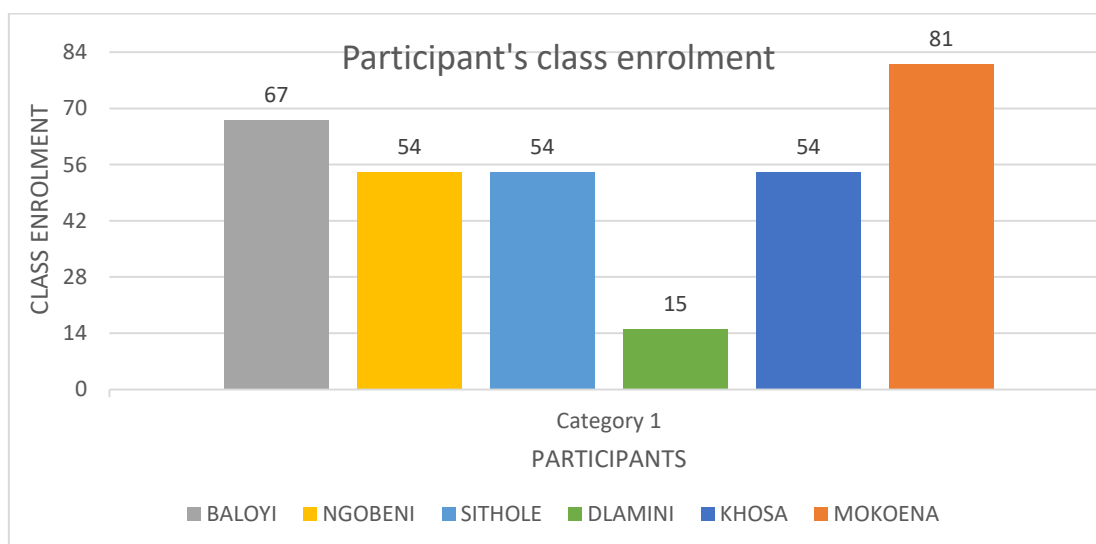
Figure 3.2 Participant's class enrolments

As one of the participants' profile elements, class enrolment showed that many of the classes staffed by participants accommodate more than fifty learners. This suggests that classes in this school are overcrowded. The Department of Basic Education's educator-learner ratio is 1:35 (one educator in a class of thirty-five learners). This overcrowding affects the capacity of educators to focus their attention on learners experiencing barriers to learning. It will also lead to poor or no identification of learners facing barriers to learning.

Moreover, once these learners are not easily identified, supporting them may not occur.

Landbrook (2009:117) asserts that "large class sizes have led to educators ignoring the needs of other learners." Low-class enrolments allow the educator to even use innovative educational approaches in teaching

(Wentzel, 2016:94). Since class enrolment in the institution being studied indicates overcrowding, educators might have challenges in supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

3.10. RESEARCH ETHICS AND ETHICAL CLEARANCE

The participants have a right to dignity as proclaimed in section 2 of the Bill of Rights (5), which was always maintained. The researcher further ensured that the participants have a right to privacy, as alluded to in section 2(32) of the Bill of Rights.

Ethics are essential in a study, primarily when you deal with human participants, as is the case in this study. They are the moral dimension of a researcher's work since they involve decisions about "what is right and what is wrong in the research process and the outcome that is achieved" (Babbie,2010:64). They are there to protect the rights of all stakeholders.

Ethical clearance for the research (approval reference number RF: 2018/06/13/31129625/23/MC) was obtained from UNISA's Research ethics committee. A copy of the signed ethical clearance certificate is attached.

- The Limpopo Department of Basic Education gave the authorisation to carry out the study (See appendix B).
- A letter was also written to the principal of the identified school, requesting permission, stating the reason for the study, and highlighting potential gains for the school and other stakeholders. (See appendix C for permission).
- Letters of request to take part in the study were provided personally to the research participants. (See appendix D).

This study has been categorised as low risk because participants are non-vulnerable human adults, and non-sensitive information was involved. However, the researcher protected the participant's interest and well-being in the study concerning their identity, place, and research location.

Before the beginning of the interviews, the researcher clarified the research objectives to the participants. Each participant signed a mandatory consent form before participating in the interview.

Namelessness and confidentiality assisted the researcher in protecting the identity of the participants. Assurances about the strict limits on access to the records by others were also made.

Since participants in a study have the right to be informed that they are being researched, they received complete information about the study. Participants were also told that they have a right to withdraw at any stage of the study without experiencing a disadvantage. After the research objectives were explained to the participants, a mandatory consent form was also presented to each participant to be signed.

The designed interview guide was strictly followed throughout the interviews. The interviewer maintained a neutral tone and did not lead the interviewee in any direction by agreeing or disagreeing with any response.

3.11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The research took place at a high school in the Tzaneen district, where the researcher is currently an educator. Given that the researcher would be familiar with the interview participants identified for the study, ethical guidelines were strictly observed to maximise impartiality and ensure that objectivity and the research process's moral integrity and finding were not compromised by self-interest. Transparency in every step of the study was applied.

3.12. DATA COLLECTION

Kothari (2004:113) indicates that 'the researcher can use one or more of the several research methods under the case study method, depending on prevailing circumstances". Therefore, using questionnaires, documents

analysis, interviews, letters, and reports of individuals is possible under the case study method. To this study, data was gathered through interviews, document analysis and observations.

3.12.1. Interviews

Interviews were chosen for this study because of the high value of data they generate and their willingness to allow the researcher to combine their advantages with observation. According to Given (2008:190), interviews are "an exercise of figuring out what people are thinking, doing, and doing by talking to them directly." "It is a process of gathering knowledge that includes the introduction of oral-verbal stimuli and reaction in terms of oral-verbal responses," explains Kothari (2004:97).

One-on-one in-depth interviews were preferred over group interviews as it avoids intimidation by others in a group interview. The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. The interviews comprised the use of a series of predetermined questions, which the researcher asked the participants in a form and order as prescribed by the procedure. The benefit of this type of interviews was for the researcher to view the phenomena the way the participants view them.

A private room was secured in the selected school for the interviews. The interviews were carried out during school hours in the free periods of each participant to avoid disrupting teaching and learning and the educator's schedules after school.

The interview duration for each participant ranged from 20 to 30 minutes, and this depended on the richness of the data that the interviewee provided. Every effort was made to create a welcoming atmosphere for the participants to feel calm and confident during the interviews.

3.12.2. Document analysis

In this study, the focus was on written communications that may provide insight on how learners facing barriers to learning are supported by educators and how educators are also supported. "The various procedures involved in analysing and interpreting data generated from the examination of documents and records relevant to a particular study is referred to as document analysis" (www.drcath.net/toolkit/document). The documents analysed include policies (on promotion and retention, school policy on inclusive education), departmental circulars, minutes and school records. These documents were requested formally from the school principal.

- School policies were analysed to check whether they cater to learners facing barriers to learning and how they capacitate school educators to support learners' barriers to education.
- Promotion and Retention policies were analysed to check if they also accommodate learners facing barriers to learning.

3.12.3. Observation

This happens when "the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site" (Creswell 2014:239). During the visit to the research site, the researcher records, in a semi-structured way, using a pre-set question about what the researcher wants to know. This study chose Field observation as it was "appropriate for the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys" (Babbie, 2010:279). The researcher assumed the position of a passive observer.

According to Kothari (2004:96), "when an observation serves a formulated study objective and is routinely organised and documented, it becomes a science instrument and the process of data collection for the researcher."

Inspections and controls were performed on this guide to ensure its validity and durability. The researcher studied and took notes on the physical atmosphere of the campus and artefacts and pictures in classes during the data collection stage of the analysis to see how the environment promotes inclusive education. The analyst noticed and made notes on the relationship between the instructor and learners who were having trouble studying on the class tour. This was intended to see how the educator could help students who were having difficulty learning. This approach aided the researcher in data validity since interview subjects could not act in the manner that they claim. Observation may also show something to the interviewer that the interviewee may not mention during the interview. It may also assist in the development of a follow-up query for the researcher. This method of data collection also helped the study because:

- Subjective bias was eliminated.

- Data collected through this method related to what was happening at that time and was not influenced by past actions or future intentions.

- The method was sovereign and did not rely on the participants' desire to respond. As such, the technique was not dependent on active cooperation with the participants, as in the interviews.

3.13. DATA ANALYSIS

"This is known as making sense of the text, audio, and images so that the researcher can answer the research question successfully" (Creswell 2012:33). Making sense of data is a difficult task that requires switching back and forth between tangible bits of data and intangible concepts in data handling. As a result, Creswell (2014:241) compares it to "peeling back the layers of an onion as well as reassembling it." "The process of reducing accumulated data collected in research to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and performing statistical analysis,"

according to Breyman & Bell (2011:571). It is also "the process of organising data into categories and identifying relationships among them," according to White (2005:168).

