



**The implementation of inclusive education with regard to
curriculum transformation in the primary schools**

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All the participants and teachers who participated in the study and taught me so much.

DECLARATION

I declare that 'The implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in primary schools' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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19/08/2022

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to all the stakeholders in the education fraternity, especially to teachers, so as they may get assistance on some of the aspects pertaining to the inclusive education policies in their schools.

ABSTRACT

Background: The purpose of implementing inclusive education policies is to provide equitable participation of historically marginalised communities in education. However, policy implementation is not always efficient and this has led to confusion, uncertainty and stress to educators, who are expected to practise the prescripts of those policies. Currently, in South Africa, legislative practices continue to improve to accommodate diverse learners in order to meet first world countries in the implementation of Inclusive Education Policy with the introduction of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

Aim of the study: This study focuses on the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office in the North West province of South Africa.

Research methods: The research study employed a qualitative approach, where data was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews with eight purposively selected schools and 20 participants, ideally teaching in different schools. One principal per school (4); One School-Based Support Team member per school (4); Three educators per school (12), giving a total of 20 participants. These teachers will be chosen because they are deemed to be the group that is critically involved in inclusive education at a school and would therefore be knowledgeable to answer the research questions posed.

Findings: This study found that Inclusive education practices in mainstream primary schools have not been adequately established, and thus the practical implementation stage appears to have not taken its course.

Recommendations: The recommendations put forth by the study suggested that since there is a need for effective implementation of inclusive education in schools, it is important that the role of institutional development and support officers should also be looked at. This would facilitate the implementation of inclusive education policies as there will be systems in place

Key words: Primary Schools; Curriculum transformation; Education White Paper 6; Inclusive Education; Mainstreaming.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SBST	School-based support team
DBST	District based support
NW	North West
DoE	Department of Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs and Training
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
LSEN	Learners with Special Needs Education
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
HIV/AIDS	Human/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
ECD	Early childhood development

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African education system has for many years been challenged with numerous factors affecting it, such as racial segregation, inequality, and violation of the right to education as stated by the Bill of Rights (Act 109 of 1996). As a solution, inclusive education in South Africa was proposed by the government and other educational stakeholders. After the first democratic elections, the government of South Africa was pressured to make changes in the education system, in order to address all the imbalances of the apartheid government. One of the most important changes that took place was curriculum transformation, and it was argued that the older curriculum did not accommodate all learners according to their needs as well as race (Stofile & Greene, 2012:70).

In some countries such as Australia, inclusive education is regarded as a system that accommodates learners experiencing barriers to learning within the general education setting (UNESCO, 2007a). In South Africa, special needs education is seen as an integral part of inclusive education (DoE: 2001). Primary schools in South Africa continue to face challenges relating to the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP).

The study is motivated by the general view of researchers such as Karlia (2017:87), who mentions that curriculum change plays an important role towards the implementation of inclusive education. It is the vision of the Department of Education that the education and training system should promote education for all, and enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they can develop their full potential and participation as equal members of society (Karlia, 2017:30).

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The apartheid education system in South Africa advanced race, sexual orientation, and ethnic divisions, and it emphasized separateness instead of common citizenship and nationhood. Education policies and curriculum improvement during apartheid South Africa were utilized as apparatus of an ideological state to advance the interests of the ruling government. The results of the double framework and racial dissimilarity came about in an expansive number of learners being excluded and marginalized in Ex-Model C schools. At the time, the attrition rate, and the disappointment among a huge number of learners were assessed at between 40 and 50%, according to the National Policy Examination into Support

Services (National Education Policy investigation, 1992). Thus, the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training of 1997 (NCSNET) as well as the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) were commissioned by the Minister of National Education to investigate the state of special education and support in South Africa (DOE, 2001).

South Africa's unstable economy is in part responsible for the lack of progress in the implementation of IEP practices (Davis, 2015:37). Inadequate funding has presented many concerns with regard to IEP implementation. In spite of the initiatives of the Education White Paper 6, which states that the funding strategy that is proposed in this White Paper is a realistic one that takes into account the country's fiscal capacity, the important features are its emphasis on cost effectiveness and exploiting the economies of scale that result from expanding access and provision within an IEP and learning system (Sokal, Laura, Katz & Jennifer, 2017:29). To date, funding has been limited and insufficient to meet the dire needs and challenges experienced by educators and schools (Sokal, Laura, Katz and Jennifer, 2017:26). According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:51), the dominant source of funding is donor funding, and the government to date has made no substantial contribution from the national budget to facilitate implementation of inclusive education policies. In this regard, Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:50) further posit that in the IEP model, the capacity and competency of key role players, adequate funding, and a uniform stance of national implementation, are key determinative factors.

Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:57) argue that this will determine whether IEP will effectively and qualitatively address the needs of the greater population. In many countries of Africa, key factors that cause IEP challenges have remained the shortage of resources, inadequate facilities, a lack of training of educators in IEP implementation, absent support of parents, overcrowding of classes, and a lack of support from the District-Based Support Teams (Swart & Pettipher, 2018:18). In this regard, the situation in rural areas is far more extreme, where the scarcity of basic resources is much greater. Other challenges stunting the development of IEP in South Africa are social conditions, legislative redress, and lack of professional development for educators, and full-service and mainstream schools are ill-prepared (Davis, 2015:34). Against this background, this study endeavours to evaluate the position of implementing inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the mainstream primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office, and assess whether the requirements set by the education authorities have been met. The Ditsobotla Area Office is faced with challenges such as the inclusion in primary schools of learners experiencing barriers to learning. It has always been a challenge in the area office of

Ditsobotla to successfully implement the policies developed since the introduction of inclusive education in South Africa.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are many policies aimed at addressing different problems related to school practice as identified by policy-makers. Despite the existence of such policies, there are still many unresolved challenges that schools are grappling with. In particular, primary schools in South Africa continue to face challenges relating to the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP). These challenges arise from insufficient resources and a lack of aid from the DoE, and a lack of support from the district teams and management of schools (Stofile & Green, 2012:43).

In addition, there are educator concerns regarding the curriculum expectations and time frames regarding the implementation of the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in catering for diverse learner barriers and needs. The Inclusive Education Policy states learners must be given the support they need in order to address their learning needs effectively (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010:24). Also, there may be many factors that contribute to a lack of support services, resulting in challenges of IEP implementation. In terms of special schools, the DoE (2001) stipulates that special schools will become centres of learning providing curriculum support for learners. However, professional support has been lacking. It has been envisaged further that strengthened support services will build the capacity of schools. Educator capacity is questioned, because educators still face many challenges in the classroom, including an aspect of poverty, where learners lack basic resources to meet the basic needs of an inclusive classroom.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Main aim

The main aim of the study is to investigate the implementation of inclusive education policies in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office. To achieve this main aim, the following objectives are to be achieved.

Objectives/ sub-aims

- To determine how the implementation of inclusive education impacts curriculum transformation.

- To determine the extent to which the Education White Paper 6 and other guideline policies have been successfully implemented in the Ditsobotla Area Office.
- To explore the challenges experienced by primary school teachers regarding the implementation of inclusive education policies.
- To examine the intervention strategies that are essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education policies in the Ditsobotla Area Office.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions to be answered are as follows;

1.5.1 Main research question

What are the challenges for the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office?

1.5.2 Sub-questions

- How does the implementation of inclusive education impact curriculum transformation?
- To what extent have the Education White Paper 6 and other guideline policies been successfully implemented in the Ditsobotla Area office?
- What challenges are experienced by primary school teachers regarding the implementation of these policies?
- What intervention strategies are necessary for the successful implementation of these policies?

1.6 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study endeavours to evaluate the position of implementing inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office, and assess whether the requirements set by the education authorities have been met. This study intends to add value to the existing literature, fostering support to the schools in implementing inclusive education policies effectively. The study upholds collaboration between relevant systems to interact with school systems in an effort to deter teachers within mainstream education practices from functioning in isolation. The study further advocates for the amendment or simplification of inclusive education policies and its guidelines/directives thereof.

The Ditsobotla Area Office is faced with challenges such as the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning in primary schools. It has always been a challenge in the area office of Ditsobotla to successfully implement the policies developed since the introduction of inclusive education in South Africa.

The audience of this study are the Department of Basic Education, educators, principals, and policy-makers. Recommendations will be made to assist these stakeholders to effectively deal with the implementation of Inclusive Education with regard to the curriculum transformation policy in their respective schools. It is envisaged that this study will lead to an increase in the available literature with regard to Inclusive Education and curriculum transformation, and thus may be used for reference by the Department of Education and the schools of Ditsobotla Area Office.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The theoretical framework that will underpin this study is the ecological theory expounded by Bronfenbrenner (1979). In order to understand aspects that influence the implementation of IE in mainstream primary schools, Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic framework was adopted. This framework focuses on the explanation of systemic influences on child development. The development of learners is influenced by various features, which Bronfenbrenner divides into five subsystems.

- The microsystem, which represents an individual's immediate context, is characterised by direct, interactional processes as familial relationships and close friendships (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:66).
- The mesosystem comprises the interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates. In terms of learners, this refers to relations between settings such as the home, school, neighbourhood, and peer group (Kuyini & Desai, 2011:104). The mesosystem can therefore be described as a set of microsystems that continually interact with one another (Makolle, 2018:23).
- The exosystem refers to one or more settings that do not involve the learner as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the learner (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), for example, school policies created by school governing bodies (SGBs) to provide for the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning.
- The macrosystem consists of the larger cultural world surrounding learners, together with any underlying belief systems, and includes aspects such as government

policies, political ideology, cultural customs and beliefs, historical events, and the economic system (Davis, 2015:34).

- The chronosystem represents the changes that occur over a period of time in any one of the systems (Gyimah, 2016:10).

Bronfenbrenner's framework, according to Davies (2015) and Bronfenbrenner (1979), thus allows an exploration of IE as being about the development of systems and the development of individuals within these systems. By identifying the inter-connectedness within and between these systems, it facilitates a better understanding of IE.

