FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN EKURHULENI DISTRICT: PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

by

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I declare that **FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN EKURHULENI DISTRICT: PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES** is my own work, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Maggie Chiroodza, who laboured hard to raise and educate us after the premature death of our father Sanderson Chiroodza in 1986 when I was in the 6th grade.

ABSTRACT

The globalisation of inclusive education mandated nations, including South Africa, to transform their education systems. Taking into account the previous studies that paint a bleak picture of inclusive education, this study sought to investigate factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in four primary schools in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng, South Africa. Inclusive education is an endless process that needs refining to improve the strategies teachers employ to reach every child's educational needs. The current study was aimed at understanding the context in which teachers implement inclusive education, and how they address barriers to learning in diverse classrooms in a bid to include all learners. This aim was achieved by highlighting both the positive and negative factors involved. On the one hand, the research report can help teachers to think about the benefits of inclusive education by focusing on those factors which support them as they try to implement this policy, and capitalize on them. On the other hand, highlighting factors constraining the process will help to uproot them and suggest ways of eliminating or mitigating the impact they may cause. Social constructivism and Bronfenbrenner's systems theory provided a scheme for selecting and prioritising variables that are of importance to the study. The theory regards the context and interaction of structures and systems as vital aspects to a developing individual. Qualitative data collected through interviews, observations, and questionnaires from the four purposively selected primary school teachers in Ekurhuleni District showed that teachers have scant knowledge about inclusive education and the current discourse on the topic. Consequently, they find it stressful to implement inclusive practice. Their knowledge has not yet shifted from the medical model of "special education", to the extent that they want certain learners to be in support classes - which would also allow them to reduce the high number of children in their classes. Additionally, there is a mismatch between the teacher and the standards stipulated in the SACE Code of Professional Ethics document. Nevertheless, there is a great benefit in having a single national curriculum, which is often taken for granted, and some measure of progress from the teachers' side that ought to be celebrated. The process of adopting inclusive education is being hampered by the inadequate skills of teachers who find it difficult to adapt to the current discourse and the contexts in which they are working.

KEY TERMS

Barriers to learning, Factors impacting implementation, Inclusive education, primary school teachers

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
EFA	Education for All
DoE	Department of Education
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HL	Home Language
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
PE	Physical Education
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SBAT	School Based Assessment Team
SBST	School Based Support Team
SMT	School Management Team
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Before 1994, there were too many disparities in how the different education departments were managed and learners supported. Ntombela (2011:1) summarised the state of affairs in education as follows: "The post-apartheid South African Department of Education inherited a legacy of inequalities. In response, it has churned out numerous policies in the drive to redress these imbalances and provide quality education for all". It was on the basis of these disparities that in October 1996, the Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCSESS) to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of 'special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa (DoE, 2001:5).

In 2001, South Africa moved to inclusive education as promulgated by Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001). Education White Paper 6 defines inclusive education as: "[T]he provision of educational opportunities in particular for those learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or who have dropped out of learning because of the inability of the education and training system to accommodate their of learning needs" (DoE, 2001:6). It should also serve those learners who continue to be excluded from the system.

Inclusive education has been accepted as the appropriate approach to the education of children with disabilities and those who experience various barriers to learning, both at the international level and in South Africa. A common basis for inclusive education is to ensure the right to equal education for all children. This is what Smit (2013:81) defines as equality in democratic theory: "… political and moral equality, equal treatment by public administration, equality before the law, equal opportunities, equal respect as a human being, and equal consideration for different needs".

It has been 20 years since inclusive education was adopted and implemented in South Africa, but several studies have highlighted challenges in its implementation. In her study, Stofile (2008) highlighted poverty, diverse interpretation of inclusive education,

negative attitudes, lack of support for inclusion, and lack of capacity to implement inclusion as some of the challenges hindering the implementation process of inclusive education. Recently, Ferreira's (2019) study revealed that Grade R in-service teacher preparation programmes are inadequate to prepare teachers for inclusive education and provide them with insufficient skills to translate theory into practice. The studies investigating challenges are not only focused on the primary school context, as Ntombela and Setlhodi (2019) in their research on transformation and social justice pointed out that inequality cuts across the South African education system and is more visible in higher education, which is inaccessible to most people. Challenging these findings and hoping to prove that all is not doom and gloom, the current study sought to explore factors that promote as well as those that impede the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng. It explored primary school teachers' experiences in addressing barriers to learning in their classrooms. This research focused on examining the curriculum aspects as outlined in the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:19). It is stated that one of the most significant barriers to learning for learners in both special and mainstream schools is the curriculum. In this case, barriers to learning arise from different aspects of the curriculum, such as the content (i.e. what is taught), the language or medium of instruction, how the classroom is organised and managed, the methods and processes used in teaching, the pace of teaching and the time available to complete the curriculum, the learning materials and equipment that are used, and how learning is assessed. The Education White Paper 6 further explains: "Central to the accommodation of diversity in our schools, colleges, and adult and early childhood learning centres and higher education institutions, is a flexible curriculum and assessment policy that is accessible to all learners, irrespective of the nature of their learning needs. This is so since curricula create the most significant barrier to learning and exclusion for many learners, whether they are in special schools or settings, or 'ordinary' schools and settings" (DoE, 2001:31-32).

These curriculum aspects directly involve teachers at the micro-level of curriculum implementation. That is why there is a need to understand the teachers' experiences of how they address barriers to learning and manage learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. It is important to find out whether these learners are **included** or **excluded** in the learning-teaching process. If the learners are included, what factors promote this, and if the learners are excluded, what factors hinder their

inclusion. The accommodation of diverse learners' needs in an institution is what Inclusive Education is all about.

This research sought to investigate which factors influence Ekurhuleni District classroom teachers to adopt and practice the principles envisaged in the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) or to avoid these principles. The study adopted a qualitative interpretative paradigm to understand how teachers experience these factors and used a social-ecological model drawing from Urie Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory of human development, which examines an individual's relationships within communities and a wider society.

Barriers to learning in the teaching and learning process need to be identified and effective interventions need to be made by the teacher. The teacher needs to examine what impediments exist in the teaching and learning process that prevents learners from accessing learning. He or she must strive to remove or minimize the barriers to learning in the teaching and learning process, thus creating a system of relationships that forms a healthy environment. Failing to create a classroom environment that supports the teaching and learning process will undermine the process and learners may fail to learn effectively or even be excluded from the education system.

When the Department of Education published Education White Paper 6 it heralded its acceptance of the principles of inclusive education. Generally, inclusive education is based on the ecological and **social model** that promotes human rights, as envisaged in Chapter 2 of The National Constitution of the Republic of South African Act 108 of 1996 section 7(1) on the Bill of Rights, where rights are regarded as a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in South Africa and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom. The principles and values contained in The National Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 and White Papers on Education and Training (DoE,2001:5), namely human rights and social justice for all learners; participation and social integration; equal access to a single, inclusive education system; access to the curriculum, equity, and redress; and community responsiveness, lead to the right to learn and live together, acceptance of diversity, uniform and responsive education and training system, removal of all elementary discrimination, positive interaction and learning from

one another, to mention just a few aspects that support the social model approach. This model acknowledges the decisive influence of the environment on the development of an individual. It is a system that celebrates learner diversity and recognizes that learning takes place in different social contexts, including schools creating education structures and methodologies that make it possible for schools to meet the needs of all (Ntombela, 2011:2). UNESCO (2009:67) proclaims: "These changes will include the commitment of schools to accept and welcome every child and a willingness to make school procedures, the curriculum, teaching and learning more child-centred and flexible". Addressing this transformation cannot be an overnight process and preparation at all levels of the system is essential when significant changes are being introduced.

The Integrated National Disability Strategy White Paper (1997) condemns the segregation of persons with disabilities from the mainstream of society. It emphasises the need for including persons with disabilities in the workplace, social environment, political sphere, and sports arenas. The Ministry of Education supports this direction and sees the establishment of an inclusive education and training system as a cornerstone of an integrated and caring society and an education and training system for the 21st century. These values summoned everyone involved to take up the responsibility and challenge of building a humane and caring society, not for the few, but for all South Africans (DoE 2001:10-11), in all aspects including the education system. The response to the challenge and responsibility led to the journey of inclusive education in the education system.

The road to inclusive education, according to Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), is set on a progressive realisation platform typified by a three-phased implementation plan. The vision and goals outlined in this White Paper reflect a twenty-year developmental perspective (DoE, 2001:45). The three phases were envisaged to be the taking of short-term steps that were contemplated for 2001 to 2003, medium-term steps from 2004 to 2008, and long-term steps in 2009 to 2021. We are now in the final phase of the implementation process where long term aims are supposed to be achieved.

The policy acknowledges that there is a need to support teachers through staff development programmes to understand and embrace inclusive education. In this regard, the support should be aimed at developing teachers who are involved in all phases of the school system, in both ordinary and special schools, with essential knowledge and skills on how to identify and address barriers to learning in their day-to-day classroom practice. Creating and managing methodologies for assessment, curriculum adaptation, realistic programmes, cooperative teaching, and learning techniques are some of the key skills that need to be taught to all teachers (UNESCO, 2009:90). Assessment skills should cover not only the learner but the learning environment as well as learner activities and progress. It is suggested (UNESCO, 2009:90) that the "teacher rote" model (which encourages arbitrary, verbatim incorporation of new knowledge) needs to be replaced with a much broader range of methods and skills that teachers can use to include all children within the school setting. A "meaningful learning" model reinforces the concept of learning as an "active" pursuit that involves a wide range of activities and skills. It supports the need for more practical, not theoretical, training of teachers. The Education White Paper 6, (DoE, 2001) states a good number of challenges that teachers may face or have to tackle in the journey of its implementation. The Government's obligation to provide basic education to all learners and its commitment to the central principles of the Constitution are also guided by the recognition that a new unified education and training system must be based on equity, on redressing past imbalances, and on a progressive raising of the quality of education and training (DoE, 2001:11). This needs a comprehensive teacher training plan that is realistic and based on the country's current profile and needs. The biggest question for the current study, then, is: what factors facilitate or hinder teachers in the implementation of inclusive education when they are to accommodate all learners in the teaching-learning process in Ekurhuleni District?

Ekurhuleni District is in Gauteng province, South Africa. Maringe (2014:53) maintains that this province accommodates the most cosmopolitan city complex in South Africa and arguably on the African continent, and that it has become host to multinational communities. This means the need to address and respond to learner diversity becomes a priority in the province. With sufficient support mechanisms and processes, a teacher will ensure that the learning support is taking place effectively and efficiently, with the learners feeling comfortable and non-threatened. Learners get to learn from

one another and to be able to understand and accept the differences between people. It is definitely not an easy road.

The list of expectations that teachers need to meet, like addressing all learners' needs, embracing diversity, and changing their attitudes and perception, leads to significant questions. What factors might facilitate or constrain the process of inclusive education? Education for all and inclusion call for teachers to be empowered to prepare lessons with variations that are responsive to individual learner needs, to conduct multi-level teaching, employ co-operative learning methods, do curriculum enrichment and deal with learners who experience behavioural problems. Is it possible for every primary school teacher in Ekurhuleni District to implement all of this with ease? Which factors affect teachers when implementing inclusive education? This and the other questions mentioned above triggered this research.

1.1.1. **The rationale for the study**

The rationale for this study can best be clarified by a personal statement from the current researcher. I am a primary school teacher and wanted to know why most studies have only focused on challenges that teachers experience in implementing inclusive education, which might be regarded as negative aspects. I wanted to focus on what is positive as well. I believe that such a study will help teachers to think about the benefits of inclusive education by focusing on those factors which support them as they try to implement this policy and to capitalize on them. On the other hand, highlighting factors constraining the process will help to uproot the constraints and suggest ways of eliminating or mitigating the impact they may cause. It is to be hoped that the findings of this research will contribute to the growing body of literature, policy, and social discussions regarding the implementation of inclusive education in this country and the rest of the world, by

- Highlighting and shedding light on the factors that affect the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools
- Indicating that all is not gloom and doom by also showing the brighter side of the implementation process of inclusive education in primary schools
- Make recommendations on how best the factors that promote the implementation of inclusive education can be fully utilised
- Diminishing the impact of factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education.

A search and evaluation of the available literature was done putting inclusive education in the South African context commencing from its inception, development and the models it followed to date, giving readers an insight on how inclusive education came about in a nutshell. Teachers' professional development in South Africa highlights the standards expected of a well-equipped teacher. This section is expected to work wonders as a self-retrospective tool to teachers.

1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is an unambiguous relationship between Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory and the social model discourse used in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. The context, structures, systems, and the influence of interaction put forward in Bronfenbrenner's theory are valuable concepts related to inclusion. The process part of the theory also concurs very well with implementation of inclusion, which is a process. The definitive aspects of Bronfenbrenner's have been described as Process-Person-Context-time (PPCT) (Shelton, 2019). The detailed theoretical framework appears in Chapter 2.

1.3. KEY CONCEPTS

1.3.1. Barriers to learning

The term "barriers to learning" **r**efers to difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself, which prevent access to learning and development for learners, (DoE, 2014:7). Examples of barriers to learning are poverty, ideology, physical inaccessibility of schools, an inflexible curriculum, inappropriate language and communication channels, lack of or inappropriate transport, and similar factors. Some barriers arise from the inability of the environment to respond appropriately to the neurological, sensory, physical, or intellectual attributes of specific children. These barriers need to be addressed through pedagogical responses, not by carrying out psychometric tests that offer little in terms of programme planning in the inclusive education model (DoE, 2005:7).

1.3.2. Factors

According to Collins Concise Dictionary and Thesaurus (1991:270), a factor is defined as something that contributes to the result. In this study, the factors that enhance or impede the implementation of inclusive education were investigated. The research

was concerned with factors that are closely related to the aspects of the curriculum at micro-level, the school environment, accessibility and conduciveness, and how teachers address barriers to learning experienced by the learners they teach.

1.3.3. Implementation

According to the Collins Concise Dictionary and Thesaurus (1991:378), implement means to carry out or to put into effect. Van Der Merwe (2013:78) describes the implementation stage as the stage that entails planning regarding the 'who', 'what', 'where', 'how' and 'when' of solving a problem. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2004:299), curriculum implementation involves extensive actions by many parties; it attempts to alter individuals' knowledge, actions, and attitudes. It is an interactive process between those who created the programme and those who are charged with delivering it. It requires adjusting personal habits, ways of behaving, programme emphases, learning space, and existing curricula and schedules. It asks of teachers to become comfortable with risks.

In this study the implementation process was focused on primary school teachers' shift from medical and/or education-for-all discourses to inclusive education, as they are charged to deliver the curriculum to learners while accommodating all their needs by addressing aspects that may cause some learners to not participate to their fullest potential.

1.3.4. Inclusive education/inclusion

Jha (2002, cited in Tomlinson, 2017) explains inclusive education as a wide concept that is intended to bring about the removal of educational disparities and inequalities for all non-literate adults and children, for all women, ethnic minorities, excluded and scheduled castes and tribes, people who are disabled, those who are destitute, child labourers, street children and orphans, and victims of war, violence and natural disasters.

1.4.   PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Department of Education (1999) earnestly confessed: "We appreciate that the implementation of the policy proposal on inclusion will bring with it many challenges for education managers, teachers, learners, and our communities". This shows that

the implementation of inclusive education was not anticipated to be a smooth process; it is indeed not an easy road. Most studies that preceded mine painted a bleak picture of inclusive education implementation. Chataika, Mckenzie, Swart and Cleopas (2012) explain that despite of the development of the inclusive education policy to address the problem of exclusion, one of the issues that hamper progress is the lack of teachers skills in adapting the curriculum to meet a range of learning needs. Correspondingly, in her study Mqele (2018) found that there was a concern in the reading ability of learners caused by lack of training and support of teachers. Masunungure (2019) on the other hand, pointed out that teachers have multiple perspectives on Inclusion. Additionally, Ngoma (2020) in her study confirmed that there is a gap that needs to be closed. She identifies the need for pedagogical professional development and intensive training of teachers to improve their skills.

Although these and many other studies paint a bleak picture of the implementation process of inclusive education, the current study sought to identify those factors which also contribute to the successful implementation of this policy. The study sought to examine factors that facilitate or constrain primary school teachers in Ekurhuleni District when addressing barriers to learning. If teachers are assisted to focus on the positives in their everyday experiences, they may be able to identify some gains being made in the journey towards inclusive education and these gains need to be celebrated. On the other hand, examining the factors constraining the process could help to eliminate them or reduce the negative impact that they may cause in the teaching-learning process. Both sides of the coin will potentially help to improve the quality of teaching.

South Africa made some steps to transform the country's education system, aiming at embracing every learner's needs. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) was born of a specific need: "…the need for changes to be made to the provision of education and training so that it is responsive and sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs" (DoE, 2001:12). The main purpose was, and still is, to enable mainstream education and training to recognise and address the causes and effects of learning difficulties in 'ordinary' classes (DoE 2001:26). While South African education needed to make some changes, there will always be challenges to be encountered in the process of making such changes (Engelbrecht, 1999). In trying to address or overcome these challenges, the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) tried to place

its main emphasis on and highlight some of the anticipated predicaments that teachers might face. The policy set forth in Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2001:10) also was not silent on how the implementation was to be executed. The DoE (2001:12) stated that there would be a process of moving away from segregation according to categories of disability and diminishing the impact of disability. Additionally, access to resources and the policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Supporting (SIAS) was to be introduced in all schools together with the intervention strategies for both teachers and learners, thereby upholding the human rights discourse and education equity, and meeting the diverse needs of diverse learners. Furthermore, employing the social model discourse, it would ensure that all the learners receive positive and equal learning opportunities regardless of their physical or intellectual capabilities.

This education White Paper 6 came to eliminate the idea that learners with any obvious disability are incapable of benefiting from formal education and hence are to be excluded. This attitude meant that these learners were formerly not allocated space in the public formal education system; but now the system is expected to accommodate them. Makoelle (2012) maintains that since the whole education system was to be transformed, teachers needed all the training required to cater for all learners' needs and also to contend with the consideration that South African classrooms are multilingual and multicultural. Gauteng, the province in question, is multinational, which widens the need, including different levels of understanding, learning styles, intelligence, talents, languages, and many more. Teachers are encouraged and called to implement inclusion by accommodating all learners in the learning and teaching process while accommodating all of these differences. This cannot happen automatically. There is a great need to support teachers by equipping them with skills to embrace diversity in their classrooms with the clear understanding that all children have the right to attend school and that it is the responsibility of the school to accommodate differences in learners. It is crucial that every learner receives equal and quality education (Education White Paper 6, DoE, 2001).

This study contests the claim that there is only reason to despair about the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. In trying to find what factors affect the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District, the following

research questions will be used to guide and focus the literature review and the empirical investigation.

1.4.1. The main research question

The central question in this dissertation was: What factors influence the implementation of inclusive education?

1.4.2. Sub-questions

This research made use of the following subsidiary descriptive questions that helped in the unpacking of the main research question and the investigation of the experiences of primary school teachers in the implementation process of inclusive education in their classrooms.

1.4.2.1   What factors promote or hinder the implementation of inclusive education?

1.4.2.2   How do these factors facilitate or hinder the implementation process?

1.4.2.3   How do teachers understand the inclusion policy?

1.4.2.4   How do teachers address barriers to learning in their classrooms?

1.4.2.5   What support is available to teachers to implement inclusive education as stipulated in the policy?

1.5.   AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study sought to explore primary school teachers' experiences in dealing with learners experiencing or who have experienced barriers to learning, and how they address barriers to learning in diverse classrooms as they seek to include all learners.

1.5.1. Aims

This study acknowledges that inclusive education is a complex process that cannot be defined by one activity. Mittler (2000) defines it as a process that has no ending. Therefore, this study aimed at understanding factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in the context in which teachers operate in this specific district.

1.5 2. Objectives

Objectives encapsulate the tasks that need to be done. The major objectives of this study were to

- Explore the factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education through the experiences of primary school teachers in Ekurhuleni District
- Examine how these factors influence the implementation process

- Explore how teachers understand the inclusive education policy
- Identify support available to teachers in implementing inclusive education policy.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach taken in this study was qualitative, based on the constructivist paradigm perspective, and executed through a case study approach. According to Guba (1990:17, cited in Creswell, 2009:6), a paradigm is a worldview, a basic set of beliefs that guide action. Creswell (2009:21) highlighted five paradigms viz positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism, and a participatory paradigm. Each paradigm is defined in terms of the ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (how we know what we know), and methodology (the process of research) that it adopts. Since this qualitative research lies within the constructivism paradigm, it carries the epistemological perspective that learning focuses on how people create knowledge out of their experiences and is determined by their social and cultural contexts. Interaction is seen as an important element to discover meaning, and the truth is created by experience. The researcher had to probe deeply through talking to participants and understanding their contexts in the form of a case study. The ontology was based on the idea that truth evolves and changes as it is shaped by the context. The knowledge/truth/reality as experienced by the participants was discovered through observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Four participants were chosen purposively in a multiple case study where the researcher was subjective and inductive in approach. The results of this study can be generalized and used in similar contexts only.

1.6.1 Research design

According to Creswell (2014), research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study. This study followed a qualitative inquiry approach using an exploratory case study. The paradigm, approach, and type are indicated in the ensuing sections. More details are provided in Chapter 3.

1.6.1.1 Research paradigm

This study is located within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm, which uses systematic procedures but maintains that there are multiple socially constructed realities. Nieuwenhuis (2012) defines it as an approach to research that stresses subjective reality as its ontology. Packer (2011, cited in Okeke & Wyk, 2015:40) says: "The interpretive paradigm assumes that people construct and merge their own subjective and intersubjective social fields as they interact with the world around them. Interpretive is basically based on the qualitative tradition and has a subjective ontology". Okeke (2015:209) describes the interpretive approach as humanistic research that emphasizes the interpretation of meaning that is characteristic of the social world. The current study is situated in this paradigm because of the belief that multiple realities exist, and that truth evolves and changes. The study is based on the process of change.

1.6.1.2 Research approach

Research methodology and approaches indicate the answers to questions as to how research should be designed, structured, approached, and executed. With a reliable research method and approach, the research should therefore be able to produce more reliable, valid, and objective knowledge (Mahlangu, 1987:4).

This research was executed from a qualitative approach using a case study design in which first-hand research data in the form of questionnaires, interviews, and observations were used. It was an evidence-based descriptive inquiry as it was describing the people who participated in the research. By employing qualitative modes of inquiry, the research attempted to illuminate the interaction process with the participants through observations, interviews, and questionnaires in the real-world context.

1.6.1.3 Research type

The exploratory case study was conducted with data gathered via interviews, questionnaires, and observations. A case study is preferred when examining contemporary events when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated (Yin, 2014). Yin (2011:18) proposes a twofold definition of a case study, as an empirical inquiry that (1) investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when (2) the boundaries between phenomenon and context

may not be clearly evident. The cases in this study were four primary school teachers selected purposefully from four different schools in Ekurhuleni District. A questionnaire was administered, interviews were conducted, and observations were employed to collect data. The sample selected for the study gave data that was inferred to a larger group which is Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng.

1.6.2 Research methods

According to Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2006:58), the term 'method' relates principally to the tools of data collection or analysis techniques. This means that research methods refer to measures, procedures, and tools to gather and analyse data. The qualitative research data in this evidence-based inquiry was drawn from four main sources through interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The data collected was analysed using an inductive approach. Research methods also encompass the selection of participants (cases), in this case purposively. The detailed description can be found in Chapter 3, the specified chapter for methodology.

1.6.2.1 Selection of participants

Sampling involves decisions about the groups or individuals, setting, events or behaviours to be included in the study, and how many (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:59). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) define a population as: "… a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we want to generalize the results of the research". A purposive sampling strategy was chosen, and four primary school teachers in Ekurhuleni District were selected. They were selected to represent a particular subgroup of interest, Ekurhuleni District. A full detailed description appears in Chapter 3.

1.6.2.2 Data collection

In this particular study, the primary data collection was conducted using the investigator's observation, interests and experience, structured interviews, and structured questionnaires with a small size sample of four primary school teachers. The data collected through these processes were analyzed meticulously and Chapter 4 provides a full discussion of the data analysis and interpretation.

1.6.2.3 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). In this study, questionnaires and interviews were employed and observations were made of each teacher. The information was compiled by grouping information that is the same together through analyzing scripts, writing summaries, coding, developing themes, generating categories, and writing analytic memos. Miles, Huberman, and Sadana (2014) call the process 'data condensation' and define data condensation as a process of making data stronger through the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming the data that appear in the full corpus (body) of written-up field notes. According to Edwards (2006), analyzing data for qualitative purposes is required to be conducted immediately after the data have been collected. The researcher immediately analysed data after gathering the data by listening to a tape recording and making an interpretation through coding by transcribing the interview responses, reading, writing down, and re-reading all transcripts (Myburgh,2014). The reading, coding, and interpretation of observation sheets, interviews, and questionnaires were done in this particular research using the predetermined categories following the research questions using inductive reasoning. Tracy (2013:36) defines inductive reasoning as a bottom-up type of reasoning that begins with specific observations and particular circumstances and then moves on to broader generalizations and theories. The description of the data is given in Chapter 4, while conclusions and recommendations based on the findings appear in Chapter 5.

The qualitative, exploratory, multiple case study was chosen because of its nature of providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena like the implementation of inclusive education, a process that has no ending. The experiences of four primary school teachers and their interpretation of events in their contexts would not be possible with any other methodology that does not involve direct interaction with the participants in their environment unearthing their opinions, thoughts and feelings.

1.7.   MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, the term 'research validity' which is commonly used in quantitative research is replaced by 'trustworthiness', which refers to qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and defensible (Johnson & Christensen 2014:299). The measures of trustworthiness, adapted from Johnson and

Christensen (2014), were considered to maximize the validity of this study namely, triangulation, researcher bias, reflexivity, and negative-case sampling. Elaborations on these aspects appear in Chapter 3.

1.8.   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before undertaking the investigation, ethical clearance was obtained from UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee. This was done to ensure that the life and welfare of the parties involved were taken care of, considered, and respected. Furthermore, it provided an assurance that the entire research process would not be harmful or exploitative in any way. Hendricks (2013:81) points out: "These guidelines have been put into place to ensure that participants are not harmed or deceived, that they have agreed to participate and that they have been assured that the confidentiality of their responses and their participation will be maintained". The procedures to ensure that this research was conducted ethically are discussed at length in Chapter 3.

1.9.   CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Orientation to Research. The first chapter entails an introduction, personal statement, and rationale for the study. Furthermore, it provides a brief background on theoretical framework, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory that guided the study, and key concepts used. It also states the problem, aim and objectives, research methodology, and division of chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The contextual, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks relating to this research are outlined. The chapter sets forth the literature regarding the development of inclusive education in the international and national contexts, and the models used to achieve the set goals in the South African education system. It outlines the teacher development programmes in South Africa and gives a conceptual model of factors affecting the implementation of the policy.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology. This chapter offers a detailed account of the research methodology. Research design dealing with the research paradigm, approach, and research type is described in detail. The research methods include procedures, tools, and techniques to gather and analyse data. Trustworthiness and ethical considerations regarding the participation of human beings in the study are discussed in full detail, shedding light on how safe this study was to all participants.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and discussion. The analysis and interpretation of the empirical qualitative research data collected through interviews, questionnaires, and observations are presented. Detailed discussions are provided of the findings of the data collected. It includes comparisons of findings to those mentioned in the literature review.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendation. The final chapter gives a summary of the study, draws conclusions based on the analysed and interpreted data, provides recommendations, and identifies areas for future research, limitations, and final concluding remarks concerning the entire study.

1.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This study sought to explore factors that hinder or facilitate the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng. It examined factors affecting primary school teachers when addressing barriers to learning in their classrooms, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory. The chapter illuminated the context of the research and gave a comprehensive introduction to the research. It presented an overview of the research background, purpose, aims, objectives, rationale, and the research problem, and outlined the research questions that helped to explore the experiences of primary school teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in their classrooms as they addressed barriers to learning or dealt with learners experiencing barriers to learning. The methodological account of how the study was executed was briefly discussed and finally, the chapter closed with laying out what is contained in each chapter to follow.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Ekurhuleni District. To this end, it was necessary to place the problem in context, demarcate the problem, and reflect on the significance and feasibility of the investigation in terms of literature as well as theoretical and contextual frameworks. This study was carried out within the framework of Bronfenbrenner's systems theory. The theoretical framework of this study, the models of inclusive education, and a contextual framework will be discussed as background to how inclusive education came about and developed internationally and then locally. A detailed overview of the South African context provides the lens through which to view the current study, namely, an exploration of primary school teachers' experiences in the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District, South Africa as they unpack the principles envisaged in the Education White Paper 6, (DoE, 2001) in their classrooms. The teacher development procedure in the South African Education system was discussed to highlight the standard expected of a well-skilled teacher. It is of no doubt that the teacher described in the SACE document is of exceptional skills who can challenge, and not be challenged by, the inclusive education implementation process.

2.1.1 Overview on factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education

Inclusive education became a global agenda that led to the transformation of education policies across the world from as early as 1900, (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:5). In South Africa as stated before, it was in 2001 that the country embarked on the acceptance of principles and values contained in the Constitution and White Papers on Education and Training; human rights and social justice for all learners; participation and social integration; equal access to a single, inclusive education system; access to the curriculum, equity and redress; community responsiveness; and cost-effectiveness envisaged in the Inclusive Education Policy, (DoE, 2001:5). A follow-up policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) aimed at providing a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school tracked. The SIAS policy is designed to improve access to quality education for vulnerable learners and those who

experience barriers to learning. It focuses on the implementation process of inclusive education using scaffolding and cooperative learning as preferred strategies pivoting on what the learner can do (Asset based approach).

Research studies have confirmed that teachers are experiencing challenges in implementing the inclusive education policy in South Africa. Ferreira (2019) in his qualitative research found out that Grade R in-service teachers seem unable to cope with inclusive education implementation. His findings revealed that the Grade R teachers were not confident to translate the theory they possess into practice when faced with real classroom situations. He found that those teachers have insufficient knowledge on the use of available resources for inclusive education implementation. He observed that overcrowding was still a problem where, at a certain school, there was a class with 54 Grade R learners. This class was fully packed to a point that he could not manage to enter and ended up standing next to the door.

Zungu (2014) in his dissertation, showed that the inclusive education policy was not implemented in primary schools in the Wakkerstroom Circuit as it was planned by the Department of Education and described in the Education White Paper 6.