In line with this, the study used qualitative content analysis to examine data collected at the school about educators' experiences in assisting students with learning disabilities. In content analysis, the researcher begins with some ideas about possible themes and searches the data for them. The following steps were used to analyse the data.

3.13.1. Preparing and organising data for analysis.

In this step, the data obtained from the completed interviews were collated and organised to facilitate transcription.

3.13.2. Explore and code the data.

The process of data coding commenced with identifying small pieces of data called segments, which are texts that are comprehensible by themselves, and that includes a single relevant idea. Open coding was employed because it is a method of finding essential words or groups of words in the data and classify them.

3.13.3. Coding to build description and themes.

The thematic analysis method was used, which according to Braun and Clark (2013:174),

"Is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within the data. The segments were therefore examined in detail to develop themes and sub-themes from the data". Compelling quotes and extracts were selected to illustrate the themes.

3.13.4. Report qualitative findings.

During this process, findings were recorded in line with the identified themes and subthemes. This process also included an analysis of the specified documents.

3.13.5. Interpret the findings.

Data was interpreted to demonstrate whether they are still in line with the research questions and objectives.

3.13.6. Validate the accuracy of the findings.

The researcher verified the findings' accuracy or credibility by employing a member checking (triangulation) strategy.

After the analysis, hard copies of data (documents) were kept in a locked safe and retained there for five years. Soft copies in digital format were held on the computer's hard drive and protected by the researcher's password.

3.14. VALIDITY

"The extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration is called validity" (Babbie,2010:153). This leads to the question as to whether we are measuring what we claim to be measuring because a measure of economic status should measure the financial situation, not a political position. Therefore, "validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure" (Kumar,2011:171). Given (2008:909) confirms it as "the goodness or soundness of a study". In other words, "validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain

strategies" (Creswell, 2014:251). In this study, the researcher used validity strategies like triangulation and an extended period on the field.

3.14.1. Triangulation

Creswell (2014:201) explains triangulation as "examining evidence from different data sources to build a coherent justification for a theme". This process adds validity to the study. In this study, different information sources were examined, such as analysing related documents, the information supplied by participants during the interviews and observation by the researcher. The themes established during data analysis were the result of converging data from these different sources.

3.15. RELIABILITY / TRUSTWORTHINESS

The researcher ensured trustworthiness in this study by documenting every procedure and every step taken. A detailed case study protocol and a database were established. Furthermore, the reliability of this study's results was achieved by discussing the following four criteria of trustworthiness.

3.15.1. Credibility

"The confidence one has in the truth of the results is referred to as credibility" (Bowen, 2005:215). This study strived to precisely describe and interpret the participant's experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning. The researcher also had a one-on-one in-depth interview with the participants in their posts for more than three years. The researcher is a staff member in the institution where data was collected, evident in the participants' prolonged engagement. He also spent most of the time observing data given by participants. Triangulation was also added to guarantee the credibility of the findings.

3.15.2. Transferability

The researcher provided a rich, thick and comprehensive account of the events and contexts so that the reader can apply these findings in other settings and contexts. The experiences of the interviewed educators who support learners facing barriers to learning at an institution where the study took place can be transferred to a much broader context, that is, other educators in other schools. The data described in this study is detailed enough to enable other researchers to utilise it for their studies.

3.15.3. Dependability

According to Creswell (2003:220), Dependability is "the degree to which the same effects might be replicated if the same instruments were used with the same participants under the same circumstances." The findings were consistent since the procedures were described in depth. The data collection processes (interviews, evaluation, and record analysis) and the analysis methods were straightforward, coherent, and communicated. Triangulation was often used to ensure that all internal mechanisms were cohesive and reliable.

3.15.4. Conformability

Conformability is described by Luningo (2015:73) as the "degree to which study results are free of bias." During the data collection process, the researcher described many of the topics that might concern him, such as personal beliefs, emotions, and behaviours, and how they could impact the study's results. To reduce prejudice in the results, these problems were observed and prevented. Consequently, the researcher should confirm that the study's results are not biased.

3.16. FEEDBACK ON THE RESEARCH

After the study was completed, a copy of the research findings was made available to the school. The researcher will also provide face-to-face feedback to the research participants. Furthermore, the input will also be forwarded to the department of education. These findings will help the department review the support given to educators in the pursuance of inclusive education, as stated in the research proposal. The study may also inform policy debates and serve as data for policymakers and planners to consider when planning.

3.17. CONCLUSION

The chapter broadly outlined the systematic way in which the research problem was addressed. The methods included research design and approach, research paradigm, research ethics and ethical clearance, validity & reliability / trustworthiness, and all data collection steps used in the study. The following chapter will deal with the analysis of data and the findings thereof.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1.   INTRODUCTION

The last chapter dealt with data collection from the sampled participants. In this chapter, the findings during the data collection processes were analysed. "It is an integral part of qualitative research and constitutes an essential steppingstone toward both gathering data and linking one's findings with higher order concepts" (Given, 2008:186).

The data analysed was obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. One-on-one semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were preferred over group interviews as data collection instruments. Data was also collected through observation, and an observation guide was created for this purpose. This method helped the researcher validate data because participants in interviews may not behave like they said they are. Therefore, observation can tell the researcher something that the interviewee might omit to say when interviewed.

Documents such as promotion and retention policy, school policy on inclusive education, departmental circulars and minutes of meetings were also analysed to determine how learners facing barriers to learning were supported by educators and how educators were supported.

4.2. THEMES

Given (2008:186) concedes that data analysis may seem like a daunting task for a novice researcher because of overwhelming field notes, interview transcripts, and so many documents to analyse. This study's themes

emerged after the analysis of data collected through interviews, observation, and document analysis.

Participants responded to the following questions during the interviews:

1. Tell me about your educational background, teaching experiences, and experiences with learners in your classroom?

2. What is your understanding of inclusive education?

3. Have you ever received any training or workshop on inclusive education from the department?

4. Do you have learners in your class who are experiencing barriers to learning?

5. What challenges do you experience in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning?

6. Do you have documents that help or give you guidance on how to address these challenges?

7. What strategies do you use to support learners experiencing barriers to learning?

8. Is there any support that the SBST is providing to you as an educator?

9. Do you have any comments regarding inclusive education in High schools?

After analysing the data, three main themes emerged, namely:

(a) Challenges of educators.

(b) Support in inclusive education; and

(c) Attitudes of educators towards inclusive education.

Within the first theme, there are three sub-themes, namely, (1) Lack of training on inclusive education, (2) Identification of learners facing barriers to learning and (3) Overcrowded classrooms. In the second theme also, three sub-themes were identified, and that is, (1) Support for learners, (2) Support

for educators and (3) Resources. The third and last theme has two sub-themes, which are (1) Positive attitudes and (2) Negative attitudes. The table below represents the themes and sub-themes identified data collected during the interviews.

Table 4.1. Identified themes and sub-themes.

Themes	Sub-themes
A. Challenges of educators	1. Overcrowded classroom 2. Identification of learners facing barriers to learning. 3. Lack of training on inclusive education.
B. Support in inclusive education	1. Support for educators 2. Support for learners 3. Resources
C. Attitudes of educators towards inclusive education.	1. Positive attitudes 2. Negative attitudes

4.3. DISCUSSION OF THEMES
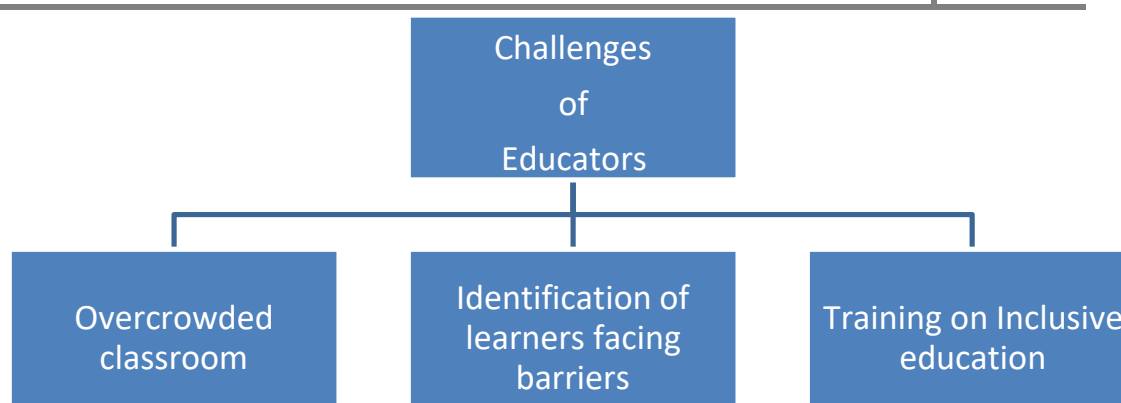
Figure 4.1. Theme A

4.3.1. Theme A. (challenges of educators)

The first theme stems from participants' answers to questions 1 to 5 and 9. The experiences of educators in classrooms resulted in several challenges. From theme A, three subthemes emerged: overcrowded classrooms, identification of learners facing barriers to learning, and lack of inclusive education training.