This allows for the exploration of the development of IE as constructed and restricted by aspects operating in different systems, and an examination of how practices are shaped by the interactive influence of individuals and their social environment. Gumede (2013:15) confirms that an understanding of the context is the first step towards understanding new developments in education and the movement towards inclusive education. Social justice principles, e.g. more equal distribution of resources and providing equal opportunities to marginalized individuals and groups, according to Tremblay (2015:24), directly engage with the very contexts and systems in which IE is embedded and seek to improve the influences of these systems on the learning experiences and relationships among learners.

The purpose of incorporating Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework in this research study, was to show that, should all systems contributing to the inclusive education Policies development interact with each other in close proximity, the adequate implementation of inclusive education in schools would be achieved.

1.9 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.9.1 Education White Paper 6

Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System was released by the Department of Education in 2001 (DoE, 2001). In this document, a framework is provided for establishing an inclusive education and training system in South Africa, with a focus on the changes that are necessary for accommodating the full range of learning needs (Swart & Pettipher, 2018:20).

1.9.2 Inclusive Education

UNESCO (2007) defines inclusive education as a process intended to respond to students' diversity by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion within and from education. Sokal, Laura, Katz and Jennifer (2017:29) see inclusion as the development of an inclusive

community and inclusive education systems. They emphasize the fact that it is about including everybody, regardless of ability, gender, language, or disability, so that all learners can belong to a school and have access to the educational potential that schools offer.

1.9.3 Mainstreaming

According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:60), mainstreaming means to include learners with barriers to learning in mainstream education alongside their regular peers. In this study, mainstreaming would mean teaching learners with barriers to learning alongside regular school learners, which is most effective to combat discriminatory attitudes, create the most welcoming communities, and achieve education for improving efficiency.

1.9.4 Curriculum transformation

Curriculum change is a learning process of redesigning all the content taught in order to ensure that the educational offering reflects the strengths, values, and strategy within the changing landscape of education, and furthermore, to equip each learner with knowledge, skills and vision to achieve local and global impact throughout their lives (DoE, 2008).

1.9.5 Primary Schools

DoE (2001) defines primary schools as schools which are generally divided into junior preparatory schools (grades 0-3) and senior preparatory schools (grades 4-7) before children attend high school.

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.

This research will use both literature review and qualitative research methods in answering the research questions raised in 1.4.

1.10.1 Research paradigm

According to Nieuwenhuis (2016:78), a paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality that gives rise to a particular worldview. Lincoln, Lynhan and Guba (2011:97) define a paradigm as a network that contains the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological premises. Punch (2016:54) defines paradigm as beliefs which show how research can be influenced and be directed by a particular paradigm, by asserting that a paradigm is a theoretical orientation that informs the choice of the research objectives, research design, and the instruments for collecting data, data analysis, and reporting of the research findings.

In this study, the researcher will use an interpretive paradigm to make sense of participants' experiences by interacting with them and listening to their narratives. The researcher will capture the reality of the participants, then their perceptions and beliefs will be analysed to bring about an improvement in the educational practices (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2014:19).

1.10.2 Research approach

In this study, the researcher will use the qualitative approach to conduct the research.

1.10.2.1 Qualitative research approach

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:245) define a qualitative research approach as an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode and translate meaning occurring in the social world.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2016:34), the qualitative research approach is most commonly described as research that concerns itself with the form of words. Through social interaction, researchers are interested in describing in words how humans arrange themselves and their settings, and how the inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so on. Babbie and Mouton (2017:76) share the same sentiments as Nieuwenhuis (2016:53), namely that the qualitative research approach focuses its attention on the study of human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves. Based on the aforementioned definitions with regard to the qualitative research approach, this approach becomes the most suitable for this research study.

1.10.3 Research design and methods

The research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer the research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2018: 34). The design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be generated. Furthermore, Maree (2019:17) posits that research design is to plan and explain how one finds answers to questions and how one will put one's research strategy into action. The significance of drawing a research plan (design) is to take the initial research problem and decide how it will be resolved.

For this study, a qualitative approach will be suitable as it provides the necessary information to achieve the objectives of the research, namely, to investigate the implementation of inclusive education regarding curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the

Ditsobotla Area Office. In this study, the researcher will use semi-structured interviews to capture participants' perceptions of inclusive education and their problems with regard to the implementation of inclusive education. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed, hence verbatim words and phrases from the interviews will be analysed and used as data to illustrate the findings. Participants will be given consent forms to take part in the recording of the interviews.

1.10.4 Population and sample

1.10.4.1. Population

A population is an entire group that you want to draw conclusions about. In research, a population does not always refer to people. It can mean a group containing elements of anything you want to study, such as objects, events, organizations, countries, species, or organisms (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:158).

The population of this study will consist of eight primary schools, hence it involves eight (8) principals, eight (8) members of the school-based support team, and twenty-four (24) teachers, of which twelve (12) teachers are from the foundation phase and the other twelve (12) from the intermediate phase, from primary schools of Ditsobotla education district. These teachers will be chosen because they are deemed to be the group that is critically involved in inclusive education at a school and would therefore be knowledgeable to answer the research questions posed.

1.10.4.2 Sample

A sample is the specific group that you will collect data from. The size of the sample is always less than the total size of the population (De Vos & Gay, 2018: 418- 425). In this study, the researcher will use the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of participants who contain the most common characteristics of the population (Flick, 2018:39). In purposeful sampling, it is important for the researcher to first determine the selection criteria to be used in choosing the participants. The participants will be selected as part of the sample because they will be the ones directly responsible for ensuring that all learners access educational provisions. These criteria must reflect the purpose of the study and guide the process to be followed. Maree (2019:37) states that it is important to select research sites that are suitable and feasible.

The sample size is determined based on the number of schools in proximity to the researcher. This sample group will be made up of 20 participants, ideally teaching in different schools. One principal per school (4); One School-Based Support Team member per school (4); Three educators per school (12), giving a total of 20 participants. Each principal and School-Based Support Team member will be part of individual interviews, and focus group interviews will be conducted with educators. Two individual interviews per school and three focus group interviews per school will be part of the study. These teachers will be chosen because they are deemed to be the group that is directly involved in inclusive education at their schools and would therefore be knowledgeable to answer the research questions posed.

1.10.5 Data collection

In this study, data will be collected by means of semi-structured interviews in the form of open-ended questions, where the questions will be detailed and developed in advance and treated in a standardised and straightforward manner. Interviews, as well as focus group interviews in each school will last about 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be of benefit to the study because they will provide indirect and historical information through the views of participants. This will enable the researcher to make recommendations for further research. Participants will receive the same set of questions, asked in the same sequence by the same interviewer. Interviews will be conducted using open-ended questions, which should provide a deeper understanding of the perception of the educator in respect of the challenges faced for the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools.

Participants can expect all COVID-19 regulations to be practised. On arrival, participants will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms, including a symptom check and temperature assessment. This will be done by use of a handheld thermometer. A checklist will be filled in by one person on behalf of the participants upon entering the venue. The information gathered from screening will be recorded and kept for 2 weeks and then discarded. Face masks will be compulsory, and participants will be expected to keep them on throughout the interviews. Participants will be expected to practise social distancing throughout the interview sessions. Venues will be sanitised prior to and after each interview.

1.10.5.1 Interviews

Maree (2019:86) defines an interview as a process in which a researcher and participants engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study. All twenty

participants will take part in the interviews. In this study, questions will be based on the implementation of inclusive education concerning curriculum transformation. Interviews are necessary, particularly when the researcher cannot observe behaviour, feelings, and how people interpret the world around them. It is necessary to interview participants when a researcher is interested in past events that are impossible to replicate. In this study, the school-based support teams (SBST) and the principals will be part of the semi-structured interviews.

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:263) regard an interview as a strategy for obtaining a better understanding of a problem or an assessment of a problem. This type of interview can concern a new product or idea by consulting a purposefully sampled group of people rather than each person individually. With the help of the principal, the researcher will meet with the school-based support teams. The interviews will be conducted with a group of educators who are members of a school-based support team. The researcher will explain the purpose of the interview to the group as well as procedures to be followed at the beginning of the interview. The researcher will be using the interview technique in order to capture the participants' perception of inclusive education and their problems with the implementation.

1.10.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

According to Creswell (2018:220), semi-structured interview questions are defined as 'those that supply a frame of reference for participants' answers.' They do not require a selection from a given range of responses, but participants answer the question in their own way and in their own words. The researcher will personally conduct the semi-structured interviews with principals of the selected schools because, by virtue of his/her position in the school, he/she is in charge of the curriculum. This implies that principals should master the curriculum and ensure that it is delivered appropriately to all learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning. Denscombe (2013:169) states that semi-structured questions allow respondents to give a free response in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses, and avoid limitations of pre-set categories of response. The main function of these questions will be to allow principals to reflect on the state of their schools' progress with regard to the implementation of inclusive education.

1.10.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos & Gay, 2018: 840-841). Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data. McMillan and Schumacher

(2014:367) explain qualitative analysis as a process of interim discovery analysis aimed at developing coded topics and categories that may initially come from the data, or which may be predetermined, and also pattern-seeking for plausible explanations.

In this study, the researcher will use inductive data analysis. Inductive data analysis is a qualitative method that the researcher uses to develop theory and identify themes by studying documents, recordings and printed verbal material (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:367). Participants will be expected to provide information and opinions on the state of the implementation of inclusive education. During the interviews, participants will provide feedback relevant to the phase they are in. Questionnaires will also be used to gather a deeper understanding of the perception of inclusive education.

Furthermore, Johnson and Christensen (2017:531) state that data analysis begins early in a qualitative research study and, during a single research study, data will be collected through semi-structured questionnaires; the researcher will counter-check the completion of questionnaires in order to identify items that will not have been appropriately responded to. Data that will be obtained from the semi-structured interviews and semi-structured questionnaires will be categorized according to similar information from the participants, and will be analysed with emphasis on meaning as constructed by the following groups of participants: 4 mainstream principals; 12 mainstream teachers; and 4 School-Based Support Team Members. This will help the researcher to identify information that will be relevant to the research question and objectives. According to Heckman and Hotz (2010:862), data has to be checked by members, especially when this relates to responses to open-ended questions by the interviewer.

1.10.7.1 Permission

The ethical clearance and permission to conduct research in schools around the North West province will be obtained from the Department of Education (DOE). Ethical approval will also be obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the North West University. In addition to this, permission will be obtained from the principals to conduct research at their schools.