Equivalently, a qualitative study by Van Vuuren (2020) intended to explore various challenges that teachers are facing to implement inclusive education policies examining the effect of legislation in the classrooms revealed that the educational policies and law do not affect the teaching and learning in overcrowded Gauteng classrooms. The study concluded that all the four participants were not fully aware of inclusive education policies. Sadly, the study divulged that teachers are not attending workshops to better their understanding of inclusive education policies.

In the light of the above, inclusive education has never been flourishing. Nevertheless, Masunungure (2019) found that the inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners is practised through the use of multiliteracy pedagogies (translanguaging/code-switching), multimodal pedagogies which include blended learning and collaborative teaching practices showing that every cloud has a silver lining.

2.2. CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1. Understanding inclusive education in the international context

It is of paramount importance to give a background on how inclusive education came about and how it was adopted globally. It became a global agenda focusing on the full inclusion of every child in the education system regardless of their abilities and disabilities.

In early 1900, the generally accepted model of diagnosis and treatment in the case of any characteristic or behaviour that was considered "outside the norm" focused on pathology, sickness, the nature and aetiology of the presenting problem, and dealing with specific pathology in a central way (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:5). This paradigm is known as the medical deficit or within-child model (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:5). It concentrated mainly on finding out "What is wrong" with people and trying to "fix them up" to fit into the system rather than adapting the system to accommodate the people. The medical discourse focused on disabilities and special education, and the focus was on diagnosis and treatment, which meant that assessment of the child's strengths and weaknesses was conducted and a possible diagnosis made for placement in a specialized environment, classifying different learners with disabilities in different categories and labelling them according to the diagnosis they had received. The children were separated and treated differently to "fix them" and alleviate their differences by offering them a special curriculum and interventions by specialist staff or experts aimed at removing the learner's deficiencies. Learners were grouped into categories based on their medical diagnosis and placed in schools located away from the mainstream with limited opportunities of mixing with other learners or the ordinary society.

The concept of "normalisation" came to the fore in the late 1960s in Scandinavian countries before being popularised in the United States. According to Swart and Pettipher (2005:6), normalisation can be defined as "making available to all handicapped people patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life of society". Weeks (2003) supports the view that normalization also means integration because a normal lifestyle is one in which one lives among "normal" people. This implies that people with

disabilities or handicaps (as the term was used then) were to live a normal life or experience a normal daily routine, normal environment, normal education practice, normal exposure to society, and so forth. Normalisation and integration are the opposites of the medical model of separate schools where learners were having limited opportunities to go home and to mix with other learners and normal society. It gave rise to the practice of mainstreaming and then to integration policies where learners with physical impairment were educated under regular circumstances. "Mainstreaming" is a term most commonly used in the United States, while the term "integration" is more frequently used in European countries. Landsberg et al. (2005:6) cite various authors who differentiate the two terms. *Mainstreaming* is regarded as the educational equivalent of the normalization principle which states that "people with disabilities have a right to life experiences that are the same as, or similar to, those of others in society". In schools in the United States, learners were brought alongside of normally developing peers. Learners with disabilities were put in their own classes but would "visit" the mainstream classes for short periods doing non-academic activities or subjects like art, music, and physical education. This was only possible in the case of learners with mild disabilities, as most learners with extreme or severe disabilities were enrolled in special education classes. According to Davies and Green (1998:97), mainstreaming as an approach in education in which learners who experience barriers to learning were placed in mainstream education gained momentum in the late 1970s in the USA. Just like the medical discourse, mainstreaming reinforced and focused on the problem within the learner. Disabilities were treated as 'different' and teachers needed to "fix" the learner to fit in the regular classrooms (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:6). It was rather a case of learners adapting to the system than of the system providing for them (Weeks, 2003).

On the other hand, *integration* relies heavily on social-political discourse. According to Swart and Pettipher (2005:7), "Humanitarian and civil rights issues originally drove policies leading to integration". This implies that integration emphasized the democratic right of every child to public education, and insisted that learners with disabilities be assigned equal membership in the community, thus maximizing the social interactions between the disabled and non-disabled communities. The problem with integration, according to Swart and Pettipher (2005:7), was that "… integration did not specify what exactly was to be done instead of exclusion and segregation …

(consequently) many different interpretations and examples resulted". This means that different people were employing the integration approach, each according to their own understanding which might be different from that of the next person, though claiming to have employed the same approach.

In the early 1970s and 1980s, there was a shift from a medical deficit to a social system change approach. Learners with disabilities were to be included in the education system in countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The main focus was on accepting and accommodating learners with disabilities in regular schools (Engelbrecht 2004). The schools' responsibility was to create an inclusive system that would embrace all learners' needs. Learners' needs had to be taken into consideration because of their special qualities (Ntombela & Raymond, 2013). In the United States of America and the United Kingdom, inclusive education became a solution to segregation in schools (Ntombela & Raymond, 2013). Inclusion became the comprehensive ideal in education. There are differences in values and practices between integration and inclusion. Inclusion can be described as a reconceptualization of values and beliefs, an approach that welcomes and celebrates diversity and not only lays down a set of practices (Mittler 2000:10, cited in Landsberg et al., 2005:8).

The inclusive education approach received its major formulation at the World Conference on Special Needs Education 1994 in Salamanca, Spain. The conference focused on the objectives of education as a fundamental human right by paying attention to the fundamental policy shifts necessary for the development of inclusive education. It was stated clearly that schools needed to be aimed at serving all learners including those experiencing barriers to learning, and the recognition of diversity was stressed. Swart and Pettipher (2005:8) summarize the purpose of the conference, declaring that it was based on the following educational, social, and economic grounds:

- Education for all learners together requires developing teaching practices that accommodate individual differences and therefore benefit all learners.
- Inclusive schools foster social inclusion thereby valuing and embracing differences and nurturing attitudes of acceptance and respect. This forms the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society.

- Educating all learners together is a more cost-effective way of delivering education for all learners.

Inclusive education shifts the focus from the learners having to adjust to fit into the education system. Instead, the school or institution is to be transformed to be capable of accommodating and addressing the diverse needs of all learners so that each learner receives a suitable or appropriate learning experience according to his or her needs. According to Walton (2006), international trends in education reflect the development of the human rights culture across the world. The focus on international attention to disability, rights, and children's rights through UNESCO (1994) is seen in the inclusive process in both developed and underdeveloped countries internationally.

The 1994 international conference in Salamanca, Spain, organised by the government of Spain in co-operation with UNESCO, attracted more than three hundred participants representing ninety-two governments and twenty-five international organizations. The aim of the conference was to further the objective of Education for All by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs (UNESCO 1994:iii). It heralded the inception of inclusive education in most countries. This means that all children are entitled to quality education and schools should serve all learners. The conference developed a document known as "The Salamanca statement (1994)". The Salamanca statement (1994) formulated most of the principles of inclusivity accepted in most countries based on the belief that schools do not function in isolation, but are influenced by economic, political, and social developments. It demanded that every government should pursue inclusivity in its education policy (UNESCO, 1994). The principles of inclusive schools were that all children should learn together, and that they deserve to be cared for and provided with the support needed.

The adoption of the Salamanca statement would imply that education systems have to be redesigned to cater for all learners. The Salamanca statement (1994: iii) declares: "The Conference adopted the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy, and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action. These documents are informed by the principle of inclusion, by recognition of the need to work towards 'schools for all' – institutions which include everybody, celebrate

differences, support learning, and respond to individual needs. As such, they constitute an important contribution to the agenda for achieving Education for All and for making schools educationally more effective". In summary, according to Engelbrecht and Green (2007:3): "It is acknowledged that, for this to be possible, education authorities have to redesign policies, schools have to change many of their practices, and both have to adopt a different mindset with regard to children perceived to be 'different'". UNESCO (1994:6, in Landsberg et al., 2005:8) share the same sentiments, saying in support of the above ideas that the emphasis was on developing inclusive systems that "… 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 marginalized areas or groups". This brought about the Inclusive Education that we have now in the South African school system, adopted in 2001 and still in use to date.

2.2.2. Inclusive education in the South African Context

The globalisation of inclusive education led to significant changes in the education systems of many countries, including South Africa. Inclusive education helped to achieve the goal of full equal Education for All (EFA) and to improve the quality of education received by all learners including learners with special needs in education. In South Africa, discrimination and segregation were the order of the day before 1994 for marginalised groups and learners with disabilities. Disability and colour were seen as justification for segregation. Thus, there was a great need for fulfilling the mandate of the new democratic constitution which states that everyone has the right to education. Consequently, South Africa had to adopt a single national education and training system that is flexible and can be adapted and differentiated to accommodate all learners, ensuring access to the curriculum, equity, and redress.

Furthermore, the South African democracy coincided with the inception of inclusive education globally in 1994 even though it took South Africa almost seven years post-apartheid to develop her inclusive education policy. The development of the inclusive education policy became the landmark that cut ties with the past where race and exclusion were the licentious factors that determined the place of vulnerable children.

With good grace, the policy brought about the guiding principles and values coined in the national constitution that promote the rights and responsibilities of individuals while acknowledging their differences, anchored in the idea that all children and youth can learn, and that they all need support.

It is important to stress that inclusive education in South Africa involves more than placing learners experiencing barriers to learning in ordinary/mainstream schools. The Department of Education (1999) believes that learners with disabilities have the same rights and capabilities as non-disabled learners to pursue their learning potential to the fullest. Most often, being disabled means being excluded from educational opportunities. In the majority of cases, learners with disabilities are willing, are able, and can participate effectively in learning with little need for special equipment or technology. Inclusivity means accepting people as they are and the education of all learners as they are. Sapon-Shevin (2007, cited in Nel et al., 2013:4) states that "inclusion begins with the right of every child to be in the mainstream of education. Learners do not have to 'earn' their way into a classroom …".   Swart and Pettipher (2005:19) added: "Inclusive is about all learners and not just a few. It is not just about disability but means responding to all learners' individual needs". Naicker (2005) echoes the same sentiments: "Inclusive education can be defined as a system of education which is responsive to the diverse needs of learners…" In a nutshell, inclusive education in South Africa is about addressing barriers to learning regardless of how the individual is characterised.

South Africa's implementation of inclusive education is based on the acceptance of diversity and social change perspectives. The DoE (1999) says inclusive education takes the view that children with disabilities should be educated with their non-disabled peers in an environment that is as un-restrictive as possible and facilitates mutual acceptance and respect. It does not relate only to issues of disability but to barriers to learning and development that can emanate from differences due to gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, age, language, class, HIV or other infectious diseases (DoE, 2001:6) and socioeconomic background. This, therefore, means that inclusive education in South Africa is there to address all barriers to learning and restore human dignity aspects. Inclusive education is the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an

inclusive society, and achieving true education for all (DoE, 1999). Although several documents are in place to promote inclusive education in South Africa, this study focused on the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), which is the inclusive education policy document in education.

According to Education White Paper 6 (DoE,2001:11), "… the education and training system must transform itself to contribute to establishing a caring and humane society, … it must change to accommodate the full range of learning needs and the mechanisms that should be put in place". In other words, inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers that prevent the system from meeting the full range of learning needs. Smit and Oosthuizen (2013:39) state: "the constitution of the Republic of South Africa requires education to be transformed and democratized in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism, and non-sexism". This implies that inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on similarities and supporting all learners, teachers, and the system so that the full range of learning needs can be met. However, there are many challenges in the implementation of an inclusive education policy due to different factors that make other studies paint a bleak picture of inclusive education. This does not mean, however, that all is gloom and ultimate despair. Some factors facilitating the process might be in place.

The Inclusive Education policy of South Africa (DoE, 2001) acknowledges that there are factors that lead to the experiencing of barriers to learning that can be located within the learner **(intrinsic barriers)** as well as factors that are located outside the learner **(extrinsic barriers).** The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:7) expresses it as follows: "different learning needs arise from a range of factors including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances, differences in intellectual ability and particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation". A brief account of intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning is provided in the paragraphs to follow.

2.2.2.1. Intrinsic barriers to learning

Nel et al. (2013:16) wrote: "Intrinsic barriers deal with conditions within the person. This usually includes barriers such as medical conditions and medical disabilities." Intrinsic barriers include sensory impairments such as visual and hearing impairments,

various forms of physical impairments including cerebral palsy and neurological conditions such as epilepsy (DoE 2004:39; Nel et al, 2013:16). The learners are usually born with specific characteristics, for example blindness, missing or incompletely formed limbs, etc. Weeks (2003:21) adds: "It is a permanent physical or mental deficit that the person concerned has to accept". These learners may be physically and/or physiologically impaired. The impairments range from sensory impairments (hearing and visual impairments), intellectual impairments and physical impairments to less visible impairments for example autism, chronic illness, learning delays, behavioural problems, developmental problems or delays, and emotional problems.

Causes of impairments (as adapted from Weeks, 2003:21-22) are:

- **Genetic factors –** They are hereditary factors inherited from the genetic composition in the form of chromosomes and genes in the cells of our bodies, for example, poor eyesight, and low level of intelligence.
- **Prenatal factors –** The impairments arise in the learner before birth, for example, brain damage through radiation, infection of mother with diseases like syphilis, defective placenta. The problems the learner is likely to have are epilepsy, cerebral disability, visual, hearing just to mention a few.
- **Perinatal factors –** These arise during birth, for example, protracted labour, instrument delivery, falling of the baby if the mother did not get assistance in time. This may cause problems like brain damage.
- **Postnatal –** After birth factors due to incidents like accidents, knock or blow on the head, malnutrition, abuse, and diseases like meningitis.

It is important to note that impairments do not inevitably lead to barriers to learning. It is often the response or lack of response from the environment that creates the barrier for the person with the impairment.

2.2.2.2. Extrinsic barriers to learning

Sometimes there is no impairment but the learner's environment, for example, home, upbringing, or teaching, is so inadequate that it affects the learner's development and learning and causes barriers to learning. Nel et al. (2013:3) state: " Extrinsic barriers that cause difficulties are issues such as poverty and unemployment rate in the area; gangster activities; the drug and alcohol abuse of parents; a high rate of HIV/AIDS;

vandalism; the illiteracy of parents; many different home languages; inadequately trained teachers with regard to learning support; and lack of sufficient support services". There are many other factors that include the following (adapted from The Education White Paper 6, DoE, 2001: 18). The explanation and examples have been given by the researcher based on the ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner and following the social model discourse in inclusive education.

- **Socio-economic deprivation** - for example poverty and political violence.
- **Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences –** these factors lead to discriminatory attitudes and practices, labelling of the learners, and exclusion from the full society.
- **Inflexible curriculums –** when a rigid curriculum makes no provision for the diverse needs of all learners, following the one size fits all approach.
- **Inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching –** teaching may take place in the second or even third language of the learner. The learner will find it very difficult to learn new concepts in a poorly established second or third language if there are no other techniques employed to mitigate the gap.
- **Inappropriate communication –** differences in language and culture (including expected level of literacy) can lead to inappropriate and ineffective communication. It can be verbal or written communication, directed at the child's family or the community at large.
- **Inaccessible and unsafe environment –** the learner or staff may fail to access the building or facilities, for example, no toilet ramps for wheelchaired teachers or learners.
- **Inappropriate and inadequate support services** - workshops and other services like SBST at a micro-level that may be lacking and referral processes that are not effective.
- **Inadequate policies and legislation** - a lack of empowering and protective policy, for example, there is a stipulated age of attending school therefore the slow-developing learner is or was sidelined.
- **The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents** - a lack of parental recognition and involvement as the primary teachers of learners.
- **Inadequate and inappropriate trained education managers and educators** - a lack of human resources development which leads to overcrowded

conditions in most classes in public schools, managers imposing ideas that may not concur with the current discourse, etc.

These are some of the barriers to learning, development, and participation that interfere with teaching and learning in South African schools (Doe, 2001) and the purpose of inclusive education is to remove them or minimize their impact on learning outcomes for all learners to reach their fullest potential.

2.2.3. How inclusive education relates to the education for all (EFA) movement
Exclusion in education does not only mean that the child is out of the school system. It can be exhibited when the learners are not accommodated to participate to their fullest potential while in the classroom. The public eye will not see exclusion in such cases as all will be in the school system and are spending their days in the classroom. Education for all means the accommodation of **all** not the attendance of **all.** Attendance of all only makes a slight move towards inclusive education and gives no assurance of accommodation.

The term *inclusive education* has a broad meaning and is widely used in society, yet there is a degree of ambiguity around it. However, this research looked at Inclusive Education as the accommodation of learners in educational institutions that increase the participation of learners by reducing their exclusion from the curriculum, communities, cultures and other aspects of human dignity with the idea that all children can learn and that all children need some form of support in learning. Furthermore, it is viewed as a movement that seeks to challenge segregation, discrimination, and exclusion practices that saturate the history of the South African Education system during the apartheid era. This means the promotion of the equal participation of and non-discrimination against all learners in the learning processes, irrespective of their disabilities, within a single, seamless system, and a continuum of learning contexts and resources according to need, (DoE, 1999).

In 1990 a world conference on education for all (EFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand. It is commonly known as "World's declaration on education for all conference" because that is where and when the EFA principle was adopted. The World declaration on education for all statement (1990) affirms that every person - child, youth, and adult -

shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. It further explains: "the satisfaction of these needs empowers individuals in any society and confers upon them a responsibility to respect and build upon their collective cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage" (UNESCO, 1990). On the other hand: "Inclusion is seen as **a process** of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (UNESCO, 1995:13).

In the light of these statements, it is beyond reasonable doubt that education for all (EFA) is a movement rooted in inclusion because the principles advocated in the one are reiterated in the other. In fact, education for all was a main theme in 1994 when the Salamanca statement was adopted. The Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) was directly opposed to segregation and holds the principle that children with disabilities remain the largest group of children who are out of the school system. The birth of education for all was to coin the principle that ensures that all children have access to equal basic education of good quality. This implies that all schools should strive to create an environment and programmes that cater for the needs of **ALL** learners. Essentially, the environment and programmes must include all learners, be welcoming to all, healthy and protective to all. "All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children" (B. Lindqvist, UN-Rapporteur, 1994, cited in UNESCO, 1995:13). The Tanenbaum newsletter (2011) outlined seven principles for inclusive education.

1. Teaching all students
2. Exploring multiple identities
3. Preventing prejudice
4. Promoting social justice
5. Choosing appropriate material
6. Teaching and learning about cultures and religions
7. Adapting and integrating lessons appropriately.

These principles ensure the benefit of **all** learners, which is education for all. To achieve the goal that **all** children and youth can learn and that **all** children and youth are supported, there is a great need for an appropriate discourse or model to follow, and inclusive education appears to be the most suitable candidate. It follows the principles that ensure the benefit of all learners, principles that work comprehensively in improving the quality of education provided to all learners, including learners with special needs in education. To address and achieve the education for all (EFA) goals, inclusive education had to experience a huge ideological metamorphosis to be the social model discourse we have now. The sections below explain the change.

2.2.4. The inclusive education discourses

2.2.4.1. The medical/pathological model

During the South African apartheid era specialized education was practised. Schools were classified into four categories of race, and various categories of disability (disability as used then) to suit the needs of handicapped learners. This is the medical model discourse which accompanied special education. It presumes that a person's disability may reduce the individual's quality of life (make the individual less able). The terms used during this period were based on the medical diagnosis idiom. Learners had to be diagnosed and efforts were made to fix the learner to fit in the mainstream. Terms used in reports include 'can't walk', 'can't get upstairs', 'is sick' 'looking for a cure', 'has fits', 'needs help and caregivers', 'is housebound', 'is a slow learner', 'handicapped', 'can't hear' and many more conveying the notion that the problem is the disabled person, as the terms were labelling and describing the individual person. The medical model linked disability diagnosis with the individual's physical body. The main aim was to eliminate, correct, cure, and manage illness or disability. This discourse provided justification for segregation and exclusion. Due to these disparities with the constitution of the country, the social model was developed to challenge the philosophy behind the pathology-based model.

2.2.4.2. The social model

The first international mandate on the right to education for *all* children was pronounced more than 60 years ago (approximately 1949). Since that time the right to education has been repeatedly endorsed and expanded by the international community (UNESCO, 2009:9). There was a worldwide paradigm shift from special

education to the concept of education for all. During this era, segregation was still exhibited in the education system as it seemed a good justification for exclusion. To promote human rights, social justice, access, equity, and redress, The South African education system adapted the social model discourse of inclusive education as the appropriate approach to achieve the 'education of all learners' goal. The policy was developed to change various concepts associated with special education or the medical model which was coined during the apartheid era under the reign of the National Party. The terms that seem to label an individual were eradicated to fit the community and address the needs of everyone. UNESCO (2009:12) suggests that states should have a clearly stated policy, understood and accepted at the school level as well as by the wider community. The social model proposed the view that the person is disabled by society. This view supposes that disability is caused by the way society is organised rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It looks at the ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for people who are different, not trying to fix them to be able to execute the activities that are not possible with the impairments they have. It is pleasing to point out that the social model discourse concurs well with the principles in Chapter 2 of The National Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 based on human rights.

Burden and Landsberg (1999:35-37) give a simplified summary of the essence of these changes in the education of learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

Table 2.1 A summary of paradigm shift from medical to the social model according to Burden and Landsberg (1999:35-37)

	Old ways of thinking (Medical/Pathological discourse)	The new way of thinking (social discourse)
Aim	Personal development	Preparation for society
Operation	In isolation	community
Vision	Based on race, exclusion	Nondiscriminative/equality, inclusive

Principle	Denial of racial exclusivity, blocking of access	Democracy, social justice, historical adjustment, discourse on rights
Promotes	Inequality, unequal, access; discrimination; marginalization/labels	Equal opportunities, equal access to education, equal rights; nondiscrimination; accommodation of needs of diverse learners
Provision of service	Fragmented; services in rigid structures; education-support services offered outside the system; marginalized and segregated learners	Integrated, holistic-range of support services (the system of education as a whole must provide, and must enable all learners to have access to education) The system needs support in order to react to diversity, educational-support services key aspect of service.
Concepts	Constructs vision	Deconstruction and reallocation of terms based on vision; promotes a new vision
Questions asked	What is the relationship between educational-support service (ESS) and education for learners with special educational needs (ELSEN)? What is wrong with the individual learner? How can we solve the problem?	What is the relationship between ESS and the needs of diverse learners? What is wrong with the system of education? How can we provide for the needs of the learner or solve the problems of all the diverse learners?
Educational needs	Segregation learners	Need for the system to change; needs and priorities that need to be addressed so that the system can react effectively to diversity in the learner population
Diversity	Based on race and category; promotes segregation	Diversity cuts across race, gender, categories, etc.; acknowledges the

		diverse needs of diverse learners, thus all learners; promotes integration
Learners	Segregated on the grounds of categories and label	Rights to which learners are entitled based on principles and vision entrenched in the Constitution.
Curriculum	rigid	Flexible, accessible, inclusive
Education	Supports the status quo	Transforming agent of change; promotes equal opportunities for race, disability, etc.; provision of service holistic in nature
System	unequal access	Promotes life-long learning

Considering the differences listed in Table 2.1, the rationale for the radical shift from the medical to the social discourse is exposed. The social model promotes the shifting of focus away from a 'deficit', problem-orientated philosophy of intervention, towards one within which support services focus on strengths, competencies, and development (UNESCO, 2009) of an individual, to fit in and function in a community.

2.2.5. Teachers' professional development in South Africa

Teachers have been seen as important role players in the implementation of inclusive education effecting the change on how learners are accommodated in diverse classrooms in this dynamic process. As mentioned before that most studies paint a bleak picture of inclusive education implementation and that most teachers are insufficiently skilled to tackle issues of inclusive education ranging from curriculum adaptation and behavioural challenges. This raises eyebrows on how they have been trained, and the set standards for the providers of teacher education so that their programmes are designed and delivered in a way that enables all pre-service and in-service teachers to meet the required standards.

The Ministry of Education gave its mandate and commitment that through the district support teams it would provide access for teachers to appropriate pre-service and in-service education and training and professional support services (DoE, 2001:29). The

skills required to respond to special educational needs should be taken into account during assessment of studies and teacher certification (UNESCO, 1994:28). It is clearly very important that teachers go through a rigorous professional development programme to be equipped with the necessary skills to deal with inclusive education principles. In preparation for inclusive education in South Africa, the policy specifically states: "the norms and standards for teacher education will be revised where appropriate to include the development of competencies to recognise and address barriers to learning and to accommodate the diverse range of learning needs" (DoE, 2001:49).

Continued professional teacher development is critical for the successful implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2015:43). It was placed under the South African Council for Educators' (SACE) management (DoE, 2006:25). SACE is the South African teachers' professional body that was developed well before the policy of inclusive education in 1997 (SACE, 2002:149). The aim was to register professional educators, and to keep the register on a roll for the purpose of regulating qualifications, standards, and professional discipline of teachers (SACE, 2002:9). This body believes that "the education profession never stays the same for long. It places the responsibility of educators to be lifelong learners" (SACE gazette, 2018:6). The SACE strives to maintain standards through very specific endeavours and actions.

- It promotes a common set of knowledge, skills, and commitments across the profession to enhance the learning opportunities of all learners.
- It strengthens the professional identity and enhances the status and public standing of the teaching profession.
- It provides a common language and a vision of the profession that all teachers can use to define and develop their practice.
- It supports professional teachers to fulfil their professional roles and responsibilities, from pre-service to in-service teachers.
- It sets standards for the providers of teacher education so that their programmes are designed and delivered in a way that enables all pre-service and in-service teachers to meet the standards.
- It provides a framework to guide the whole continuum of educator preparation and development from student selection to pre-service education, provisional

registration of newly qualified teachers, induction, full registration, educator evaluation, continuing professional development, and career advancement.

- It facilitates (individually and collaboratively): evaluation, reflection, and professional development of teachers at all career stages.
- It guides educators to deepen and broaden their professional knowledge, skill, and understanding as they gain experience.
(SACE gazette, 2018:6).

According to the SACE gazette (2018:9-12), the professional teaching standards for South African teachers consist of 10 standards which are necessary and interlinked components of professional practice.

1. Teaching is based on an ethical commitment to the learning and wellbeing of all learners.
2. Teachers collaborate with others to support teaching, learning, and their professional development.
3. Teachers support social justice and the redress of inequalities within their educational institutions and society more broadly.
4. Teaching requires that well-managed and safe learning environments are created and maintained within reason.
5. Teaching is fundamentally connected to teachers' understanding of the subject/s they teach.
6. Teachers make thoughtful choices about their teaching that lead to learning goals for all learners.
7. Teachers understand that language plays an important role in teaching and learning.
8. Teachers can plan coherent sequences of learning experiences.
9. Teachers understand how their teaching methodologies are effectively applied.
10. Teaching involves monitoring and assessing learning.

In addition, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nzimande, published the revised policy on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualification on 19 February 2015 in Government Gazette no. 38487, aiming at ensuring that the higher education system produces teachers of high quality, in line with the needs of the country (Government Gazette, 2015:6). Inclusive education forms an important aspect

of both general pedagogical knowledge and specialised pedagogical content knowledge (Government Gazette, 2015:10). Unfortunately, some teachers who are still in education were trained before the birth of inclusive education. In-service programmes and workshops should be available for those teachers who were trained during the "special education" era where disability was regarded as a person's tragedy. According to UNESCO (1994:28): "in-service training should, wherever possible, be developed at school level by means of interaction with trainers and supported by distance education and other self-instruction techniques".

The perception of teachers needs to be shifted from this old model to the new model, the social model, which looks at the way the social environment accommodates people with disability. Walton (2014:223) proclaimed: "Gauteng is committed to teacher development, for the implementation of its Inclusion Strategy with 'teacher and expert staff development and support' as the second pillar". The first pillar is in-service teacher training for inclusive education. This implies that teacher training courses provide quality training towards inclusion, and South Africa is making a great effort to develop her teachers professionally.

Furthermore, Gasa (2011:92) identifies three-level hierarchy training opportunities for mainstream education that some countries find useful in equipping teachers.

- All teachers need to have an understanding of inclusive practices in the classroom, developed through both initial training and ongoing processes of professional development.
- Many teachers (ideally, at least one per school) will need to develop some level of expertise in the more common difficulties and disabilities that learners experience. Such teachers need to be trained not only to improve their own practice but also to act as advisers and consultants to their colleagues.
- A few teachers need to develop a high level of expertise, not through separate training tracks from the outset but to develop skills and experience as mainstream teachers and only later to specialize given the diversity of difficulties with which they will be confronted. It is also important for the expertise not to be defined too narrowly and for it to be built on a broad base of expertise at a lower level of training. Teachers should be informed before they inform.

In conclusion, UNESCO (1994:27) suggests: "in teacher-training practice schools, specific attention should be given to preparing all teachers to exercise their autonomy and apply their skills in adapting curricula and instruction to meet pupils' needs as well as to collaborate with specialists and co-operate with parents". In the light of the above discussion, I consider teachers' professional development relevant in stating standards that are expected of a well-equipped South African teacher. I am optimistic that it will work as a self-retrospection tool for teachers as there are clearly stipulated standards and expectations to be met by all SACE registered teachers. It gives one a standing point on whether it is non-compliance or insufficient training lacking proper strategies to address barriers to learning or otherwise.

2.2.6. Strategies that promote the implementation of inclusive education

In an inclusive classroom, learners are expected to possess a degree of autonomy and show initiative in the learning process. Selection of good strategies when teaching helps learners to bypass their areas of weakness and perform at the level of their capabilities Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:175) say "A teaching method is a particular technique a teacher uses to help learners gaining knowledge which they need to achieve a desired outcome". They also define a strategy as "… a broad plan of action for teaching-learning activities with a view to achieve one or more learning outcomes".

Fourie and Hooijer (2006:51-52) advocate for social collaboration where there is interaction of participants who share a joint focus on a topic to achieve a common objective. They further explain that this view evolves from Vygotsky's theory that interaction serves as a catalyst for intellectual growth and language development. The same can faultlessly concur with Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems as talking is encouraged in a wide variety of contexts, including group discussions, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning groups. Nel et al (2013:29) state that "it is important for teachers to know that a learner-centred, activity-based, teaching approach is the key. The DoE Guidelines for inclusive learning programme (DoE, 2005:36) add that "Participatory and collaborative learning allows learners experiencing barriers to learning to contribute to tasks and activities at a level appropriate to their level of development. Highly gifted learners will contribute differently according to their strengths and interests. Joint planning, discussion and reflection will stretch other

learners and add value to the learning of all participants". Of the above methods, cooperative learning has gained an upper hand because it actively involves the learners in the teaching-learning process and places ecological aspects in the centre looking at the relationship of learners to one another and to their environment they are operating in.