4.3.1.1. Subtheme 1 (Overcrowded classrooms)

This subtheme developed when participants were responding to questions 1 and 5 during the interviews. In question 1, participants were asked about their teaching experiences and experiences with learners in their classrooms. In this question, four of the six participants mentioned overcrowding in classes as an experience that affects their capacity to deliver the curriculum and support learners facing learning barriers. The following comments highlight this:

Sithole: "I'm experiencing overcrowded classrooms, where you can't even give individual *attention to each learner. Ill*-discipline also result because you don't know all learners." Khosa added that: "In the classroom, I'm faced with diverse situations, overcrowdi*ng and ill*-disciplined learners is the order of the day."

From the above statements, classes at this school are mostly overcrowded, which will lead to educators neglecting learners facing barriers to learning. Ill-discipline is prevalent in classes where there is overcrowding, and educators will certainly lose control of learners. The department acknowledged this challenge and its consequences of making it difficult for educators to implement curriculum and assessing learners (DBE, 2009c:59).

Wentzel (2016:95) found out that "lower class sizes allow for more interaction between the educator and learner, resulting in quality teaching and learning." When classrooms are overcrowded, educators are unable to offer personal support to learners who require individual attention.

Question 5 required participants to mention challenges they experience in supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

Dlamini: "My challenge is lack of proper knowledge in this policy. I feel I am not the right *person to implement this policy. Overcrowding also impact in my ability to support the* learners I identify as facing barriers to learning."

Although knowledge of the policy was mentioned mainly by the participants in responding to question 5, overcrowding was also mentioned to prevent educators from effectively supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

In 2009 the department of education released a report regarding overcrowding and recommended further investigation (DBE, 2009c:59). It also came out with the plan to relieve schools of overcrowding depending on the availability of national resources. Specific procedures and styles in teaching large classes successfully are contained in this document (DBE, 2009c). Furthermore, the department also acknowledged this issue in its budget speech of 2012 when the minister announced its strategic plan aimed at reducing the class sizes by providing schools with additional posts to lower educator-learner ratio in South African schools.

4.3.1.2. Sub-theme 2 (Identification of learners facing barriers to learning)

In this subtheme, the researcher discovered that educators at this school could not quickly identify learners facing learning barriers. Educators recognise learners experiencing disability and learners with poor vision only as learners facing barriers to learning. This is so because the two categories are easily recognisable without the process of screening. This was evident when participants replied to question 4, which required them to say if they had learners in their classrooms experiencing barriers to learning.

Mokoena: "Yes, they are there." When probed how she identifies them, she responded: *"Some are on crutches and some struggle to read from the chalkboard."*

Ngobeni expressed a similar view to the same question as this: "Yes*, some learners are* slow to get along with the lesson, others can't express themselves in English." When probed if they ever use a SIAS toolkit to identify learners facing barriers to learning, he replied: "No."

In this question, all the participants echoed the same view that learners face barriers to learning in their classes. The information they provided indicates that there might be more learners facing learning barriers than the ones they identified. This is so because they are using their biased judgment instead of the department's SIAS toolkit provided to them.

According to this policy, "barriers to learning may include:

   a) Socio-economic aspects (such as lack of access to essential services, poverty, and under-development)

   b) Factors that place learners at risk, for example, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, political violence, HIV and AIDS and other chronic health conditions c) Attitudes

   d) Inflexible curriculum implementation at schools

   e) Language and communication

   f) Inaccessible and unsafe structural environments

g) Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services

h) Lack of parental recognition and involvement

i) Disability

j) Lack of human resource development strategies

k) Unavailability of accessible learning and teaching support materials and assistive technology (DBE, 2014:13).

The SIAS process helps the educators to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school" (DBE, 2014:11).

4.3.1.3. Sub-theme 3 (Lack of training on inclusive education)

Asking questions 2, 3 and 9 of the interviews guided led to discover this subtheme. Educators at this school lack the fundamental understanding of the concept of inclusive education. That was most evident when question 2 was asked.

This is what Khosa had to say: "It is a policy which says we must keep learners with disabilities at our schools."

Mokoena concurred with Khosa: "It is a government directive which says we must te*ach* all learners in the same classrooms, including those with special needs."

Ngobeni further expressed this lack of understanding on inclusive education issues when he just expressed himself like this: "It is a system that allows space for parents, teache*rs,* community and experts towards common goal".

Moreover, judging by the answers given above, it becomes evident that there are lacking knowledge and understanding of what inclusive education is all about. Only a few participants knew that it is a policy but could not elaborate further about this policy. The responses of most of the participants suggested that they had little or no understanding of inclusive education. They did not

mention anything about supporting learners facing barriers to learning in their classes. This is indicative that they will just keep learners in their classes to comply with the policy requirement but not support them. Whereas the reasons for inclusive education are among others:

- Are about acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support,
- Are about enabling education structures (schools), systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners, therefore,
- maximising all learners' participation in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.

 Therefore, it is essential to understand the primary reasons for inclusive education. This understanding can only be achieved when educators are trained. "Lack of training and skills are viewed as barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education" (Jali, 2014:76). Education is a right to every learner. In pursuing this fundamental right of learners to basic education, the state, through the constitution (Act 108 of 1996), committed itself to protect all learners disabled or not by achieving equality and non-discrimination (section 9 (2), (3), (4) and (5)

Question 3 from the interview guide required educators to indicate if they ever received any training or workshop on inclusive education from the department. The responses from most of the participants indicated that they had no training. Their responses further indicate that inclusive education policy was only reported to them in a staff meeting by two SMT members who attended the workshop. From the participant's understanding, they had little time to understand what this policy is all about.

Khosa reported that they were only told about this policy during a staff meeting by the principal and the SMT member who attended the workshop.

Mokoena confirmed this: "We had a less than an hour briefing about this policy by those who attended the workshop." Of the six participants, only one agreed to have received training.

"The only workshop I remember about inclusive education was in 2015, conducted by the department and only the principal and one SMT member were invited." confirmed Baloyi. This indicates that there were no follow-up meetings/training or any kind of communication between the school and the department regarding inclusive education. This further confirms the lack of support for educators by the department. This lack of support for educators by the department will result in a lack of support for learners facing learning barriers. The department in EWP6 promised that "education support personnel within district support services will be orientated to and trained in their new roles of providing support to educators and the training will focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as the whole so that a full range of learning needs can be met" (DoE, 2001:19).

Question 9, which invited participants' comments about inclusive education in high schools, also discovered that educators are yearning for full training on inclusive education practice.

Khosa complained that: "This policy is confusing us, because the department doesn't train us but want us to implement it."

Still, on the same issue, Dlamini indicated the following: "The department must take educators for full training on this policy so that we can have good knowledge."

Baloyi confirmed these views when he said: "Yes, the department should first train *educators well enough before forcing t*hem to implement this policy."

The introduction of the SIAS policy document was an intervention by the department to help educators support learners facing barriers to learning. Nevertheless, one of the questions that SIAS raises is on the stakeholders' capacity such as educators to participate at the different stages of the

designated support initiatives (Majoko & Phasha, 2018:48). This further confirms that educators' experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning are confronted with challenges. Educators require intense training before they effectively support learners.

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                    │    education    │
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│   Support for   │  │   Support for   │  │    Resources    │
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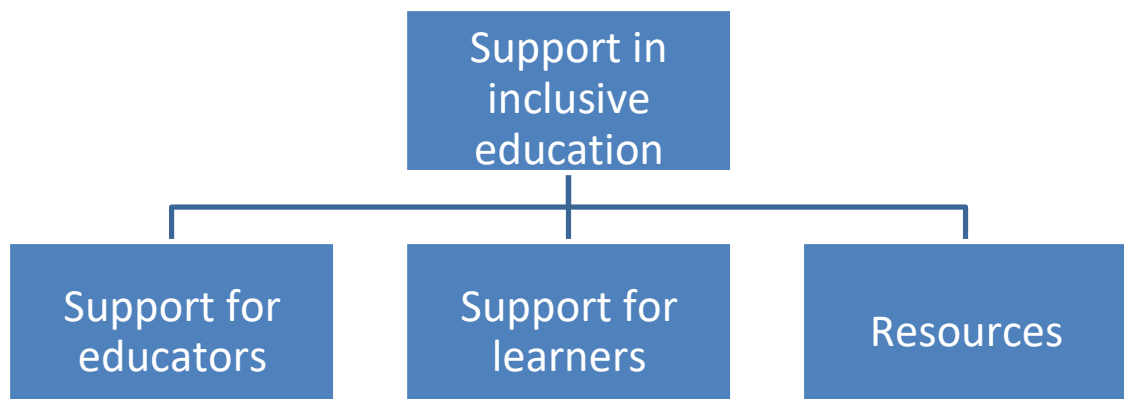
Figure 4.2 Theme B

4.3.2. Theme B (Support in inclusive education)

Theme B emerged when participants responded to questions 6, 7 and 8 of the interview guides. The questions were:

Question 6: Do you have documents that help or guide you in addressing these challenges?