1.10.7.2 Informed consent

Permission will be requested from the school principals before entering their premises and collecting data, since obtaining permission from organisational personnel is required by contacting them before the start of the study (Creswell, 2018:231). Likewise, informed consent from all the prospective participants – principals, SBST members and teachers – to participate in the study will be obtained after having informed them of its purpose, the

procedure to be followed, the risks, benefits, alternative procedures and the measures implemented to ensure confidentiality (Johnson & Christensen 2017:107).

1.10.7.3 Voluntary participation

The researcher will inform all participants that their participation in the study is voluntary, since participants cannot be compelled, coerced or required to participate in a study against their will. Participants will also be informed that the freedom to participate or not is a basic right, which includes the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:118). In this way, it will be ensured that intimidation to participate or to remain a participant will not be applied, and the participants will not be exploited in any way, thereby upholding the highest ethical code.

1.10.7.4 Anonymity and confidentiality

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:222), the right to privacy refers to the freedom of the individual to pick and choose for him or herself the time and circumstances under which to participate in the research. This author further elaborates that privacy should also involve the extent to which personal attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, and opinions are to be shared with or withheld from others during and after completion of the study. The researcher will also make sure that participants' identity will be kept private and confidential.

1.10.7.5 Release or publication of the findings

The researcher will submit an article to a scientific journal for possible publication, with his supervisor as a co-author. The researcher will ensure that all participants will be informed about the possible publication of the results. This aspect will be included in the informed consent letter.

1.10.7.6 Debriefing of participants

Debriefing involves explaining the true purpose of the research study when completed, along with why the deception was necessary (Creswell, 2018:231). This author further elaborates that if there is psychological distress as a result of having been deceived by the study, participants must be offered adequate means of addressing this distress. The researcher will ensure that the participants have debriefing sessions directly after the completion of the semi-structured interviews. These will be focused on going through the experiences and emotions they will go through during the process.

1.10.7.7. Ensuring No Harm to Participants

Creswell (2018:74) argues that researchers must ensure that research does not cause harm to participants involved. The participants of this study will be assured that they will not incur any harm through their participation in this study. The researcher needs to ensure that the study will not cause any harm, but would rather improve and develop human lives (Creswell, 2018:71). Hence, any research must be subjected to a gateway check, and pass through stakeholders around the research to ensure all guidelines are followed, and no damage will be caused to the participants or the research context (Mertens, 2015:236).

1.10.8 Contribution or significance of the study

This study will endeavour to evaluate the challenges for the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office, and also assess whether the requirements set by the education authorities have indeed been met. Findings should assist teachers in effectively dealing with the implementation of Inclusive Education with regard to the curriculum transformation policy in their respective schools. It is envisaged that this study should lead to an increase in the available literature with regard to Inclusive Education and curriculum transformation, and it may thus be used for reference by the Department of Education and schools of Ditsobotla Area Office.

1.10.9 Delimitations of study

This study will be conducted in Ditsobotla primary schools. Ditsobotla is located in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District of the North West Province. The study is the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation. Four primary schools in the Ditsobotla Area Office will be engaged in the study. Only teachers and principals will participate in this study, which includes SBST members.

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION OR OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This research project is structured as follows:

1.11.1 Chapter One - Overview

This chapter will serve as a basic introduction to the researcher's scope of work. It covers introduction and background regarding the challenges in the implementation of inclusive education in the public primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office, contains the problem statement, research questions, aims and objectives, theoretical framework, significance of the study and delimitation to the study.

1.11.2 Chapter Two - Literature review

This chapter will focus on literature review: a brief historical overview on the previous education system and the curriculum transformation in South Africa that led to the gestation of the White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001) is presented. An account will also be provided of the policy development since 2001.

1.11.3 Chapter Three - Methodology

This chapter will provide an explanation of the research methodology and design used to conduct the investigation.

1.11.4 Chapter Four - Findings of the research

This chapter will cover the empirical findings that will be found from applying the research methodology in chapter three, and the findings will also be discussed.

1.11.5 Chapter Five - Conclusion and recommendation

The fifth chapter serves as a synthesis of the summary of all the chapters as well as the conclusion with reference to the problem statement. Some recommendations will be offered for a more effective implementation of the White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in the Ditsobotla public primary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides literature which outlines the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in South Africa for the study. It provides insight regarding the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning in South African schools, and the policy development after 1994 in post-apartheid South Africa. Much emphasis is placed on the flagship of inclusive education in South Africa. It is reflected in the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training system (DoE, 2001), and subsequent policies and guidelines following the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

The literature review of this study was conducted in line with the objectives and followed the following headings. First, the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in selected schools in the Ditsobotla Area office. It determines and outlines the historical background of inclusive education, after which an overview of the current situation in selected schools is provided. The existing situation with regard to inclusive education in South Africa is explored on the national, provincial, district and school level. It identifies inclusive education practices in the classroom, and some practical implications of inclusion on teaching, learning and assessment are additionally discussed. It concludes with the challenges faced by inclusive education practitioners in South Africa.

2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

After 1994, South Africa adopted a new constitution (RSA, 1996) which contains the Bill of Rights (Makoelle, 2017:23). South African society has undergone several changes since the dawn of its democracy in 1994. Consequently, it was crucial for the Department of Education to introduce inclusive education. Based on recommendations in the joint report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) of 1997, the Department of Education released the consultative White Paper 6 (2001) aimed at building an inclusive education and training system, which spelled out the commitment of the Department of Education to provide inclusive education that took into consideration the needs of all learners, especially those learners who were disadvantaged by the apartheid education system.

Reflecting on the background of inclusive education in the 1910s, it is evident that people with impairments (disability) were marginalized and treated differently. Tremblay (2015:24) states that historically, people with disabilities were often placed in hospitals, asylums, or other institutions that provide little, if any, education. During the era of extermination in Greece, disability was seen as “punishment of the gods” hence as a bad thing or a sign of evil deeds.

Tremblay (2015:13) states that Decroly, who was a Belgian teacher and psychologist, founded a school for learners with mild disabilities (behavioural disorders, learning disabilities, and light mental retardation) in 1901. He gradually invented his pedagogy for these learners. Historically, learners with disabilities have been treated as ‘invalid’ or inferior, in need of very special protection, and viewed as essentially incapable to benefit from education. This conceptualization led to exclusion and the construction of institutions to accommodate these learners. Later on, a belief took root that all children belonged in the same school system and should not be separated. The parallel system to traditional schooling that developed came to be known as Special Education, and further refinement of this system became known as Special Needs Education.

According to Tremblay (2015:56), Special Needs Education can be demarcated as a system of education for learners with disabilities within ordinary schools, as it directly represents an effort to provide education in more ‘normal’ settings. A typical characteristic of this provision of education is that it has been offered in special classes and not in cooperation with other learners in the mainstream schools. According to Turnbull, Shank, Smith and Leal (2012:77), the goal of mainstreaming was to return learners with disabilities to the mainstream of education as much as possible, alongside normally-developing peers. Swart and Pettipher (2018:7) posit that, in contrast to mainstreaming, the goal of integration was to ensure that learners with disabilities are assigned equal membership in the community. Frederickson and Cline (2010:65) state that a further aspect that differentiates mainstreaming from integration was that special services followed the learner to the school. However, only a limited number of additional provisions were made, and the onus was still on the learner to ‘fit in.’

The idea of inclusive education was given momentum by two conferences organized under the auspices of the United Nations. The first of these, held in Jontien, Thailand in 1990, promoted the idea of education for all. It was followed in 1994 by a UNESCO conference in Salamanca, Spain, which led to a statement that is still being used in many countries to review their education policies. The Salamanca Statement proposed that the development of schools with an inclusive orientation is the most effective means of improving the efficiency

and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (Booth & Ainscow, 2013:13).

2.2.1 The UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Subsequent Policies

The traditional special education is viewed as being flawed on moral, practical and epistemological grounds, according to Booth (2009:45), since there was a movement from special educational needs to active inclusive educational discourses and supportive pedagogies. Internationally the human rights movement called for the inclusion of all people in all aspects of life (UNESCO, 1994; United Nations, 2006). In 1994, over 300 participants, including representatives of 92 governments and international organisations, met in Salamanca, Spain, with the purpose of furthering the objectives of inclusive education. The resulting Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) was framed by a rights-based perspective on education.

According to UNESCO (1994:98), the underlying purpose of the meeting in Spain was to further the aim of Education for All by considering what basic policy changes are needed to promote inclusive education, so that schools can serve all learners, particularly those with special educational needs. Tremblay (2015:44) states that the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education is based on the premise that every learner has a fundamental right to education and has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs.

2.2.2 Education for all (EFA)

The Salamanca Statement called for a commitment to Education for All through recognising the necessity and urgency of providing education for all learners, young people, and adults 'within the regular education system.' UNESCO (1994:111) proposed that:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes be implemented to take responsibility for the wide diversity of these learners and their needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within learner-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.

- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society, and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of learners and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

2.2.3 Inclusive schooling

The Salamanca Statement also called on the international community, particularly UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank, to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling and to support the development of special needs education as an integral part of all education programmes (UNESCO, 2009:32). As for the United Nations and its specialised agencies, the Salamanca Statement demanded that they 'strengthen their inputs for technical co-operation' and improve their networking for more efficient support for integrated special needs provision. Lipsky and Gartner (2016:258) state that the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education will have to become a benchmark for measuring progress in schools with regard to inclusion of learners with disabilities for many years to come.

2.2.4 Call to Governments

The Salamanca Conference on 'Special Needs Education: Access and Quality' identified the following as obligations of all governments in an attempt to further the purpose of inclusive education:

- To give the 'highest policy and budgetary priority' to improve education services so that all learners could be included, regardless of differences or difficulties.
- To adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of 'inclusive education' and enrol all children in ordinary schools unless there were compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
- To develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries that have inclusive schools.
- To ensure that organisations of disabled people, along with parents and community bodies, are involved in planning and decision-making.
- To put greater effort into pre-school strategies as well as vocational aspects of inclusive education.

- To ensure that both initial and in-service teacher training address the provision of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994:78).