The Guidelines for inclusive programmes (DoE, 2005:93) defines it: "Co-operative learning is a way of teaching in which learners work together to ensure that all members in their groups have learnt the same content. In co-operative learning, groups are organised and tasks are structured so that learners must work together to reach a goal, solve a problem, make a decision, or produce a product". It outlines the characteristics of cooperative learning as follows; (DoE, 2005:95-96).

- Face-to-face interaction- Learners interact directly with one another when carrying out collaborative activities. Interaction needs to take place among learners, not between learners and learning materials.
- Equal opportunity for success- All learners have a chance to contribute to the success of the group.
- Individual accountability- All learners are held individually responsible for learning, the materials and contributing to the group.
- Interpersonal skills- The teacher has an assurance that members learn a range of interpersonal and social skills for example communication skills, leadership skills, decision-making skills, trust building, time management and conflict management.
- Learner reflection- At the end of the activity learners evaluate how well their group functioned and whether their goals were achieved.
- Positive inter-dependence- The accomplishment of the group goal depends on all group members working together and coordinating their actions.

In working towards a common goal, the learners in a cooperative can be regarded as a system that relates to and influences one another with multiple layers and different intelligences. The DoE Guidelines for inclusive programmes (DoE, 2005:111) says "Teachers should be aware of the different multiple intelligences of learners and be able to identify them. These intelligences are of utmost importance in guiding the choice of appropriate teaching and learning strategies". In other words, one would

deduce that the learners' intelligence and accompanying learning styles should be taken as a starting point in determining the teaching methodologies and assessment procedures to be applied, all creating a system. It explains some of Gardner's types of intelligences (1983,2003), and how these learners prefer to learn (2005:112-115). Their preferences of learning determine how they react and interact and influence others in the system.

Logical-Mathematical- (1) Strong at math & problem-solving skills, (2) Ability to discern logical or numerical patterns, (3) Ability to pursue extended lines of logic and reasoning, (4) Asks 'why' & 'how' questions, wants to reason things out, wants to know 'what's coming up next' - sequential thinking. The highly logical mathematical learners will be interested in problem solving and hypothesis–testing strategies.

Spatial- (1) Strong visual imagination and other spatial abilities, (2) Likes to design, draw, read graphics, posters, (3) Needs pictures to understand, likes puzzles, mazes, organizing space, objects and areas, (4) Has ability to mentally manipulate forms, objects or people in space or transfer them to other locations or into other elements, (5) Has the capacity to recognize forms, shapes and how they relate and interact with another, (6) Has also sensitivity to the balance and composition of shapes. Visually-spatially strong learners learn best from information that they see or read. They have strong visual imaginations and are inclined to be involved in spatial activities.

Interpersonal - (1) Strong people skills, (2) Ability to make distinctions among others in their moods, feelings, biases, thoughts and values, (3) Has the ability to act appropriately using knowledge of others, (4) Loves to talk & influence, usually a group leader, an organizer, (5) Communicates well, (6) Good at conflict resolution, listening, negotiating & persuasion. Highly interpersonal learners enjoy engaging in learning experiences in a social setting.

Bodily-Kinesthetic - (1) Ability to handle objects skillfully, either fine or gross motor movements, (2) Also the ability to control own movements for function or expression, (3) Desire to move! Constant movement or commitment to comfort, (4) Wants to get up, move around, tap, touch, fiddle with things & do things. Highly bodily-kinesthetic learners enjoy learning whilst moving about freely and touching. They also learn best from handling materials, writing and drawing.

Verbal-linguistic - (1) Use of core operations of language, (2) Sensitivity to the meaning, sound, inflection and order of words, (3) Loves language - reads and loves to talk, (4) Constant talking, a good memory for dates & names, (5) Likes to tell and

listen to stories, (6) Likes a variety of voices and remember jokes, (7) Enjoys reading. Learners with strong oral language abilities like to read and think out loud.

- Has a good understanding of own strengths and weaknesses
- Able to exercise self-control
- Good at goal setting & is comfortable being alone
- Make choices in favour of long-term benefit
- The ability to develop successful working models of oneself-A way to learn and develop new behaviours based on self-knowledge

Learners who are highly emotionally sensitive enjoy solitude, like thinking and are happy to work alone.

Moreover, the way the learners prefer to learn influences the methods and strategies that teachers apply. This should be done with a clear picture that there are layers of interacting systems resulting in change, growth, and development.

The contextual framework looked at the understanding of inclusive education, teacher development and strategies advocated by the department of education as factors promoting the implementation of inclusive education.

2.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The underlying theoretical approach adopted for the current study is the ecological systems theory, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of human development.

2.3.1. Bronfenbrenner's Bio-ecological Systems Theory of Development

Bronfenbrenner's systems theory (1979) is based on how ecosystem functions in shaping the development (Shelton, 2019) of an individual. It looks at child development through the lenses of systems that relate to and influence one another. Bronfenbrenner first developed his theory as 'ecological systems theory' in 1989 (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) and then further developed it to 'bio-ecological systems' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) adding the aspect of heredity by affixing "bio". The latter is known as the "Person-Process-Context-Model" of development with three components (Shelton, 2019). He continued his work by adding the component of

"time" making it Person-Process-Context-Time (PPTC) model of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) with four components.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) described the PPCT model as having four interrelated components: (a) the developing mental **process**, involving the fused and dynamic relation of the individual and the context, (b) the **person** with his or her individual repertoire of biological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural characteristics, (c) the **context** of human development, conceptualised as the nested levels or systems, of the ecology of human development he has depicted, (Bronfenbrenner, 1977,1979) and (d) **time**, conceptualized as involving the multiple dimensions of temporality, for example, the ontogenetic time, family time, and historical time, all constituting the chronosystem that moderates change across the life course.

The bioecological systems theory as a whole is a multidimensional model of human development which suggests that there are layers of interacting systems resulting in change, growth, and development. What happens in one system affects and is affected by the other systems (Swart & Pettipher, 2011:10). In this theory, the systems refer to the individual's environment in which he or she interacts directly or indirectly and which influences the person's development. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011:11): "he emphasized that a person's development is the product of interactions-cultural, social, economic, political - and not merely psychological". He views humans as active participants in the process of development adapting to the environment that involves the relationship with others (Shelton, 2019). The theory is represented by a very complex centric model with the individual in the centre, and the universe as the outer and background layer, as depicted in Figure 2.1.
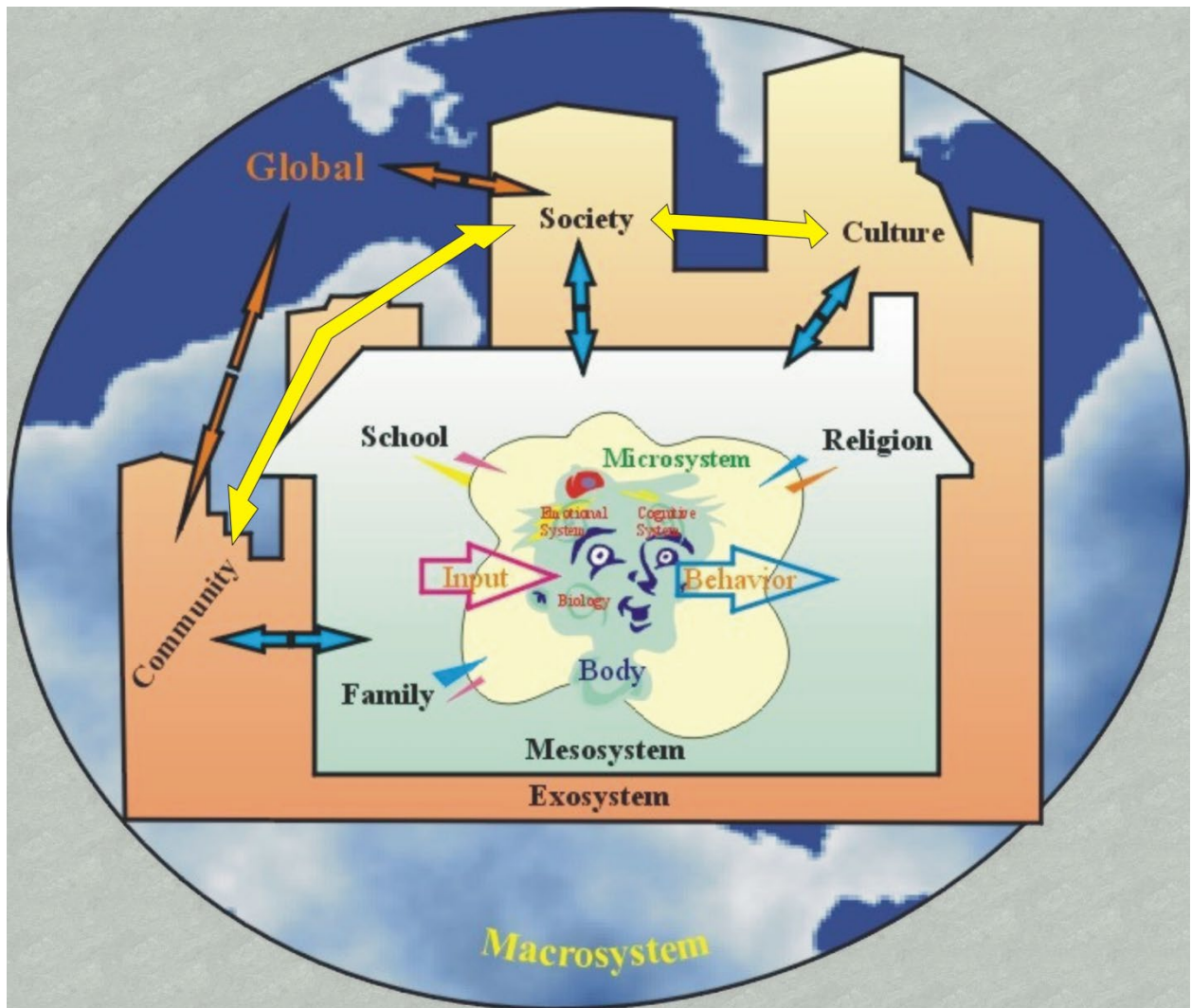
Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's model of the bio-ecological systems. John Ryan. [File:///C|/My%20Documents/Webs/Bronfnbrenner%20webquest/index.htm (1](File:///C|/My%20Documents/Webs/Bronfnbrenner%20webquest/index.htm) of 4) [7/12/2001 6:36:39PM]

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory has five layers with structures within a layer and interaction of structures within layers. It is characterized by a commitment to the understanding of the dynamic relationships between the developing individual and the integrated, multilevel ecology of human development. The layers of his theory are described in the paragraphs to follow.

2.3.2.1. The microsystem

The microsystem is described as the setting within which the individual is behaving at a given moment in his life. It consists of the complex relations between the developing individual and the immediate environment containing the individual. The structures include the family, school, neighbourhood, and childcare setting. The people

surrounding the individual affect the individual's behaviour while the individual's behaviour affects the people surrounding him or her. The individual actively participates in these structures. Bronfenbrenner (1994) explains it as a system characterized by direct, interactional processes as familial relationships and close friendships.

2.3.2.2. The mesosystem

This layer provides the connection between the structures of the microsystem (Berk, 2000). Swart and Pettipher (2011:14) explain that the family, school, and peer group interact with one another, modifying each of the systems. They give an example of the relations between the family and the child's school. The relationship between the teacher and the child influences the interaction of the child with his peer group and family. The interaction is between two or more settings in which the developing individual actively participates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25). It is the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, cited in Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

2.3.2.3. The exosystem

According to Berk (2000), this layer defines the larger social system in which the individual does not function directly. It includes the local community, culture, and society, involving structures like other parents, family friends, education, extended family, work associates, and local health care. Even if the individual might not be involved directly, the interaction within the layers and structures affect the individual positively or negatively. Bronfenbrenner (2005: xiii) gave an example of what may occur when the parent has had a stressful day at work and as a result is less able to provide quality caregiving to the child. He regards this system as an extension of the mesosystem embracing specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not contain the developing individual. However, he believes that it impinges upon or encompasses the immediate settings in which the person is found and thereby delimit, influence, or even determine what occurs there.

2.3.2.4. The macrosystem

This layer is regarded as the superordinate level of the ecology of human development. According to Berk (2000) it is comprised of cultural values, customs and laws, politics, health, and economics. This means that the structures in this layer influence the interaction of all other layers in the sense that every individual in a nation is controlled by the values, customs, and laws surrounding him or her as well as his

or her societal and cultural demands. The macrosystem influences the nature of interaction within all other levels of the ecology of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: xiv). This also makes this layer very relevant to inclusive education in the sense that it links directly to concepts of being humane and being human, discrimination, equality, justice or rights, etc. It confirms that people are not just individuals, but they live in a community and must share things and care for each other.

2.3.2.5. The chronosystem

According to Swart & Pettipher (2011:15), the chronosystem encapsulates the dimension of time and how it relates specifically to the interaction between these systems and their influence on individual development. The time factor in this layer can be internal or external. External in the sense of for example death of a parent due to old age and internal for example the physiological changes that happen to an individual's body as he or she ages or grows. As every individual grows or ages, the individual's perception changes and he/she reacts differently to the environment. Shelton (2019) explains: "When a person acts or changes, effects will be experienced in other parts of the ecosystem, which will change the ecosystem in turn affecting the person".

Finally, Bronfenbrenner believes that all the levels of the organisation involved in human life are linked integratively in the constitution of the course of individual ontogeny.

2.3.3. The importance of Bronfenbrenner's theory to teachers

The Bio-ecological systems of Bronfenbrenner's theory are vital in the inclusive education system that follows the social model discourse. The following arguments were extracted from the theory, with reference to the social model perspective of inclusive education.

- The relations between an active individual and his or her active multilevel ecology constitute the driving force of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: xix). This statement advocates for active participation by all parties in the teaching-learning process. Teachers are encouraged to engage learners in activities that induce participation between themselves and the environment. Swart and Pettipher (2011:10) further explain: "Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological

model of development has much relevance in emphasizing the interaction between an individual's development and the systems within the social context". In other words, the school as a system is urged to exert a positive influence on learners to interact and participate.

- The immediate environment is referred to as the setting for proximal processes. Patterns of the proximal process in a school set-up are found in activities like reading, playing, learning new skills, problem-solving, performing complex tasks, etc. The power of proximal processes can be harnessed when supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning. Swart and Pettipher (2011:11-15) state that the proximal processes need to involve progressively more complex reciprocal relationships and interactions between an active individual and persons, objects, and symbols in his or her immediate environment, which they call synergism. In this statement, the word *reciprocal* is very important as it suggests an agreement to help each other and behave in the same way towards each other. Reciprocity in inclusive education can be a very important tool that teachers may use. They can do this for example when selecting teaching approaches. Teachers are reminded that learners should take part in the process, not as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge but as active participants.

- Since the model starts with the immediate environment of the learner and extends to the wider society, it helps the teacher to promote the preparation of an individual to become part of the community. It also influences other structures and systems, such as progressing in content from the known to unknown; for example, a grade one teacher cannot introduce the theme *my community* before *my family*.

- The systems are interrelated components. Consequently, when teachers are working with the learners, they must not lose sight of the systems that surround the learner. The success or failure of their efforts should not be ascribed to a single system or aspect. They must look at the proximal process which is the person-environment interaction, the person's characteristics, the context which is the environment, and time which looks at a regular and extended period. This is very important when screening learners experiencing barriers to learning and when evaluating the teaching process on a day-to-day routine.

- The theory gives a glimpse of why each child develops differently, focusing not only on the biological aspects of the individual but on the ecological aspects around the child as well. This helps teachers to create structures and systems conducive to learning in the classroom, together with other teachers, especially previous and next grades, and with parents, enhancing good communication and exerting a positive influence.

- The theory features the word *perception*. It holds the belief that as an individual grows or ages, the person's perception changes and he/she reacts differently to the environment. Teachers can adopt this belief when selecting teaching methods, activities, and media. They should all be age appropriate as well as contextually appropriate. The type of activities that may be thrilling to lower grades might be monotonous for upper grades, and what interests one group of learners of a certain age will not necessarily another group of learners of the same age.

- As Bronfenbrenner further developed his theory, he added the prefix "bio-", thereby indicating that he accepts that both an individual's biology and his environment play a role in his growth and development. This helps teachers to realise that their focus should not be on the environment only but also on considering how the individual might learn better. The question of nurture versus nature can simply be answered by indicating that teachers are expected to be agencies of **nurturing nature** as they unpack the curriculum in their classrooms.

In accordance with the operational frameworks discussed above, the concept of inclusive education in South Africa and globally is based on the social model and some aspects of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Both consider an individual as a social being whose interaction influences and is influenced by the systems and structures around him or her. Process, context, influence, and interaction have been regarded as of the utmost importance to promote human rights, social justice, access, equity, redress, and quality education for all, to enable all learners to participate actively in the classroom and in society at large.

2.4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 2.2 was designed with a view to providing a condensed representation of a conceptual framework that captures factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education policy in schools, drawing from Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory and the social model discourse. The needs of a community/society are at the top of the model to show the origin of the policy in its quest to address their needs. In other words, the community's needs led to the drafting of the inclusive education policy.   The contents and the principles of the policy itself define and influence everything that comes below it, as they are influenced by the needs of a society guided by the national constitution. It influences the curriculum in particular. Marks et al. (1978:457, cited in Carl, 2012:28), view curriculum as "…the sum total of the means by which a student is guided in attaining the intellectual and moral discipline requisite of the role of an intelligent citizen in a free society".   The curriculum influences how teachers manage and organise their classrooms, and its influence is chiefly dependent on its flexibility. According to Stevens (Lewis & Doorlag, 1995:190; Vogel 2011:5-12), classroom management is what teachers do to make the classroom pleasant, meaningful, safe and orderly for the learners, to ensure that learning support can take place effectively and efficiently, and to make certain that learners feel comfortable and non-threatened. Stevens (op. cit.) cited three main managerial actions in planning the classroom environment: (1) the arrangement of furniture and the physical condition of the classroom like the colour of the wall, the windows and doors, space, noise level, ventilation, temperature, lighting, etc. (2) Organising the teaching environment which encompasses the procedure that the teacher uses to divide the curriculum into smaller learning programmes, the organizing of learners into groups, the use of equipment such as chalkboards and guidelines for improving learner behaviour (discipline), and (3) Classroom administration which includes writing reports and filing information. The research question addresses teachers, and to get the answer, they had to be observed during these activities, interviewed, and requested to fill out a questionnaire.

Methods and techniques take centre stage at this level and are linked with the selection of language, pace of teaching, media, strategies, and processes of teaching. Although these processes comprise the bottom level on the model, it is at this stage that learners can easily be excluded in the teaching-learning process if the concept of *disability is not inability* is not understood. This level involves aspects like collaboration

teaching, grouping, multicultural teaching, learning styles, and many more. Furthermore, it indirectly probes the capacity, commitment, and attitudes of the implementers of the policy, the teachers. However, regardless of how committed a person can be, training and support are needed to maintain momentum through and within all the levels from top to bottom and vice versa. Moreover, training of the policymakers, curriculum planners, and implementers is necessary right from the onset of a policy. However, the policymakers and curriculum planners are beyond the scope of this study as it focuses on implementers, the teachers. Hence, only teachers' development is included in this study.

In brief, if any barriers to learning, whether system-based or due to organic/medical causes, particular life experiences, or socio-economic deprivation, are not addressed, they can be stumbling blocks to the implementation of inclusive education.
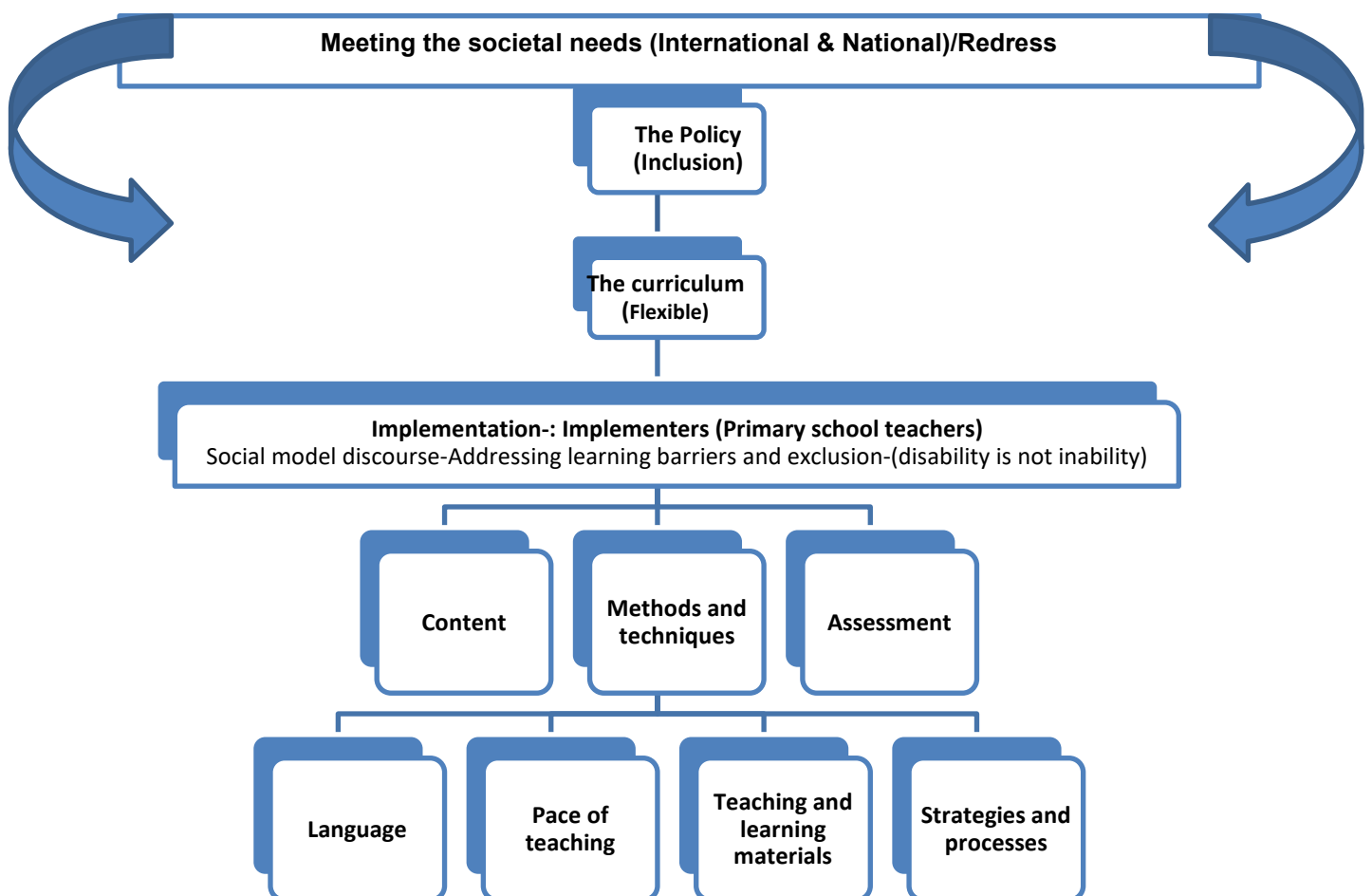
Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework representing factors that affect the implementation of inclusive education in a classroom. Source: Self-generated by the Author

2.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL STUDY

This chapter has highlighted the development of inclusive education internationally in three main stages or models. Firstly, there was the **medical discourse** in which learners were categorized according to race and disability (as used then). The education systems of that time found these categories a justification for excluding learners from mainstream education and putting them in special classes or schools. Learners needed to be "fixed" to fit the system. Secondly, education entered the **social-political discourse** (which did not feature much in South Africa) where normalization and integration were the key words guiding the implementation process during the era. This discourse encouraged interactions between the disabled and the non-disabled community. Finally, the third model which is in use to date is the **social model discourse**. It acknowledges that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support. From this perspective, education should be accessible to everyone irrespective of the nature of their needs following the main principles, "equal education for all" and "human dignity". Interaction and maximising the participation of all learners in the culture, adapting the curricula of educational institutions, and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning are some of the goals. These goals interlink in most aspects with the bio-ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner. His theory describes the interaction of an individual in the surrounding environment (structures and systems). Each structure or system influences and is influenced by other structures, which all influence the individual's development directly or indirectly.

Teachers' development was regarded as an important aspect in the implementation of inclusive education as it gives teachers skills relevant to involving every child in the teaching-learning process so that children can achieve their full potential. However, it must be noted that not only teacher-training programmes affect the implementation of inclusive education; various variables are represented in Figure 2.2. Some involve the commitment of teachers and stakeholders, attitude towards inclusion, knowledge, and the capacity to address the needs of learners, context and environment, collaboration, and support of learners and teachers. Moreover, it does not underestimate the relevance of the socio-economic background, biology (physiology, behaviour, and other qualities) and family background of learners that may affect the implementation process of inclusive education.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The study in hand sought to explore the factors that affect the implementation of inclusive education. This chapter provides an explanation, justification, and motivation relating to the research methodology used. Research methodology and approaches indicate the answers to questions as to how research should be designed, structured, approached, and executed. It offers a detailed account of the design, dealing with the paradigm, approach, type, methods, and process of data collection that were selected. It describes the sampling procedure, data gathering process, number of participants, and how participants were selected. An explanation of the significance and effectiveness of the data collection instruments is provided, and the analysis process is discussed. An interpretive qualitative case study was selected as a reliable research method and an approach that would produce reliable, valid, and objective knowledge about the phenomenon under study, with primary data collected through interviews, questionnaires and observations.

3.2. RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The use of a qualitative case study is a well-established approach in education research. One major feature of well-collected qualitative data is that they focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, allowing a deeper understanding of what "real life" is like (Miles et al, 2014). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:5), qualitative research typically refers to "an in-depth study using face to face of observation techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings". Creswell (2009) describes the major characteristic of qualitative research as gathering information by talking to people, and seeing them behave and act within their natural setting where the researcher has face-to-face interaction with them. Qualitative methods offer an effective way of interacting with the participants and obtaining insight into the contexts in which they operate. Another feature of qualitative data is their richness and holism, with strong potential for revealing complexity through "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) that are vivid, are nested in a real context, and have a ring of truth that has a strong impact on the reader (Miles et al, 2014).

The current researcher gathered the qualitative data using Interviews, questionnaires, and observation to enable her to interact with and represent the voices and actual words of the participants that reflect their perceptions. The researcher obtained the participants' consent to do so in the analysis. The purpose of the process was to capture the meaning of real-world events from the perspective of the participants (Yin 2011:11). The conclusion of this study was drawn with reference to the data collected, which Yin (2011:20) calls "adherence to data". Transparent information about the research was made known to the participants beforehand, which upholds the values of trustworthiness and credibility of this study. The researcher was solely accountable and was honest throughout the study, protecting the participants' privacy and maintaining their integrity as advocated by Punch and Oancea (2014). The responsibility for the wellbeing of participants during the investigation was carried out with empathy understanding (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Collecting qualitative data offers the researcher insight into the world of the participants in the endeavour of uncovering their truth, the nature of their reality through interacting with them. The investigation took place within a real-life context (natural setting) where there was no manipulation or control of behaviour or setting. Context sensitivity was of the utmost importance because as mentioned before, the theoretical framework drawn from the bio-ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that the systems and structures around the individual influence his or her development. Yin (2011:8) agrees that qualitative research covers contextual conditions such as the social, institutional, and environmental conditions within which people's lives take place. He suggests that these contextual conditions may strongly influence all human events. The qualitative design used to collect field-based data allowed the researcher to capture contextual conditions as well as the participants' perspectives.

In summary, a qualitative design was selected for the following reasons (adapted from Johnson and Christensen, 2014):

(1) It studies behaviour in naturalistic settings, which helps yield more holistic insights into educational processes that occur in particular settings

(2) It provides in-depth and rich information about participants' worldviews and their personal perspectives and subjective meanings

(3) It provides detailed information about why a phenomenon occurs.

In light of the preceding discussion, the interpretive/constructivism paradigm, the qualitative design, and the explorative multiple case study with data from interviews, observations, and questionnaires were the appropriate modes of inquiry suitable for this empirical study investigating factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Leavy (2017:8) proclaims: "I think of research design as building a structure or plan for your research". She further explains that architects have many general structures with which they work. In research, she pointed out five major approaches namely quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods research, arts-based research, and community-based participatory research. Additionally, Punch and Oancea (2014:142) define research design as "…all the decisions involved in planning and executing a research project - from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results … research design situates the researcher in the empirical world and connects the research questions to data". Philliber, Schwab, and Samsloss (1980, as cited in Yin, 2014) further simplify the concept of a research design by describing it as a "blueprint" for research, dealing with at least four problems: what question to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results. The word *blueprint* can be seen as referring to a plan or a model.

This study was executed in the interpretive/constructivism paradigm using a qualitative design, implementing an explorative case study with data collected through observations, interviews, and questionnaires. How each was employed is described in detail in the following sections.

3.3.1 Research paradigm

The study utilised the interpretive/constructivist paradigm. Bakkabulindi (2015:21) defines a research paradigm as "a sort of 'camp', to which a researcher belongs in terms of assumptions, propositions, thinking, and approach to research". According to Punch and Oancea (2014), it is not a single entity but an umbrella term that encompasses an enormous variety of methodological traditions, strategies and designs, approaches to data, and methods for the analysis of data.

Creswell (2009) says the goal of research in the constructivist paradigm is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. This paradigm examines how people engage in the process of constructing and reconstructing meanings through daily interactions (Leavy, 2017:129). Nieuwenhuis (2012) defines it as an approach to research that stresses subjective reality as its ontology. This means that it is influenced by personal feelings, tastes, and experiences. Packer (2011, cited in Okeke & Wyk, 2015:40) says: "The interpretive paradigm assumes that people construct and merge their own subjective and intersubjective as they interact with the world around them". Grbich (2013:7) asserts that reality is viewed as socially and societally embedded and existing within the mind. She further explains that this reality is fluid and changing, and there are multiple realities. Interpretive study is based on the qualitative tradition and has a subjective ontology. Furthermore, Creswell (2003) explains ontology as how researchers make claims about what is knowledge or as the nature of reality (Creswell, 2009).