Question 7: What strategies do you use to support learners experiencing barriers to learning?

Question 8: Is there any support that the SBST is providing to you as an educator?

From the above questions about support, three subthemes emerged, and that is: Support to educators, Support to learners and Resources.

4.3.2.1. Subtheme 1 (Support to educators)

If educators are to support learners facing barriers to learning effectively, they too should be supported. However, all the participants' responses show little or no support for educators by the School Based Support Team (SBST). Education White Paper 6 put it clear that "the District Based Support Teams will provide the full range of educational support services, such as professional development in the curriculum and assessment to these institutional-level support teams" (DoE, 2001:29).

 Some of the responses for question 8 are: "No support, they (SBST) also don't have enough information about this policy", complained Dlamini.

In the same line of thought, Sithole had this to say: "The committee exist just by name, the people don't know what they are supposed to do."

Furthermore, Baloyi expressed a similar view: "The committee is there, but they are helpless as they haven't received any training from the DBST (District Based Support Team)."

The above responses reveal to the researcher that the school's support team is there for compliance's sake. The committee has never supported educators. Educators also defend this support team's lack of action by blaming the DBST for not capacitating them. The mandate of the DBST is "to evaluate and, through supporting teaching, build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and further and higher education institutions to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs" (DoE, 2001:47). Schools are not receiving any support due to them from the DBST, as expected. If the SBST is well supported, then educators will have the ability to cascade this support to learners facing learning.

Following the EPW6 (DoE, 2001:29), the School Based Support Team's core function will be to establish well-coordinated learner and educator support

services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner and educator needs. Inadequate support for educators remains a severe challenge in schools, and if they are not supported, support learners facing barriers to learning will remain a dream to achieve. "Educators will always feel insecure themselves if they are not supported" (Ndinisa, 2016:65). The barriers to learning experienced by many learners have necessitated a support instrument called SIAS (Majoko and Phasha, 2018:48). The aim of this policy document is "to provide a framework for the standardisation of procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in schools" (DoE, 2014:11).

4.3.2.2. Subtheme 2 (Support to learners)

It is the right of every learner to go to school near his home following the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). Although the South Africa School Act (SASA 1996) makes it plain that: "Learners with special needs at public education should be granted instructional assistance, in order to show their degree of success in equitable opportunity, through adaptive and positive evaluation interventions." Section 12 (4). The emphasis on inclusion is no longer on students with disabilities only, but rather on all students, even those who are not entitled to rights (Forlin, 2010:650).

Learners confronting barriers to learning are indeed their own without educators' assistance as those who adopt inclusive education policies. These students are not sponsored regardless of the criteria laid out in the EWP6 policy. The answer to Question 7 in the Guide was obvious. This was clear. On this issue of supporting learners facing barriers to learning, this is what Khosa had to say: "I just notify my sectional head to take the matter forward."

Mokoena shared the same view by saying: "I just alert my senior on learners that I suspect to be experiencing barriers to learning."

As the school manager and being the one who attended training on inclusive education,

Baloyi reported this: "Once the learner has been identi*fied and interviewed, we invite parents and recommend that they seek medical attention or involve a social worker to* help the learner in that situation."

Participants Khosa and Mokoena's responses indicate that educators in this school do not know the procedures of supporting learners, which are contained in the SIAS toolkit. The two educators only mention a reference to seniors. This, in turn, might mean avoidance of learners facing barriers to learning instead of supporting them. This action by educators might be caused by a lack of support for educators by the department.

Moreover, the fact that educators in countries like this "are judged on the results of their students, so there is little motivation for them to devote additional time of support to those who are unlikely to achieve good results" (Forlin 2010 in Sharma et al., 2013:5). However, the response by Baloyi indicates the little they can do as educators, and that is

'identification'. After that, they refer the learner to parents who do not know barriers to learning. The identification mentioned by the respondent does not follow the procedures contained in the SIAS toolkit.

Furthermore, advising a learner's parents to seek a specialist's help is not adequate to support a learner by the educator. As mentioned earlier, when profiling the research site, the school is situated in an intense rural area where most of the parents of these learners are not educated and only survive by being labourers in nearby farms. Therefore, most parents might ignore this advice because of a lack of knowledge of these barriers' consequences in their child's future.

4.3.2.3. Subtheme 3 (Resources)

Resources provision in support of learners facing barriers to learning is vital. Without resources, support would be meaningless, and the education of these learners will be in danger. As the "first step in building an Inclusive Education and Training system the department of education concede that a wide range of learning needs exists among learners and if they are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the learning system" (DoE, 2001:17).

EWP6 stipulates the department will prioritise human resource development because "…classroom educators are our primary resource for achieving our goal of inclusive education and training system" (DoE, 2001:18). Currently, inaccessible and unsafe built environment are found in schools. In contrast, the ministry in EWP6 stipulates that "an aspect of the development of learning settings that they will give urgent attention to is the creation of barrier-free physical environments" (DoE, 2001:28).

The educator's lament of total lack of support from the department might seem an exaggeration if you consider that the department has provided every school with a file containing all the documents during the workshop in 2015. These files have all the necessary documents to help educators support learners facing learning barriers in their respective schools. When responding to question 6 of the interview guide, which asked about the availability of documents to address the challenges.

Ngobeni indicated the following: *"I have not yet received any document personally, but I'm still enquiring from my colleagues."*

In the same vein, Sithole had this to say: *"There is a file in the principal's office that we are encouraged to use to deal with such situations."*

Dlamini responded to the same question in this manner: "Yes, the principal and the SMT *came back from the workshop with a file containing documents in it. The file is in the* principal's office."

The participant's response to this question indicates that educators in this school do not bother consulting documents provided to them when confronted with the task of supporting learners facing barriers to learning. The file provided to the school by the department is an essential resource that can guide educators when they are faced with challenges of support. If educators do not go through this file's content, they will not even know the resources they lack. Do educators regard this as an extra responsibility that is not meant for them, or they are just lazy to carry out their responsibility? This question leads us to the next theme, which deals with educators' attitudes towards supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

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               │ Attitudes of educators │
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    │ Positive attitudes │     │ Negative attitudes │
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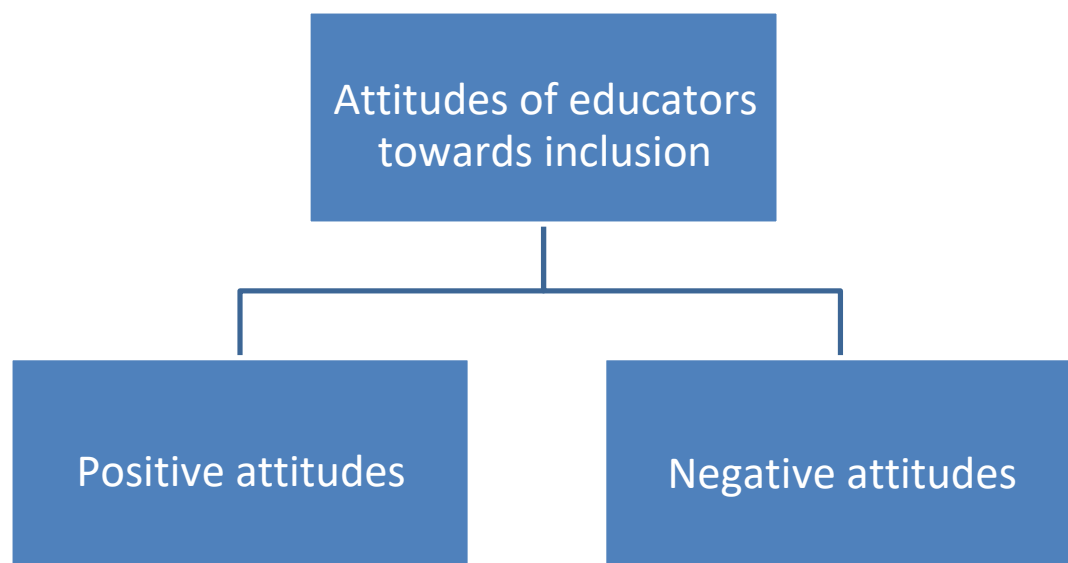
Figure 4.3 Theme C

4.3.3. Theme C. (Attitudes of educators towards inclusive education.)

This theme emerged after participant's responses to question 6 and 9 were analysed. As mentioned earlier in chapter 2, "the attitudes of educators are an important predictor of a successful inclusion than training" (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007:354). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2007:78) assert that "educators are human beings with individual attitudes to difference and disabilities, formed in a context of prevailing social attitudes."

If educators' attitudes towards inclusion are positive, support for learners facing barriers to learning will be successful. But by judging from the responses of participants in answering question 6 which required them to say if they had documents which helps them to support such learners, educators' attitudes seem to be negative. Most educators know that the school has documents that can guide them while supporting learners facing barriers to learning. Willingness to peruse these documents to understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting learners facing barriers to learners seems impossible. Responding to question 6, Mokoena said: "They are not in my file, but in the principal's office."