2.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

The application of an inclusive education policy challenged all nations to provide quality education for all learners, including those with special needs (Kuyini & Desai, 2011:104). However, each government interprets intervention, guidance, and ultimately national policies on inclusive education in terms of its own history, traditions, values, and structures. The way in which inclusive education is implemented internationally also has a distinct influence on inclusive education policy implementation in South Africa. What follows is a brief overview of inclusion in a few countries.

2.3.1 Inclusive Education in Australia

The educational system in Australia is the responsibility of individual state jurisdictions and territories. Consequently, each jurisdiction has its own Education Act and establishes its own agenda regarding the education of learners with special needs. Whereas there are many similarities between the content of individual Acts, the options for the education of learners varies quite considerably, due to the autonomy of decision-making within each authority. The geographical vastness of the continent also impacts enormously on the availability of school options, with many children being unable to attend a traditional local community school (Forlin, 2015:13).

School systems in Australia began to establish a large number of segregated special schools between the 1940s and 1970s to cater for learners with specific disabilities. Public school systems, though, provided only for learners who were deemed to be 'educable' or 'trainable', and during this period many learners with profound support needs were not offered places even in special schools (Loreman, Depperler & Harvey, 2011:76).

2.3.2 Inclusive Education in Ghana

In Ghana, inclusive education also tends to focus on special needs to the exclusion of other broader, inclusive ideals. In stark contrast with the inclusion policies of Sweden and Australia, it seems that Ghana still identifies in practice more with the medical model of special needs. Significant efforts to integrate learners with special needs in mainstream education are not a priority; rather a community view of integrating persons with disabilities into the economy and broader community is aimed for. The focus is still much on disability to the exclusion of inclusive education as such. Gyimah (2016:46) states that disability is

viewed in Ghana from two perspectives, which are the categorical diagnosis of specific disabilities, and the non-categorical analysis of functional characteristics.

Gyimah (2016:37) states that whilst Ghana is doing its best to provide inclusive education, it is still faced with challenges such as a lack of comprehensive and multi-disciplinary assessment practices, poor parental involvement and community participation, inadequate central government and district assembly funding, as well as poor teacher competence in adapting the physical environment and curriculum to meet the needs of the disabled learners in educational settings.

2.3.3 Inclusive Education in Tanzania

Special needs education in Tanzania was developed and supported by efforts of non-governmental and religious organisations. The first school for the blind (Blind Boys) was established by the Anglican Church, and the Roman Catholic Church started the first school for deaf children, while services for persons with physical disabilities were provided by the Salvation Army. Mmbaga (2019:19) explains that the historical development in special needs education in Tanzania followed the development in most other countries, i.e. services for certain disability groups (the blind and the deaf) were provided by churches and charity organisations followed by small-scale educational provision in special schools for other disability groups, e.g. persons with physical and intellectual disabilities.

According to Commins (2011:31), there is a gradual shift in Tanzania's national curriculum from highly subject or content-based formats to competency-based formats in structure and assessment, although continuous assessment is less valued than a terminal examination. Most special needs education services are provided at primary school level in residential (boarding) and non-residential special schools. These non-residential special schools include both government schools and schools supported by humanitarian organisations and churches. Special needs education is offered in 18 special schools, of which the majority are residential schools as well as special units integrated into regular schools.

2.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.4.1 Inclusive Education in the South African context

Calls for contextually appropriate understandings of inclusive education have been made for many years. One of the maxims of inclusive education is that it needs to be determined contextually (Booth & Ainscow, 2013:46). This has been taken up by inclusive education scholars in Africa, who make a case for inclusivity being central to traditional African ways of

living. Since 1994, when democracy was established in South Africa, there has been a radical overhaul of government policy from an apartheid framework to providing services to all South Africans on an equitable basis. The provision of education for learners with disabilities has been part of that process, and the development of an inclusive education system can be traced back to the nation's founding document, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996. In Section 29 (the Bill of Rights) it is stated that everyone has the right to *'a basic education, including basic adult education and, to further education, which the state through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.'*

In line with South Africa's constitution, education policy-makers in South Africa were made aware that in reconstituting education, the rights of learners described as having special educational needs would have to be given due consideration. In line with international thinking, South African inclusive education activists argue for an education system that accommodates the learning needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities, in mainstream classrooms. In order to illustrate the conceptualisation of inclusive education and the challenges in implementing inclusive education strategies within the South African context, it is necessary to consider the complex contextual influences that have shaped, and continue to shape, the transformation of education, including the move from conceptualising special needs within an individualistic deficits approach to needs, to a human rights approach within the social context in which life is lived out. According to Sayed (2019:11), these influences include a specific history of inequality, imbalance and injustice for the majority of the population that have shaped post-apartheid educational policy, as well as the 'fiscal constraints that the new government inherited in 1994.'

The framework for an inclusive education system is laid out in Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DOE, 2001). The scope of this policy is broad, as it attempts to address the diverse needs of all learners who experience barriers to learning. The policy calls for a significant conceptual shift that is based on the following premises:

- All children, youth, and adults have the potential to learn, given the necessary support.
- The system's inability to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs results in a breakdown of learning.

- The policy asserts that in order to make inclusive education a reality, there needs to be a conceptual shift regarding the provision of support for learners who experience barriers to learning.

2.4.2 Learning Support Structures as outlined by the Education White Paper 6 (2001)

The Education White Paper 6 (DOE, 2001) was published after several draft documents and negotiating sessions with relevant stakeholders, and written comments from all walks of life. Most of the recommendations of the NCSET/ NCESS report were included in this policy document. A period of 20 years was allowed for the implementation of the policy on inclusive education. According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:62), the Education White Paper 6 (2001) makes provision for support by means of a systems approach, and collaboration between these systems. Support at the different levels (national, provincial, district, and school) is discussed below.

2.4.2.1 District-Based Support Team (DBST)

Each province is divided into several districts, each of which has a team which manages the implementation of inclusive education. In the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) the Department of Education commits itself to strengthening education support services through the establishment of District-Based Support Teams (DBST), which should provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, and which should target special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service, as well as other primary schools and educational institutions. A District-Based Support Team (DBST) is a group of departmental professionals whose responsibility is to promote inclusive education through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, identifying, assessing and addressing barriers to learning, leadership, and general management.

According to the Draft guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education (DoE 2002a:102-105) the core functions of the District-Based Support Team (DBST) are:

- To develop and provide back-up support in the schools and early childhood learning centres by supporting the capacity building of these institutions, identifying and prioritising learning needs and barriers to learning in their district, identifying the support needed to address the challenges, and pursuing these within a strategic planning and management framework, and on-going monitoring and evaluation of support. They should also link these institutions with formal and informal support systems so that the needs and barriers to learning can be addressed.

- The main focus would be to provide indirect support to learners through a supporting teaching and learning environment responsive to the full range of learning needs. A second focus would be to provide direct learning support to the learners where the School-Based Support Team (SBST) is unable to respond to particular learning needs (DoE, 2002a:103).

2.4.2.2 School-Based Support Teams (SBST)

The School-Based Support Team (SBST), previously known as the Institutional Level support team (ILST), is responsible for determining the support needs of the school, teachers, and learners, and co-ordinating support provision within the framework of Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS). The team should meet on a regular basis to fulfil these functions. Every public school is obliged to establish a SBST. The School-Based Support Team is an 'internal' support team within institutions such as early childhood centres, schools, colleges, adult learning centres and higher education institutions. In each institution, this team will ultimately be responsible for liaising with the District-Based Support Team (DBST) and other relevant support providers about identifying and meeting their own institution's needs. For this reason, School-Based Support Teams should be constituted of teachers and staff from each individual institution (DoE, 2005).

Key functions of the SBST include:

- Coordinating all learners, teachers, curriculum, and support in the school.
- Identifying school needs with a focus on barriers to learning at learner, teacher, and curriculum of school levels.
- Being competent and proactive in the use of the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) Policy and guiding teachers through the SIAS support.
- Developing appropriate in-class and school-based strategies to address these needs.
- Encouraging collegial/peer support.
- Drawing upon additional resources from within and outside the school to address these challenges.
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an 'action framework' (DoE, 2005).

2.4.2.3 The role of Special Schools as a resource centre.

According to the Education White Paper 6 (2001:21), special schools have specialised skills available among their staff members and have developed learning materials to especially assist learners. The professional staff members at special schools could run training workshops for other teachers on how to provide support in the classroom. Special schools could also produce learning materials and make them available through a lending system to other schools in the district. Furthermore, the services offered at special schools should be upgraded qualitatively, specifically on the training of its staff members, for their new roles in implementing the SIAS strategy (DoE, 2005).

2.4.2.4 Full-Service Schools as a Support Structure

Full-Service schools, as outlined by the Education White Paper 6 (2001:22), will serve as models for support and inclusion that can later be considered for system-wide application. They will be given the priority of developing flexibility in teaching practices and style through training, capacity building and provision to both learners and teachers. According to the Education White Paper 6 (2001:15), Full-Service schools will be provided with the necessary physical, material, and human resources, and professional development of staff so that they can accommodate learners with barriers to learning.

The Education White Paper 6 (2001:15) furthermore, distinguishes between full-service, ordinary and special schools, thus in the inclusive education and training system, a wider spread of educational support services will be created in line with what learners who have barriers to learning require. This means that learners who require low-intensive support will receive this in ordinary schools and those requiring moderate support will receive this in Full-Service schools. Learners who require high-intensive educational support will continue to receive such support in special schools. This implies that the learners with diverse barriers to learning have to be accommodated by all teachers within their mainstream classes with regard to assessment and support of all special needs. The special needs may emanate from the content, the teaching, or learning in the curriculum of the school.

2.4.3 Post-apartheid educational transformation and policy development

The central feature which distinguishes South Africa from other countries in terms of educational provision is the extent to which racially-entrenched attitudes and the institutionalisation of discriminatory practices led to extreme disparities in society as a whole. From 1948 until 1994, the only contender in the production of education policy was the state, which utilised its power vested in legal complicity unhindered by a popular constitution (DOE,

1997a). The 1980s witnessed an increasing demand for a democratic government and it became increasingly clear that any system imposed by an apartheid government would fail, and that a radical transformation was necessary (Du Toit, 2016:53). The potential for meaningful participation which the democratic election of 1994 made apparent to the majority of South Africans, summoned a new era of possibilities for inclusiveness by virtue of the process of social and educational transformation (Loebenstein, 2010:69).