Okeke (2015:209) describes the interpretive approach as humanistic research that emphasizes the interpretation of meaning that is characteristic of the social world. This constructivism study followed two main philosophical dimensions namely ontology and epistemology. It holds the relativism ontology that believes in the notion that truth is based on the context, and it evolves, and that multiple realities exist. The epistemology that truth is created by meaning and experience, furthermore, requires digging deeper to discover meaning through interaction and talking to people. Extensive interaction through interviews, observations, and questionnaires took place between the researcher and four primary school teachers in the Ekurhuleni District, allowing the researcher to explore factors that facilitate or impede the implementation of Inclusive Education in primary schools. The researcher obtained a clear view of primary school teachers' experiences as they attempted to address barriers to learning in classrooms in day-to-day routines. The evidence collected through these tools was regarded as the truth. In other words, in this study, the truth is based on the data collected. The ontological and epistemological beliefs informed the methodological approaches outlined in detail below.

3.3.2 Research approach
The qualitative approach

Qualitative research has been described as research that seeks to explore and explain phenomena from the perspectives of those who are studied (Lemmer & Wyk, 2010:35), an in-depth study using face-to-face or observation techniques to collect data from people from their natural settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:5). Okeke (2015:209) stresses the point by saying: "Qualitative researchers are encouraged to adopt ways that enable them to represent the voices or actual words of participants in their research report". He claims that the use of actual words of participants enables the researchers to claim that their approach is deep in meaning, substantial and descriptive.

Johnson and Christensen (2014) consider it important for a researcher to get closer to their objects of study through participant observation. They regard it as important because it gives the researcher a chance to experience the subjective dimension of the phenomena they study. According to Leavy (2014, cited in Leavy, 2017:266), qualitative research typically uses inductive approaches to knowledge building aimed at generating meaning. Johnson and Christensen (2014) claim that in qualitative research design the researcher is said to be the "instrument of data collection", because it is the researcher who asks the questions, collects the data, makes interpretations, and records what is observed. In other words, the researcher according to them is the determinant although the outcome will be based on the data collected. They refer to "empathetic understanding" - putting yourself in someone else's shoes. This is possible when the researcher interacts with the participants. Grbich (2013:19) promotes the idea that the researcher is the instrument, and that the dynamics of interaction will impact on questions, sampling, attitude and the nuances of verbal and non-verbal communication.

The generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with human community (Creswell, 2009). According to Leavy (2017:124), the qualitative approach values depth of meaning, as well as people's subjective experiences and their meaning-making process. Subjectivity refers to being influenced by personal opinion, feelings, experience and tastes. She suggests that qualitative research questions be open-ended, beginning with "what" or "how" (Leavy, 2017:128), for the very purpose of obtaining a subjective response.

This evidence-based inquiry was conducted using systematically gathered empirical data collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Qualitative research emphasizes multiple socially constructed realities (Creswell, 2009), and this is the reason the current study was conducted using this design. People's subjective understanding and multiple meanings were prioritised by using multiple cases to get different perspectives from different individuals in the process. As mentioned before, this study is based on what Johnson and Christensen (2014) call interpretive validity, which refers to portraying accurately the meanings attached by participants to what is being studied by the researcher. It accurately represents research participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences and portrays them in the research report. In taking this point of view, it is clear that the four participants, primary school teachers, would not at all times express similar views, hence, multiple realities were obtained from the phenomenon under study.

3.3.3 Research type

This was an exploratory case study.

Rule & John (2011:4) define a case study as follows: "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". Yin (2011:18 & 2014) provides essentially the same definition.

A multiple exploratory case study approach involving four different primary school teachers chosen from four different schools was selected to explore the teachers' experiences in addressing barriers to learning in their classrooms. An exploratory case study provides a detailed account of a single individual or a group to get an in-depth understanding of the organizational culture (Yin, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2014:50). Ellet (2007, cited in Tracy, 2013) points out that case studies usually consist of a descriptive narrative that illustrates a problem, indicates potential solutions, and leaves the actual resolution to the reader. Tracy (2013:265) adds that these descriptions are typically written without a great deal of scholarly language so that they may be easily understood and analysed. The current researcher found it the most applicable research type because it is holistic, it exists in a real-life context, and does not require long term immersion in a culture.

A questionnaire was administered, interviews were conducted, and observations were made to collect data from each of the four participants. The sample selected for the study rendered data that was inferred to a larger group which is Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng. The teachers' responses were grouped as a single entity though they were from different places and represented different characteristics of individual teachers. The researcher searched for information-rich informants as they were likely to be knowledgeable and informative about Inclusive Education. A purposeful sampling technique was implemented. Participant selection is discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

The core setting for observations was the teachers' classrooms because that is where the implementation of inclusive education is expected to occur in full capacity and where most of the educational goals are accomplished. The observation tool incorporated some aspects to be observed around the school premises to check accessibility, conduciveness, and adaptability of the school environment in general. There was no manipulation or control of behaviour or setting as context-sensitivity was of the utmost importance. All the ethical aspects were taken into consideration when selecting the cases and administering the interviews, questionnaires, and observations. Yin (2014) warns that a good case study researcher will strive for the highest ethical standards including having a responsibility to scholarship, being honest, avoiding deception, and accepting responsibility for one's work.

3.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

3.4.1 Selection of participants

Sampling entails making decisions about which people, setting, events or behaviours to include in the investigation. Researchers also need to decide how many individuals, groups, or objects will be observed from the available population (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:59; Miles et al., (2014). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:143) define a population as: "… a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we want to generalize the results of the research".

A purposive sampling strategy was chosen. This strategy involves selecting those individuals who best represent a subgroup of interest (in this case Ekurhuleni District),

providing the best information to address the purpose of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:152). Qualitative research encourages purposefully selecting participants or sites that best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question (Creswell, 2009; Leavy, 2017:180). Leavy (2017:79) calls it "judgment sampling". Patton (2015, cited in Leavy, 2017:79) describes a purposeful/purposive/judgment sampling as based on the premise that seeking out the best cases for the study produces the best data.

In this explorative multiple case study, four primary school teachers in Ekurhuleni District were purposefully selected from four different primary schools in Ekurhuleni District on the basis that they are qualified and experienced in the field of education. Miles et al. (2014) assert, "Multiple-case sampling adds confidence to findings". Furthermore, purposeful sampling is a strategic approach to sampling in which information-rich cases are sought so that the research purpose and questions may be addressed most effectively (Leavy, 2017:79). Although the sampling procedure was purposeful, the researcher had no personal connection to the teachers and the schools selected but believed that the teachers chosen were equipped with basic knowledge on inclusive education gained through teacher-training, in-service training, or organised workshops. They have experienced inclusion and are still experiencing inclusive education. Tracy (2013:135) asserts that all researchers should strive toward a purposeful sample so that data and research questions complement each other, aligning with the research project goals. Less importantly though worth noting, ethnicity variations were included in the cases to try to represent the diversity in South Africa. This was done informally without attempting a proportional representation of ethnic groups through the heads of the institutions who helped to identify the prospective participants.

In the interest of qualitative research, a small sample size of four primary school teachers, the cases, and their respective classrooms in an ordinary school setting were involved in this study. This was believed to be an adequate size to represent the larger population, Ekurhuleni District, giving a reliable and credible conclusion. This means that the four primary school teachers (the cases) were considered a good representation of the population (Ekurhuleni District) and gave the researcher a room to generalize the findings with good statistically significant results. When researchers

are sampling, they must always make sure they are unbiased, Mayan (2009) cautions. Although a purposeful sampling technique was used, the researcher avoided attempting to identify cases that were expected to disconfirm or confirm the researcher's expectations and generalizations.

The cases were composed of all females as a true reflection of them dominating primary schools, two black Africans, one White and one Indian. Table 3.1 gives a summary of their profiles.

Table 3.1 A summary of the participants' profiles.

Criteria	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Age	27 Years	29 years	56 years	37 years
Qualifications	Bachelor of Education Honours degree in business management	Bachelor of Education in Further Education and Training (FET)	Bachelor of Technology in management	Postgraduate in Curriculum and Learning Support
Experience	5 years	8 years	27 years	13 Years
Subjects taught	Mathematics	English FAL	Mathematics Technology	Mathematics English HL Afrikaans FAL Life Skills
Grades	4 and 5	2,3,4 and 5	4, 5,6 and 7	3

The qualitative data were gathered from the multiple cases through observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Each data collection tool is explained below in detail.

3.4.2 Data collection

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:14) make an important point: "Unlike opinion or ideology, the evidence-based inquiry is conducted and reported in such a way that logical reasoning can be painstakingly explained". In this particular research, the data collection process was conducted using the investigator's observation, interests, and experience, interviews, and questionnaires to gather the data that helped to draw a

conclusion regarding what is the truth. The data are discussed and analysed in Chapter Four.

3.4.2.1. The Interview

The interviews were used to allow interaction between the researcher and the participants. It was the most prominent data collection tool in this qualitative study as it facilitated listening to participants to discover meaning through their experiences. It is a good way of exploring people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations, and constructions of reality, and the most powerful way we have of understanding others (Punch & Oancea, 2014:182). It is more than a social encounter where the researcher and the participant share ideas; it is a tool for gathering data. Garton and Copland (2010) state that interviews are a form of communicating or interacting. According to Becker (2014:128): "Ideally every Q & A session should come to feel like a discussion, even if it is not really as free ranging as a social conversation". The researcher took it upon her shoulders to create this kind of feeling as well as creating an interview situation by carefully preparing a set of questions and guiding the interview, deciding logistics, duration, setting, recording, and making elaborations. In this study, the researcher conducted individual interviews asking open-ended questions and receiving answers in the dialogues that took place between participants and the researcher. She followed the strategies suggested by Seidman (2006, cited in Hendricks, 2013:112).

- Listen more and talk less
- Follow up on what the interviewee says
- Avoid asking leading questions
- Keep the interviewee focused and ask for specific details
- Do not reinforce interviewees' responses

The preparation for the interviews started with informing the principals of the schools involved. This step was followed by identifying prospective participants, after which the researcher introduced herself and her mission without deceiving anyone. When the access had been granted, the researcher wrote field notes on what the participants do and say, making verbatim quotes as much as possible. Participants were engaged in informal discussions on why people always complain about Inclusive Education,

what factors affect them as they try to address barriers to learning and how they deal with the challenges they meet, and the support they receive.

All four primary school teachers from different primary schools in Ekurhuleni District were interviewed face to face. The interview sessions were tape-recorded to capture all the data accurately and in sufficient detail without the distraction caused by detailed notetaking. Interviews proceeded in the following manner.

Firstly, there was the introductory phase that took place as soon as the ethical clearance had been issued, and request letters accepted. It was aimed at identifying the participants' suitability and opening up the topic of the implementation of Inclusive Education from the participants' points of view. They were asked questions that led them to talk about barriers to learning, challenges, successes, and recommendations. This paved the way for the structured interview focusing on what factors affect the implementation process of Inclusive Education at micro level and on how these factors (as identified by participants) promote or constrain the implementation process. The data collected was organised and coded for analysis immediately and on an ongoing basis. Through ongoing analysis, interpretation, and collecting of data, the purpose of the study became more distinct (Tracy, 2013:27). The researcher asked follow-up questions through phone calls and WhatsApp messages as she tried to make sense of the data collected.

The researcher was not restricted from making further follow-ups if the need arose to obtain clarification of or elaboration on any issue raised during the interview, for the purpose of easy synthesizing and data analysis. The follow-ups made were few and mostly brief, so they were conducted through calls or WhatsApp messages - see Appendix B.

3.4.2.2. The Questionnaire

According to Johnson and Christensen (2014:191), "a questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that each research participant fills out as part of research study". The researcher administered the questionnaires to get information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions, personality, and behavioural intentions of research participants on the subject of inclusive education. The questionnaire contained open-ended questions, presented in natural and familiar

language to enable the participant to write freely, and also to give a detailed description from their point of view with no limitations. This gave the participants a chance to fully express their experiences without any prejudice in the comfort of their places of choice, whether workplace or home.

The questionnaires were distributed to the four primary school teachers who had been interviewed a few weeks before, to facilitate the validation of data that was collected through the structured interviews and to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon. A sample of the questionnaire tool used in this research appears in Appendix C.

The questionnaires were used to increase the validity, credibility, and reliability of data by checking the results obtained from interviews. The use of different methods to check validity is called triangulation. Cohen and Manion (2000) define triangulation as: "an attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint". Merriam (1988, cited in Creswell, 2009:200), concurs that multiple methods of data collection and analysis strengthen reliability as well as internal validity.

3.4.2.3.   Observations

A structured observation was conducted of four Primary school teachers from different schools in Ekurhuleni District. They were observed in their classes as they teach any of the subjects of the curriculum. No special arrangements were made as everything was done during the regular school time. The main focus was on examining factors that affect the implementation of inclusive education in the delivery of the curriculum as teachers were striving to handle learners showing signs of learning difficulties and addressing barriers to learning.

The act of observation occurs when a researcher who is an investigator is given a platform to collect live data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen & Manion, 2010). Tshabangu (2015:50) states: "Interpretive researchers are characterized as participant observers". However, the researcher can be a participant or non-participant in trying to see or hear what is occurring naturally in the research site. In this study, the researcher occasionally participated although it was unplanned. The researcher

was focusing on what was taking place in the classroom situation, what enabling factors were in place to promote the implementation of inclusive education, and how the teachers implemented inclusive education principles, trying to understand the teacher's views, meanings, and perceptions. In order to give a clear picture of what might transpire, a personal note is required yet again. As mentioned before, I am a primary school teacher so having young children around tempts me to engage with them here and there. If there seemed to be a need for me to participate, I did so. In other words, the participation was not planned and was situational. Nevertheless, this could not stop me from consciously maintaining my position as a researcher.

Notes were collected from the classrooms on how teachers engage with their learners. The aim was to observe the interaction between the teacher and the learners as well as between the learners among themselves, and the classroom environment and atmosphere. A brief inspection was conducted of the school buildings and the general school setup to see how accommodative, conducive, and accessible the institutions are/were. The observation was done with the emphasis on the implementation of inclusive education, management of learners showing signs of learning difficulties, and various issues relating to content, language, classroom arrangement, teaching methods, processes, materials, time, and how learners are assessed in an effort to involve all learners. Some classroom aspects that were observed, and mechanisms provided by schools, were included on the observation template as shown in the list below.

- Content (i.e. what is taught and differentiation to cater for all the learners)
- The language of instruction
- How the classroom is organized and managed and general school environment accessibility
- The methods and processes used in teaching
- The pace of teaching and the time available to complete the curriculum
- The learning materials and equipment that are used
- How learning is assessed
- Support from other learners for example pushing of wheelchairs, writing of notes, etc.
- Mechanisms provided by the school such as

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- Feeding scheme

- Extra lessons

- Support classes

- Support of teachers internally by experts through workshops and class visits

- Social worker/ Psychologist/ Counsellor/ therapist etc.

- Technology and software

- Interactive boards

- School transport

- Lighting

- Stationery

- Ramps or lifts

- Carpeting

- Security and safety

- General infrastructure of the school; types of buildings (conduciveness in the South African weather conditions), accessibility, and accommodative design.

The observation tool is included as Appendix A.

3.4.3 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). Creswell (2009) explains inductive data analysis as a process in which researchers build their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up. The researcher works back and forth between the themes and the database until he or she has established a comprehensive set of themes. Tracy (2013:36) concisely defines inductive reasoning as a "bottom-up" type of reasoning that begins with specific observations and circumstances and then moves on to broader generalisations and theories. In this empirical study, questionnaires, interviews and observations were used to collect qualitative data from primary school teachers in ordinary school settings. Each teacher was interviewed and later given a questionnaire to complete to test the validity and reliability of the data collected through interviews. The gathered data was in the form of words—that is, language in the form of extended text (Miles et al., 2014). The information supplied by participants was

organised by identifying statements that were relevant to answering the research questions and grouping similar items together to form themes. After the identification of themes, the analysis of data in this study was done using the information that addressed the research questions. The researcher assembled the data material belonging to each category in one place and performed the analysis on a question by question basis with only questions number one and two analysed simultaneously. The analysis was performed on an on-going basis and clarifications were obtained using phone calls or the WhatsApp messaging service, depending on the issue at hand and time of the day. This was done concurrently with data gathering and continually reflecting about data, making interpretations, and writing analytical comments. Any material that seemed particularly relevant for answering any of the research questions was highlighted. Creswell (2009) concurs that data analysis is an on-going process during qualitative research. He formulates it as follows: "it is an on-going process involving continual reflection about the data, asking analytic questions, and writing memos throughout the study". According to Edwards (2006), analysing data for a qualitative study is required to be conducted immediately after the data has been collected. The researcher immediately analysed the data after gathering the information or data by listening to a tape recording and interpreting the information. Researchers construct explanations for participants' accounts (Tracy, 2013:5) through coding, by transcribing the participants' responses and then reading all transcripts (Myburgh,2014). The reading, coding, and interpretation of observation sheets, interviews, and questionnaires were executed as an ongoing process using a bottom-up strategy. The study used a simultaneous coding system in which descriptive coding dominated the in vivo and emotion coding types.

3.4.3.1. The bottom-up strategy

According to Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), the bottom-up approach to data analysis entails the following steps.

   (a) Establishing the discrete findings
   (b) Relating findings to each other
   (c) Naming the pattern, and
   (d) Identifying a corresponding construct.

The description, interpretation, and analysis of the data are described in Chapter Four in the sequence as above, and Chapter Five presents conclusions and recommendations as per the findings, using text.

3.5 MEASURES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

The term 'research validity' commonly used in quantitative is replaced in qualitative research by 'trustworthiness', which refers to qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy, and defensible (Johnson & Christensen 2014:299). Several issues relating to trustworthiness (adapted from Johnson and Christensen, 2014) were considered for this study.

3.5.1. Triangulation

Triangulation occurs when two or more methods are used to verify the validity of the information being collected (Tracy, 2013). It is a validation approach that uses multiple investigators, methods, data sources and/or theoretical perspectives in the search for convergence of results. The current study employed multiple data collection methods. Tracy (2013:236) uses the term 'triangulation/crystallization' and described it as a process of gathering multiple types of data seen through multiple lenses as a way of achieving credibility. The multiple data collection tools used in this study are interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Cross-checking of information was done during the data collection period where the questionnaire was used for triangulation purposes, by comparing questionnaire responses to data collected from interviews. The reasoning is that when many data materials converge, the findings are more credible (Denzin, 1978, cited in Tracy, 2013:236).

3.5.2. Researcher bias

The researcher tried to obtain the results as per the participants rather than consistent with what the researcher wanted to find. Adherence to the data collected was of great importance. To avoid potential fabrication and bias, "adherence to data" was applied uncompromisingly. However, it is worth stating that in any qualitative research that for the researcher to be completely unbiased and objective is almost impossible. The researcher, especially being a teacher herself who would, no doubt, also be navigating the challenges and the barriers to implementing inclusive education successfully in

her classroom context would compromise the findings. Henceforth, the following section is of paramount importance in this study.

3.5.3. Reflexivity

The researcher frequently practised self-reflection, self-awareness, and monitoring any possible biases and predispositions that might be a threat to validity during the data collection and analysis process. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:356) explain: "Reflexivity is a broad concept that includes a rigorous examination of one's personal and theoretical commitments to see how they serve as resources for selecting a qualitative approach, framing research problem, generating particular data, relating to participants and developing specific interpretations".

3.5.4. Negative-case sampling

Although the sampling technique that was used was systematic and purposive, the researcher avoided at all costs attempting to identify cases that were expected to disconfirm or confirm the researcher's expectations and generalizations. The cases had no personal connection with the researcher, and met the researcher for the first time on the day of self-introduction.

Overall, interpretive validity was regarded as the predominant form of validity measure. Interpretive validity requires that the researcher 'gets inside the heads' of the participants, looks through the participants' eyes, and sees and feels what they see and feel. In this way, the qualitative researcher can understand issues from the participants' perspectives and thus provide a valid account of these perspectives (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

3.6. ETHICAL MEASURES

Prior to commencing the study, ethical clearance was sought from the University of South Africa (UNISA) Ethical Clearance Committee. Johnson and Christensen (2014:126) define ethics as: "the principles and guidelines that help us uphold the things we value". This implies that research is meant to add value to human life and not erode anything from it. It indicates that to conduct research, certain aspects should be considered to ensure that the life and welfare of the parties involved are considered and respected. The entire research process should not be harmful or exploitative in any way. Hendricks (2013:81) points out that ethical guidelines have been put in place

to ensure that participants are neither harmed nor deceived, that they will only be included once they have agreed to participate, and that they have been assured of the confidentiality of their responses and their participation. Punch and Oancea (2014:58) regard research ethics as a branch of applied ethics which concentrates on the specific contexts of planning, conducting, communicating, and following up research.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2014:127), there are three areas of ethical concern for educational, social, and behavioural scientists: (1) the relationship between society and science, (2) professional issues, and (3) the treatment of research participants. Some of the aspects that were considered when dealing with participants were access and consent, confidentiality and anonymity, caring and fairness, privacy and empowerment, risks and benefits of the research, and voluntary participation. The research was conducted throughout in a morally committed manner (McNiff, 2013:113).

The researcher made sure that participants were thoroughly informed of the research project as a whole, and of each procedure. Awareness was a top priority where the comfort of the respondent was concerned. A consent form was attached to every questionnaire, and it was read to every participant. Due to the use of the observation tool, consent for minors to participate (Appendix E) and assent from learners (Appendix D) were obtained from relevant individuals. All the participants were given comprehensive information so that they could fully understand their role and the intentions of the researcher (see participants' information sheet, Appendix H).

3.6.1. Autonomy

Access to the research setting was negotiated with the Department of Education and the principals of the schools. Letters to ask for permission to conduct research (Appendix G) were sent to the relevant offices. Schools were visited only after the permission to conduct research was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) (see Appendix J). Once in a setting, the collection of data was carried out with the explicit consent of participants, that is, the teachers. The participants freely agreed to be part of the research process as informants. They all confirmed that they understood what their participation entailed and how it was to be reported, and that they felt free to withdraw their agreement at any time throughout the research process

if they wished to do so (Punch & Oancea, 2014). They also understood the right to refuse to answer any question(s) (Tracy, 2013:90). In this study, voluntary informed consent was obtained through the opt-in procedure where the participants signed and returned a consent form without coercion, fear, or any kind of penalties or repercussions for declining to participate. One participant withdrew at the initial stages when she thought the researcher was a spy. A follow up and assurance were given to her accompanied by an explanation of the purpose of the study, and she was instantly excused from taking part without any repercussions or threats resulting from her choice to withdraw. Consent to participate (Appendix F) in the study was a prerequisite for every participant.

3.6.2. Trust

In the course of research, researchers are entrusted with information about participants, much of which is of a personal and sensitive nature. Researchers should, therefore, bear in mind issues of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. The questionnaires and interviews did not use the participants' real names and affiliations. They did not require information on names, job title, place of work, name of school, dates, places of crucial events or detailed institutional description, so that participants' names and identities could be hidden and protected (Kemmis et al., 2014:163-164). The researcher coded the participants and their schools using the first four letters of the alphabet.

3.6.3. Beneficence

Beneficence is a social responsibility that entails striving to act for the benefit of others (research participants). It is often coupled with non-maleficence, which is described as not to harm others. The researcher made sure to eliminate all risks of causing harm to the participants throughout the research project, and possible risks and gains were explained to the participants although they were unlikely to eventuate. The welfare of research participants was a significant concern for the researcher. Hammersley and Traianou (2012, cited in Punch & Oancea, 2014:78) caution: "There are many different types of harm (or damages) that may be associated with research, such as, at the individual level, physical, psychological, social and reputational, and practical and occupational harm". Although it is very difficult to assess and monitor risks associated with feelings and emotions, the researcher tried to enquire after the participants' well-being concerning the research on a regular basis rather than once-off.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014:67) explain that the research should be of benefit, either directly to the research participants, or more broadly to other researchers or the society at large. The potential benefits of this research are based on the rationale of this study that focusing on the positives would help teachers to take positive strides towards inclusive education. The immediate benefits that the researcher brought to the attention of participants were a sense of belonging, rethinking inclusive education positively, empowerment and self-development, creation of sound relationships, and networking with the outside world.

Overall, polite communication was always used. Assurances were given that results would be disseminated to all participants. Each core participant, i.e. the teachers, was entitled to receive a copy of the research write-up to see the impact they made and are making in achieving education for all. This copy was to be sent at the end of the study through email and or WhatsApp or any other reliable way of communication. As far as the learners are concerned, a meeting was scheduled to thank them personally and to give them thank you notes.

Last but not least, the study upheld the ethics principles of objectivity, competence, integrity, honesty, care, openness, non-discrimination, professionalism, and respect.

3.7 RESEARCH PROCESS

Figure 3.1 summarises the journey to complete this dissertation.

Figure 3.1 Graphic phases of my research journey (adapted from Bairagi & Munot, 2019:10)

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter offered a detailed account of the research methodology and the research design dealing with the research paradigm, approach, and research type. The research method including procedures, tools, and techniques to gather and analyse data was chronicled. The main data collection tools were interviews, questionnaires and observation. Trustworthiness and ethical considerations regarding the participation of human beings in the study were discussed.

The following chapter is based on the analysis of the data followed by a thorough discussion of the data collected. The study was conducted in a natural environment and involved interpreting information from participants and their environments. It is subjective in nature and the data appear in words. The presentation of data is solely dependent on the data collected and meaning derived from the qualitative strategy, that is to say, the inductive approach.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretation and analysis of the primary qualitative data from three different tools are presented in this chapter. The study was conducted through the lenses of qualitative design using a multiple case study approach in which firsthand data from interviews, questionnaires, and observations were used. The interpretive qualitative case study research was conducted in Ekurhuleni District to explore factors that facilitate or impede the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools, drawing different perspectives from four primary school teachers from different schools. The ideas were anchored in and guided by Bronfenbrenner's systems theory of human development in the social constructivism paradigm.

Interviews and on-site observations were the core or dominant tools saturated by the data the researcher needed. A questionnaire was used for triangulation to validate the qualitative data collected through interviews. The cross-checking of information was done during the data collection period. Through the questionnaire, the researcher managed to determine how consistent the participants were in what they said during the interviews. Observation was used to give the researcher the opportunity of seeing the contexts in which these teachers work. This was necessary because there was a high probability that some of the interviews might not be carried out in the classrooms or not even on the school premises, depending on the arrangements made to accommodate the participants comfortably. Context played a vital role in this study as the development of an individual is viewed through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's theory of systems where the participation and interaction in the structures and systems (the environment) are important. The key concepts of this theoretical framework are the interactions and participation within and between different systems and structures in which the individual is involved directly or indirectly. The interactions in every setting influence and are influenced by other layers in the system, while the systems influence each other, and finally everything influences the development of an individual. Bronfenbrenner believes that these systems relate to and influence one another together with the individual's biological traits which would recognise the equal partnership of nature and nurture (Shelton, 2019).

The research questions guided the analysis, and the of data is presented using codes. The first four letters of the alphabet each represent both a school and the teacher. This means that teacher "A" teaches at school "A". The responses obtained from teacher A, therefore, refer to school A.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The study sought to address the following research questions:

1   What factors promote or hinder the implementation of inclusive education?

2   How do these factors facilitate or hinder the implementation process?

3   How do teachers deal with learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms?

4   How do teachers understand the inclusion policy?

5   What support is available to teachers to implement inclusive education as stipulated in the policy?

This study revealed a number of factors that affect the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District. Explanation codes namely *professional development*, *teaching and learning*, *collaboration* and *inequality* are used to code the data gathered.

4.2.1. Professional development

Continuous teacher development was placed under SACE to manage and regulate the integrity of the profession. Although the council has well defined standards, the four teachers who are all registered with this council could not tell exactly where the policy document is and not really remember when they last read it. This might be lack of commitment to policy, lack of time - as Teacher A said, "we don't have time" - or because the Education White paper 6 (2001) (Special needs education: Building an inclusive education and training system) is biased towards disability, as I perceived as a teacher. I read it through and realised that it is silent about talented or gifted children. They are included tacitly in the statement that "all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support" (DoE, 2001:16). Only Teacher C pointed out that the phrase "enrichment and support" should be expanded, and she indicated that she gives enrichment tasks to learners who have mastered the learned concept and assists those who encountered problems in grasping the concept. The rest of the participants were quiet about these learners as the document is also silent. Unsurprisingly, since the schools used in this study are mainstream schools without

visibly impaired children, participants apparently put no effort into reading the policy document as it seems as if it mainly concerns impaired learners. According to the teachers, special classes are there to take the slow achievers while the teachers remain with the rest of the group. If there are tasks, they set to work and make their learners finish the tasks even if it means spending two days on the task. This, therefore, means the policy can be misleading. When it explains that every learner needs support, it is more rewarding to consider the talented and the gifted learner to wipe out the idea that inclusive education is for low achievers, the once marginalised and the impaired learners. According to Gasa (2011:74), legislation can play four main roles which are the articulation of principles and rights in order to create a framework for inclusion, the reform of elements in the existing system which constitute major barriers to inclusion, the mandating of fundamental inclusive practices, and the establishment of procedures and practices throughout the education system which are likely to facilitate inclusion. The policy document should have pointed out how all learners can learn and how all learners need support. This in turn affects the way teachers understand the process of inclusive education.

Teachers' understanding of the inclusion policy

The question was asked how teachers view inclusive education and the reason for its inception. Each of the four participants defined inclusive education differently, but each definition appeared to be aligned to the medical discourse, so that it is small wonder that they hardly implement inclusive education in their classrooms.

Teachers A gave the justification of inclusion as the government's quest to enroll learners with special needs in education, which they couldn't do without a policy, and she said: "*they just wanted us to teach all the learners in the ordinary schools*". Teacher B on the other hand provided this definition: "*Including special needs children into the mainstream alongside normal healthy children*". This shows that, according to her, a child who is different is abnormal; or the teacher is operating under the normalization era; and/or that her view was based more on medical discourse than on inclusive education, as she is describing what is wrong with the individual. Teacher C understands inclusive education as based on classifying learners according to their intellectual ability which is expressed using the term Intelligence Quotient (IQ). "*Including all children in the same class because the South African Government*

identified that learners have different IQ level but can learn together and help each other when they learn together". IQ is based on a standardised test, which basically means that it can lead to categorisation of learners according to their scores. Teacher D seemed to have a closer understanding of the meaning of inclusive education. She used terms like "*equal opportunities*", "*address barriers to learning*" and "*non-discrimination*", some of the phrases that express the rationale for the inception of inclusive education in South Africa in the social model discourse. This can point to the complexity of the term "inclusive education" itself. It is, however, unfortunate that only one of the four participants appears well informed about inclusive education but can hardly apply it in the classroom situation. The theoretical knowledge that the teacher possesses is hard to put to practice. Whether they are well informed or have scant knowledge, all four participants testified that it was necessary to transform the South African education system to inclusivity, in spite of not fully understanding the principles of inclusion but focusing on the concept of "all".