Baloyi echoed Mokoena's words when he said: "Yes, documents are there, but *documents alone cannot help us without proper support from the departme*nt."

The interviewer probed Baloyi's response about 'proper support' anticipated from the department. Baloyi's response to proper support was: "constant workshops and monitoring." Educators' undesirable attitudes towards supporting learners facing barriers to learning stem from a lack of adequate knowledge. Educators are not known because they have not been trained to handle such responsibilities. This was evident when participants responded to question 9 which required general comments. Training can go a long way in equipping educators with knowledge to support learners facing barriers to learning.

This notion was backed by Dlamini, who stated: "The department must take educators for *full training on this policy so that we can have good* knowledge."

In the same line of thought, Sithole said: "Teachers must be trained and provided with resources to be able to support learners."

Ngobeni also expressed this view: "The departments of education need to show *seriousness in training educators and* also monitoring systems that are in place."

From the above responses, training is paramount to remove educators' negative attitudes towards supporting learners facing barriers to learning. European Commission Communication Improving the quality of Teacher Education (2007) found that educators need to have a full range of knowledge, attitudes, and pedagogical skills to help learners reach their full potential by responding to specific needs of each learner applying a wide range of teaching strategies. Gwala (2000) in Mkhuma (2012:37) affirm that "some educators display negative attitudes towards inclusive education because they are not knowledgeable and skilled enough to implement this policy with self-confidence.

4.4. OBSERVATION

As has been pointed out earlier in chapter 2, the benefit of the observation method in data collection is that it can tell the researcher something the interviewee might omit to mention when interviewed. An observation guide was designed for this purpose, and the researcher assumed a passive observer status while the educator was teaching. During this class visit, the researcher took notes in line with the observation guide. The following was observed.

1. The educator does not conduct classroom assessments to identify learners that might be facing barriers to learning. The educator only introduces the lesson of the day and then start to teach as if all learners are the same and without barriers. In this way, learners facing barriers to learning are not supported. Learners who experience

barriers to learning in regular classrooms may experience an inflexible curriculum from teachers using inappropriate teaching styles (DoE, 2001a:7&18).

2. During the class visit, the researcher observed a learner with dwarfism and was sitting at a desk that looked higher. She struggled to climb up and down this desk, and it looked like nothing was done to make her feel accommodated in class. This shows that the school does not have some Teacher Learner Support Materials (LTSM) to answer learners' needs facing barriers to learning. A smaller desk would make this learner feel comfortable and focus on the day's lesson. Furthermore, during that lesson, the educator sported a learner who seems to be struggling to see what is written on the chalkboard; he just instructed the learner to change position to the front row to have a closer view. A knowledgeable and passionate educator would have realised that this learner needs reading glasses and started a process of supporting him.

3. The third question in the observation guide asked the researcher to observe if learners facing barriers to learning receive support in the use of adaptive equipment. The answer is "NO" as no assistive device was visible in the classroom. If the assistive devices were there, their educator would probably lack the knowledge of operating some of them. They did not receive any training in supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

4. The classroom arrangement was not conducive for inclusive education. The layout for an inclusive classroom was hampered by congestion and a shortage of furniture. That was observed to respond to question

4 of the observation guide. An ideal classroom for inclusive education and successful support for learners facing barriers to learning would have a sufficient number of learners, enough furniture and an arrangement that would allow free movement around learners and the educator while teaching. In this type of classroom, all the learners feel welcomed because they are accommodated regardless of their diverse needs.

5. Other factors in the classroom that impacted or negatively impacted learners during the teaching and learning activity were overcrowding and unsupportive structures. The class observed had approximately 54 learners. As expressed earlier in this chapter, overcrowded classrooms hamper the educator's ability to provide individual support to learners facing learning barriers. This kind of situation also leads to ill-discipline among learners as the educator cannot control the learners.

The researcher further observed that the classroom entrance had a step that renders it inaccessible for learners using wheelchairs. Whereas "the department committed itself to giving urgent attention to the creation of barrier-free physical environments" (DoE, 2001:28). This commitment is yet to be realised. This was also eluded earlier in the subtheme of the resource.

4.5. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The school-owned documents were analysed and seemed silent regarding the support of learners facing barriers to learning in their school curriculum. This has also been confirmed during class observation, where the lesson was not designed to also cater for learners facing barriers to learning. The following documents were analysed.

4.5.1. Circular E22 of 2016 (Criteria for the implementation of progression in grade 10-12)

This was a follow-up of circular E35 of 2015 sent to the provincial education department whose purpose was to align the regulations with the minimum requirements of the National Senior Certificate to ensure that a learner who is progressed meets the essential criteria which will assist the learner in coping with the demand of the next grade. Who are progressed learners?

4.5.2. Guidelines for the implementation of promotion and progression requirements for grade 10-11 (2016)

This legislation's focus is on progressed learners. The concept "learning progression" is defined as "the purposeful sequencing of teaching and learning expectations across multiple developmental stages, ages, or grade levels" (edglossary.org). This is the learner's advancement from a lower grade to a higher grade, even though the learner has not complied with all the promotion requirements. Learners who qualify for progression are learners who did not perform satisfactorily because of barriers they experience in their lives. According to the document, the intent is "to uphold the learner's best interest and to minimise unnecessary school dropout in the schooling system so that every learner has an opportunity to achieve an exit qualification such as National Senior Certificate" (DBE, 2016:2.6.1). The document attributes learner's dropout to disappointment and hopelessness by learners because they have failed many times in the same grade. This document is silent on learners' barriers, which might have caused this underperformance and the necessary support thereof.

The document further clarifies the criteria for learner progression from grade 10 to 11 or from grade 11 to 12 in section 2 as follows:

   a) "The learner must have failed to satisfy the promotional requirements of either Grade 10 or Grade 11 and repeated Grade 10 0r Grade 11.

b) The learner must have passed the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) and another three of the seven subjects offered.

c) The learner must have attended school regularly. Absenteeism more than 20 days, without a valid reason, will disqualify the learner from being progressed.

d) The learner must have complied with the prescribed School-Based Assessment (SBA) requirements for that academic year" (DBE, 2016:2.6.1).

The above criteria imply that the learner who qualifies to be progressed has an interest in education but has barriers preventing them from performing well. The learner needs to be supported by educators to achieve, but no support will be meaningful if the barriers have not been identified. The SIAS process points out that the initial identification of learner who requires support to perform well "would be based on accumulated evidence from the curriculum assessment process which includes observation, documentation from the learner's portfolio, workbooks, and consolidated verbal and written information from other educators, and parents/caregivers" (DoE, 2008:10).

When it comes to supporting a progressed learner, the document pronounces that the district through the District Based Support Teams (DBST) and the school through School Based Support Teams (SBST) must have clearly articulated intervention strategies that include early identification of low achievers or at-risk learners so that the school, district and province can develop and implement additional learning opportunities (DBE,2016;6).

This will be done "through meaningful extended day/year-long programs outside of regular school hours to build the self-esteem of these learners and facilitate their social adjustment or facilitate their access to alternate career pathways that are available locally" (DBE,2016;6). The above statement about support is vague; the department seems to be relegating the duty of

supporting learners facing barriers to learning to educators who are less resourced and have not been appropriately trained to handle such.

Support for learners facing barriers to learning who have been progressed to grade 12 will have their performance monitored and based on their performance during Preparatory examination, which if not good, the learner will be persuaded to:

a) "Write the examination in a limited number of subjects (maximum of four) in the first sitting of the end-of-year examination" (DBE, 2016; 3.2).

When a progressed grade 12 learner writes a reduced number of subjects in the first sitting and the rest of the subjects to be written in the subsequent examination, it is called Multiple Examination Opportunities (MEO). This act shows that the department acknowledges that this kind of learner might be facing barriers to learning and needs support. Allowing a learner an MEO opportunity is not supported because the learner's barriers have not been identified, so that appropriate support to be determined. After the first sitting of the examination, the learner who took this MEO opportunity is on his or her own to face the remaining examination/s, with no support. The learner is no longer regarded as a learner in that school, and even resources such as textbooks lent to this learner have been retrieved.

4.5.3. Other documents

Other documents which were analysed are the school policy on inclusive education. This document is non-existence at the institution. School minutes of meetings held also did not show any meetings held regarding support to educators and learners facing barriers to learning. Programs for supporting learners facing barriers to learning were not available. Learners' portfolios for learners facing barriers to learning were also not available. This shows that educators do not support learners.