The need for parity in all aspects of education was thus, according to Sayed (2019:13), imperative in a new democratic education system. The demand for parity was captured in the commitment to equity and redress as cornerstone principles of all education policies and the commitment of the new Government to bring South Africa in line with international standards for the recognition of human rights. The overriding mandate and obligation of people given the responsibility of shaping the education policy after 1994, were to transform education by addressing the disparities and inequities of the past, and to create one system that could provide all learners with access to quality education (Waghid & Engelbrecht, 2010:20). The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996) emphasised the right of all learners to appropriate education. In a parallel endeavour, the international inclusive education movement increasingly desired to replace a charity or medical discourse about disability with a rights discourse (UNESCO, 1994). In South Africa, the rights of those with disabilities were highlighted in the Education White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (DOE, 1997a).

Key education policy documents and legislation, such as the Education White Paper on Education and Training (DOE, 1995), the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (DOE, 1997a), and the South African Schools Act (DOE, 1996), stress the principle of education as a basic human right as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. This principle implies that all learners have the right to equal access to the widest possible educational opportunities and it encapsulates the vision of an educational system that not only recognizes the wide diversity of learners' educational needs, but also expects schools to meet these diverse needs (Waghid & Engelbrecht, 2010:24).

2.4.3.1 Overview of the Education Transformation in South Africa

Educational reforms and curriculum transformation have been a priority in South Africa since the establishment of the Government of National Unity in 1994. Education is critical in redressing the injustices of apartheid colonialism, which created an inequitable and fragmented education system. Factors such as school access, governance, curriculum, teacher deployment, and financial resources have also gone through the education policy

mill. Gumede (2013:35) stated that while relatively impressive progress is observed regarding legislative interventions, policy development, curriculum reform and the implementation of new ways of delivering education, many challenges remain. Key among the challenges relates to the quality of education twenty two years since the dawn of democracy.

There have been some commendable changes in the education landscape in South Africa since 1994. However, as Gumede (2013:23) argues, there remain policy questions that are yet to be addressed. The recent policy interventions in the form of the 2013 White Paper for Post-School Education and the various curricula reforms are part of an effort to address the policy issues that need attention. Furthermore, Msila (2017:89) argues that education was used as a political tool to divide society and create a certain form of identity among learners during the apartheid dispensation. Tabata (2016:49) makes a point that Africans were subjected to what was known as 'Native Education' under the Bantu Education Act of 1953 during the apartheid system. Therefore, the post-apartheid educational reforms and curriculum transformation are a direct response to apartheid curricula that were described as authority-driven and elitist (Jansen & Taylor, 2018:37).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 106 of 1996) provides the basis for educational reforms and curriculum transformation in South Africa's education system. According to Burke (2010:45), the beginning of the process of curriculum change existed in the manifestation of concerns, needs and dissatisfactions of curriculum practices of the time, creating a need for variation.

2.4.3.2 Educational reforms and curriculum transformation processes since 1994

The main reforms pursued were institutional. For example, 19 departments of education had to be rationalized into a single national department of education and nine provincial departments of education. There were also numerous policy reforms, mainly to ensure access to education by learners who were previously excluded. The ideal starting point in discussing curricula changes in post-apartheid South Africa relates to the introduction of Curriculum 2005, also known as the 'Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum'. Harden, Crosby and Davis (2015:65) suggest that, in outcome-based education approaches, the end product defines the process. Therefore, an outcome-based education programme can be summed up as results-oriented thinking, which is the opposite of input-based education, where the emphasis is on the educational process (Davis, 2015:37). Many countries such as Australia introduced OBE in the 1980s and 1990s for different reasons, especially at a time where there was an increasing call for accountability (Ramoroka,

2017:46). According to Davis (2015:23), South Africa developed its own OBE model. South Africa's Ministry of Education launched the OBE system in the year 1997. OBE was said to be concentrated on the learner and the outcomes the learner should be able to achieve. In the OBE model, every learner was respected as an individual, regardless of race, ethnicity and cultural background. No-one was deemed better than another.

Everybody was accommodated in their learning environments (Ramoroka, 2017:47). Due to the challenges that were identified as constraining in OBE, the National Curriculum Statement 2002 (NCS) was introduced. Contrary to the OBE curriculum, the NCS curriculum required that all learners in grades 10, 11 and 12 do a minimum of 7 subjects, as opposed to 6 subjects. In the NCS curriculum, learners are expected to learn a minimum of two South African languages. In addition to the two languages – the first additional language which is English and the second additional language which is the home language – learners were also expected to make a compulsory choice between Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy; Life Orientation was made a compulsory subject from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

In 2000, a Ministerial Committee was appointed to review the progress and effectiveness of the curriculum (DOE, 2002). According to the DOE (2004), the brief of the review was the structure and design of the curriculum, teacher orientation, training and development, learning support materials, provincial support to teachers in schools, and implementation time frames. The Ministerial Committee recommended that the curriculum be streamlined, and that it should be modified to make it more accessible to the teachers; amendments were then effected in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) 2002, culminating in the Revised National Curriculum Statement. Byers and Rose (2019:61) were of the opinion that the NCS-2002 placed a heavy burden on the teachers who were to become the ultimate drivers of educational transformation in schools. Cook (2018:10) supports the view of Bynard, by indicating that not only were teachers under-trained, but there was also a shortage of resources and lack of support from the government. Maphalala (2012:66) also argues that a lack of preparation among teachers was also a problem in adequately implementing the NCS curricula.

From the Revised National Curriculum Statement, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced in the year 2012. Pinnock (2011:43) points out that CAPS is not a new curriculum; it is rather an amendment of NCS. du Plessis (2013:91), on the other hand, argues whether CAPS is about an amendment, a repackaging or a rearticulation, as this is much of the debate around CAPS. Indeed, NCS and CAPS have similar rationales when it comes to situating the curriculum within the aims of the South African Constitution, and both NCS and CAPS contain a similar list of values (including

social justice, human rights, environmental awareness, and respect for people from diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds).

2.4.4 Follow-up reports and guidelines on Education White Paper 6.

Follow-up on Education White Paper 6 (2001:34) indicates that several reports and recommendations on inclusive training in South Africa have been posted over the past few years. Those consist of the following:

2.4.4.1 The report on Implementing Inclusive Education in SA (2008)

In 2004, the Department of Education issued a tender for discipline-checking out the implementation of Education White Paper 6 (2001). The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was appointed to undertake the overall project management of the field test, the Sisonke Consortium for Human Resource Development Programme. The field test found, amongst others, that special schools need to focus on specific disabilities and not a wide range thereof so that the support they offer is specialised, and furthermore, that the fear as well as negative attitudes towards disability amongst the broad public still need to be addressed. The check highlights the main demanding situations as being the obvious disparities in the resourcing of unique colleges throughout provinces, the shortage of assistance by district officials as well as the postponement in changing mainstream facilities to full-service schools. Hence it was decided turn special colleges into useful resource centres. Based on the findings and challenges identified in the report, it was recommended that transversal teams be established in a manner that ensured representation of all critical directorates/units at all levels in the system for effective and successful further rollout of inclusive education, and also that teachers are trained in the key implementation strategies of inclusive education. Another recommendation is to improve capacity levels in the District-Based Support Team (DBST) to ensure, first, the establishment of School-Based Support Teams (SBST) in all schools in their jurisdiction and second, the on-going training, mentoring and monitoring of teachers and schools – especially in the area of curriculum differentiation (DoE, 2008).

2.4.4.2 The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS: 2008)

The aim of introducing the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) strategy (DoE, 2008) in the education system is to overhaul the process of identifying, assessing and providing programmes for all learners requiring additional support so as to maximise participation and inclusion (DoE, 2008).

The intention with the crafting of the SIAS strategy is to address and rectify the following shortfalls within the education system concerning screening, identification, assessment and support of learners:

- Access to special services or facilities is limited, as special schools and education support services are not always within reach of communities. This leads to marginalization and exclusion of learners with additional support needs, including a large number with disabilities;
- The absence of a system of rigorous assessment and identification to ensure a consistent process of screening, identification and referral of learners to special schools;
- The general lack of involvement of teachers, parents and learners in the assessment process;
- Assessment practices that fail to outline the nature and level of support needed, thus making it difficult to fund that support appropriately (DoE, 2008).

2.5 CHALLENGES TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Engelbrecht and Green (2017:13), findings from research and evaluation studies have highlighted several challenges to inclusive education in South Africa. These include the need for conceptual and practical integration of the inclusive education agenda with the National Curriculum Statement, the need for teacher capacity development in general, the need for role-player capacity development for collaboration, the need to address current teacher morale and attitudes, and the need to rethink training and development for inclusion and address the current physical and psychosocial environment in many schools.

It was assumed that the introduction of curriculum 2005 (OBE) based on the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grade R-9 (DOE, 2002b) would enable teachers to implement inclusive education more effectively. While this assumption was legitimate, one of the major challenges confronting teachers is making the conceptual link between inclusive education and the National Curriculum. Inclusive education tends to be viewed by teachers as an extra burden. The challenge is to present teachers with a coherent package that clarifies the relationship between policy, curriculum, and inclusive education (DoE, 2002b).

2.5.1 Role player capacity development for collaboration

The development of collaboration skills, although neglected, is an essential aspect of preparation for an inclusive education system. Support challenges at school level include

poor strategic planning on the part of the school and the district, as well as resistance to change and unavailability of district personnel. If School-Based Support Teams (SBST) are to succeed, they need to be able to access support from the district and from the community. Hay and Da Costa (2017:117) suggests, for example, that the gap between conceptualising inclusive education and an understanding of how to implement it in the day-to-day life of the schools is apparent, not only among teachers, but at all levels of the system. Experiences of structured and supported collaboration and training in collaboration skills are urgently required.

2.5.2 Teacher development capacity

It is clear that teachers lack adequate knowledge, skills and training for effective implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. A comprehensive study conducted by Hay and Da Costa (2017:213) revealed that teachers in South Africa have a definite lack of knowledge about issues relating to inclusive education. Furthermore, the teachers felt unprepared and ill-equipped to teach in inclusive classrooms as a result of their lack of training, lack of time, large classes, and lack of teacher experience.