> *Teacher A: I think it was necessary but it's not being implemented effectively. The policy is there, and a lot of good write ups are there but nothing is being done - only a few schools are trying. They (children) realize that they are given attention. At our school we have a support class, they enjoy going there. They are given another opportunity to try.*

> *Teacher B: Absolutely necessary because it wasn't right to exclude other learners, even UNESCO says children must not be deprived for being different. They must learn, work together while they stay with their families. They learn from one another…They learn about different habits, lifestyles, diversity, and different cultures in the real situation…Being isolated they don't learn much.*

> *Teacher C: Yes, it was necessary because it helps learners to be confident and they perform better. They also have the opportunity to learn from others… their peers. They learn from other kids. It is easy for the teacher to see the normal standard that is expected of the child when they are together. When separated its difficulty to see.*
> *Learners remain with their families, not being sent to other far schools.*

> *Teacher D: Yes, it was unfair for some children to be posted somewhere for education purposes. I think the children need equal opportunities. Every child is special in his own way. In inclusive education set up you can make him grow to his full potential maximising on what the child can do not on what he can't do, Children's performance gets better…they are given extra opportunities…their best work is realized for example when they had a written assessment task, we can choose to record the task that the child had performed well and leave out the rest. The child does not feel discriminated as he will be part of the society in a normal set up.*

The fact that all the participants understood the concept of inclusive education as "all learners" in the education system without attaching the idea of accommodating them in the teaching and learning process may also mean that teachers have moved beyond medical discourse, as most teachers seem to be still operating in the EFA era. Additionally, the differences in understanding of the concept can be attributed to the complexity of the term "inclusive education". Teachers understand it in different ways but seem to equate it with "education for all", which is incorrect as they are different movements (see 2.2.3). However, the participants' attitude towards and knowledge of inclusive education cannot be ignored.

Teacher A has been greatly negatively influenced by the size of the classes she teaches. She sounds frustrated and puts little or no effort into trying to include and accommodate all learners in the teaching-learning process although she has the concept of "all" in her mind. Her sentiments clearly show that she is not happy about the context in which she finds herself. This reveals the negative impact of overcrowdedness on the morale of teachers. In turn, learners take advantage of the situation and discipline becomes a great problem added on top of the existing ones. Because teachers cannot implement inclusive education effectively, other problems ensue, for example when learners are not fully occupied, they find other ways of occupying themselves which in most cases are not good. Furniture can be at great risk of being vandalized, as observed at school A. It is quite probable that Teacher A represents a number of teachers in the same context.

Supervision by District officials

As mentioned before, instead of supporting the teachers who have gone through a once-off training, the district officials only come to rate the teachers against the syllabus completion tool. They just sit in warm staff rooms going through the learners' books they have been given by the teachers, mostly 9 books, 3 from each category of learners as high, average, and low performers. This was witnessed at school A during my visits and once experienced personally as a class teacher from 2010-2015 in a public school, though in a different district from the one under study. Further inquiries done with other teachers confirmed the process. It seems most unfortunate that professional teachers are only concerned about the learners' work while ignoring the process of teaching.

Although other factors affect the implementation of inclusive education, this study has revealed that lack of skills in teachers is causing a lot of harm in the process. In this study several aspects linked to inadequate training and lack of support were identified. If teachers are equipped with the necessary skills, they should not engage in ineffective practices like drilling learners for examination, adhering to novice tools, rigid ways of assessment, abandoning learner-centred approaches, shunning illiterate parents, and depriving learners of other activities that they are likely to excel in.

The support system is very poor in that there is no follow-up on what the teachers are doing in their classrooms. Instead of them receiving support, they are rated. The data collected indicate that there is little or no support available to most teachers.

> **Teacher A:** *Support is not adequate because nothing is being done about overcrowdedness*
>
> **Teacher B**: *Support is a little bit adequate…we need support from authorities in education… there isn't much from them*
>
> **Teacher C:** *We sometimes really struggle with behaviour problems … but sometimes it's because of their backgrounds*
>
> **Teacher D:** *I don't, the support is always adequate*

The data collected have proven beyond doubt that there is support available to teachers directly and/or indirectly. Teachers are supported through peer discussions, materials, extra lessons, support classes, and feeding schemes for learners. However, in most cases teachers are left to rely on their own devices in the process of teaching without follow-ups which makes them think that there is no support or care from high authorities. The once-off teacher training seems inadequate to produce teachers with the relevant skills for addressing barriers to learning, especially taking into account the contexts in which some of them are operating.

Despite the reported teacher support through workshops, peer discussions, materials, extra lessons, support classes, and feeding schemes for the learners, the need remains overwhelming because the implementers of the inclusion policy are not well equipped and impractical.

A note on feeding schemes: Although it may seem surprising that a feeding scheme is regarded as teacher support, it is important to remember that the learner who is fed, is likely to actively participate in class activities, participate in and contribute to the class discussion, and become a good recipient of the process.

Teachers' support to implement inclusive education

As mentioned before, support is one of the many variables that affect the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District. According to the education White Paper 6 (2001), The Department of Education is mandated to create platforms that make it easier for the implementation of the policy in classrooms. Below are woes expressed by teachers regarding the support they need.

> ***Teacher A:*** *Yoh, Overcrowding! 60 learners in a class is hectic. The teacher fails to know the children's needs. At least if the number can be 40 it's better... Nothing is being done… Nothing at all.*
>
> ***Teacher B:*** *More training from the department although we received some from the universities. Mostly they are working with support class teachers not us*
>
> ***Teacher C:*** *We need Parental involvement although parents are not the same. There is a problem of homework. Some parents cannot help their children with merely homework because they don't understand it. Some don't even care much. We sometimes help children with homework at school in the afternoon. The other thing is that the numbers are too big to deal with. It's sometimes difficult to deal with all the learners… but we try.*
>
> ***Teacher D***: *If classes are smaller, the learners will learn a lot, 30 Children in a class is rather too much. People talk of assistant teachers, but I don't need one because I want to see my learners' performance by doing everything for them. -I need a variety of workbooks not only Platinum because some books explain better than others.*

It appears that little or nothing is being done to support teachers to implement inclusive education effectively in their classrooms. Teachers are routinely going to work, teaching those who are teachable through basic and traditional methods, gather evidence, wait for the retention form towards the end of the year to list those who did not make it and call the parents to sign in acknowledgment of the knowledge that their child will remain in the same grade. In most cases, they just resort to their own devices, using desperate measures.

It is worrying that there were no recent workshops or in-service courses that any of the participants had attended. They shared the same sentiments that the workshops are organized for support class teachers only and there is no need for attendees to give feedback as it does not concern regular teachers that much. This point takes us back to the fact that teachers do not know the role of support classes at their schools, despite the fact that all the participants underwent the teacher training programmes that meet the SACE requirements and are registered with the council (see the mandate of SACE in Chapter Two, 2.2.5).

Most help should come from the school based support team (SBST) and the Department of Education, but there is not much forthcoming. There is a claim that professionals in the persons of social workers, psychologists, counsellors, therapists, etc. are available at the district offices and that they visit schools to support both teachers and learners, but none of the participant teachers can recall any incident of such visits. If support personnel visit, they are interested in support teachers where some of the learners are referred. Schools A and C have a local ELSEN school to which they refer learners who are not benefiting from the support classes at the regular school. The researcher visited the local ELSEN School that is located in the township area and established that all professionals needed for the support of learners with special needs in education are based in that school as their workstation. They are involved with learners in this particular school and their work seemed to be hectic because the school accommodates learners with autism ranging from mild to profound and these learners typically require extensive support. Having such a centre in the proximity may be regarded as a circumstance to be celebrated. Nevertheless, those experts are not supporting teachers in the mainstream as outlined in the policy document. The situation remains that teachers are not getting the support needed for them to effectively address barriers to learning in their classrooms.

Since there is no follow-up after workshops have been presented, the fact that teachers need support may remain hidden and become permanently unresolved. This study was not directed at the district officials, but their structure influences the way teachers implement inclusive education in their classrooms. If the district officials know what they are supposed to do and are not doing it, they are guilty of causing harm to

innocent learners. On the other hand, if they are inadequately trained and lack the necessary skills to support the teachers, a vicious circle of ignorance is set in motion.

Although the following factors do not exert a great influence on the implementation process, it is worth noting that they make a difference in the life of a learner experiencing barriers to learning.

- *Feeding scheme for learners*

All schools receive food parcels for the learners but in Township schools nearly every learner eats the food that is provided, unlike in former Model C schools where only a few learners eat, often choosing to eat or not to eat depending on the menu of the day. Some learners have options that others do not have. This confirms that the economic challenges faced by children are not the same. However, whether they have a choice or no options, if learners have eaten, they concentrate better.

- *Extra lessons*

With the exception of School A, the schools have extra lessons in the afternoon. This is a fact to be celebrated although the time is mostly misused as learners are made to do homework during that period.

- *Support classes*

All schools have support classes with support teachers helping the screened learners. However, they are regarded as a dumping ground for learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. If there is a need to be referred for special services, the relevant form is completed, the learner is given an LSEN number, and waits for placement. Teacher C said: *"serious learners are sent to… LSEN (*school named)"

- *Lighting system*

All schools use electricity as a source of light, but in schools A and C there are no globes or fluorescent tubes and no switches in the classrooms. This means that the schools are mainly using electricity for administration purposes rather than for improving the teaching and learning process. The situation is due to vandalism and/or lack of maintenance. However, it should be easy to refurbish it when a pressing need arises or when the schools need to move to the technological era with electricity available.

- *Stationery*

Although not some schools are not sufficiently provisioned, the schools receive stationery from the Department of Education. They all use the GDE workbooks in one way or another.

- *Ramps*

All schools have ramps, although they are meant for food and stationery delivery. They will be useful when any of the schools have a teacher or learner in a wheelchair. School B is a double storey building without lifts but with some ramps downstairs. The teachers and learners use stairs to move between storeys, so physically impaired learners may not be accommodated due to the absence of lifts. This situation can also be worrying because the sickroom and the staffroom are downstairs. Consequently, if a situation arises where a learner or teacher needs to go to the sickroom for example with a condition like dizziness, they are forced to go down the stairs in that condition which might lead to falling of both the helper and the helped.

- *Safety and security*

All schools were observed to have security personnel. At Schools A, C, and B there are logbooks while School D has a remote-controlled gate that is operated by the receptionist. The receptionist has a full view of the gate and the surrounding area. In some schools, learners are occasionally abducted from school or at the school gates. It is to be celebrated that the safety of learners and teachers is becoming a priority in Ekurhuleni District.

Although these may be regarded as cosmetic measures, I believe highlighting them makes everyone realize that they form part of the factors in place to support the implementation of inclusive education, as without these tiny planktons, the enormous whale goes hungry.

4.2.2. Teaching and learning

The study showed that the training teachers are receiving from colleges and universities on a once off basis is not effective enough to give them relevant knowledge and skills to screen, identify, and address barriers to learning in their classrooms. They are not knowledgeable about inclusive education principles that need to be considered. Consequently, they need intensive support to be able to operate in their contexts. This is evident from their understanding of inclusive education.

> *Teacher A: Including children with learning barriers because the government wanted to include learners with barriers in our schools.*

> *Teacher B: Including special needs children into the mainstream alongside normal healthy children with the reasons of helping learners into the education system to learn from peers and learning together not specifying on needs or disability.*

> *Teacher C: Including all children in the same class because the South African government identified that learners have different IQ level but can learn together and that learners help each other when they learn together.*

The definitions given by these teachers reflect a limited view and understanding of inclusive education as they believe that only learners with impairments were or are the reason for the adoption of inclusive education in South Africa. Teacher D was the exception, as she showed a good grasp of what inclusive education is:

> *Teacher D: Every child in my class gets equal opportunity. No discrimination on race, culture or intellect to give every learner in South Africa every opportunity to learn in a school that does not discriminate, to help learners who are struggling in grasping concepts and to address the barriers to learning that the education system might have.*

Although her definition was accurate, her practice in class during observation did not reflect this knowledge. In general, observations show that more emphasis is placed on what learners cannot do. Learners are made to complete written tasks so that teachers have evidence to provide when writing motivation letters for the referral of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Nothing much is being done to address barriers to learning besides collecting evidence on why the child should be retained in the same grade or referred to an LSEN institution. Teachers tend to rely on practices that do not benefit the learners, for example "military training" learners for exams and "banning" participation in other subjects like PE. I believe a teacher's core responsibility is to engage all learners, encouraging interactive learning. Teachers form part of the proximal system in the inclusive education implementation process with a strong influence on the teaching-learning process in all learning areas/subjects.

 It was also clear that the teachers felt inadequately prepared to implement inclusive education effectively.

> *Teacher A: No, I don't think so. There are so many nice journals talking about inclusive education, but nothing is being done. I ask myself, "Why can't we implement all these good ideas?" Not adequate because nothing has been*

done about overcrowdedness. How do you expect one teacher to teach 60 learners? You can just move with those who can, and others repeat. What can we do? It's hectic you can see. But if the number was small, we can do it… not with this number.

Teacher B: A little bit adequate because we need support from high authorities in education. There isn't much from them, but the school is trying, we work as a team, but some workshops would help us a lot. But we are trying but you know what we learnt is not really what we experience…you know … somewhere somehow, we are a little stagnant when it comes to implementation. Nothing much is being done. It's all for the teacher to deal with inclusive education… it becomes too much sometimes. More training from the department is needed although we received some from the universities… at least hands on… you see.

Teacher C: We are trying our best… from the school side, they support and there are programmes to help us to reach the learners … we have intervention during the day as teachers and in the afternoon we have volunteers who come and help the learners with homework maybe something else about behaviour, it's a challenge sometimes. Some learners ummmmm…. And parents don't just care although they are not the same… but most don't really care much. We do homework with their children in the afternoon

Teacher D: I don't think it's adequate, support is never adequate, the support I get as well as the support I give my learners, the number must be reduced and help us with some of the learners. Some learners are really struggling a lot, you really don't know how to help them sometimes. And learners come with different problems every year. But this year I have this one (name supplied) …. He is trying… improving a bit, yah.

Teachers seemed to run out of ideas in dealing with other aspects and shift the blame to overcrowdedness; even those teachers with reasonable sizes of classes put the blame on overcrowdedness. Since they seem to have no adequate skills to tackle inclusive education, this affects the teaching and learning process in several ways.

Assessments

All schools have formal and informal assessments which they administer to every learner. They use the School Based Assessment (SBA) and common papers from GDE, or an end of term examination set internally, at school level. All learners write the same paper, while teachers can prolong the examination period for every learner to complete the written task. In the foundation phase there are no examinations, but there are formal and informal assessments. Learners are assessed in different ways and by various methods like observation, reading, oral work, speaking and listening on a continuous basis.

Learners are drilled for examinations so that they may have "equal opportunities" to classmates with a bias towards academic and written tasks. Below are responses revealing how teachers administer their written tasks and assessments.

> **Teacher A**: *I train them for exams and give them similar papers to answer… so that they know how much they are expected to write and finish. They must write until they finish. The faster ones when they are done, sleep on their desks waiting for others.*

> **Teacher B**: *we use the PE lessons… they don't go for PE, only because you are here, we can send them all. If you don't get them there, you will never get them, and they will never finish their written work … remember they are slow…very slow.*

> **Teacher C**: *All learners write the same paper. They must finish it. The paper is moderated by the HOD before they write. There are simple questions for those struggling. They can get something… but some may fail to get some few ticks.*

> **Teacher D**: *They don't have a choice because they must do what others have done. They must finish everything just like everyone else. If they fail to finish today, I make a copy of the other pages he did not finish and start there tomorrow… even 3 days… all I do is to make copies of the remaining work until it's done.*

Learners are "forced" to complete examinations. Consequently, they are deprived of participating in other activities like Art, Music and PE because they have not finished the same writing task as their peers or they cannot be involved in the next lesson until they finish the written assessment. This means that they may miss a new concept that the teacher may be introducing because of failing to complete the "difficult concepts" they are faced with in the examination paper. Teachers do not allow for a range of ways in which the learner can perform, respond, explain or demonstrate achievement of the outcome. The assessment should focus on both the learner and the learning environment if it is to facilitate the learner's performance to reach their full potential.

The teachers were boldly stating that they "steal" time from non-academic subjects to make up extra classes. The curriculum is designed to help children develop holistically. This practice could actually disadvantage these learners as they are deprived of opportunities to socialise and develop social skills. Regardless of the differences that are seen in learners academically, and even biologically, teachers force learners to perform what they know they cannot so that they have evidence to show the district officials when they come. According to many teachers, the persons to be satisfied are

the district officials, not the learners, hence not much learning is taking place for learners experiencing barriers to learning. The way in which teachers are administering examinations implies that all learners are expected to do the same as what others have done at all costs. The way examinations are administered also shows that there is a bias towards the academic subjects. Below are some comments on how examinations are done in the schools.

Teacher A: … I train them for exam…

Teacher B: Us… We don't have exams, but we do tasks… different tasks. Written tasks are a problem… they don't finish so they don't go for PE

Teacher C: All learners write the same paper. The paper is moderated by the HOD before they write but some learners lose self-esteem if they fail the examination

Teacher D: I make sure that every learner has completed his or her written task. If the child fails to finish the same day, I make a copy of the pages the child has not done…. He will write until he finishes.

It is as if the classroom is being turned into a military camp where learners are trained and drilled even if they seem to be biologically of low intelligence. The same approach is evidently not used for subjects like PE. Instead, learners are barred from attending such subjects for as long as they have not completed their written work.

The following excerpts reveal what is assessed by teachers.

Teacher A: We have formal and informal assessments. We use the School Based Assessment (SBA) and common papers from GDE, or end of term examination set at school level. All learners write the same paper. They write until they finish. The faster ones can sit or sleep waiting for the slower ones to finish. I don't follow the time allocation on the examination paper…they will never finish… only a few

Teacher B: As Foundation Phase we don't have examinations, but we do have assessments. We have formal and informal assessments. We assess in different ways. We give tasks on different aspects like observation, reading, oral work, speaking and listening and written work. The slower ones do not finish their work, so they don't usually go for PE… only today because you are here.

Teacher C: We have formal and informal assessments. We use the School Based Assessment (SBA) and common papers from GDE, or end of the term examination set at school level. All learners write the same paper. The paper is moderated by the HOD before they write. Some learners lose their self-esteem when they haven't done well in these tests.

Teacher D: We have formal and informal assessments. We use the School Based Assessment (SBA) and common papers from GDE, or end of term examination set at school level. All learners write the same paper. I give extended opportunity e.g. extra time. If the child has failed to complete the paper, I make another copy of the paper and make the child continue from where he or she has left the previous day.

Data collected reflected that there is rigidness in the way learners were/are assessed in all the schools. The only issue raised by all teachers is the extension of examination time as all the examinations are standardized and uniform for all learners. In all four schools, formal and informal assessments are administered in different phases. The teachers all understand what assessment is but not how it is supposed to be done. The assessment should be continuous for the foundation phase without examinations and with examinations from Grades 4-7. All the learners are assessed in the same unvarying way. Learners who go for support are expected to write or do the same activity required in their original classes when it comes to assessments. All the teachers confessed that even if there is a time limit stipulated for each task, they prolong the period for some learners who are struggling to complete the examination or task within the stipulated time, to the extent that the learner may continue with the same task the following day, as explained before. The teachers' aim is mainly to make all learners do the same tasks in terms of assessments. In this approach, most learners are left behind as the emphasis is put on written exercises, and struggling learners are made to produce more than they can afford to. Assessment methods and techniques can hinder or promote inclusion. Striving to make every learner do the same tasks in exactly the same way can disadvantage those learners who cannot read and write proficiently. Alternatively, teachers should employ a variety of valid assessment methods, including worksheets, investigations, assignments, book reports, practical reports or demonstrations, group work, paired work, whole-class work, independent work, projects, formal and informal observations, peer assessment, self-assessment, oral work, and assessment tasks to assess content knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes relevant to each subject area. Prolonging the time of examination does not improve the proficiency of an individual. Gasa (2011:105) suggests that assessment should as far as possible be taken in a naturalistic setting by teachers themselves where learners must be able to demonstrate their strengths and potentials.

The teacher is expected to make sure that assessments are carried out in the learner's preferred language, that the task is meaningful in the child's own culture (for example, reading books should at least resemble the child's culture), and that the assessment situation is constructed in a way that students are not culturally disadvantaged - for example, a female student being assessed by a male behind closed doors can be a taboo to some cultures. The purpose of assessment according to UNESCO (1994:22) is to follow the progress of each child. Assessment procedures should be reviewed.

Methods and processes

All the teachers seem to be aware of the importance of using learner-centred methods of teaching, but there are challenges that hinder the process. "*Because of the large numbers of learners that makes the 30-minute lessons appear to be very short*" Teacher A lamented. *"Class sizes can a be a challenge",* affirmed teacher C. *"With these numbers, a child in a group can just wait for others to participate… not with buddying",* explained Teacher D. Homework is given to afford learners enough practice, as teachers lament that there isn't enough time to cover everything that is expected of each day. According to Teachers B and D, giving homework works very well, but teachers A and C were saying that most learners do not bring back the work. With the assistance of volunteers, Teacher C is helping learners with "homework" in the afternoon before they go home. Because the teacher's intention is for the learners to practice more at home, the term "homework" is maintained although it sounds more like extra lessons. The so-called "homework" is done at school in the afternoon before the learners go home. During observations, the researcher noted that teaching is mostly dependent on the DBE workbooks or any other series the school might be using. Township schools use DBE workbooks as their core workbooks but in former Model C schools, these are used for homework purposes. This means that if there is a textbook delivery failure like the one that happened in the Limpopo Province in 2012, they will not be affected much as the other schools that are dependent on them. It is evident from Teacher D's words when she said, *"…some workbooks explain better…we need a variety, we have Platinum and the DBE workbooks for homework purposes".* Teacher B concurred that they use both the Platinum and the DBE workbook although no specifications were provided on how these books are used. Adherence to workbooks makes it clear that teachers are not employing child-centred approaches or adapting the content to suit their learners in order to reach every learner in their classrooms. They work towards syllabus completion as anything else is time-

consuming and will threaten their syllabus coverage percentage. A premade workbook cannot be expected to automatically be accommodative to every learner in the classroom no matter how well it might be designed. It is still the teacher's responsibility to adapt the content available and employ methods and techniques that help learners to grasp the concepts they are being taught, drawing from Jerome Bruner's concept of scaffolding where the support is fashioned to each learner and learners experience a learner-centred approach.

Nel et al (2013:29) state: "it is important for teachers to know that a learner-centred, activity-based, teaching approach is the key". Contrary to the latter statement, Teacher A confesses that she rarely does group work activities and other activities that need different arrangements because of the limited space in the classroom. If on a particular day she wishes to employ an activity like group work, she moves the tables and changes her "permanent setting", but she also laments that the time is too short to adjust the settings and settling down of all learners takes approximately 10 minutes of the 30-minute period. It appeared that not much was done, although she knows it should be done. Frustration and distress were evident in her gestures and the way she sounded. The response of teacher A may also imply that she sees learning as when the teacher has said or explained something to learners, that is, rote learning.

The other three teachers, however, were knowledgeable and understood that varying teaching methods and techniques, using different equipment and learning media, and employing hands-on activities as well as peer teaching, multi-level teaching, and buddying help to cater for all learners with different learning styles. No instances were observed, however, of effort being made to achieve these ideals although they claim to do it. Mahaye and Jacobs (2004:175) say: "a teaching method is a particular technique a teacher uses to help learners gaining knowledge which they need to achieve the desired outcome." They also define a strategy as "… a broad plan of action for teaching-learning activities with a view to achieve one or more learning outcomes" (Mahaye & Jacobs, 2004:175). This distinction between method and strategy will help the researcher to differentiate between methods and strategies in the discussion.

Fourie and Hooijer (2006:51-52) advocate for social collaboration, where there is an interaction of participants who share a joint focus on a topic to achieve a common

objective. They further explain that this view evolves from Vygotsky's theory (bearing in mind that Bronfenbrenner's theory was developed from Vygotsky's theory) that interaction catalyses intellectual growth and language development. Talking is encouraged in a wide variety of contexts, including group discussions, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning groups. Nel et al. (2013:29) state: "it is important for teachers to know that a learner-centred, activity-based, teaching approach is the key". They base their argument on the writings of constructivist theorists such as Vygotsky (1934), Erikson (1950), and Bronfenbrenner (1979), who believe that knowledge is actively constructed and reconstructed as the person develops higher levels of understanding. The DoE Guidelines for an inclusive learning programme (DoE, 2005:36) adds: "Participatory and collaborative learning allows learners experiencing barriers to learning to contribute to tasks and activities at a level appropriate to their level of development. Highly gifted learners will contribute differently according to their strengths and interests. Joint planning, discussion and reflection will stretch other learners and add value to the learning of all participants". Of the methods mentioned above, cooperative learning has gained prominence because it actively involves the learners in the teaching-learning process, as advocated in Bronfenbrenner's systems that emphasize interaction. Swart and Pettipher (2011:10) explain that the bio-ecological model of development has much relevance in emphasizing the interaction between an individual's development and the systems within the social context. In all the classes observed, all the learners were seated in rows and columns facing the front although the reasons given for this setup differ. There was no sign of such interactive activities being done. The Guidelines for Inclusive Programmes (DoE, 2005:93) define cooperative learning as: "…a way of teaching in which learners work together to ensure that all members in their groups have learnt the same content. In co-operative learning groups are organised and tasks are structured so that learners must work together to reach a goal, solve a problem, make a decision, or produce a product". It encourages face to face interaction with equal opportunities for success, while instilling interpersonal and positive interdependence skills.

The DoE Guidelines for Inclusive Programmes (DoE, 2005:111) states: "Teachers should be aware of the different multiple intelligences of learners and be able to identify them. These intelligences are of utmost importance in guiding the choice of appropriate teaching and learning strategies". In other words, one would deduce that

the learners' intelligence and accompanying learning styles should be taken as a starting point in determining the teaching methodologies and assessment procedures to be applied. Howard Gardner's types of intelligences (1983, 2003) show eight separate abilities and how learners who favour each of these prefer to learn. The theory advocates for a variety of teaching activities to accommodate different learning styles of learners.

Subject content

The question was asked how teachers strive to accommodate all learners in terms of what is taught (content).

> *Teacher A: I use Bloom's Taxonomy. I have three levels of assessment tasks on the same topic.*

> *Teacher B: I adapt the content making it easier for the kids. I go down to the level of the learners.*

> *Teacher C: I consider all the levels of learners. I give higher order questions and lower order questions to accommodate all. I do it following three stages of complexity.*

> *Teacher D: I use different methods, pictures, PowerPoint to cater for all learning styles. If the child learns using the correct style, he or she will grasp the concept.*

The observations carried out proved beyond doubt that teachers adhere to the novice tools and workbooks, where every learner should do every task regardless of whether it is arranged from simple to complex or not. The fact that when the district officers come, they need to physically count the number of activities the learners did, encourages teachers to become slaves to the novice tools that the department provided. They are forced to adhere to the tool in order to be rated green (the colour code for competence). The district officers are seemingly not part of the education system but customers who need to be pleased. This issue of adherence seemed not to be a problem, as teachers simply accept the attitude of "adhere to it" - you will finish the syllabus no matter what.

Nevertheless, Teachers A and C consider different levels of questioning, according to Bloom's taxonomy. Teacher B adapts the content and Teacher D capitalizes on different methods and a variety of materials to cater for all learning styles. Teachers understand that teaching is not a uniform process, that something must be done to

reach the full potential of every learner, but the focus is not on the learner as teachers perforce have to adhere to certain textbooks. Hence, the claimed activities are not employed effectively. the teachers displayed the knowledge but not the practical application. It could be argued that they are impractical, yet their job is based on practical matters.

Based on their theoretical knowledge, multi-level teaching is duly mentioned in two of the responses, with adaptation being cited by one of the teachers. Adaptation leads to multi-level teaching. According to the DoE (2005:22), "learning, teaching and assessment strategies must be differentiated or adapted to meet the individual needs of all learners".

The general observation and findings indicated that teachers do nothing but use content-based DBE workbooks and other series that they have chosen. They are supposed to be guided by the novice tools that are supplied by the Department of Education. These tools stipulate the content per week/month and per term indicating the syllabus coverage expected per topic. Instead of being allowed to use novice tools as guidelines, teachers are expected to adhere invariantly to these tools. The syllabus coverage is rated based on these tools, so adherence becomes a requisite to teachers.

Regretfully, Teacher C confessed that she **adheres** (for emphasis) to the novice tool which she calls Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) - a plan provided by the GDE with topics, time allocation, and the percentage coverage of each topic per week and per term/year. She understands it very well and she further explains that *"5% of the syllabus coverage is obtained by ten 30-minute periods and each day is an hour, 5 days give 5 hours. This means that an hour is 1%".* If the word "adhere" is understood as to stick firmly to something, flexibility is greatly compromised, and the outcome is regarded as more important than the process. If the target is the completion of the syllabus only, then the necessary methods and procedures may not be employed, for example, strategies like re-teaching the same concept if the learners have not performed well. If this is done, the routine will not go as per the ATP "**stipulations".** I intentionally avoid the word guidelines because it seems inappropriate here. If the tool is meant to be adhered to strictly, it means it is stated clearly and firmly that it must be

done, that it is the blueprint. This would then restrict the teachers from exploring different dimensions that may assist learners in understanding the concepts taught. It seems that they are turning the developed flexible curriculum into a rigid programme. It should be noted that adherence to this tool might affect the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom as it is used in an inflexible way. An inflexible curriculum and rigid teaching methods affect the implementation of inclusive education negatively. An inflexible curriculum does not cater for learners' needs. It implies that the teachers must rigidly follow it regarding what to teach in a particular grade on a particular day in order to cover the required syllabus content. Fourie and Hooijer (2006:41) call it a blueprint approach which they describe as follows: "The content to be learned is presented to learners without any regard for their context, specific needs, barriers or difficulties". This approach, according to them (2006:41), does not encourage learners to be analytical, critical, or creative, since the teacher is responsible for pouring information into the child's head.