Based on the review of the documents mentioned earlier, it can be concluded that advanced learners encounter learning obstacles. The framework requires these learners to struggle and then advance them using those standards that do not support equitable education goals. It is also little in existence in the advanced learner assistance programme. No other district surveillance data remains, such that the success of progressive learners needs quarterly figures. Many who have advanced to 12th grade are encouraged to write down all topics during their final test if the third quarter tests have not been carried out well. They are themselves during the first session of their exams, and they receive little encouragement. While the Education White Paper 6 says, "the fundamental idea should be to provide the opportunity for learning for both adolescents, young people and adults and all they need is help" (DoE, 2001:6).

4.6. CONCLUSION

It emerged from the interviews that educators face severe challenges in supporting learners facing barriers to learning. Educators are still to understand the policy of inclusive education. This is so because they are not adequately trained to implement it. Overcrowding in classes also hampers the identification and support of these learners. Support due to educators is not coming forth; hence learners are not correctly supported. As observed during class visit, the school has an infrastructural challenge. The infrastructure does not satisfy the standards of supporting learners facing barriers to learning. This whole situation increases the stress level of educators and results in a negative attitude.

The subsequent chapter (Chapter 5) will discuss the findings of the study, together with recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, data collected was discussed, and findings were analysed. This chapter would summarise the results and checks if the aims and objectives of the study were achieved. As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study was:

To identify secondary school educators' experiences in supporting learners facing learning barriers at a school in the Tzaneen district. The educators' experiences will inform the department of the necessary intervention strategies to get their support. It is also essential to note that whatever the experiences of the educators are, learners must continue to be supported for the achievement of the goals of the National Development

Plan 2030, which are among others, to ensure that "all children must access and benefit from high quality education, high-quality services that are flexible, so that they can be responsive to the needs of all children and specific consideration should be given to the most vulnerable children, those who are living in poverty or with disabilities" (NDP 2030:264)

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To understand how educators at a school in the Tzaneen district are supporting learners facing barriers to learning.
- To identify what the department provides support to educators at a school in the Tzaneen district to respond to learners' needs facing learning barriers.

- To identify what informs teachers' experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning.
- To identify the attitudes of the educators at a school in the Tzaneen district to inclusive education.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following are the outcomes established to form the themes that arose during the discussions and data analysis in the previous chapter.

5.2.1. Overcrowded classrooms

Educators have overcrowded classes, and it is difficult in helping educators who encounter learning obstacles. The class enrolment at this school ranges from 15 to 81 students, as found during the researcher's data collection. It was more than fifty students in several schools. Managing big groups is difficult for teachers because it is not easy to handle them. If the students are out of balance, there would be poor discipline. Classes today are varied with any form of student barrier. The teacher cannot adequately screen, locate, determine and assist learners who pose challenges to learning in this case. Apart from the difficulty of overcrowding in schools, students confront inadequate parental support. The education department had agreed that in 2009 when it issued a study (DBE 2009c:59), it laid out a strategy to alleviate schools of this task. However, classrooms are overcrowded to date, and students appear to be helpless in the face of learning obstacles. The following are recommendations: Education bands and all they need is assistance" (DoE, 2001:6).

- During the budget speech by the department of education in 2012, the minister promised to provide schools with additional posts as part of its strategic plan to reduce class sizes in schools. If this plan can be implemented, it can go a long way in reducing overcrowding

in classes so that educators can have manageable class sizes where they can have the ability to identify and support learners facing barriers to learning.

- Overcrowding, in certain instances, can be caused by how subjects or learning areas are streamed. Usually, science and commerce streams have a low enrolment of between six to twenty learners per class, while general streams have between forty to eighty learners per class. This leads to the Humanities stream being overcrowded while science streams enjoy below educator-learner ratio numbers. Since the department of education does not consider streams when allocating post establishments and only consider school enrolment, the researcher recommends that it will be helpful for schools to do away with streams that have low enrolment per class and the learners be transferred to a nearby school which offer those streams.

5.2.2. Lack of understanding of inclusive education and barriers.

The outcomes of this research suggest that educators are incredibly comfortable with the idea of inclusive education. Ntombela (2009:113) observed that "effective and productive distribution of instructional advancement relies, among other things, upon proper comprehension of the change between stakeholder organisations (i.e., educators) within implementation organisations. And once schools and administrators do not grasp this policy, children who are confronted with obstacles to learning will never be recognised and protected. The participants' answers during the interviews were straightforward. Educators have a weak grasp of what is more about comprehensive school policies (EWP6). Many educators regard this strategy as a departmental to retain students with disabilities and not

send them to special programmes at ordinary schools. Education requires teaching pupils in normal education environments and special education needs (Suleymanov, 2015:4). Educators are ignorant of implementing this programme because of Salamanca's announcement that schools must be prepared to care for all children except for special purposes. "… Accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from a remote or nomadic population, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups." (UNESCO, 1994:6)

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, learners' educational rights experiencing obstacles to learning are constitutional, and the EWP6 aims to ensure that they are secured. Mahlo (2011:185) said that "Inclusive schooling will lead as an education tool to the democratisation of culture by embracing universal ideals of freedom, civil dignity and the acceptance of plurality."

Awareness of hurdles is another factor that educators neglect. Barriers are functional disabilities for most educators. In conversations with educators, the researcher has found this. They said they knew students who face learning obstacles without the SIAS method. There is little understanding of intellectual, social, emotional and linguistic challenges. This inability to recognise an equitable curriculum strategy and obstacle awareness would find many students unaware and unsupported obstacles to learning.

The researcher then recommended:

- Departmental promotion of comprehensive education should be expanded to penetrate classrooms so that educators can adequately identify and help learners who face learning barriers. • Early in primary

school years, teachers who face learning barriers should be recognised to ensure that the form and degree of support are sufficient as they enter secondary education. If students are marked as having obstacles to high school education, they could be sponsored late or never.

5.2.3. Lack of training on inclusive education

Educator's lack of conceptual knowledge and understanding of inclusive education and barriers that emerged in the findings is caused by absence of training on inclusive education. The results were discovered when conducting interviews with educators. Most educators "have not had the benefit of being trained to teach learners who experience barriers to learning in their initial training, hence they experience challenges" (Mahlo, 2011:1). The move towards an inclusive schooling system "depend among others on teacher education, as an important aspect of enabling or hindering it" (Forlin, 2010:649). Knowledge and understanding of inclusive education can only be achieved when educators are trained. The department used the cascade model to train educators about this policy (EWP6). This model does not prove effective as the department does not monitor to check if training did reach the targeted educators. Educators knew for the first time about this policy when reported to them after the principal and one SMT member attended the workshop. That was in 2015, and there was no follow-up meeting or workshop to monitor or support educators on how to implement this policy. If EWP6 is not fully implemented in schools, learners facing learning barriers will never be supported in their education. This policy (EWP6) asserted that "education support personnel within the district support services will be orientated to and trained in their new roles of providing support to all educators, and the training of educators will focus on supporting all learners…" (DoE, 2001:19). Until educators are appropriately trained on inclusive education, support for learners facing barriers to learning will remain

a dream to be achieved. The lack of training on inclusive education for educators led the researcher to recommend the following:

- Educators must constantly be reskilled through in-service training, workshops and even seminars to capacitate them on supporting learners facing barriers to learning. The workshop/s that have already taken place in the district seem ineffective because of their short duration. The duration of training for educators on inclusive education should at least take a week or two to enable its contents to simmer in educators' minds.

- The department needs to conduct follow-ups after the workshops to check if educators implement what they have been taught. This will be a monitoring strategy and serve as continuous support for educators on-site after training at workshops.

- Tertiary institutions which offer educator training qualifications should infuse modules or programs of inclusive education into their student's courses. This will fully equip educators with abilities to provide quality support to learners facing barriers to learning when they begin their teaching career. Forlin (2010:652) support this when he says that "Continuing to prepare teachers for inclusion by offering them a stand-alone course that is run by specialists outside the main curriculum continues to perpetuate the notion that inclusion is something that can only be done by specialists and should be an add-on to all other curriculum areas." Therefore, the notion of inclusion should be introduced across all facets of teacher education to be seen by educators as part of standard classroom teaching.

- Professional development for educators is significant since some of the challenges they face are systemic. Educators should be encouraged to enrol with higher learning institutions to keep them well-informed on how to support learners on their educational journey.

- For inclusive education to be fruitful and learners effectively supported, a paradigm shift needs to occur. And for a paradigm shift to take place, factual information to challenge stakeholder's way of thinking to change them is required. Therefore, an educator's professional development should focus on making such changes.

5.2.4. Lack of support for educators

Findings on this challenge are that educators are not supported by the departmental structures formed and tasked to do so. The school has an elected School-Based Support Team (SBST). And after its election, names were sent to the district. EWP6 (DoE, 2001:29) put it clear that "the primary function of the SBST is to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services". Educators lament that this structure has never supported them. They are not surprised because, since its election, it has never received any support from the department through the District Based Support Team (DBST). Mahlo (2011:18) defines support as "all activities that increase capacity of a school to respond to diversity". Educator training on inclusive education by the department is direct support for educators. This support will capacitate educators to carry their responsibility of supporting learners facing barriers to learning with confidence. The DBST is a departmental structure tasked with providing a comprehensive range of educational support services to schools (DoE, 2001:29). But academic support services due to educators and learners are yet to be realised.