2.5.3 Teacher training and support

Inclusive education is a reality in South Africa and it involves a philosophical shift. Swart and Da Costa (2017:20) point out that a paradigm shift from an individual to a systems approach cannot happen by simply changing vocabulary in a particular training session. It requires considerable time, because it is a developmental process that goes beyond workshops and other in-service training activities. Teachers need time to create insight and develop confidence and coping strategies, and they need to do this in the context of continuous support in the classroom. Arbetter and Harley (2010:34) posit that the Education White Paper 6 (2006) estimates a twenty-year period for the effective implementation of inclusive education and there is consequently an urgent need to find ways of integrating training and support during this transition period.

2.5.4 Curriculum Issues

Referring to the Education White Paper 6 (2001), and Guidelines of Full-service/Inclusive Schools (2009), Donohue and Bornman (2014:8) argue that the curriculum seems not to be responsive to the learning needs of learners with special education needs, and even with guidelines given, the practicality of that lacks correlation. Furthermore, Andrew et al. (2015:30) explain that the challenge with the capacity of the curriculum to accommodate the diversity of learners, and administer support to their learning needs, is the required overall

curriculum transformation (Cornelius & Balakrishnan, 2012:84). Mpofu and Shumba (2012:330) observe it as irregular for teachers to be expected to adapt their skills and expertise into a rigid curriculum which is not responsive to the learning needs of all learners, especially those with special educational needs (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015:2).

2.5.5 Lack of Teacher Support and Training

It is the responsibility of the key role-players in mainstream schools to ensure the safety of all learners from negative stigmatisation, and stereotyping attitudes. Likewise, Pather (2011:1105) revealed that there is often negligence from schools and parents in preventing learners with special education needs from being socially isolated, due to stigmatisation and stereotyping attitudes. For Hall and Theron (2016:2), frustrations and complaints from teachers have been as a result of the overpopulated classrooms, which makes it almost impossible to support all learners' learning needs. According to Engelbrecht and Green (2018:84), teachers tend to feel threatened by the demands and difficulties that lie with teaching in mainstream education settings, where they tend to doubt their ability to support learners' learning needs accordingly. Moreover, Bornman and Donohue (2014:3) proved that this occurs as a result of lack of teacher support, training, and preparation.

2.5.6 Policy Implementation Challenges

According to the Department of Education, the initial calculated efforts to support and implement the inclusive education policy were observed as insufficient, especially with the measures of translating it into practice. Thus, alternatively, the Education White Paper 6 was articulated to devise strategies on how to practically implement support needed for learners with special education needs and disabilities (White Paper 6, 2001). Policy content should be comprehended as a main crucial factor ready to be translated into implementation (Guidelines for Full/Inclusive schools, 2009:29). Consequently, du Plessis (2013:87) regards this as a crucial aspect in establishing the directives for implementation. Sharma et al. (2013:3) further argue that policy contents with their outlined intentions are worthless if they do not serve or fulfil the needs of those who are affected.

In an effort to implement support in mainstream schools, the Department of Education documented several guidelines towards establishing full-service schools, as well as the adaptation strategies of the curriculum to meet the needs of learners with special education needs (White Paper 6, 2001). However, according to du Plessis (2013: 86) and Donohue and Bornman (2014:7), there has not been any real action documented on the implementation plans. A real concern thus for du Plessis (2013:86) has been about the year

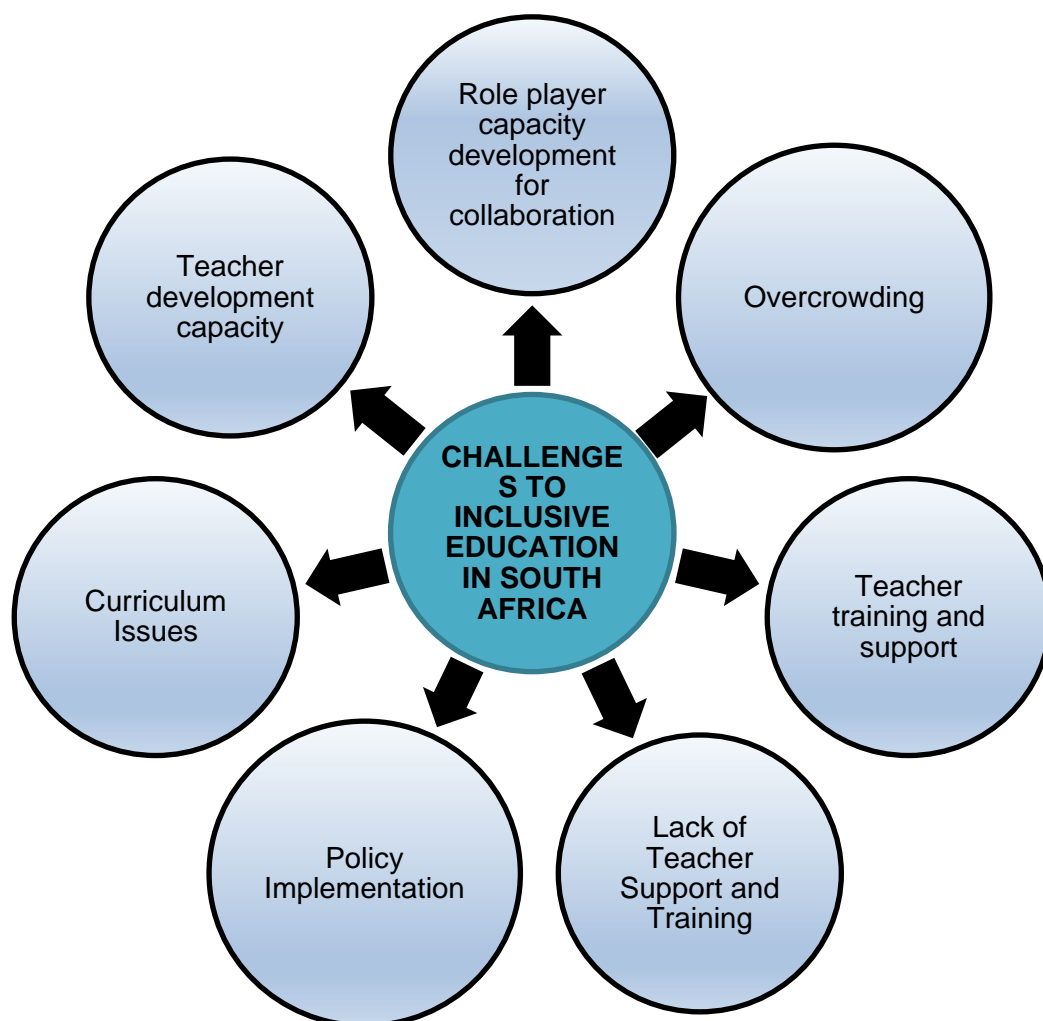
2020 implementation plan that has been behind schedule. Though necessary steps have been taken to achieve this initiative, the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support implementation plan has been scheduled from the year 2015 to the year 2019, and was expected to have reached the maturity stage by the end of 2019 (Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support, 2014:22), which has not been the case.

However, a serious drawback for the Department of Education is that the implementation of the White Paper 6 and SIAS strategy is still in the process of being finalised. This reveals the shortcomings of the Department of Education. Furthermore, the non-functional and non-operational full-service schools within their jurisdiction are of great concern (Hall & Theron, 2016:2).

2.5.7 Overcrowding

For Dreyer (2017:2), the large number of learners in mainstream schools indeed tends to pose frustration to teachers, which also limits them on attending to the majority of the learning needs of learners with special education needs. In addition, large class sizes have been identified as a hindrance of support in inclusive education practices; among other contributing factors, mismanagement of disruptive behaviour is often reported as a result of overcrowding (Yeo et al., 2014:4).

Figure 2.1 Factors influencing inclusive education in South Africa



2.6 SUPPORT STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES

The inclusion of learners with special education needs can be made effective through enforcing positive attitudes of support, where all necessary resources are provided, with the purpose of transitioning mainstream education settings into inclusive education practices. Furthermore, actualising learners with special education needs in their learning environment may lead to peaceable inclusive education practices, through which teachers, as leading role players, may construct learning activities conducive to learners' diverse needs. Such learning activities should be structured to prepare them for real life events (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018:204).

2.6.1 Active Teaching

According to Morewood and Condo (2012:16), this mode of teaching does not require a practical instructional system or educational setting, but requires the heart of an individual with the purpose to make a difference in the lives of others. Such devotion and dedication in teaching guarantees care and support for learners, even in inclusive education settings. In addition, Mitiku, Alemu and Mengsitu (2014:131) suggest that teachers need to implement alternative teaching procedures for active learning and participation to occur. Consequently, this will contribute to fostering learners' active interaction within their social and physical environment, accompanied by comprehensive skills and suitable pedagogies (Sharma et al., 2013:6).

2.6.2 Differentiated Instructional Approach

With regards to the strategies that may be used to offer support within inclusive education practices, Danielson, cited by Rachmawati et al. (2016: 587), pointed out through literature and research findings, that using differentiated instruction is the art of professionalism for teachers, namely, that in the process of effective teaching, the teacher should identify diversity of learning needs of learners, and utilize differentiated instructional approaches in order to attend to learners' diverse learning needs (Webster, 2015:994).

2.6.3 Alternative Pedagogy

Among other strategies that may be utilised around the issue of positive support in mainstream education is the alternative pedagogy in the classroom, which is opposed to the traditional instruction normally based on "drill and memorisation" (Engelbrecht & Green, 2018:201). The Salamanca Statement proposed that sound pedagogy, which has to be learner-centred, will have to be adapted and adjusted to the needs of the learner rather than the learner adapting to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process (UNESCO, 1994:7). In essence, teachers should be able to incorporate other methods or alternative methods of instruction in their inclusive classrooms, to provide for every learner's special learning needs in an equal proportion (National Planning Commission, 2011:304).