However, if this tool is used correctly, it will give good guidance to all teachers to teach the same content in the same grades, helping to make and implement a single and uniform curriculum for all in almost the intended way with little or no misinterpretations of the content by different individuals in different institutions.

Teachers' ways of addressing barriers to learning

The question investigated how teachers try to mitigate some of the challenges they encounter in their classrooms. Below are their responses.

> ***Teacher A****: When we teach, we give lower-level performers easier worksheets but at the end they write the same examination. The papers are difficult for them… I train them for examinations before they come. I give extra time... They write until they finish. Those done will wait and sleep on their desks.*

> ***Teacher B****: The children do not have enough support from the parents and the community. In most cases they are labelled … yah, I give praise-they feel they are valued… I make them learn from each other to accomplish the goals together.*

> ***Teacher C****: Some children lose self-esteem when they have not performed well in examinations or assessments, and the high teacher-pupil ration makes it difficult for teachers to give necessary support in day-to-day basis. I sort my assessments according to levels… I use group work for them to learn from each*

other… during class discussion I choose the weaker ones to answer easier questions to boost their confidence and have a feeling that they can do something… I cannot do anything with overcrowdedness; it is the way it is… but we are trying our best to teach

Teacher D*: Some learners in the same group feel not being fair to have different papers or giving extra time to other learners and some learners resist to mix up with the rest of the group, they isolate themselves and even resist buddying system. I praise the child whenever he or she gets something correct…. I can give sweets, clap hands and hug for them to feel honoured.*

Just like any other policy without exception, inclusive education has factors that affect its implementation positively or negatively. Data collected through interviews reveal that teachers are grasping at straws because they lack adequate skills to implement inclusive education and to make matters worse, there is no support available to them. Showing that she is desperate and overwhelmed, **Teacher A** said: "*Sizoenzani? (What can we do?) … they are doing nothing about overcrowded classes… maybe those better schools can do something about inclusive education because they have everything with small numbers… us you see how hectic it is… argh … we read many good articles about inclusive education and you ask yourself when are we going to implement this?*".

Both words and gestures showed how desperate she was. Her sentiments also tell us that she is still waiting for the right time to implement inclusive education and that right time is not yet at hand, she cannot do anything as nothing has been done yet, hence "*sizoenzani?*".

Teacher B*: My support comes from SMT, HOD and peers when having problems on how to help the children… never got from the district… even a single workshop*

Teacher C*: My support is mainly from School Governing Board (SGB) and the intervention programmes they have at school to bridge the gap of non-participation of parents.*

Teacher D*: I rely mostly on programmes organised by the school like extra lessons where every teacher is responsible for his or her subject area in the afternoon.*

The responses given by the teachers clearly show that teachers get help only from the institutions they work in or rely on their own devices.

Classroom organisation and management

According to data collected, all the teachers responded on the arrangement issue, ignoring the management part of the question, although Teacher B pointed out something in passing about discipline, where she said she uses a lot of techniques and makes eye contact as an example.

> *Teacher A*: *I am forced to have a permanent position of rows where every learner faces to the front sharing a double seat desk… I try to alternate a girl and boy per desk depending on the gender balance*

> *Teacher B*: *I prefer buddying where I try to pair a weaker and a stronger learner … so they sit in rows*

> *Teacher C*: *I group them differently depending on the task, sometimes mixed, the other time ability grouping especially when I am giving support to those who are struggling so that they don't delay others but mostly they all face to the front.*

> *Teacher D*: *I use PowerPoint a lot, so everybody faces the whiteboard in rows and columns… I don't really like grouping as most kids especially those struggling will not fully participate in group discussions".* She supported her position by saying, … *pairing works well with me as everybody is expected to talk to his or her buddy.*

All these explanations were justifications for placing learners in rows and columns. Since a person is a social being that needs interaction with different systems and structures, dwelling too much on PowerPoint limits the individual's opportunities to learn from the peers around him or her.

As mentioned before, most responses dwelled on arrangement, overlooking management. It is worth noting that during the observation period the researcher found out that teachers receive guidelines from The Department of Education indicating expected content and syllabus coverage. Register taking is done by class teachers every morning and school reports are sent home at the end of every term. I also observed that punishments like time out, detention, and withdrawal were being employed where necessary. Moving towards the child who is not paying attention and calling the child by name were strategies used by Teacher C to control and discipline her class during instruction time. This is to be commended.

According to Stevens (Lewis & Doorlag, 1995:190, Vogel 2011:5-12), classroom management is what teachers do to make the classroom pleasant, meaningful, safe and orderly for the learners, to ensure that learning support can take place effectively

and efficiently, and to make certain that learners feel comfortable and non-threatened. Making a close link with Bronfenbrenner systems theory, Stevens (op. cit.) further explains that managerial actions include:

- Planning the classroom environment, which includes the arrangement of furniture and the physical condition of the classroom like the colour of the wall, the windows and doors, space, noise level, ventilation, temperature, lighting, etc. The classroom environment should be safe and free of obstruction, pleasant for working and attractive. Fourie and Hooijer (2006:43) add: "When physical factors reach extreme for example, overheating, they cause stress for learners and reduce the amount of learning that can take place". The teacher is encouraged to minimise distraction for learners who have difficulty with listening skills, make learners with albinism sit away from light, etc.

- Organising the teaching environment, which encompasses the procedure that the teacher uses to divide the curriculum into smaller learning programmes, the organizing of learners into groups, the use of equipment such as chalkboards, whiteboards, and guidelines for improving learner behaviour (discipline). Russo et al.- (2005:109) say: "Discipline at school has two very important goals namely, to create an environment conducive to learning and teaching and to ensure the safety of staff and learners". This gives the insight that discipline in the classroom is also very important.

- Classroom administration, which includes writing reports and filing information. The information can be divided into general information such as timetables, registers, newsletters, etc., learning programme information such as examination papers, lesson plans, etc., and confidential information about learners such as reports, learner profile documents, etc.

Good classroom management will lead to more time for learning as well as easy access to learning, and help learners manage themselves. Woolfolk (2007:473) concludes: "the goals of effective classroom management are to make ample time for learning; improve the quality of time use by keeping students actively engaged; make sure participation structures are clear, straight forward, and consistently signalled; and encourage student self-management, self-control, and responsibility". Maphumulo and Vakalisa (2004:351) assert: "Managing classroom activities effectively constitutes the most significant part of the teacher's work". Meier and Marais (2012:6) sum the matter up by saying: "… every teacher is an educational manager because all the functions

of planning, organizing, directing and controlling are part of their everyday life too". This gives the sense that management in the classroom is not a once-off thing but a day-to-day practice by teachers. Some teachers would remind us that the hardest part of their task is not teaching subject matter, but managing a classroom (DiGiulio, 2000:4; Jacobs et al., 2004:350). Since managing is the hardest aspect of teaching, it is best to do advance planning of what the teacher hopes to achieve, which is still a dream to aspire to in most schools. In schools A and C, light fluorescent tubes and switches are not working, which can be attributed to vandalism due to lack of control and active engagement of learners. DiGiulio (2000:1, as cited in Jacobs et al, 2004:351) describes classroom management and its significance in the teaching-learning situation aptly in his statement:

> "In its most positive sense, classroom management means a great deal more than discipline or making students behave. It means essentially that the teacher is a leader. He or she gets things going, keeps things moving, keeps students safe, and runs the show enough to be able to actually teach and have students learn. At its heart, positive classroom management is creative: It creates the best situation in which the student can learn, and the teacher can teach."

This, therefore, means that classroom arrangement is a strong variable in the implementation of inclusive education. Lastly, it must be noted that there is no arrangement that is perfect, but any arrangement should strive to manage all the learners and attain the set goal with the philosophy that people are social beings, including the learners we teach. The way they socialise is influenced by and can influence the way they grasp the content that is taught.

Support classes

I observed that support classes are being used to reduce the exorbitant numbers in classes instead of to improve collaboration between teachers. Some classes are so large that teachers are overwhelmed to the extent of sending learners to special classes who may actually benefit more from being in the classroom with the teacher's support. Teachers are "dumping" learners in support classes to lighten their load.

Learner transport

The government states clearly that a child should be enrolled in the school that is closest to where he or she is staying. For as long as there is a wide gap between schools in different locations, it will seem impractical as the reality is that some schools are better than others. In an effort to attend better schools, learners travel a long way to and from school. They wake up very early to beat the traffic, and consequently

reach school tired. This is not the only challenge. When it is time to go, teachers are forced to release the learners as "transport" will be waiting. The implication is that teachers do not have time to detain these learners to help them or punish them. Although it does not justify the practice of depriving learners of other activities, this is one of the causes for teachers to do so. Lack of transport provision is a secondary problem as the primary issue lies in unfair distribution of resources between former model C and township schools.

Language differences

The question enquired about the teachers' sentiments regarding the language in education policy that promotes multilingualism.

> *Teacher A: It's a problem when it comes to public schools where learners from grades 1-3 are taught in vernacular languages for example in IsiZulu they know kunye, kubili, kutatu for three years then when they go to grade 4 it becomes one, two, three. To young learners it will be like a different concept altogether. Grade 4 is like grade R. We need to code switch but if you do not know the language children used in foundation phase then it's a big problem. They should start with English rather.*

> *Teacher B: It's a resource. They must learn in their Home Language (HL) and make a transformation in grade 4. There is no use for a grade R child to be forced to learn in English if it's not his home language.*

> *Teacher C: A resource because the child must understand what he or she is learning home and must continue at school for example the child knows a cup as "komishi" in IsiZulu, the teacher should continue from there, there after the child will also understand that it's also a cup.*

> *Teacher D: A resource because in the time we are in now you can't only know one language. You need to broaden your spectrum so having two or more languages is fine while someone is still young.*

Although three of the four teachers assert that language (multilingualism) is a resource, they do nothing to preserve that "resource" or to bridge the gap between HL and LoLT. Consequently, instead of being a resource, language is causing more problems to inadequately trained professionals. It is adding to the diversity of learners and making it more difficult for teachers. This is what Teacher A had to say about the language policy:

> *"it is difficult to shift these learners to tell them that the concepts, for example, identifying numbers in IsiZulu kanye, kubili, kutatu is the same as one, two, three in English when they are in grade 4.* She added that *"they cannot just learn it automatically…teaching grade 4 sometimes becomes like teaching grade R where you teach the language and concept at the same time".*

It is quite evident that there is a vast difference in the languages in schools. All teachers do code-switch to accommodate the language differences. The teacher uses LoLT and alternates to another language that she thinks the learner understands better which might not be necessarily the learner's HL. The Constitution emphasises that all official languages must "enjoy parity of esteem" and be treated equitably, thereby enhancing the status and use of indigenous languages, with government taking legislative and other measures to regulate and monitor the use of disadvantaged indigenous languages. The government of South Africa is trying its best to preserve schools with different mediums of instruction, but it is unfortunate that some parents still hold the perception that "if you know English well, all the desired things will follow". This leads to people forcing in their children to attend English medium schools, of which there is a limited number. It becomes a challenge for teachers to deal with in the classroom situation and it also leads to overcrowdedness in some schools as they are regarded as 'best' because of English being the medium of instruction. However, the data collected shows that there is no evidence of other methods like the whole language approach except for code-switching and interpreting by other learners.

There are some approaches like the whole language approach that may be put in use in situations that resemble School A, where Teacher A said the process seems *"like teaching grade R"*. It must be noted that the DoE (2005:22) states that all learning programmes are language programmes, and Learning Area teachers should be Language teachers because learners experiencing barriers need continuous focus on language acquisition. What teachers view as "difficulty" is what they are expected to do. The National Language Policy Framework (2003:3) says: "It is through language that we function as human beings in an ever-changing world. The right to use the official language of our choice has therefore been recognised in our Bill of Rights, and our Constitution acknowledges that the languages of our people are a resource that should be harnessed". It is clear that teachers may sometimes be in the difficult position of trying to drive a concept home and overlooking some other aspects that need attention, for example, a Mathematics teacher may consider it time-wasting to use the whole language approach in a Math lesson. This is how the teachers deal with languages differences in their classrooms:

Teacher A*: English is the language of instruction, but I code switch to IsiZulu or SePedi although the school uses two languages.*

Teacher B*: English is the language of instruction. I code switch or ask another learner to explain or translate. I also use a lot of visual aids and eye contact and gestures to capture their attention.*

Teacher C: *English is the language of instruction, but we code switch to vernacular.*

Teacher D*: Afrikaans is the language of instruction, but I switch to English when addressing a particular child or children who are not proficient in Afrikaans*

In most South African schools, the linguistic reality is that the majority of learners use English as Second Language (ESL) and in other cases, it is the learner's third language. They may have two different home languages and English seems a foreign language to them. The general practice in schools in the township and rural areas is the use of the home language (HL) or primary language of the learners from grade R to grade 3 with English introduced in grade 1 as First Additional Language (FAL) or second language. English is then used across the curriculum from grade 4 (where it proves a challenge to teachers), but learners continue with their primary language as a learning area. This is also envisaged in the Language in Education Policy (1997:106, as cited in Lemmer & Wyk, 2010:231). One of the aims of the Language in Education Policy is to support the teaching and learning of all languages that are required by learners or used in communities in South Africa. Furthermore, all learners should learn an African language for a minimum of three years before the end of the General Education and Training Band commonly known as GET. The Constitution (1996b:13) in section 29 determines that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where education is reasonably practicable. This seems to indicate that a public school in the Republic of South Africa must admit learners and meet their educational requirements without any discrimination, and the notion of 'every possible difference' includes language. The National Language Policy Framework (2003:3) states: "A person's language is in many ways a "second skin": a natural possession of every normal human being, with which we use to express our hopes and ideals, articulate our thoughts and values, explore our experience and customs, and construct our society and the laws that govern it". It further explains: "It is through language that we function as human beings in an ever-changing world. The right to use the official language of

our choice has therefore been recognised in our Bill of Rights, and our Constitution acknowledges that the languages of our people are a resource that should be harnessed". South Africa has eleven official languages which are isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and siSwati (referred to as the Nguni language group); Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana (referred to as the Sotho language group); Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans. Every child has the right to be instructed through any one of these by choice, but the choice is sometimes misused by parents in an effort to choose schools they feel are better than others. In South Africa, language is regarded as a resource rather than a challenge, and multilingualism is encouraged for all people, including learners. In other words, multilingualism promotes and embraces diversity. The National Language Policy Framework (2003:6) explains: "The Policy Framework not only initiates a fresh approach to multilingualism in South Africa but strongly encourages the utilisation of the indigenous languages as official languages to foster and promote national unity. It considers the broad acceptance of linguistic diversity, social justice, the principle of equal access to public services and programmes, and respect for language rights".

It is clear that language can promote or impede the implementation of inclusive education. If it is seen as a resource that helps people learn to appreciate their differences, it promotes multilingualism and appreciation of other people's languages. On the other hand, if the learner is taught in an unfamiliar language or a language in which he or she is not proficient, it is crucial that teachers be aware that many learners experience barriers to learning because they are not learning in their mother tongue (Donald et al., 2010:55; Nel et al., 2013:31). If the learner does not use his or her language of choice, it will jeopardise the learning process unless there are measures in place for the learners to acquire the LoLT. We use language to think. Attempting to think in a language in which one is not proficient will cause misconceptions and gaps in the learning process if there are no mechanisms in place to address the challenge. The DoE Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DoE, 2005:9) states: "…learners are often forced to communicate and learn in a language which they do not usually use at home and are not competent to learn effectively". This means that some provisions should be in place to bridge the gap. Systems like the whole language movement approach should be in place to bridge the gap between HL and LoLT. Vogel (2011:82-83) summarizes the issue by saying: "… language teaching and learning

support (should be) approached holistically, so all aspects of language (spoken language, reading and written language) should be taught simultaneously". The DoE Guidelines for Inclusive Programmes (DoE, 2005) adds: "Learners for whom the language of learning and teaching is not their home language will require support in acquiring the language of learning and teaching. All learning programmes and Learning Area teachers should be Language teachers because learners experiencing barriers need continuous focus on language acquisition". Support can also include code-switching, interpretations, translanguaging, building more group work, scaffolding with the HL, use of sentence frames, gestures, and visuals, etc. These strategies can work well to eliminate transitory barriers to learning due to language differences. Webber (2014:141) points out a lesson to be learned from the South African's experience: "the use of flexible multilingual pedagogies (bridging and scaffolding strategies, code-switching, etc.) allows teachers to build on the whole of these children's repertoires". Language has been described as a crucial means of gaining access to essential knowledge and skills. It is critical to cognitive development and can determine scholastic progress (Ovando & McClaren, in Lemmer & Wyk, 2010:225). This means that proper or appropriate language should be used to cater for the needs of the learners.

Regardless of the challenges perceived by teachers, language remains a resource in the teaching and learning process. Teachers should be trained adequately to preserve the special resource. Cummins (1979, in Lemmer & Wyk, 2010:139) argued that when knowledge is gained, this knowledge can be accessed through any language a person knows or learns. He claimed that the brain does not store information learned according to the language of instruction. Webber (2014:7) points out: "instead of relying upon the problematic concept of mother tongue, it is more important to build on students' actual linguistic resources in a positive and additive way". His theory of additive bilingualism resonates well with the South African education system as it promotes self-identity in learners. He suggests that learners working in an additive bilingual environment succeed to a greater extent than those whose first language and culture are devalued by their schools and societies at large. The maintenance of mother language is therefore of great benefit to learners, as stipulated in the Language in Education Policy (1997). The additive bilingualism approach is of the view that the first language should continue to be developed and the first culture to be valued while

the second language is added. Wallace Lambert (1977:18, cited by De Jong, 2011:63) refers to the attainment of language proficiency in this acquisition context as additive bilingualism because it involves social value and respect. Learning a second language does not foreshadow the slow replacement of home or another language. De Jong (2011:63) asserts: "Multilingual competence develops more easily (though not necessarily automatically) in additive contexts, because both languages receive attention in schools and society". This implies that multilingualism helps to protect languages from becoming extinct. Ruiz (1984, in De Jong, 2011:105) proposes a language-as-resource orientation, which aims to change the perception of subordinate languages as deficits (or problems) to assets.

In the light of these arguments, language is not a deficit/problem/challenge but a resource that teachers can capitalize on by creating opportunities for using, developing, displaying, and engaging in multiple languages, building on all students' existing linguistic repertoires, and making knowing multiple languages an integral part of the curriculum and instructional practices (De Jong 2011:170).

De Jong (2011, cited in Webber, 2014:3) identifies four principles for effective multilingualism in the education of all learners:

- Striving for educational equity
- Structuring for integration
- Affirming identities
- Promoting additive bi-/multilingualism.

Languages are cultural treasures of the South African society that merit constitutional protection and should be used also for instruction, although it is still a strongly contested issue even to this date. In South Africa, the use of language is a contextual factor that merits careful consideration by teachers when they prepare lessons (Lindeque & Vaneyar, 2004:125). Since every language should enjoy parity of esteem, all the eleven official languages should be used as the medium of instruction without disadvantaging other minority groups or disadvantaged indigenous languages – although it is hard to conceptualise how this might be achieved.

Nevertheless, language can promote the implementation of inclusive education if used as a resource that helps people learn to celebrate their differences. A healthy language policy promotes multilingualism and appreciation of other people's languages. On the

other hand, if the learner is taught in an unfamiliar language or one in which he/she is not proficient, it can lead to exclusion.

The pace of teaching and syllabus completion

It was observed, and it seems to be the norm in almost all schools in South Africa, that teachers are controlled by the timetable and number of lessons per week that determine the syllabus coverage. If the teacher has been absent, he/she is required to plan how to recover the time the learners have lost.

In general terms, the use of the timetable helps to maintain order and allocate activities to specific times so that they may not be abandoned. It facilitates calculation of changes that may be needed, reduces breakdowns and errors, makes it easier to substitute of a member, and helps management to supervise teachers. Typically, timetables are vital tools in institutions, but become a source of much frustration to the users if it is not thoughtfully designed for the programme and/or if the user is not well informed regarding the activities to be done during a specific period of time.

As mentioned before, teachers are given the novice tool (Annual Teaching Plan) that they 'adhere to" when they teach for the easy calculation of syllabus completion which is needed at the end of each cycle. Any teacher who adheres to the tool will achieve a good percentage of syllabus completion according to the GDE requirements. Unfortunately, this may also mean that teachers lose several learners in the process because they have a target to meet. Inclusive education means accommodation of all learners regardless of their differences. It should be clear that not every child in the class requires the same time, same approach or style of learning, or media to complete a given task, which leads to differences when completing the syllabus. With the current approach, teachers attempt to hurry to complete the syllabus while a number of learners have not mastered the concept, without giving ample opportunity for practice and application of new concepts. The teacher must bear in mind that some learners take longer than others to master certain skills. The time available to complete the curriculum should be comfortable for both the teacher and the learners. If the teacher is obliged to complete the curriculum in a short period, it will lead to what may be called **"marathon teaching"** where the teacher will be racing with great effort against time

and concentrating on completing the syllabus without taking into consideration whether learners have mastered the relevant concepts or not.

4.2.3. Collaboration at micro level

All four schools included in the study have SBST and SBAT, although the functionality of the SBSTs can be a point of debate. From discussions and observations, it is evident that the assessment teams and the School Management Team (SMT) are visible during the assessment time where they moderate the scripts before and after they are written. Observation data show that teachers in these teams are fully occupied with their day-to-day responsibilities of teaching and marking large piles of books while the management part of their responsibilities suffers. The SBST's responsibilities are in hibernation in most cases. They are not actively involved although they exist and only come into play when the support class teacher wants to refer a learner to the LSEN school or when there is a serious behavioural problem.

During the course of the year, the interaction is between a class teacher and the support class teacher rather than between the SBTS and the teacher. Learners experiencing barriers to learning seemed to be passed around from one class to another as the bells rang to signal the end of a period. When the learners return to their original classes, are welcome by the uncompleted tasks that they fail to finish for two main reasons: (1) because they experience barriers to learning and (2) because they have been out of the class and cannot cope with work that keeps piling up. This frustrates most learners, and they lose interest in what they are doing. In the end they perform badly and are progressed to the next grade without the necessary knowledge and skills, or referred to LSEN schools. According to the teachers, the process of referring a learner is very cumbersome in terms of evidence of work and forms to be completed. The sad part of the process is, when everything that was required has been submitted, the child often remains with the same school for a year or two, waiting for placement in an LSEN school or any other institution that will meet his or her learning needs. The child will not receive any attention at all while he or she has an LSEN number and is waiting to be placed. In other words, the child will stop belonging to the school while he or she is physically available. The systems and structures for collaboration are not functional at all and there is lack of collaboration within these structures.

Woolfolk (2007:614) defines collaboration as: "… a philosophy about how to deal with people that respect differences, shares authority, and builds on the knowledge of others". This definition indicates that collaboration is very important in the education system at all levels. The systems and structures influence one another and must result in change, growth, and development in the learners.

Teachers are called to collaborate with colleagues and SBST, parents, community and specialist teachers, and non-teaching specialists like social workers, health workers, educational psychologists, etc. Tynan (2010:105) states: "education is a partnership between parents, teachers, school and children. Cultivating a good understanding across this partnership is the key to children getting the best out of their school years". The SBST can be described as the spine of teacher support at the school level, as it is expected to find ways of changing what is happening in the classroom so that the learner can be maintained where s/he already is. The SBST is supposed to help the teachers to deal with the challenges at the school level. When their attempts are unsuccessful, they can help the learner directly or assign another teacher to help the learner in cases where the learning and teaching styles the classroom teacher uses are not suitable for the learner in question. This helps to support learners in their ordinary schools and classrooms. The process was not, however, evident in the schools that were studied. Learners are only helped by the class teacher and/or the support class teacher, and then may be referred.

According to Fourie and Hooijer (2006:19), the key support function of any SBST is identifying and addressing barriers to learning in the local context, thereby promoting effective teaching and learning. They can help in developing the school's policy regarding an internal referral system as well as a system of referral to outside professionals when necessary. This cannot be done without the involvement of parents and/or the family.

The teacher should be prepared to work and cooperate with anyone who is caring for the learner, creating systems and structures that enhance the development of the children he or she teaches, acknowledging the realities of the South African society in which there are different types of families where "parents" may be found in a nuclear or extended family, grandparents, single/divorced parents, same-sex parents, foster

or combined families. It is crucial to find the relevant caring person or persons. As Meier and Marais (2012:151) point out: "It is important to provide the young learner with a sense of continuity between home and school, which can only happen if there is a partnership between school and home". Drawing from Bronfenbrenner (1979), the DoE White Paper 6 (2001:6) views inclusive education as "broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community and within formal and informal settings and structures". These statements support the involvement of parents/family, as well as the community at large. All these structures should synergize and have a beneficial influence on developing learners.

According to Vogel (2011:27), parents play a significant role in the education of their children. They can be a source of information because they know their children better and can inform teachers about their child's learning problems. They can advise about individual behaviour, they can contribute to the design and implementation of joint learning support strategies, and they can help with homework. It is most unfortunate that some parents may be available but cannot manage to help their children with homework due to illiteracy and are shunned by the school. Neither they nor the school seem to appreciate their potential significant contribution in ways or activities that are not academic. Instead, they withdraw from school activities as there seems to be no space for them. Their children are 'taken away' from them and "homework" is being done at school in the afternoon with volunteers' help. It is only their signature that would contribute when the child is to be retained in the grade. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2005:13) states: "Parents should be encouraged to take an active interest in the teaching, learning and assessment of their children". Regardless of the challenges involved, it is very important to involve the parents in their child's learning. The South African Schools Act 84 (1996) states that parents should make up the majority of the members of the management body of the school, now mostly called School Governing Body (SGB). If parents are a majority component in the SGB, it helps them to have input in the education of their children as well as an insight into the schools' ways of operation and the roles they are supposed to play in the school system to effectively enhance the development of their children.

Parents can also be involved more directly in the classroom. Vogel (2011:29) asserts: "Parents could become involved in the classroom by assisting the teacher to make the

learning support aids and instruments which are used in the course of learning support, such as small blocks or seeds …". They can donate books and magazines, act as assistant teachers, accompany teachers on excursions, and perform various other tasks that the class teacher finds suitable for the parents to do. It should be noted that parents are regarded as stakeholders in the education system in South Africa. They have a say on whether to progress or retain a learner in a particular grade. This may be misused by parents, however, if they are not well informed, as the researcher once experienced.

Finally, collaboration is a vital tool for supporting the implementation of inclusive education and should be practised consciously to promote participation and interaction of the systems involved. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of synergy between and within the structures at micro level in schools under study. Additionally, lack of parent recognition and involvement was seen to be a challenge in these schools. This creates a lack of respect for parents as informed role players in the assessment and future development of their children.

4.2.4 Inequality

Mention is often made of "previously disadvantaged schools". While many of these schools are still disadvantaged, schools which were regarded as privileged are still privileged and there is no spirit of togetherness and sharing even of immaterial/intangible assets. There is an observable gap between township schools and former Model C schools, and inequality in education is prevalent. It seems as if nothing is being done to narrow the gap, and even teachers seem to be comfortable about it as they maintain the status quo. Social stratification and unequal distribution of resources aggravate the situation.

It must be noted that the current study is not aimed at comparing township schools and former Model C schools, but these terms have featured in this section because these locations are regarded as contexts in this study, and their differences affect inclusive education especially regarding the aspect of "equal education". The responses given by teachers were based on the challenges they experience, and all pointed out overcrowdedness. It is an issue that may even allow the listener to deduce whether the teacher is in a township school or a former Model C school. This alone is

a strong indication that stipulating "the school" as a context cannot mean that information about and the description of "school" is the same for every case. The location and sizes of schools and the community they serve vary from school to school, therefore uncritical use of the terms former Model C and township schools is appropriate and applicable to this study.

In this regard, it is pertinent to point out that township schools typically simply request *enough textbooks for each learner* while former Model C Schools request *different series because some textbooks explain better*. In terms of the teacher-pupil ratio, the township schools have up to 60 or more learners in one class, which is a very high number, whilst the former Model C schools have an average of between 30 and 35 learners but teachers express the same woes - that the numbers are large to deal with.

> **Teacher A**: *Overcrowdedness, sixty learners in one class are hectic. You can go up to June without knowing them all, so you cannot be able to support them. In other cases, it will be very late to help the learner on the concepts he or she has missed.*
> *Resources are also not enough (resources referred to are mainly textbooks).*
>
> **Teacher B**: *I think we need a little bit of training although our universities did train us. The Department of education can organise workshops where we can go and get the necessary knowledge and expertise so that we can bring back to our classes and help the children who are really struggling.*
>
> **Teacher C**: *The first support I need is parental support. Parents are not the same, some really support but others do not. Sometimes I work with learners in the afternoon to help with homework because some parents do not even understand the work that they are supposed to help their children with. The number is sometimes too big to deal with, classes are bi--------g (word drawn for emphasis) sometimes up to 60 learners… in one class.*
>
> **Teacher D**: *Sho!, Ah!, Yoh!, Well, I think if the classes were smaller the learners would learn a lot. We have about 30 children, if they were less, we would give extensive individual support. I don't like an assistant teacher because I want to see the performance of my learners, so the number should just be smaller. I need different series of books so that I can have a wide range to choose the work suitable for my learners as some textbooks explain better than others.*

The phrase uttered by Teacher D, *"some textbooks explain better",* seems to indicate that teachers depend on textbooks rather than on the syllabus. This raises the question: If they do not use the syllabus as their manual in teaching, what is the likelihood that they will use the policy document? Policies may exist but there is no

guarantee that they are being read with a view to effective implementation, for there is no support and follow-up within the structures.

For the government to reach the goal of **equal** education for **all**, it should understand that treating different institutions differently can be a good step towards achieving equality or narrowing the gap between the former Model C Schools and township schools. The former Model C schools have the advantage in nearly every respect. As most parents pay school fees, the schools are in a position to hire more human resources and thereby reduce the teacher-pupil ratio. They can also afford to buy more teaching-learning materials and improve their classrooms without waiting for a government subsidy. If there are no informal settlements nearby, the available resources are not strained. In contrast township schools, due to informal settlements, find that resources are strained because the demographic figures that are used in the planning and supplying of goods and services do not match the actual population in these locations. This is the reason why resources like DBE workbooks can be in short supply and mobile classrooms are raised all over the schoolyards to accommodate excess learners.

Overcrowdedness is a sign of lack of human resources and the highest teacher-pupil ratio is common in township schools. An individual's social status mostly correlates with the type of location in which a person stays and with the income the person gets. The higher the individual's income, the less likely he/she is to stay in high-density suburbs/townships. This means that some learners, especially from townships, are still caught in the socio-economic trap and they can be regarded as impoverished even in the education system. All of this is evident in the things the teachers from these different settings wish for. This leads to the next point of discussion, which is overcrowdedness.