5.2.5. Lack of support for learners

Mahlo (2011:1) argue that the "implementation of Inclusive Education in schools will require not only accepting learners facing barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms, but also providing those learners with appropriate support". The fundamental values of the new education system also emphasise protecting the rights of learners by:

- "Making sure that all learners are treated fairly.
- Making sure that all learners can participate fully and equally in the education system.
- Making sure that all learners have equal access to a single, Inclusive Education system.
- Making sure that all learners can understand and participate meaningfully with the teaching and learning processes in schools" (DoE, 2002: 4).

Since educators in schools received insufficient or no support from the department, learners facing learning barriers will not be appropriately supported. Educators revealed during the interviews that when they are faced with keeping a learner, they refer it to their seniors. And their seniors also guide these learners to their parents who possess no means of support. Learners facing barriers end up unsupported. Educators also admitted that the school has a SIAS toolkit document that can help them with supporting learners facing barriers to learning. This document is designed to help educators evaluate the degree and scope of support required to boost the participation of learners facing barriers to education. "It set out the procedures that must be followed in identifying and addressing barriers to learning that affects individuals' learner's performance in the classroom" (DoE, 2008:1). But this document is gathering dust in the office of the principal while learners go unsupported. Meanwhile, the National Policy on *Assessment and Qualifications for schools in the General Education and Training Band*

(DoE,2007) states "that learners facing barriers to learning and development should be identified early, assessed, and provided with learning support". In light of this, the researcher recommended the following:

- The department should provide continuous support for educators to have the capability to support learners facing barriers to learning. The DBST should ensure that training for educators and intervention programmes on support for learners are in place. Quarterly training for SBST can empower them to capacitate educators at the school level.

- Through the DBST, the department should monitor and assess the capabilities of the SBST and intervene where necessary. This is because support for educators depend on the functionality of the SBST structure. The monitoring mechanism should be strengthened. Educators become complacent when they are not monitored. Reports and minutes of curriculum meetings held should be submitted to the district monthly.

- After learners have been recognised as facing barriers to learning, educators and learners' resources should be provided to enhance teaching and learning.

- Educators should be trained to prepare a lesson that will accommodate learners facing barriers to learning. It is currently a one-size-fits-all type of lesson plan being used by educators when they are teaching.

- Educators must use the little to support learners instead of waiting for the department to help them fully. The SIAS toolkit can help guide educators in the process of supporting learners. This document encourages educators to involve other stakeholders in the process of supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

5.2.6. Lack of resources

Support for educators and learners in schools can also be made through the provision of resources. The department acknowledged the importance of resource provision for learners facing barriers to learning by accepting that ".a broad range of needs exists among the learning population and if they are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from learning system" (DoE, 2001:17). Outcomes of this investigation reveal that overcrowding in schools is caused by, among other things, a shortage of resources. If educators, as human resource, are adequate in the schools, class sizes would be smaller and comply with an educator-learner ratio of 1:35 as prescribed by the department. Contrastingly, there is a shortage of educators, which leads to many learners being crammed in one class, resulting in poor identification and support of learners facing barriers to learning. Through National Development Plan (NDP 2030), the government declared as one of its objectives that "educational institutions should be provided with the capacity to implement policy. Where capacity is lacking, this should be addressed as an urgent priority".

During observation, it was found that infrastructural resources do not adequately meet the standards for supporting learners facing barriers to learning. Areas around the school, from classes to the sports field, are not wheelchair friendly. Morning devotions are held twice a week, that is, on Mondays and Fridays. There is no hall for morning devotions, and learners stand in front of a block of classes while educators stand on the porch. There is no area designated for learners with disabilities like dwarfism and those on wheelchairs. Steps on the entrances of classes also act as a barrier for learners who are in wheelchairs. Another obstacle is that during rainy days, morning devotions are not held because learners cannot stand in the rain as there is no shelter to accommodate them. Furniture in classes is one-size-fits-all. Learners with dwarfism barriers are bound to use desks and chairs designed for learners without barriers. Meanwhile, the National Development

Plan (NDP 2030:69) were to "eradicate infrastructure backlogs and ensure that all schools meet the minimum standards by 2016".

After these findings, the researcher recommended the following:

- Norms and standards funds for learners facing barriers to learning should be higher than that of ordinary learners since their educational needs are not the same. Learners facing barriers to learning will require additional and special needs to support them on their educational journeys. The school can buy chairs, desks and other equipment specially designed for learners facing barriers to learning. Wheelchair ramps can be constructed to accommodate learners on wheelchairs.

- The department should make more posts available for schools to hire new educators to reduce overcrowding. This will lead to standard classes where educators can easily recognise and support learners facing barriers to learning.

- Through the DBST should monitor and evaluate if the school infrastructure meets the standards to support learners facing barriers to learning. The monitors' reports may be used as guidelines for the school's management teams (SMT) and SGB's to follow to comply with the requirements for adequate infrastructure to support learners facing barriers to learning.

- The SBST should partner with private companies to get sponsored in specific resources such as hearing aids, braille, spectacles, wheelchairs, and other materials to support learners facing barriers to learning. Specialists can also offer their services for free if the SBST involves them as stakeholders supporting learners facing barriers to education.

5.2.7. Unsupportive Promotion and Progression documents

The documents analysed are not vocal about the support for learners facing barriers to learning. In circular E22 of 2016, the department acknowledges that some learners in schools are facing barriers to learning; hence, it approved the progression of learners who do not meet the requirement to be promoted to the next grade. But the criteria to progress these learners do not indicate if these learners were identified as facing barriers to learning. But learners who fail to meet promotion requirements are usually those with difficulties in learning. These difficulties need to be placed, acknowledged and support provided. According to the circular, the department intends to "minimise unnecessary school-dropout in school system and offer every learner an opportunity to achieve an exit qualification which is National Senior Certificate" in schools (DBE, 2016:2.6.1). When these learners progress to the next grade, support for them is left in the hands of the educators who have not been trained to do so. There is no monitoring and support by the department to check if these learners are coping with the grade's demand. This prevailing situation has led the researcher to recommend the following:

- The department must amend the current circular E22 to specify that the learners have progressed as they have been identified as facing barriers to learning. And the circular must determine how these learners should be supported. Monitoring of support on these learners should be realistic.
- Assessment policy for learners facing barriers to learning must be made available to educators to guide them during assessments.

5.2.8. Attitudes of educators towards inclusion

This research found out that the attitudes of educators towards inclusion are negative rather than positive. Negative attitudes are a critical barrier to the support of learners facing barriers to learning. This negative attitude suggests

that learners facing barriers to learning are not getting help. The study found out that the school has documents received during the workshop, including a copy of EWP6 and SIAS toolkit. Educators are not willing to go through these documents to support learners facing barriers to learning. These attitudes stem from the fact that educators have little or no knowledge and skills to support learners.

The researcher also observed that the demand for high academic achievement usually placed on schools by the department frustrate educators. They develop negative attitudes towards learners facing barriers to learning and do not wish to include them in their classes to lower their school's achievement.

The situation in classes, such as overcrowding, lack of resources, and inadequate training, results in low morale for educators and triggers negative attitudes. Educators are not coping with this ever-changing education system. Educators regard learners facing barriers to learning as an extra workload. Mahlo (2011:193) affirm that "the most difficult challenge in preparing educators to work with diverse classes is ensuring that they have positive attitude". Educators themselves can act as a barrier because of their attitudes. This study found out that educators do not think that they have the ability, knowledge and skills to support learners facing barriers to learning, hence the negative attitudes. In such situations, the following were recommended by the researcher.

- Sufficient in-service training on inclusive education could go a long way in changing educators' negative attitudes to positive ones. When an educator possesses the knowledge, supporting learners facing barriers to learning will be easy.
- Educators need to be motivated during workshops to change their negative attitudes towards learners facing barriers to learning.

- The drive to be the best among others should be done away with as it leads educators to focus on learners without barriers and neglect those facing barriers.

  Educators fear that learners facing barriers to learning can lower their academic achievement.

5.3.   CONCLUSION

The Department of Education's goals that it intends to accomplish in the next twenty years is to "build an Inclusive Education and training system that would provide good quality education for all learners" (DoE 2002: 4). The South African Schools Act (1996) legislated the likelihood of this inclusive education system by proclaiming that where it is practically possible, learners with "Special educational needs" should be taught in the same classroom as average learners, and support should be given to these learners. While trying to support these learners and at the same time to comply with this legislation, educators come across vast experiences.

The experiences of educators in supporting learners facing barriers to learning are full of challenges. Firstly, the same educators who support learners do not have sufficient knowledge about inclusive education. They cannot even correctly identify learners facing barriers to learning. Another challenge is the dysfunctionality of the support structures such as the SBST. This structure (SBST) is not functional because it is not getting the necessary support from the DBST. Monitoring by the department as a support strategy is not happening. This whole situation is creating frustration among educators who are supposed to support learners. The frustration sparks negative attitudes from educators towards supporting learners facing barriers to learning. When these learners go unsupported, their rights to education as enshrined in the constitution is violated.