2.6.4 Embracing Diversity

Teachers and schools should appreciate and embrace diversity, and, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol, that begins with recognising rights, an equal basis of participation in education, full development of human

potential, and sense of dignity (Department of Social Development, 2015:16). Schools should further view diversity in terms of learners' race, culture, social and economic backgrounds, as well as learners' ethnicity (UNESCO, 1994). For Rachmawati et al. (2016: 587), the embrace of diversity should be observed as a tool that prevents negative teacher attitudes within inclusive education practices, or rather prevents teachers from being barriers to the learning process with their widely held negative perceptions towards practices of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

2.6.5 Clinical Teaching

MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013:46) posit that a diverse and inclusive classroom with complex educational needs calls for a teacher with positive perceptions, who modifies teaching as new needs arise. With different strategies that can be used, a teacher in a classroom will have to become a 'clinical watcher', relating with every learner individually.

According to the National Development Plan 2030 of Persons with Disabilities as Equal Citizens, teachers are supposed to be acquainted with adequate knowledge on how to include learners with various disabilities. This proposes that teachers have inherent skills of carefully observing each learner's learning process (Department of Social Development, 2015:49).

The clinical teacher can obtain information about the learner, such as the learner's current cognitive developmental level, learners' way of thinking, and level of language comprehension, together with proper intervention strategies (Hoppey, 2016:14).

Schilder et al. (2017:1072) argue that inclusive education practices may be implemented or practised by imparting support and care collaboratively. Similarly, for Hoppey (2016:14), this can be achieved through clinical teaching or through remedial and educational therapy, a process where a teacher would display qualities of someone who is enthusiastic, sensitive, optimistic and serious about learning.

2.7 MONITORING OF FUNDING TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES

According to the Report on the Implementation of Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (Basic Education Department, 2015:51), it is stated that in ensuring an effective distribution of funds to special schools, full-service schools and mainstream schools collectively, a policy guiding such distribution of funds is being constructed and developed to avoid discrepancies and inconsistencies.

Moreover, the report reveals monetary funding to have been inconsistently distributed or allocated among provinces since the year 2007, which has occurred more so in the poorer provinces such as Limpopo and the Eastern Cape. However, such funding has been found to be highly effective in provinces such as the Western Cape, Free State and the North West; it has helped to build greater capacity within the provincial, district and circuit offices, thus strengthening support in the inclusive education system (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:13).

For inclusive education practices to fully function and to advance in the same proportion across the country, and in comparison to other countries, funding would have to be made available, although this often poses a problem (Ametepée & Anastasiou, 2015:150). Secondly, underlying discrepancies, and other aspects which lead to funds being misappropriated, would have to be thoroughly investigated. New incentives on how funds are distributed and monitored would have to be put into effect (Michael & Oboegbulem, 2015:315).

2.8 Implementation

Schools are agents of change, and knowledge and skills of implementation are needed daily in schools and districts. The term 'implementation' is not new and it concerns how political and economic issues impact policy implementation and how policy is implemented at the institutional or administrative level (Davis, 2015:43). On the other hand, Johnson and Christensen (2017:34) hold the view that policy implementation became pertinent by the introduction of a top-down approach. On the contrary, theories and assumptions of this approach claim that this approach did not assist practices in terms of how policy was delivered in democratic societies. However, Tremblay (2015:90) views IEP as taking action, planning programs, embracing aspects of change, and supporting individuals responsible for delivering projects. Critics who advocate a bottom-up approach to policy implementation are of the view that policy implementation starts with people responsible with public administration, where district officials liaise with organized societal interests (Harden, Crosby & Davis, 2015:160). Some scholars view implementation studies as being central to public administration, organizational theoretical knowledge, and public management research and political science studies (Stofile & Greene, 2012:21). In this regard, the education department, district support teams, school managers, and educators all have a vital role to play in the implementation of IEP.

Furthermore, some scholars have the assumption that policy interpretations have an impact on how policy is cascaded, as this influences implementing knowledge of the policy problem

(Makolle, 2018:23). Consequently, educators' lack of knowledge regarding IEP implementation has an impact on the execution of IEP as meaning and understanding is limited (Mmbaga, 2019:19). According to Gumede (2013:57), implementation studies, in a broader sense, 'can be characterized as studies of policy change.' Similarly, educators form the frontline as the first implementers of policy and are expected to make it happen, that is, to implement by putting change efforts into action. In order for schools to implement policies, support structures from partners in education is required. In this respect, partnerships in the deliverance of equitable education for all in terms of IEP is a priority in order for successful implementation of policy

2.8.1 Quality inclusive education for all learners

According to Johnson and Christensen (2017:66), providing information about the research questions, gives details about the section of the population, and stimulates new insights and concepts throughout the study. Furthermore, Mertler (2012:51) indicates that it is a systematic, critical analysis, and summary of existing literature relevant to the research topic, hence it aims at contributing towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified.

The Department of Education (2008) states that the main objective of any education system in a democratic society is to provide quality education for all learners so that they will be able to reach their full potential and achieve objectives. With the publication of the White Paper 6 in 2001, South Africa has proclaimed its policy of inclusive education; the goal being the advancement of human rights as well as environmental justice. The main aim of curriculum transformation was to change the education system in such a way that it accommodates all learners, including those with barriers to learning as they form part of the education system in South Africa. Many policies were introduced, such as assisting the successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

2.8.2 Teacher attitudes towards IEP implementation in South Africa

Different beliefs, attitudes and concerns of teachers can influence the practice of IEP, and the quality of educational materials and teaching learners receive internationally (Harden, Crosby & Davis, 2015:40). According to Tremblay (2015:24), educators in mainstream classes who are not capacitated in IEP are afraid to teach learners with disabilities, and develop negative attitudes towards IEP, because it is perceived that academic standards would be lowered. Furthermore, meagre access to resources and specialist support affects teacher confidence and attitudes toward IEP (Gyimah, 2016:13). It is argued that when

teachers are empowered with IEP knowledge, they seem to accept the change (Gyimah, 2016:13). Similarly, Mmbaga (2019:19) reported when educators experience challenges with students, especially those with special needs, and engage them with a positive attitude, their confidence to teach them is likely to improve, which changes their negative attitudes. Many studies investigating educator attitudes in IEP have been done in Western countries (Gumede, 2013:46). Although they provide significant information for IEP practices in developing countries, these studies do not adequately address issues that are relevant to South Africa. This study is therefore important in examining teachers' concerns and attitude toward IEP practice in South Africa.

2.8.3 Educator challenges in the implementation of IEP

South Africa has followed international trends with the implementation of IEP by providing a unitary system of education for all, particularly in terms of the Education White Paper 6, 2001. However, since democratic South Africa is one of the developing countries, problems experienced in the implementation of IEP practices are slightly different. South Africa's advances from a colonial system of government to a democratic one in 1994 brought about new opportunities for expansion within education for the country (Hallahan & Daniel, 2012:19). However, this expansion and new endeavours cannot eradicate past hardships, as South Africa is still a developing country. South Africa's history mirrors many developing countries in Africa with a history of illiteracy, discrimination, civil war and a very unstable economy (Swart & Pettipher, 2018:18).

South Africa's unstable economy is in part responsible for the lack of progress in the implementation of IEP practices (Davis, 2015:37). Inadequate funding has presented many concerns with regard to IEP implementation, in spite of the initiatives of the Education White Paper 6, which states that the funding strategy that is proposed in this White Paper is a realistic one that takes into account the country's fiscal capacity. The important features are its emphasis on cost effectiveness and exploiting the economies of scale that result from expanding access and provision within an IEP and learning system (Sokal. L. and Katz. J, 2017:29). To date, funding has been limited and insufficient to meet the dire needs and challenges experienced by educators and schools (Sokal. L. and Katz. J, 2017:29). According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:44), the dominant source of funding is donor funding, and the government has made no substantial contribution from the national budget thus far to facilitate implementation. In this regard, Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:59) further posit that in the IEP model, the capacity and competency of key role players, adequate funding, and a uniform stance for national implementation are key determinative factors. They

further argue that this will determine whether the IEP will respond effectively and qualitatively to the needs of the general population. In many African countries, the key factors causing the challenges of the IEP remain scarce resources, inadequate facilities, a lack of educator training in the implementation of the IEP, a lack of parental support, class overcrowding, and lack of support from district support teams (Swart & Pettipher, 2018: 18). In this sense, the situation in rural areas is much more extreme where the scarcity of basic resources is very real. Other challenges that hinder the development of IEP in South Africa include social conditions, legislative recourse, a lack of professional development for educators, and poorly prepared mainstream and full-service schools (Davis, 2015:30).

2.8.4 Challenges to IEP Implementation

Reading widely indicates that challenges in education within the South African context were identified from a number of aspects. These include lack of skills training, few resources, and inadequate support services.

2.8.4.1 Lack of skills training

Educators are resistant (negative) toward change as a result of a lack of skills training, and lack of knowledge and capacity (Davis, 2015:37). According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2016:54) many studies conclude that educators are key to the success of IEP implementation, yet educators are still left without educational support which is an important barrier in terms of skills, knowledge or attitudes needed to work with diverse learners. In addition, a major barrier is the lack of human and material resources.

2.8.4.2 Lack of resources

A huge concern, according to Mokolle (2018:48), is that there are very few allocations made for assistive devices for learners with special needs, and a general shortage of teaching-learning materials in schools. According to Tremblay (2015:29), a general lack of support and resources, as well as the prevailing negative attitudes towards disability, all contribute to the general bewilderment in South African schools towards IEP. Furthermore, if educators do not have the necessary skills and techniques to teach, this may encourage negative attitudes.

2.8.4.3 Inadequate Support Structures

White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) stipulates that it will strengthen the education support service; that it will have at its centre new DBSTs; and that these will strengthen and build the capacity of educators and schools to recognize and address severe learning difficulties and

accommodate a range of learning needs. This support has either not been forthcoming, or has been inadequate (Hallahan & Daniel, 2012:19).

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on a literature review with specific focus on the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of Ditsobotla Area office, North West, determining and outlining the background of inclusion in an international context, and also how policy development took place in South Africa. More emphasis was placed on how inclusion should be implemented at the national, provincial, and district levels. The next chapter provides an overview of the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology of the study, which intends to show the context in which, and purpose for which, the collection of data will take place. The chapter therefore provides an account of how the qualitative investigation was designed and how it was conducted. It also covers the method of investigation that includes data-gathering techniques and the design of the research. An overview of the research methodology employed in this study was provided in chapter 1. The chapter further provides the research design, which explains the procedure followed to conduct the study. The research design includes the statement of subjectivity, selection of informants, transcription of data, analysis of data, reliability and validity of the study, and ethical measures that were considered during the research proceedings. The role of the researcher will also be detailed in this chapter in order to clarify ethical research proceedings.