Class sizes
Overcrowded classrooms were the main issue all teachers were deploring. It is interesting to point out that teachers B and D claimed to have overcrowded classrooms with less than 40 learners per seating. This shows unawareness of the fact that crowded and overcrowded are different concepts. Overcrowding is when the number of learners in a classroom is greater than the room was designed for (Wedell &

Maderez, 2013:175). However, overcrowdedness cannot be a positive variable in the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, it is a barrier that needs to be addressed and ways of mitigating its impact need to be in place. Teachers cannot change the circumstances; they are (to use an idiom) "waiting for the rain to stop", which might not happen.

The GDE is, however, seems not to be doing something to reduce the exorbitant numbers. According to Blatchford et al. (2000-2003, cited by Setti, 2016:3), a case study confirmed the benefits of smaller classes, showing that there was more individual attention, a more active role for pupils, and beneficial effects on the quality of teaching. The implication is that overcrowded classes compromise the quality of education learners receive. This study has not produced any evidence that a relationship exists between class size and learners' achievement, but it became clear that teachers are inadequately skilled with the result that they are frustrated and cannot address barriers to learning, including overcrowded classes.

In conclusion, it appears that factors preventing teachers from addressing barriers to learning are largely linked to their training. They lack adequate skills to deal with situations with which they are confronted in their day-to-day experience. The result is that they do not even fully utilize some of the mechanisms that are in place, for example, support classes which they use as a "disposal area" to reduce the exorbitant numbers in their classes. If there is support being given in classrooms, it is at a very minimum level and the higher authorities are doing nothing or very little to help the teachers to effectively employ inclusive education.

The Department of Education, on the other hand, is overlooking serious aspects like overcrowded classes that need to be addressed to ease the burden on teachers, especially in township schools. In former Model C Schools with the average ratio of 1:35, the situation is not as bad as in township schools with an average ratio of 1:55; yet they express exactly the same troubles as the township schools. While it is obvious that the teacher with 60 learners would struggle to attend to all the learners, the other teacher with 30 learners is also finding it difficult. Large classes frustrate teachers so much that they lose interest in their jobs. It is worth stating that in township schools the teachers' plea is to have at least a textbook for each learner so that they don't have

to photocopy the workbooks, while in former Model C Schools teachers desire a variety of textbooks as some textbooks explain better than others. This shows that the needs and required support differ from school to school, depending to a large extent on the geographical location of the school. The most prominent kind of resource needed in the township schools is human resources. Different treatment regarding the provision of resources and support is needed to achieve equality in the schools.

4.3 DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

The data reported in this study have led to the following findings regarding factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng.

4.3.1 Need to improve teacher development and support

If the teachers who were trained under the new dispensation of inclusive education were unable to explain what inclusive education is, what is to be expected of teachers in the education system who have more than 25 years of service and were not trained to deal with inclusive education? It may seem that the implementation process is doomed. It appeared that the once-off training of teachers does not give teachers the necessary skills to address barriers to learning in their classrooms. This does not only affect the implementation of inclusive education in their classes, but may also negatively influence other positive variables that are in place to move towards the goal. The deficiency in the training of teachers should not be underestimated, as the damage it may cause can hamper the functioning of the whole education system including the implementation of an inclusive education process. These teachers have high qualifications and are registered with SACE, which suggests that they read about and studied issues of inclusive education in order to complete their courses. After the completion of the course, teachers seem to relax and their knowledge fades. Workshops, in-service training, and follow-ups are consequently needed to equip them with the necessary skills for them to be consciously able to implement inclusive education and to improve and enhance their ways of teaching. Unfortunately, the district officials seem also to have received once-off training only and they do not really understand their portfolio. Instead of making follow-ups to see how teachers perform in their classrooms and to support them, they come to rate them. This causes teachers to rely on their own devices just to escape from the red colour rating without considering the needs of all learners.

A lack of effective ways to address barriers to learning, absence of psychological and guidance services, and deficient school social and welfare support at an institutional level slowed down transformation towards inclusivity. In fact, most schools are yet to implement it. The relevant teacher support services should be available at every school or district level so that social, emotional, psychological, career guidance and counselling problems could be addressed immediately as needed. Regrettably, there is no support and follow up happening in schools to help teachers face barriers to learning. Equally disappointingly, the SBSTs in the schools do not know who exactly is responsible for what at the district level to get the assistance and the teachers do not know who the members of the SBST are, as there is no active participation and interaction of the systems.

The support classes that are available in schools are used as waiting rooms for learners who experience barriers to learning and have been referred to other schools to suit their educational needs. These learners can wait for too long - it can take more than a year for a child to be placed in the recommended institution. This logically means that the learner will be "**excluded while available**" since he or she gains little or nothing in the current school. Referrals must be done as soon as it is realized that the learner is not gaining much in the institute he or she current attends. The number of learners who need the services of special schools per district are often proclaimed to be insufficient to warrant the establishment of such schools in the district. Some cynics have asked if the authorities want immunization and medical treatment of children to stop so that there can be enough impaired learners for a government to establish a school. Such inanity simply reflects the perceived irrationality of the arguments put forward. It seems that the Department of Education does not understand that in inclusive education, every child matters. Having a small number should be something that we should celebrate and an incentive to find a good way of helping them, rather than for it to be treated as a problem.

4.3.2. Need to bridge gap between the HL and LoLT languages

Most black African children lack the proficiency in English that they need to catch up with their white, coloured and Indian counterparts. They need special tutoring or approaches to bridge the language gap, as English is the language of instruction in most schools from grade four but it is the second or third language of most learners.

They need to be motivated to work in the second language through direct and intensive exposure, and to hear the language more often. In addition to that, parents must also be made aware that English is not a gauge of literacy or academic proficiency. Many of the community members try to squeeze in their children into English medium schools as they believe that fluency in English will make the child cleverer than others. As mentioned before, the primary language is "the language of the person's thoughts" (Fourie, 2012:48). This means that learners who are taught in their second or third languages may find that language becomes a barrier to learning for them, as they will be thinking in their home languages and have to translate their thoughts to the language of instruction. Despite the impact of language on education, learners are supported only by code-switching that can also be done in another language that is not the learner's HL.

4.3.3. Overcrowded classrooms as a root problem

A ration of 1:50 or even more is too high for any teacher to deal with, especially in the foundation phase classrooms where learners still need very close supervision and one-on-one interaction. The learners will never get adequate attention from their teacher hence misconceptions will be rife. To unlearn or correct a wrong concept requires much time and effort, and might lead to confusion that can interrupt the development of new concepts, leading to a foundation that is not strong enough to sustain the child throughout the school years. Moreover, more time is taken in dealing with disruptions in overcrowded classes. To make matters worse, the process is driven by unequipped teachers. The Department of Education seems to overlook such aspects, but these very aspects affect the quality of results in grade twelve. This also raises the issue of limited resources. Human resources, teachers in particular, are still a big challenge. Overcrowdedness does not only hamper the teaching and learning process, but it also strains the available resources so that maintaining them can be a big problem. While the department may buy some resources each year, a textbook, for example, which is expected to be used for at least five years, can't last even two years if it is in the hands of different learners each day from one class to another, as there will be no accountability. The building of multi-storey schools with a reasonable teacher-pupil ratio calculated per subject, class, and per school can be a way forward rather than scattering prefabricated mobile classes around the schoolyards. Surprisingly, the official teacher-pupil ratios are lower than reality, giving a politically

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acceptable figure that does not benefit the learner as a recipient. Even if the head is non-teaching, he or she is included in the teacher-pupil ratio calculations. They are **non-teaching** but have pupils allocated to them. This means, in effect, that the learners are "**non-learning**". Arguably, Heads of Departments (HODs) in schools and principals who are non-teaching should have their ratios based on how many teachers they are supervising, not based on learners. The issue of human resources needs to be addressed properly rather than disguised. There are teacher funding programmes like Funza Lutshaka who are trying to curb the shortage of teachers, but due to the increased university fees, the number of student teachers will definitely decline because the allocation of funds does not increase at the same rate as the university fees. Most people do not regard teaching as their priority job due to different reasons, but undoubtedly salary is one of them. Expensive as the universities are, no one is prepared to pay a large sum towards a course leading to a job that does not pay well. If a teacher wants to further his/her career in education, the salary limit is put at an honours degree. The outlook seems bleak with regard to the availability of human resources in schools. However, no matter how difficult it sounds, measures should be in place to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education.

4.3.4. Quantity versus quality

Due to the bias towards the quantity of work given to learners, teachers are resorting to rigid ways of assessment, teaching methods that are not child-centred, and drilling of learners for examinations to show a good coverage of the syllabi.

The curriculum may be flexible, but the system is structured in such a way that processes are rigid as teachers are not allowed to use alternative ways of assessing learners. The system and the instrument used by the DoE to check syllabi coverage is by physically counting the number of written activities given to learners, which is not realistic. It is orientated towards quantity. If the teacher fails to meet the stipulated quantity, he/she is rated low with orange or red. This system thwarts the pursuit of quality and the implementation of inclusive education. The system is very comfortable for the controllers, as they check learners' books sitting in a very quiet and friendly staff room. They then allocate the ratings to each teacher using the robot colours to grade each work they have observed. The uniform and unvarying type of assessment using common examinations sometimes leave learners frustrated, as most of the work

is not within their reach since they receive no support but only training. As they have been trained for examination, it may lead to low self-esteem in some learners if they perform dismally. Maybe the issue goes back to other aspects like poor remuneration and frustration. Although various officers have been observed to display an apathetic attitude, the Education White Paper 6 (2001:20) states clearly: "One of the tasks of the district support team will be to assist educators in institutions in creating greater flexibility in their teaching methods and the assessment of learning". In this case, the incompetence of these officers cannot be ruled out as well.

4.3.5. Equality versus context

Although it is through geographical location/position that every place is different from another, the high-density suburban schools' quality of education suffers not so much through its location as through the demographics. Most schools can be described as "clustered" because of the prefabricated mobile containers that are provided as classrooms. Workshops are not conducted in these schools as venue centres because of the lack of resources. They are conducted mostly in former Model C schools where almost everything is in good condition. This shows that equality is compromised in terms of the quality of education received depending on the schools' location. Different contexts have different qualities of education, hence equal education for all is not a reality. It seems evident that the better the conditions and environment, the better the potential quality of education received. While some learners come from squatter camps or informal settlements, other learners are privileged due to the social and economic status of their parents who can afford to buy their own houses and can pay school fees. For as long as learners are viewed or treated according to their background and the ability of parents to pay school fees, there is no equality, and it will be difficult to break the chain of poverty in many families. Treating different schools differently is the way forward to achieve **equal** education for all.

According to data from this study, resources are not fairly distributed in the schools that were observed. Human resources are especially disparate, and there are more overcrowded classes in the township schools than in the former Model C Schools. It is interesting to note that in the participating schools, there were two former Model C and two township schools. The wish of township schoolteachers was to have at most 40 learners in a class, while the former Model C teachers have 35 learners but feel the

number is too big. In these schools, resources are not as strained as in the township schools, where there are prefabricated units (containers) as classrooms. These containers are very hot when in summer and very cold in winter. They are not conducive to the teaching-learning process. While the system makes sure that every child is in a learning institute, it seems to overlook the equality and inclusive education parts of the phrase. It seems reasonable to suggest that the supply of resources should match the needs of a particular school, and not be allocated on a "one size fits all" basis, as the conditions of schools are completely different. The resources supplied can constitute a barrier to learning, for example, the prefabricated classrooms that have been described as "cold-blooded", since they follow the weather conditions. It is important to repeat the statement by Fourie and Hooijer (2006:43): "When physical factors reach extreme for example, overheating, they cause stress for learners and reduce the amount of learning that can take place".

4.3.6. Teaching methods and techniques versus the timetable

Within a 30-minute period, learners are expected to change classrooms, settle and engage in interactive learning. There is no time allocated for the movement of learners from one class to another and to settle down. Teachers should be responsible for the quick movement of these learners by their visibility during the process to reduce movement time. Instead, the process takes a lot of time, leaving only a few minutes for instruction time. The inadequately equipped teacher then refrains from methods that encourage active participation of learners and resorts to rote and lecture methods to cover the content stipulated for that day. It can be a point of debate whether the learners should transition or the teachers instead. Plainly, moving of teachers rather than learners can limit the movement time but comes with its own limitations. It might compromise the physical classroom environment, as the teacher will not be able to display relevant materials in each room. If teachers do attempt to do that, there will be duplication of material and no accountability for maintenance of the classrooms and teachers' property. Basically, this is a barrier to learners that needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, nothing is being done at the moment except shifting the blame whilst the learners who experience barriers to learning are deprived even further.

4.3.7. Lack of commitment to policy by individuals

It is true and correct to say there is a need for workshops and in-service training opportunities for teachers so that they may be well equipped to tackle inclusive

education, but one cannot rule out the fact that most teachers are not committed. Only one of the four teachers was aware of the existence of other documents that followed the publication of the Education White Paper 6 (2001). Teachers do not depend on syllabi but on workbooks. If a teacher is unfamiliar with the syllabus as one of the basic documents in teaching, there seems to be little likelihood that the same teacher would study a policy document like the Education White Paper 6 (2001). Because they are not adequately skilled in using relevant literature, they do not think of referring back to the policy. Skill in reading and understanding policies is vital to every teacher. The short workshops (not specifically the inclusive education workshop) that they are sometimes engaged in cannot unpack all that is in the policy document. The brief workshops are designed only for refreshing the teachers' previously acquired knowledge or highlighting the changes made to certain policies, building on the knowledge of an adequately trained teacher. In this case, since the inclusive education policy has not been changed since its inception, each qualified teacher should be intimately familiar with it, but the opposite is true.

4.3.8. Need for school transport provision

I observed that there is no school transport provided for any of the four schools. Learners walk or use personal transport modes. This might sound good and normal, but some learners travel a long way in order to attend a "better school"; for example, a school located in a CBD or low-density suburb is likely to have learners coming from very far from the school, as in the case of some learners in schools B and D. Usually the infrastructures of these schools are good, and the class sizes are small, hence, it may well be regarded as a "better school". Those learners who travel far to get to school might be tired in class, as their sleeping time is interrupted. Teachers are also unable to detain such learners even if there is a need to do so, because when time is up, the transport is outside waiting for that same child the teacher wants in the classroom for extra support or for completing unfinished tasks.

4.3.9. The improvement of teachers' salaries and conditions of service

Teachers who are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills but are misplaced, i.e. those who are in work situations and positions where their talents and capabilities cannot be utilized, delay the implementation process. The Department of Education in South Africa only pays and raises the teacher's salary up to the honours level. It discourages teachers from furthering their studies to masters or doctorate degrees. It

is therefore recommended that to enhance transformation, the government should treat its teachers fairly not only by negotiating but also by displaying good faith and upholding its agreements (Thembela, 1990:42). Unless the salaries and conditions of service of teachers are improved, their frustrations will always harm education and transformation. A better salary structure should be negotiated with every qualification given its equivalent treatment so that teachers have the incentive to develop themselves through study. Although there is a belief that the main reason for every individual to work is not because they want work, but because they want a remuneration, it is also true that interests and passion act as drives to motivate one to do the job. Conditions of service which would encourage further study and provide the motivation to venture into and explore various fields should be made available. With this provision, South Africa will eventually have teachers who are lifelong students. Without such opportunities, however, the teaching profession will have teachers who are passive and unable to meet challenges and change. Chivore (1990:312) warns that inadequate pay levels for teachers affect the status and stability within the profession and create frustration which could result in militancy and a decline in educational and professional standards.

4.3.10. The need to combat racism in learning institutions

To be able to handle multilingual and multicultural classes in a non-racist way and to adjust to non-racist staff meetings, there is the need for exposure to situations that would assist teachers to understand their colleagues, their behaviour and their customs, and most importantly the learners they teach. In their bid to reconstruct South African schooling, the policymakers should keep in mind the challenge of the country's biggest enemy, racism and inequality. Teachers, parents and the government should never hope or take it for granted that racism and inequality will quietly go away on its own. Racism and inequality in South Africa are exhibited in negative attitudes that were and still are systematically infused in peoples' lives. It cannot simply vanish on its own without some active participation and determination to get rid of it regardless of how the policies on equality envisage these principles. Up to this day, there are still people who are being charged for racism or cautioned on racial or hate speech regarding their comments on social media. Demographically it is correct to say that there are fewer Indian and White teachers than Black teachers, but one can rarely find

an Indian or a White teacher in township schools. They claim it is not safe for them. Hence, the mixing of different races in the education system is not evident.

Change of attitude amongst South Africans is highly called for. It is disheartening that in this new democratic South Africa, some teachers are still in a position of saying they can't teach at a poorest of the poor school, "those schools" are clustered and even driving can be a nightmare. When referring to other schools from different settings, teachers use the term "these other schools". The use of the terms "us" and "them" shows that segregation is still hiding behind this inclusive education era. To combat resistance against the transformation of education to full inclusive education, channels of communication must be opened amongst teachers of various racial groups and ethnic groups, mixing people of different races and colour in township schools, involving every teacher everywhere without racial exceptions and holding workshops in such schools, thereby exposing the reality. With such an approach there will eventually be a change of heart and mind-set towards one another. The new South Africa has no room for selfish group interests but instead, the new democracy needs to be nurtured with public interest and respect for one another, by embracing diversity and appreciating differences in good spirit. This same spirit is then transferred to learners.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In trying to provide education for all, some principles of inclusive education are being ignored or overlooked, thereby compromising quality and equality. The issue of overcrowdedness frustrates the teachers, who experience that their delivery of lessons is hampered. The Department of Education, however, turns a blind eye to class sizes that can be as big as 60 learners in a single class under a single teacher. This is because the teacher-pupil ratio is calculated by dividing the number of learners by the number of teachers **regardless** of their teaching assignments. Although there are hitches as mentioned above, it is interesting that the Department of Education has done something towards the move to inclusivity - not enough, though, considering the time that is left (two years) to meet the expected deadline of twenty years stipulated in the Education White Paper 6 (2001). All schools have support classes, electricity as a method of lightning, SBST, feeding schemes, supply of uniform DBE workbooks that

differ only in LoLT but have the same content, and measures to ensure the security and safety of teachers and learners. All is definitely not gloom and doom. We have to celebrate the gains we have made thus far to help us stay positive in the journey.

Considering the preceding discussion, many factors affect the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng. Some mechanisms have been put in place to try to achieve the goals of inclusive education, but they can be overridden by other strong negative aspects which then impede the process because of inadequately trained teachers. Due to the lack of skills needed to address barriers to learning, all the positives turn to be negative as teachers feel frustrated. They feel timetables are hampering their teaching because they have very large classes and cannot employ strategies like group work. The other gloomy aspects identified involved salaries and further education. The government's ceiling salary is set at honours degree level. If a teacher studies beyond honours degree, appreciation is shown in the form of a once-off bonus but there is no salary notch added. Ironically, the lifelong learning expected of teachers by SACE is given a limit. The third aspect is inequality. There is still no equal education for all learners. There is still a recognisable difference between the township and former Model C schools in nearly every aspect just as before democracy. Former Model C school learners are still more privileged than township school learners. These and other aspects show that the impact and influence of a negative feature can be devastating and cause everyone to forget about the positives. This makes me believe that is why most researchers have painted a bleak picture of inclusive education, as it is still a matter of education for all (EFA) and medical discourse rather than inclusive education. Some teachers are still wondering when the implementation of inclusive education is going to take place, yet the set period is about to elapse. As I was following the news during the COVID-19 pandemic, I could see that the pandemic exposed the inequalities that are still prevailing in schools in terms of resources in schools and their conduciveness to learning. This substantiated my finding that there is no fair distribution of resources, with townships schools being disadvantaged. However, there is a little that is being done and those identifiable aspects need to be celebrated. They include the electrification of schools, feeding schemes for learners, security on premises with logging in of visitors, and a single curriculum with the provision of uniform syllabi and workbooks.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Concluding this study, this chapter provides a general summary of the findings to demonstrate to what extent the aims and objectives stated in Chapter One have been addressed and achieved. The study followed an interpretive/constructivist qualitative multiple case study approach in which firsthand research data in the form of questionnaires, interviews and observations were used. This interpretive/constructivist paradigm maintains that there are multiple socially constructed realities in the real world.

The study was an evidence-based inquiry, and it was explorative as it was exploring the perceptions of the four teachers who participated in the research. The exploration involved factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education by primary school teachers in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng. It explored primary school teachers' experiences in addressing barriers to learning in their classrooms. It focused on identifying and examining how these factors influence the implementation process, probing into how teachers deal with learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning, exploring how teachers understand inclusive education policy, and identifying the support available to teachers in implementing inclusive education effectively. The evidence-based inquiry principle was followed using systematically gathered empirical data collected to extract specific conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This interpretive qualitative case study contested the claim that all is gloom and doom concerning the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. The introduction highlighted the inception of inclusive education globally and nationally drawing from Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems theory. The theory describes the participation and interaction of a developing individual in different structures and systems, where each system influences and is influenced by other systems regarding an individual as a social being. I found this framework suitable for this study as it has an unambiguous relationship with the social model discourse in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. Like the systems theory, the social discourse

purposes that even if the individual has an impairment or is different, it is the societal barriers that create disability, and that disability is not inability. Society should look at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for people who are different, not trying to fix them to be able to execute the activities that are not possible with the impairments they have.

Additionally, since the Education White Paper 6 was adopted in 2001, now 19 years ago, I assumed that teachers who have been in the field for at least three years would understand inclusive education, in accordance with the SACE document relating to the professional development of teachers in South Africa.

Surprisingly, the data collected from interviews and observation revealed that teachers are not well equipped to tackle inclusive education effectively due to a lack of skills to do so. They seem to be operating in the medical discourse phase or further as Education for All (EFA). They still wish for learners to stay in support classes that are available in schools. Little is being done to address barriers to learning in the classrooms and the blame is placed on the large classes the teachers face. They do not really understand what inclusive education is and are not prepared to read the document as they feel they know it through training. The education system and structures are not working in synergy. The policy document has its own principles to be followed and implemented by the teachers, but teachers do not know it. Secondly, the SACE has the mandate to set good standards and practices in the teaching profession, but the highly qualified teachers are not matching the standard outlined. Thirdly, the teacher who is the implementer is deceived by the qualification he or she possesses, claiming they would be able to implement inclusive education if it were not for overcrowded classes.

Although all four teachers who were participants in this study are/were trained, qualified, and have SACE accreditation, they seem not to match the standard that SACE claims to achieve. The SACE Ten Professional Teaching Standards and Practice for South African Teachers (Section 2.2.5) are impressive. Reading them creates a mental picture of a "fully armed teacher" ready to tackle inclusive education, but the "real teacher" as encountered in this study is far from those standards. There seems to be a mismatch between policies and practices in both the SACE and the

Education White Paper 6. The reason may be insufficient skills to translate theory into practice.

Teachers seem, to use an African idiom, like toothless dogs with bones to chew. Because they have no tools to tackle the challenge, little is being done to address barriers to learning in their classrooms. Instead of addressing the barriers to learning, they try to shift the blame for any negative outcomes to other structures and systems. They feel they can fulfil their role as trained and registered professional teachers. These trained professionals misunderstand the role of support classes in their schools, they claim language is a resource but do nothing to preserve it, they still use terms like "those other schools", meaning they still need to combat racism and work in collaboration with other schools with the resources they do not have. Unfortunately, there is no one to follow up on what is really going on in the classrooms as the Department officials do not enter the classroom but only offices and staffrooms. They do not realise that they have impractical implementers. This may perhaps be attributed to the issue of teachers' meagre salaries and/or the insufficient training of managers. Fully trained but half-skilled as they are, they are prevented from progressing further with their own education by the limit for promotion (and concomitant salary increase) being set at an honour's degree. This does not motivate teachers to self-develop through further studies and effectively puts paid to the "lifelong learning" concept. However, there are some minor, maybe "pocket-sized" gains that should be highlighted to assist teachers to focus on the positives in their everyday experiences in the journey towards inclusive education, and help them see the need to celebrate and capitalize on them.

Although there are other factors that influence the implementation of inclusive education, according to this study, teachers' development is the key to start supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers claim to know about inclusive education, yet they still need more development and need to acquire skills that enable them to address the problems they face rather than trying to shift the blame to overcrowded classes, material shortage, and length of teaching periods. Undeniably, aspects like overcrowded classes are a reality and it should be noted that it is one of the barriers to learning that needs to be addressed by the implementers. Teachers should not wait for the rain to stop but should find ways of dancing in the rain, for there is not enough help that they can get from officials.

This study discovered that each section of the education system seems to be detached from the rest, yet they influence one another while lacking interaction and follow-ups within the structures and systems. Consequently, the influence on the education system is a negative one as learners experiencing barriers to learning are present in classes but are not accommodated in the teaching and learning process. This plainly shows that interaction is very important and that if one part of the system or structure is not sound, it influences other systems and structures negatively. Therefore, teachers must undergo rigorous training as well as enough exposure to the policy, and receive the necessary support and follow-ups as they are the ones who are the implementers of inclusive education in the classrooms in close proximity to learners as beneficiaries of the process.

However, the biological traits of some teachers who learn quickly may help them to implement inclusive education in their classrooms. As mentioned before, failure or success of something should not be evaluated based on either systems/structure only or biological only. In other words, a once-off training and lack of support and follow-ups may not make all teachers unable to implement inclusive education. A few might be doing something out there although it is a drop in the ocean.

As highlighted in Chapter One, the fact that most studies paint a bleak picture of inclusive education does not mean that there is nothing to celebrate. Every journey starts with a single step and each step should be appreciated, hence every little step is to be celebrated in the journey of inclusive education.

Regardless of the challenges and processes that lead to the creation of barriers to learning, teachers have positive things to say about inclusive education even if some factors, like a single curriculum, are overlooked as if they happened automatically. Listed below are the teachers' reasons to celebrate their experiences in the implementation of inclusive education. The interview and observation data collected for this study reflected these gains of inclusive education.

- All schools have support classes although they are not utilized in the right way. Inadequate teacher development and support programmes may be to blame for this
- Learners are receiving food from schools
- Schools have electricity which is a very good lighting system

- Some schools have extra lessons in the afternoon
- Security and safety of learners is maintained as all schools have a certain measure to follow before entry. There is either security personnel or the gate is remotely controlled by a receptionist
- Having a single curriculum with uniform syllabi, workbooks and the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) helps reduce misinterpretations of the content by different individuals in different institutions and leads to teaching of the same content in each subject and grade at the various schools.
- Having LSEN schools in the proximity

All is not that desperately hopeless; a little has been done following the big stride of a single curriculum, though it is very little. In conclusion, if the district officials are as impractical as the teachers, they should not delay taking their responsibilities seriously because the implementation of inclusive education is not a simple task. The way they assess learners' books and rate the teachers is unacceptable.

5.3 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

In my endeavour to investigate factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education, using data collected from four primary school teachers, I attempted to answer all five research sub-questions listed in Chapter One (see subsection 1.5.2). The answers to these questions formed building blocks towards the answer to the main question and highlighted other aspects of great importance in this study.

5.3.1. Factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education

The first question was (1.5.2.1), what factors promote or hinder the implementation of inclusive education? The main factor identified that influences and is influenced by the rest of the factors, is the inadequacy of relevant skills in teachers to deal with barriers to learning in their classrooms. Although teachers claim to understand inclusive education, their actions and attitude when dealing with barriers to learning show that they still need more training and support in order to be able to address barriers to learning. This, therefore, raises the issue that once-off training is not effective in giving teachers the needed skills in a diverse classroom. Additionally, all four teachers are trained and registered with SACE. The standard and practice of a teacher are admirably stated in the SACE documents, but do not reflect that teacher in reality. There appears to be a general mismatch between policies and practices, or there is

no collaboration and active participation in these systems. There is no follow-up training to correct or improve the situation. Consequently, teachers are frustrated due to other factors like overcrowded classes. They adhere indiscriminately to novice tools instead of using them as guidelines. The study reveals that due to lack of follow-ups and interaction within the systems, features that were meant to be beneficial become problems, for example, the teacher was blaming the timetable for time management failure, or the issue that learners should remain in support classes. Teachers are still maintaining the medical discourse despite having completed college and university courses offering inclusive education modules. This means that the quality of the training may be questionable. Teachers seem inclined to blame anything that is not done well on the large classes. Furthermore, something like multiple languages that could potentially be a good avenue to healthy diversity is regarded as a factor adding to the problems of diversity that teachers are supposed to deal with. Unfortunately, the inability or unwillingness of teachers to see the advantages leads to chaos and disaster in the classrooms.

5.3.2. How these factors affect the implementation process

The second question (1.5.2.2) was, how do these factors facilitate or hinder the implementation process? As mentioned before, the potentially positive factors turn into negatives as a result of the way they are perceived and handled. There are mechanisms provided by the Department of Education or schools like the feeding scheme for learners, support classes, electricity, extra classes, and teaching timetables that are not as well utilised as they should be.

5.3.3. Ways of dealing with barriers in the classroom

The third question (1.5.2.3) was, how do teachers deal with learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classroom? The teachers are, in fact, relying on their personal means of addressing what they see as "problems". For example, a teacher may drill a learner for an examination in almost military style - while the teacher is the commander in the classroom, he or she is commanded by the district office to have a certain number of activities, or be rated with a red colour, implying "you are not a good teacher". To be on the safe side, teachers are doing what pleases the district officials and no changes or modifications are risked. What eventually becomes of a learner who is experiencing barriers to learning is obviously a topic that remains ignored. The

process is simple: the learners are referred to support classes and when there is a task or examination, the learner is brought back to his or her original class. There the learner is drilled for the task or examination. This means that support classes are treated as " special schools within regular schools". All these issues seem to come back to inadequate training. If you are not well informed, you cannot do more or you cannot give what you don't have.

5.3.4. Teachers' knowledge about inclusive education

The fourth question (1.5.2.4) was, how do teachers understand the inclusion policy? Teachers claim to be knowledgeable about inclusive education but do nothing towards the implementation of it. They don't address the problems but shift the blame to other aspects. Even if some aspects like overcrowded classes are real and need attention, teachers need to consider an uncomfortable question: What is it that you are doing to mitigate the impact of it? The answer at present seems to be: Nothing. They have not shifted from the medical discourse to the current social discourse. One of the teachers understands inclusive education to be focused on intellectual ability which is evidenced by her use of the term IQ (Intelligence Quotient). The term is based on a standardised test which basically means that it can lead to the categorisation of learners according to their scores. Unsurprisingly, the way teachers in this study utilise the support classes they have in schools is, in essence, special education. All of this implies that teachers have little knowledge about inclusive education. While knowledge can be the power that makes a person manage circumstances and events efficiently, a little knowledge may be more dangerous than ignorance.