Something needs to be done differently to protect the learner's rights to education, which will make it easy for educators to support learners facing barriers to learning. The department needs to assess the situation and intensify the campaign to implement EWP6. The experiences of educators who support this kind of learners can be less challenging if all stakeholders, as mentioned in EWP6, seriously take up their roles and responsibility in realising the objectives of this policy.

Currently, the procedure is not receiving the proper attention it deserves but is an extra workload for educators, impacting the support due to learners. Ndinisa (2016:78) assert that "everything in life needs to be worked hard upon to be attained, so does inclusive education". In conclusion, all research questions were answered, and the objectives of the study were met.

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7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/09/12

Dear Mr Mathebula

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018/09/12 to 2021/09/12

Ref: 2018/09/12/31129625/07/MC
Name: Mr JS Mathebula
Student: 31129625

Researcher(s): Name: Mr JS Mathebula
E-mail address: 31129625@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 72 2898 777

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr S Moodley
E-mail address: Siva49moodley@gmail.com
Telephone: +27 82 578 1552

Title of research:

Experiences of educators at a school in the Tzaneen district in supporting learners facing barriers to learning

Qualification: M. Ed in Inclusive Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/09/12 to 2021/09/12.

The **medium 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.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2021/09/12**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2018/09/12/31129625/07/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa
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PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B:

PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ref: 2/2/2   Enq. MC Makola PhD   Tel No: 015 290 9448   E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Mathebula J.S
P O Box 237
NWAMITWA
0871

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATORS AT A SCHOOL IN THE TZANEEN DISTRICT IN SUPPORTING LEARNERS FACING BARRIERS TO LEARNING".**
3. The following conditions should be considered:
3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the schools concerned.
3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH· MATHEBULA JS

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
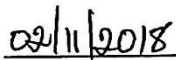
4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.

Ms NB Mutheiwana
Head of Department

02/11/2018
Date

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH. MATHEBULA JS

CONFIDENTIAL

APPENDIX C:

PERMISSION FROM SCHOOL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

<div style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center;">
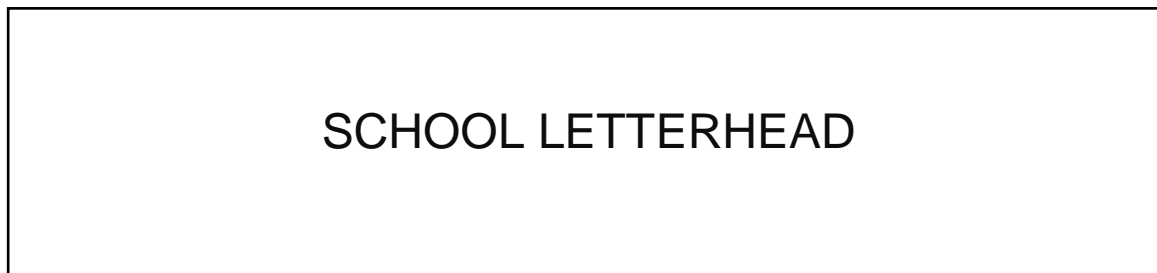
SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

</div>

.   2019-02-19

The Researcher
P O Box 237
Nwamitwa
0871

Dear Mathebula J.S

Ref: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

It is our pleasure as a school to inform you that your application to conduct research in our institution has been successful. The permission has been granted with the following conditions:

- The research should not in any way disrupt teaching and learning in the institution.
- Educators must not be compelled to participate in the researcher.
- No financial implications should be carried by the schools.
- The researcher should comply with the ethics of research as outlined by your institution.

We appreciate the contribution you wish to make to the education of a nation and wishes you success in your study.

Yours faithfully

_____   _____

Principal   signature

APPENDIX D:

LETTER OF REQUEST TO PARTICIPANT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

27 July 2018

Experiences of educators in supporting learners facing barriers to learning at a school in the Tzaneen district: A case study

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Mr. Jappy Samuel Mathebula, and I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr S Moodley, an external supervisor contracted with the Department of Inclusive Education, towards a MEd Degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Experiences of High School Educators in Supporting Learners Facing Barriers to Learning at a School in the Mopani District: a Case Study.

This study is expected to collect important information that could identify the experiences of the educators in supporting learners facing barriers to learning at your school, and that, based on the identified experiences, the Department would be able to review the support it provides to educators to respond to the needs of these learners. You are invited because, as an educator at the school, you interact directly with learners facing barriers to learning. I obtained your contact details from the management of the school.

A total of six educators from the school will be participating in the study. The study involves collecting data through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations. Separate semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the principal, two Life Orientation educators, and three class educators. The duration of each interview will be approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Participating in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. 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, however, free to withdraw

at any time and without giving a reason.

The potential benefits of taking part in the study are that the experiences of the educators in supporting learners facing barriers to learning at the school would be identified, and that the Department would be able to review its support to educators based on the identified experiences. While the educators at the school would be better able to support learners facing barriers to learning, the findings and recommendations of the study could also be of immense benefit to educators at other schools who may have similar experiences in supporting learners facing barriers to learning.

No risks are anticipated for this study, and there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. You have the right to insist that your name is not 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, or connect you to the answers you provide. your responses 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. In addition, although a report of the study may be submitted for publication, the data will be presented anonymously, and your participation will not be identifiable in such a report.

Hard copies of your responses will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in the principal's office for future research or academic purposes. In addition, electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies will be shredded, and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through using a relevant software program.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. 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 Mathebula J.S on 072 2898 777 or email: japimathebula@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for five years.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any

aspect of this study, please contact Mathebula J.S at 072 2898 777 or email: japimathebula@gmail.com.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr S. Moodley at 082 578 1552 or email: siva49moodley@gmail.com

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

Thank you.

_____

Mathebula J.S

APPENDIX E:

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 interview during the focus group discussion.

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

Participant Name & Surname (Please print) _____

_____   _____

Participant Signature   Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)   _____

_____   _____

Researcher's signature   Date

APPENDIX F:

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Researcher: Jappy S. Mathebula (Student no: 3112 962 5)

Topic: EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATORS IN SUPPORTING LEARNERS FACING BARRIERS TO LEARNING AT A SCHOOL IN THE TZANEEN DISTRICT.

Supervisor: Siva Moodley Dr

Participant: ……………………………………………………

Position of the Participant: ……………………………………

Date of the interview: ………………………………………

Time of the interview: …………………………………

NOTES TO BE READ TO THE PARTICIPANT

I'm doing a research study with UNISA, and my topic is: EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATORS AT A SCHOOL IN THE TZANEEN DISTRICT IN SUPPORTING LEARNERS FACING BARRIERS TO LEARNING. The purpose of this study is to explore experiences of educators in providing support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. I'm going to ask you nine questions.

Questions

1. Tell me about your educational background, teaching experiences, and experiences with learners in your classroom.

Answer notes:

………
…………………

Probe question:

……………………………………………………………………

2. What is your understanding of inclusive education?

Answer notes:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………

Probe question:

……………………………………………………………………

3. Have you ever received any training or workshop on inclusive education from the department?

   Answer notes:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………

   Probe question:

   ………………………………………………………………

4. Do you have learners in your class who are experiencing barriers to learning?

   Answer notes:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………

   Probe question:

   …………………………………………………………………………

5. What challenges do you experience in supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning?

   Answer notes:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………

   Probe question:

   ……………………………………………………………………

6. Do you have documents that help or give you guidance on how to address these challenges?

   Answer notes:

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………

   Probe question:

   …………………………………………………………………

7. What strategies do you use to support learners experiencing barriers to

learning?

Answer notes:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………

Probe question:

…………………………………………………………

8. Is there any support that the SBST is providing to you as an educator?

Answer notes:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………

Probe question:

……………………………………………………………………….

9. Do you have any comments regarding inclusive education in High schools?

Answer notes:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………

Probe question:

………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your participation in this study. You may rest assured that the responses you gave will remain confidential.

APPENDIX G:

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE.

STUDENT NAME…………………   STUDENT NUMBER…………

OBSERVATION DATE………………   LOCATION……………………

OBSERVATION GRID.

AREA OF OBSERVATION	TARGET OF OBSERVATION	TICK ONE		
		YES	NO	
Teacher-Learner Interaction				
	1. Does the educator conduct classroom assessments to identify and support learners facing barriers to learning?			
	2. Does the school have Teacher Learner Support Materials (LTSM) to respond to the needs of learners facing barriers to learning?			
	3. Do learners facing barriers to learning receive support in the use of specialised or adaptive equipment?			
Classroom arrangement	4. Is the classroom layout conducive for inclusive education?			
	5. What factors in the classroom impact negatively on learners facing barriers to learning during the teaching and learning process?			