5.3.5 Support available to teachers

The final question is (1.5.2.5) was, what support is available to teachers to implement inclusive education as stipulated in the policy? Teachers are not receiving much support to implement inclusive education effectively. Teachers are left to their own devices but are also expected to meet the Departmental requirements such as syllabus coverage per term or circle. As they are inadequately trained, they rely on loopholes and dodges to survive the department's needs while forgetting the learner experiencing barriers to learning.

5.3.6. Summary on the main research findings and conclusion

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that this interpretive qualitative multiple case study revealed that professional development is a strong influential factor in the education system. Lack of professional development leads to frustration in most teachers, so much so that they can unconsciously turn the positive aspects to negative. Having obtained a qualification deceives most teachers into thinking they can tackle inclusive education effectively, yet they seem unable to do it. They are still operating in the medical discourse (see Table 2.1). Hence, they were found lacking in the ways listed below, with the core factors put in bold for easy identification.

- They claim **language** is a resource but use only code-switching to deal with language differences in their classrooms.
- They do nothing to reduce the impact of **overcrowdedness**; rather, they use it as justification for not doing what they are supposed to be doing
- They **adhere to the novice tools (ATP)** they are given instead of using them as guidelines
- They are **biased towards academic subjects**. They go to the extent of "banning" learners from other subjects like PE because they don't finish their written excises. Had teachers been adequately informed, they would not focus on what the learners cannot do. This point leads to the next point
- They have **stipulated ways of assessing the learners**. They can go as far as drilling a learner to perform what others have performed in the name of "equal opportunities"
- They **lack a commitment to the policy**. They make no effort to search for valuable knowledge from the policy document.

While these comments may seem harsh, the listed behaviours were the result of inadequate training and support of teachers in their classrooms as well as **the way the Department officials supervise the teachers**. Maybe the officials also did not undergo rigorous training, so that they do not know how they should supervise and support teachers. Instead of supporting teachers in their classes, the officials come to rate them based on the learners' books. If they are supposed to be rating teachers, why is it that they only rate them on the grounds of the work they have given to their learners? I do not think there can be a convincing answer to this question. These

officials and their modus operandi are a stumbling block in the implementation process of inclusive education.

In addition, **parents who are illiterate** and cannot help their children with homework join the long queue of factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education. As a result of their ineffectual teacher development, teachers tend to discount the help that parents can give their children. They are denied their role to contribute to the education of their children. Consequently, they avoid school visits even if they have been called, and they do not even attend events like sports. If they do come, the teacher utilises the chance to talk about the child's performance. As a result, they leave their children entirely to the school and seem to hide away in their homes. Had it been that teachers understand inclusive education well, these parents could do a great deal to help in the development of the school and children in general. They can perform activities like accompanying teachers during excursions. Unfortunately, these parents are excluded even as learners experiencing barriers to learning are excluded. Their children are even doing "homework" at school with the help of volunteers, carrying the invisible label "those who have no one to help at home" on their backs.

A further identified challenge was the **long distance that learners travel to and from school**. It not only affects their participation in class as they reach the school tired, but also does not give teachers room to detain the learners. The privately organised transport will be waiting to fetch the learner at the time they have agreed with the parent.

Lastly, it is a reality that **racism and inequality** still prevail in schools. When selecting the schools of study, both township and of former Model C schools were included to balance the scale on contexts. Unpredictably, teachers still use the words "those other schools", implying "we are not the same". It is significant that "those other schools" know and accept that they are not the same as "such schools with everything". With this "us" and "them" mindset, teachers build a wall between the township and former Model C schools. It is worth noting for clarity's sake that in township schools there are a few or no White or Indian teachers. They are situated in the former Model C schools. So, the "them" and "us" also infer differences in colour. The two groups meet when they attend workshops, which are typically conducted in a school with better facilities

which is the former Model C school in most if not all cases. It appears that teachers resist mixing and mingling, meaning there is little or no sharing of ideas and materials that may help in addressing barriers to learning. Mostly, the township schools are the ones short of resources including the DBE workbooks.

In this 21ˢᵗ century, some schools are still regarded as poor schools. Even if they are known as poor schools, nothing is being done to reduce the gap between the so-called poor schools and "rich schools" (the privileged schools). In the township schools, the walls of the original school are hardly visible because of the prefabricated mobile classes. Due to the densely populated surroundings, the schools are forever overstrained with regard to resources. Equality in education is still a dream to be fulfilled in the future. With the COVID-19 (an acronym that stands for **Co**rona**VI**rus **D**isease of 20**19**) pandemic, all the challenges were exposed in even greater detail.

5.4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a multitude of factors that affect the implementation of the inclusive education policy because there are a number of stakeholders and systems involved. The success or failure of the process should not be attributed to a single system or aspect. It must be considered with the acknowledgement of person-environment interaction, the characteristics of the individuals involved (both the teacher and learner), and the context which includes both the environment and time which looks at regular and extended periods, as well as the policy document. In this section recommendations are put forward to the government, SACE, The Department of Education and teachers. These recommendations should be regarded as suggestions that stand to be tested, and that may lead to further research.

5.4.1. The government

Schools are institutions that are meant for the development of children. It is not beneficial to those learners to claim that the teacher-pupil ratio in South Africa is less than 30 while, in reality, most government public schools are composed of overcrowded classes of up to 60 learners in one seating. The intricacies of political language and propaganda harm the education system. The education system should address the needs of all stakeholders, and avoid making statements that are at variance with the real situation in order to gain approval. It is recommended that all

involved let politics be politics and education be education without political language. Overcrowded classes and inequality in education are real and need to be addressed.

5.4.2. **The Department of Education (DoE)**

The Department's obligation should not be to rate teachers in terms of how much work they have given to learners, but to support them to reach the educational goals. Making school visits with visiting classrooms cause great harm to innocent learners, especially those who experience barriers to learning. Teachers struggle to please the Department in meeting the syllabus coverage percentage required termly. Setting standards and targets is to be applauded, but the way these standards and targets are currently managed is not beneficial to the central recipients, the learners. It is recommended that having set standards and targets, the Departments send officials inside the classes to observe what is really going on. The coveted "green" rating may even be causing teachers to go to the extent of making learners copy the answers to fulfil the Department's requirement. Officials would do well to remember that they are also teachers, and do not actually belong in offices. They have a duty to stand up, and follow-up and give the relevant support teachers need in their classrooms.

5.4.3. **South African Council of Educators (SACE)**

The mandate of this body is perfectly outlined with sound practices and standards, including registering of teachers. The teachers who are in the field, however, are far removed from these stipulated standards and practices. They lack adequate skills to provide equal education to all the learners they teach. Learners experiencing barriers to learning are left out in the teaching-learning process. It is recommended, therefore, that SACE follows up on the training these teachers receive and furthermore follows up on how these teachers are performing in their classrooms. It is the responsibility of the SACE to investigate the alignment of their standards with the standards set by the providers of teacher education, so that their programmes are designed and delivered in a way that enables all pre-service and in-service teachers to meet the SACE standards (SACE gazette, 2018:6).

5.4.4. **Teachers**

Teachers may be trained and registered with SACE, but the reality is that their training did not provide them with relevant skills to address barriers to learning. Teachers should not be deceived by the qualification they possess, since qualifications are

obtained through theory-oriented training that lacks the practical aspect of actual teaching. Unfortunately, there is currently no relevant support to be had from officials, but teachers should bear in mind that teaching is more of a calling than a job. Teachers deal with the lives of vulnerable learners who rely on them. I recommend that teachers take upon themselves the responsibility to search for the relevant skills that are to effectively address barriers to learning in the classroom. They should not wait for the challenges to dissipate but equip themselves to be able to "dance in the rain" and reduce their own frustration.

5.5.   AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Findings show that most teachers are relying on code-switching to bridge the gap between HL and LoTL. It is suggested that further qualitative research be conducted to investigate how teachers who are proficient in only one or two official languages can bridge the gap to help the learners in schools located in townships and inner cities so that all learners may have equal opportunities to access and succeed in learning.

- The support systems available seem to exist more on paper than in practice. The participants lamented that they hardly get support from The Department of Education. I suggest that qualitative research be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of DBST support in the surrounding schools in Gauteng Province.

- The reality concerning the number of learners in a class is far above the official (maybe politically motivated) teacher-pupil ratio records. Most public schools are overcrowded, especially the township schools. With reference to the issue of overcrowdedness, it is suggested that research be conducted on how political campaigns impede the education of children in a nation, for example, the teacher-pupil ratio is calculated to give a good political report but makes no difference to or improve in any way the lives of learners as recipients of education.

- Although schools may be in the same province, it should be noted that the geographical location of a school creates different contexts that differ widely. A comparative investigation can be carried out to compare the benefits of learners in former Model C schools to those of the learners in the township schools.

- The teaching methods that help learners to participate effectively in the teaching-learning process, such as re-teaching of concepts that the learners

have not mastered, are being abandoned by most teachers as they try to meet the syllabi coverage as **stipulated** by the district officials. The requirements are calculated per lesson, per week, per month and term. The lessons are controlled by timetables, so that if a teacher uses the time for anything else it will be very difficult to meet the stipulated syllabus coverage. It may cause the teacher to be graded at umber or red levels, which would actually be a false reflection of the teacher's performance. Competence/incompetence cannot be measured by syllabus completion only without class observations. Teachers are becoming slaves to the given milestones and to the timetables due to this way of supervision. The milestones are not used as guidelines but should be **adhered to** for the teachers to satisfy the officials' requirements**.** Surely this limits the creativeness of teachers. Which is more beneficial to the learner: to be actively involved in the learning process, or to labour through a curriculum without proper practice and understanding? A qualitative study can investigate the approaches to curriculum and policy implementation and issues of quantity versus quality.

- Probing the training systems for teachers may reveal why they appear to be theoretical and mechanical rather than practical.

5.6.   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Qualitative research is typically based on small, non-random (i.e., purposive) samples and often is used more for exploratory or discovery purposes than for hypothesis testing and validation purposes, so that qualitative research findings are often not generalisable beyond the local research participants. This means that findings might be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

The current study was executed in the interpretive paradigm following the relativism ontology which regards context as an important aspect in data collection, and the epistemology that believes that the researcher should be subjective, should interact with people to discover meaning. This suggested that the interviews, questionnaire, and observation would provide the qualitative data that would address the research problem. As often happens in qualitative research, there was an overload of data. In the early stages of analysis, most of the data looked promising and everything seemed

significant. It was a cumbersome task to sort through, organise, and condense the information.

Additionally, I believe my ethnic background might have impacted on interviews as some participants thought that I was spying on the schools that I visited. One of the prospective participants even withdrew when she heard of interviews and observations from a researcher of different ethnicity. This also caused the response rate to be very slow. However, data was collected to the extent that I realised that I had too much data to analyse.

Although I was very conscious of and therefore tried to limit my influence on my research, my role as a researcher who is a teacher might have influenced my perspective on the data analysis. My treatment of answers may have been shaped both by what I read during my literature study and my experience as a teacher.

The Covid-19 pandemic contributed to the delayed submission of this study. Due to the severity and rapid spread of this disease, a total nationwide lockdown was announced, which caused disruption of the research in a multitude of ways, including both logistic and personal complications, and led to significant delays in all aspects of the research process.

5.7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this research, the researcher focused on educational transformation in South Africa and the attempt to embrace the diverse community of this country through the implementation of inclusive education in the classrooms. South Africans had looked forward to equality in all spheres of life after their independence in 1994, but a bleak picture of inclusive education has been painted in most studies. This research looked at the factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in South African public schools, exploring specifically the experiences of primary school teachers in Ekurhuleni District, Gauteng. An attempt was made to counter the bleak outlook that inclusive education has been given in most studies reported in the literature. This research study demonstrated that there are challenges teachers face but cannot address due to inadequate skills to do so. Because this has a significant influence on

the implementation of the policies in education, the implementation of inclusive education in particular seems to be doomed. Learners are present and available in classes but are not accommodated, which implies that there is no inclusive education but exclusion. Regardless of all the challenges, there are some minor aspects to celebrate even though these small steps are not good enough for the long journey of inclusive education.

From my experience as a teacher, I have realized that most parents are now aware of impairment as something that is found in any community regardless of colour, ethnicity, nationality, or any other difference. Before the genesis of inclusive education, most parents associated impairments with witchcraft, or a curse from God or ancestors, which led them to hide the affected persons in their houses. Nowadays they are brought up in a normal way and sent to schools with the understanding that even if their children are different, they can still be educated. However, they are not being accommodated in the learning process as their needs are not met.

Some schools have been erected and support classes made available to cater for children with special needs in education. Schools for mentally challenged persons have been erected and universities are providing courses on inclusive education. During the period of segregation, most children were deprived of the right to education but now the government is trying to provide education to **ALL,** although the word 'quality' is somehow lacking in these phrases. The provision of mobile (prefabricated) classes compromises the quality of the education learners receive as the structures are not conducive to teaching and learning. All children will be in schools, but the infrastructure is not conducive to quality teaching and learning, hence, inequality still prevails.

As mentioned before, our diverse languages are cultural treasures of the South African society that merit constitutional protection and should be used also for instruction, although it is still a strongly contested issue even to this date. Different languages are catered for in different schools, which helps in preserving them from extinction. Education is executing the constitutional aspects of language as The Constitution (1996b:13) in section 29 determines that "everyone has the right to receive education

in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where education is reasonably practicable".

The road to inclusive education according to Education White Paper 6 is set on a progressive realisation platform typified by a three-phased implementation plan. We are now in the final phase of the implementation process where long term aims are supposed to be achieved; more precisely, only less than a year is left in the twenty-year plan outlined to 2021. How is the South African education system going to accomplish these goals? The progress is rather too slow, we are nearing the end and much still needs to be done. This might be the reason why most researchers paint a bleak picture of inclusive education implementation in South Africa. It is there in practice but moving at a snail's pace. The situation is regrettably not hopeful looking at the 19-year period that has passed since the inception of inclusive education in the Republic of South Africa. Nonetheless, everything may not be lost if the teachers of South Africa awake to the responsibilities and the glory of their calling.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Observation Report template

This tool serves to gather information on the implementation of Inclusive Education in primary schools

ITEM	AREA TO BE OBSERVED	DESCRIPTION	ANALYTIC COMMENTS
1	The content (i.e. what is taught and differentiation to cater for all the learners)		
2	The language of instruction		
3	How the classroom is organized and managed and school environment		
4	The methods and processes used in teaching		
5	The pace of teaching and the time available to complete the curriculum		

6	The learning materials and equipment that is used		
7	How learning is assessed		
8	Functioning of boards like School Based Support Team (SBST) and School Based Assessment team (SBAT) in the school		
9	● Mechanisms provided by the school		
	● Feeding scheme		
	● Extra lessons		
	● Support classes		

	● Support of teachers internally by experts through workshops and class visits		
	● School social worker/Psychologist/ Counsellors/Therapist etc		
	● Technology and software		
	● Interactive boards		
	● School transport		
	● Lightning system		

	● Stationery		
	● Ramps or lifts		
	● Floors; Carpets, tiles, cement		
	● Security and safety in general e.g. fencing, logging in books for visitors and security personnel		
	● General infrastructure of the school; types of buildings- Their conduciveness to South African		

	weather conditions and accessibility		

GENERAL REMARKS

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APPENDIX B

REQUEST LETTER TO PERFORM IN AN INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A LETTER REQUESTING AN ADULT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW TO BE COMPLETED BY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms._____

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Julia Rufaro Chiroodza am conducting as part of my research as a master's student entitled; Factors affecting the implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni District: Primary School Teachers' experiences at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by the school principal through the Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve the handling of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately ninety minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate the collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office.

The benefits of this study are to highlight factors affecting you as you strive to implement inclusive Education in your classroom. The factors that hinder the implementation will be uprooted and find a way of eliminating their effects in your teaching. On the other hand, the factors promoting will indicate that all is not gloom and doom by showing the brighter side of the implementation process of inclusive education in primary schools. Recommendations on how best the factors that promote the implementation of inclusive education be fully utilized will be made. This will help you in your profession as a teacher.

In all this, there are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. Please note that you will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Julia Rufaro Chiroodza on 0833166146 or email jrchiroodza@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for you in February 2020 although the study is expected to be complete in November 2019.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 0833166146 or by e-mail at jrchiroodaz@gmail.com .

I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

Yours sincerely

_____   _____   _____

Researcher's name (print) Researcher's signature   Date

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Section 1: Understanding Inclusive Education

1. In your own understanding, what is Inclusive Education about?

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2. Why was Inclusive Education adopted in the South African Education system?

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3. Do you think it was necessary to make that transformation in education? Substantiate your answer.

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Section 2: The implementation

4. Which steps are you taking in support of this Inclusive Education policy in the following aspects?

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(ii)   The language of instruction

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(iii)   Classroom arrangement and management

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(iv)   Teaching methods

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    (v)   Utilisation of the time available in completing the syllabus

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    (vi)   The learning materials and equipment you use in your classroom

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_____

    (vii)   The way you assess your learners

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(viii) Utilising support from other learners for example copying of notes, buddying, etc.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Section 3: Support system

5. What kind of support do you need in your classroom for you to be able to implement inclusive education effectively?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. How is the support rendered to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6(a). Is it adequate?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Like any other policy, Inclusive Education might have factors affecting it positively or negatively. In your experience as a teacher what have you identified as positive and negative factors? List them below

Positive factors	Negative factors

8. How best do you utilize the positive aspects you stated above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. How do you mitigate the impact of the negative aspects you have stated?

_____

_____

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_____

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_____

Section 4 Evaluation (Opinion)

10. Do you think it was necessary to transform the South African Education system to Inclusivity? Why do you say so?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. In your own understanding how do learners gain as recipients of Inclusive Education system?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. Do you think there is something to celebrate that South African Education system has done so far in working towards Inclusive Education? You may give examples.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. What is your comment on the Education language policy? A resource or a problem? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. How would you describe the provision of resources in South African public schools?

_____
_____
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Is there fairness in the distribution of the resources in schools in high density and low-density suburbs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

COVER LETTER FOR A QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Dear respondent

This questionnaire forms part of my master's research entitled: Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni South District: Primary School Teachers' Experiences for the degree M Ed at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a purposeful sampling strategy from the population of five primary school teachers at different schools in Ekurhuleni South District. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey.

The aim of this study is to investigate the factors that promote or hinder the implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni District. The findings of the study may benefit in highlighting and shedding light on the factors that promote or hinder the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in this district and to indicate that all is not gloom and doom by showing the brighter side of the implementation process of inclusive education in primary schools. I am convinced that if teachers are assisted to focus on the positives in their everyday experiences, they will be able to identify some gains being made in the journey towards inclusive education and this needs to be celebrated. The factors that hinder will be exposed to mitigate their effects in addressing barriers to learning.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising one section as honestly and frankly as possible and according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately 60 minutes (An hour) to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or organisation and your anonymity will be ensured; however, indication of your age, gender, occupation position etcetera will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired, or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, an electronic summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you on request.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. If you have any research-related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact details are: Cell and wats app: 0833166146, e-mail: jrchiroodza@gmail.com and my supervisor can be reached at 0124812881/0124812784 Department of Inclusive Education, College of Education, UNISA, e-mail: ntombs@unisa.ac.za .

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research. Please return the completed questionnaire to Julia Rufaro Chiroodza before (Date): _____.

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

Section 1: Understanding inclusive Education

1. What do you know about inclusive education?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. In your own perception do you think the policy is being implemented well?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2(a). What makes you say that?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. As a teacher do you feel well equipped with skills to address barriers to learning or to accommodate all the learners in your teaching process? Support your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Are the classrooms at your school conducive to cater for learners who have special needs in Education? How?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4(a) If not, how would you prefer them to be?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section 2: The Implementation

5. In your classroom, how do you create a positive learning atmosphere that embraces diversity and caters for learners experiencing barriers to learning?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What factors are affecting you as a teacher when you support learners experiencing barriers to learning? List them below.

Positive factors	Negative factors

7. As an educator, let's say you have been given a platform to recommend on aspects regarding addressing barriers to learning, what would you suggest?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7(a) Why do you think there is a gap in the aspects you have mentioned above?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. On the positive factors you have given above, what seems to be the cornerstone in this school and how best are you utilizing it in helping the learners in your class?

_____
_____
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section 3: Support system

9. How is support rendered to you in an effort to address barriers to learning in your classroom?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Do you sometimes have workshops or in-service courses that are directly linked to addressing barriers to learning in a classroom situation?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10(a) If so, when was it last held? Who organized/sponsored it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

ASSENT FROM LEARNERS

ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear learner,

Date_____

My name is Teacher Chiroodza and would like to ask you if I can come and watch you do some activities with your teacher in the classroom and when you play outside on the playground. I am trying to learn more about how children do different activities with their teachers as well as when they play with friends outside.

If you say YES to do this, I will come and watch you when you are with your teacher in the classroom as well as when you play on the playground. We will do a fun game where you have to answer some questions for me. I will also ask you to do some activities with me. I will not ask you to do anything that may hurt you or that you don't want to do.

I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to mommy or daddy about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards

Teacher J.R. Chiroodza

Your Name	Yes, I will take part 😁	No, I don't want to take part 😒
Name of the researcher		
Date		

Witness		

APPENDIX E

PARENTS' CONSENT FOR MINORS

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Parent

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled; **Factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District: Primary school teachers' experiences.**

I am undertaking this study as part of my master's research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to highlight and shed light on the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in Ekurhuleni District, and to indicate that all is not gloom and doom by showing the brighter side of the implementation process of inclusive education in primary schools. The possible benefits of the study are the improvement of the teaching processes and to identify some gains being made in the journey towards inclusive education and this needs to be celebrated.

I am asking permission to include your child in this study because I expect to have other classmates participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to take part in a class observation during regular classroom activities in three or four visits each lasting for at least an hour or an hour and a half. Your child's books can also be observed to see how they are assessed in different subjects.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are (1) to engage in an active learning process that addresses a wide range of learning needs in a single classroom and highlight the need for teachers'

skills in adapting the curriculum to meet a range of learning needs. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities so there is no need for special arrangements before commences or after school.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you, and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, the records will be erased.

The benefits of this study are the improvement of the teaching and learning process that will help the learner as a recipient.

There are no potential risks in this study as your child will be involved in his/her regular classroom activities

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof S Ntombela Department of Inclusive Education, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 0833166146 and my email is jrchiroodza@gmail.com . The e-mail of my supervisor is ntombs@unisa.ac.za Permission for the study has already been given by the school principal and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child: _____

Sincerely

_____ _____

Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature:

Date: _____

Researcher's name: Julia Rufaro Chiroodza

Researcher's signature: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX F

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____, confirm that Julia Rufaro Chiroodza, who is asking for my consent to take part in this research, has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and the anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read 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.

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

I agree to the recording of the interviews, questionnaires and observations.

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 G

REQUEST FORM FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

REQUEST FORM FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Request for permission to conduct research at
_____Primary School

Research title   : Factors affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni District: Primary School Teachers' Experiences.

Date   : _____

Attention   : Mr/Mrs/Ms_____

Department   : _____

Contact details   : _____

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms   : _____

I, Julia Rufaro Chiroodza am doing research under the supervision of Professor S Ntombela, in the Department of Inclusive Education towards an M Ed degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled; **Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni District: Primary School Teachers' Experiences.**

The aim of the study is to examine the factors that promote or constrain the implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni District. Your school has been selected because the research title is restricted to this District, where the researcher resides. The four schools were randomly selected without following any other specific criterion rather than being a public primary school in Ekurhuleni District and the fifth one will be the researcher's workplace. The study will entail exploring primary school teachers' experiences in addressing barriers to learning in their classrooms.

The benefits of this study are to highlight and shed light on the factors that promote or constrain the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in this district and to indicate that all is not gloom and doom by showing the brighter side of the implementation process of inclusive education in primary schools. I am convinced that if teachers are assisted to focus on the positives in their everyday experiences, will be able to identify some gains being made in the journey towards inclusive education and this needs to be celebrated.

This study has no foreseeable potential risks associated as there are non-vulnerable adult participants and non-sensitive information involved. If any arise, they will be dealt with following the recommended research ethics. There will be no reimbursement or

any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback will be given through emails and or wats app.

Yours sincerely

_____

Julia Rufaro Chiroodza

APPENDIX H

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Date_____

Title: Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni South District: Primary School Teachers' Experiences.

Dear prospective participant

My name is Julia Rufaro Chiroodza and I am doing research under the supervision of S Ntombela, a professor in the Department of Inclusive Education towards an M Ed degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled; **Factors Affecting the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Ekurhuleni South District: Primary School Teachers' Experiences.**

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is expected to collect important information that could highlight and shed light on the factors that promote the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in this district and to indicate that all is not gloom and doom by showing the brighter side of the implementation process of inclusive education in primary schools.

Why am I being invited to participate?

You are invited because you are a qualified teacher with experience in teaching primary school children and I hope that you have made some contribution in the department of education in unpacking inclusive education principles.

I obtained your contact details from the school principal. This study will have a sample of approximately ten teachers from different schools, so your participation is highly appreciated.

What is the nature of my participation in this study?

The study involves observations, interviews and questionnaires. Interview and questionnaires will have structured and open-ended questions that you will be expected to answer. Questionnaires and interviews will have approximately an hour

each which will be done on separate days. Observations will be carried out during your normal classroom set up on an agreed day.

Can I withdraw from this study even after having agreed to participate?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation.   If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, but it will not be possible to withdraw once you have submitted the questionnaire and the interview is done.

What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?

The benefits of this study are to highlight and shed light on the factors that promote the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in this district and to indicate that all is not gloom and doom by showing the brighter side of the implementation process of inclusive education in primary schools. I am convinced that if teachers are assisted to focus on the positives in their everyday experiences, they will be able to identify some gains being made in the journey towards inclusive education and this need to be celebrated.

Are there any negative consequences for me if I participate in the research project?

This study has no foreseeable potential risks associated as there are non-vulnerable adult participants and non-sensitive information involved. If any arise, they will be dealt with following the recommended research ethics. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Will the information that I convey to the researcher and my identity be kept confidential?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research (this measure refers to confidentiality) OR Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give (this measure refers to anonymity). Your answers will be given a code number, or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings (this measure refers to confidentiality. Only the transcriber has access to the data and confidentiality will be maintained by signing a confidentiality agreement. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly

and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Please note that your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Privacy will be protected in any publication of the information by individual participants not being identifiable in such a reports or studies. I therefore make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality or anonymity because no focus groups are used as a data collection method where one cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially.

How will the researcher protect the security of data?

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

Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Has the study received ethics approval?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the (identify the relevant ERC), Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

How will I be informed of the findings/results of the research?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Julia Rufaro Chiroodza on cell number 0833166146 or email jrchiroodza@gmail.com . The findings will be accessible in February 2019.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Julia Rufaro Chiroodza on cell number 0833166146 or email jrchiroodza@gmail.com .

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor S Ntombela on 0124812881/0124812784 or email ntombs@unisa.ac.za

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

Julia Rufaro Chiroodza

APPENDIX I

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____, confirm that Julia Rufaro Chiroodza, who is asking for my consent to take part in this research, has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and the anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read 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.

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

I agree to the recording of the interviews, questionnaires and observations.

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 J

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/10/17

Ref: **2018/10/17/47861134/15/MC**

Name: Miss JR Chiroodza

Student: 47861134

Dear Miss Chiroodza

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018/10/17 to 2021/10/17

Researcher(s): Name: Miss JR Chiroodza
E-mail address: jrchiroodza@gmail.com
Telephone: +27 83 316 6146

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof S Ntombela
E-mail address: ntombs@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 481 2784

Title of research:

**Factors affecting the implementation of education in Ekurhuleni District: Primary
school teachers' experiences**

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 2018/10/17 to 2021/10/17.

The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/10/17
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
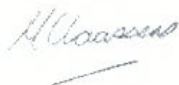   principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

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 **2021/10/17**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2018/10/17/47861134/15/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

APPENDIX K

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH FROM GDE

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE AMENDED APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	27 May 2019
Validity of Research Approval:	04 February 2019 – 30 September 2019 2019/46
Name of Researcher:	Chiroodza J.R
Address of Researcher:	4 Bartle Street Kempton Park West Kempton 1619
Telephone Number:	083 316 6146
Email address:	jrchiroodza@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education in Ekurhuleni District: Primary School Teachers' experience.
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	Five Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Ekurhuleni North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

27/05/2019

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the

Making education a societal priority

above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
4. A letter / document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Mr Gumani Mukatuni
Acting Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 27/05/2019

2

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

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What are the potential benefits of Ekurhuleni North School District Director participating in the research

The findings from the research study will create an understanding regarding the legal implementation of safety within the school and will assist the researcher in developing a safety plan (framework) to create a safer school environment.

How will interview guide and questionnaire information be kept confidential and stored?

As indicated participation is voluntary and the researcher will make all effort to maintain confidentiality. Interview guides and questionnaires will not include personal information in an attempt to maintain confidentiality. All information received will be stored in-line with the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act No. 04 of 2013 as amended. The records will be kept in safe storage by the researcher for a period of five years, after completion of the research study, where after it will be shredded.

Ethical clearance

The research study will adhere to all ethical requirements set by Unisa and application for ethical approval will be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Economic Management Sciences, Unisa.

How will Ekurhuleni North School District Director be informed of the results/findings

Should the Ekurhuleni North School District Director Governing Body require final results, these can be made available by the researcher on request, within the five year storage period.

Should Ekurhuleni North School District Director require additional information or want to contact the researcher the school Governing Body is welcome to do so using the researcher's details below. Should the school have concerns regarding the way in which the research has been conducted please contact the supervisors Prof J.J. Oschman (oschmjj@unisa.ac.za) or Dr D. Visser (vissed@unisa.ac.za).

Thank you for your time and consideration for participating in this research study.

Sincerely Yours
Mrs Cheryl Lin Rielander
Senior Lecturer
Department of Operations Management
Tel: 012 429 2497
E-mail: rielacl@unisa.ac.za

Approved ☐   Not approved ☐

Signature: _____   Date: _____