The information was gathered in order to actualize the objectives of the research and to determine the perceptions of participants on the implementation of inclusive education regarding curriculum transformation in the Ditsobotla Area Office.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Andriopoulos and Slater (2013:386) define 'paradigm' as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality that gives rise to a particular worldview). Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011:97) define a paradigm as a network that contains the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological premises. Creswell (2018:37) provides a definition of paradigm which shows how research can be influenced and be directed by a particular paradigm, by asserting that a paradigm is a theoretical orientation that informs the choice of the research objectives, research design, and the instruments for collecting data, data analysis, and reporting of the research findings.

The paradigm of this research is social constructivism, and through the use and application of this paradigm, subjective knowledge and understanding as well as experiences regarding inclusive education policies were investigated (Creswell, 2018:37) Through social constructivism, the researcher intended to understand how the research participants understood or perceived the implementation of inclusive education policies (Daniel, 2016:98).

In this regard, the information gathered has been provided by the research participants' personal and subjective experiences, where the researcher utilised a phenomenological approach, which is an approach used to describe, interpret and make sense of the experiences of respondents about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014:342). With that, the researcher was in a better position to understand the participants' relayed experiences, and beliefs as the truth, and a reality which has been socially constructed by them as they interact with their environment.

According to Mertens (2015:237) and Oosthuizen *et al.* (2017:59), social constructivism stands by the ontological assumptions that observes reality as something that is not absolute, but rather socially and actively constructed by its participants, as they are confronted with multiple realities on daily basis, and where subjective assumptions and meanings are created by individuals as a result of their life experiences regarding certain things and aspects.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach.

3.3.1 Qualitative research approach

Haradhan (2018:16) conceptualises qualitative research as a research method where the collected data would be considered rich in describing conversations and the environments that people live in. In similar terms, the main aim of using the qualitative research method in this current research study was to understand the personal, subjective, and internal information regarding the implementation of inclusive education in the primary schools of Ditsobotla sub-district. According to Kielmann, Cataldo and Seeley (2012:9), qualitative research methods are generally in-depth and open-ended, meaning they study people and events in their natural settings.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The research design refers to a plan and a blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct the research (Trotter, 2012:399). Wahyuni (2012:72) refers to the research design as a plan, namely, arriving here from there, where 'here' implies the initial question to respond to, and 'there' as a set of conclusions and answers discovered. In essence, the research design can be explained as the procedure which the researcher undertakes for conducting the research study, where the most significant aspects of how data will be collected, described, interpreted and planned are elaborated. It is however important to note that when it comes to a qualitative research design, there is no one structure as one would find in quantitative research (Brooks & Normore, 2015:799).

For this study, a qualitative approach was suitable as it provided the necessary information to achieve the objectives of the research, namely, to investigate the implementation of inclusive education regarding curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office. In this study, the researcher will use interviews to capture participants' perceptions of inclusive education and their problems while dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning. In using interviews, verbatim words and phrases from the interviews will be analysed and used as data to illustrate the findings.

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.5.1 Population

From the population of the study, which consisted of all primary schools in Ditsobotla, the target group was drawn purposefully from selected eight schools, based in Ditsobotla Municipality, Lichtenburg sub-district. The target group within the selected schools consisted of (8) principals, eight (8) school-based support teams and 12 teachers, of which twelve (12)

teachers will be from foundation phase and the other twelve (12) from the intermediate phase, who have a minimum of 5 years teaching experience. These teachers were chosen because they were deemed to be the group that is critically involved in inclusive education at the school and would therefore be knowledgeable to answer the research questions posed. Out of eight primary schools, a sample of 6 schools was drawn.

The 5 years minimum teaching experience requirement is based on the fact that learners within lower grades in primary schools tend to display cognitive and intellectual complexities where teachers are required to incorporate inclusive education skills, with the ability to embrace diversity of learning and teaching in order to attend to learners' diverse learning needs. According to Kielmann et al. (2012:19), the manner in which the sample of the research is designed, and its sample size is drawn, depends on the aims and objectives of the study.

Table 3.1 Population and Sample

	Population	Sample
Schools	8	6
Teachers	24	20

3.5.2 Sampling

Sampling refers to the specific manner in which data sources are selected in order to collect research data with the purpose of addressing the research's objectives (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon, 2015:1775). Data in this research study was drawn purposefully.

3.5.3 Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling is described as the selection of the research participants according to the aims and objectives of the research study. Furthermore, purposeful sampling is designed to provide the study with content-rich data for the study in depth (Benoot, Karin & Bilsen, 2016:5). The sample in this study will be made up of 4 principals, 4 SBST members and 12 educators. The participants will be selected as part of the sample because they will be the ones directly responsible for ensuring that all learners access educational provisions. These teachers will be chosen because they are deemed to be the group that is directly involved in

inclusive education at their schools and would therefore be knowledgeable to answer the research questions posed

3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection phase involves identifying and selecting individuals for study, obtaining their permission to be studied, and gathering information by administering instruments such as asking them questions or observing their behaviour (Creswell, 2012:151). Data collection strategies were selected taking into consideration the focus of the research and desired time-frame of the study. The researcher identified schools whose principals and school-based support teams would take part in focus group interviews for the purpose of the study. According to Creswell (2014:138), qualitative research design follows observation and in-depth interviews as methods of collecting and interpreting data. The data is often in the form of verbal quotes. Mertens (2015:386) and Kumar (2011:131) assert that an efficient way of storing data collected from interviews is through high quality tapes for audio recording purposes, while in other cases, researchers often record their interviews in notes during interview proceedings (Oosthuizen et al., 2017:278).

Thomas (2013:192) believes that the research instruments are those instruments and techniques which can be used to collect data and can take the form of interview and questionnaires. This study adopted open-ended questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The aforementioned method will be adopted because the researcher seeks to achieve the objective of the study, which is to explore the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation. Furthermore, observations and field notes will make part of the data collection methods in this study. For this study, qualitative design was deemed suitable as it yields constructive information relevant to the research objectives. Conrad and Serlin (2011:148) describe qualitative research as a method that focuses on the comprehensive understanding of peoples' experiences and life circumstances, together with their everyday thoughts and perceptions.

3.6.1 Interviews

For Jamshed (2014:87), interview guides could also be referred to as interview schedules, where the researcher formulates a list of topics and questions more likely to reinforce descriptors that inform the research questions posed. A set of predetermined interview questions will be prepared as an instrument that inspires participants to engage in a fruitful discussion yielding adequate data for the study.

It is, however, advised by Flick (2018:2237) that the researcher should prepare the interview questions in advance, before the commencement of interviews. The interview questions were structured and formulated in line with the aims and objectives of the research study, which were:

- To determine how the implementation of inclusive education impacts curriculum transformation.
- To investigate the extent to which the Education White Paper 6 and other guideline policies have been successfully implemented in the Ditsobotla Area Office.
- To explore the challenges experienced by primary school teachers regarding the implementation of inclusive education policies.
- To examine the intervention strategies that are essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education policies in the Ditsobotla Area Office.

3.6.1.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to test and assess whether the procedure was going to concur with what was proposed in the study, carefully looking at how questions were asked, and how they were responded to (Flick, 2018:239). The pilot study was conducted informally in one primary school to assess whether questions asked were appropriate and whether they resonated with the research's objectives.

3.6.1.3 Focus Group Interviews

According to Mertens (2015; 382) and Kielmann et al. (2012:34), the conversation that exists between the research participants and the researcher as the facilitator in the focus group interview is there to inspire more fruitful conversation regarding the phenomenon, which lays out research participants' personal experiences as data for the research.

Furthermore, with the research data being qualitative, the interview questions were open-ended, with the purpose of eliciting personal and more meaningful experiences from the research participants. Moreover, the decision around focus group interviews as a data collection strategy in this study was made with the purpose of evoking a strong sense of beliefs and reasoning regarding the research participants' personal experiences of the phenomenon.

This research study made use of focus group interviews (face-to-face, open-ended and unstructured) as a data collection strategy to obtain information that would answer the research questions (Qu & Dumay, 2011:245). 4 mainstream principals; 12 mainstream teachers; and 4 School-Based Support Team Members. The researcher was the one facilitating the whole interview process. The predetermined interview questions and the observation tool are attached as appendices and details of field notes were well documented.

3.6.1.4 Open-ended questionnaires questions

According to Creswell (2012:220), open-ended interview questions are defined as ‘those that supply a frame of reference for participants’ answers’. They do not require a selection from a given range of responses, but participants answer the question in their own way and in their own words. The researcher personally delivered open-ended questionnaires to principals of the selected schools because the principal is the champion of the curriculum by virtue of his position in the school. This implies that principals should master the curriculum and ensure that it is delivered appropriately to all learners. Denscombe (2013:169) states that open-ended questionnaires allow respondents to write a free response in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and avoid limitations of pre-set categories of response. 4 principals completed the questionnaires. The main function of this questionnaire was to allow principals to reflect on the state of their schools’ progress with regard to the implementation of inclusive education as well as the strategies the school employs for implementation.

3.6.1.5 Field notes

Field notes (recordings of observations and reflections on them) were kept throughout the empirical phase of the research with regard to the observations made, during the pilot study as well as the focus group interviews (McMillan & Schumacher 2019: 364). Descriptive field notes included a description of the interview process and how it unfolded while reflective field notes included the researcher’s thoughts, insights and hunches as the interview proceeded (Creswell, 2019:217). Apart from transcribing all the focus group recordings, field notes were compiled to compare them against recorded information. Other field notes included participants’ comments and tentative interpretations made by the researcher during the data collection and analysis procedures.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data of the research study investigating the implementation of inclusive education in the primary schools of Ditsobotla were analysed using thematic and content analysis methods, where the researcher attempted to make sense of the situation without imposing pre-existing expectations and determinations on the phenomenon under study (Mertens, 2015:236).

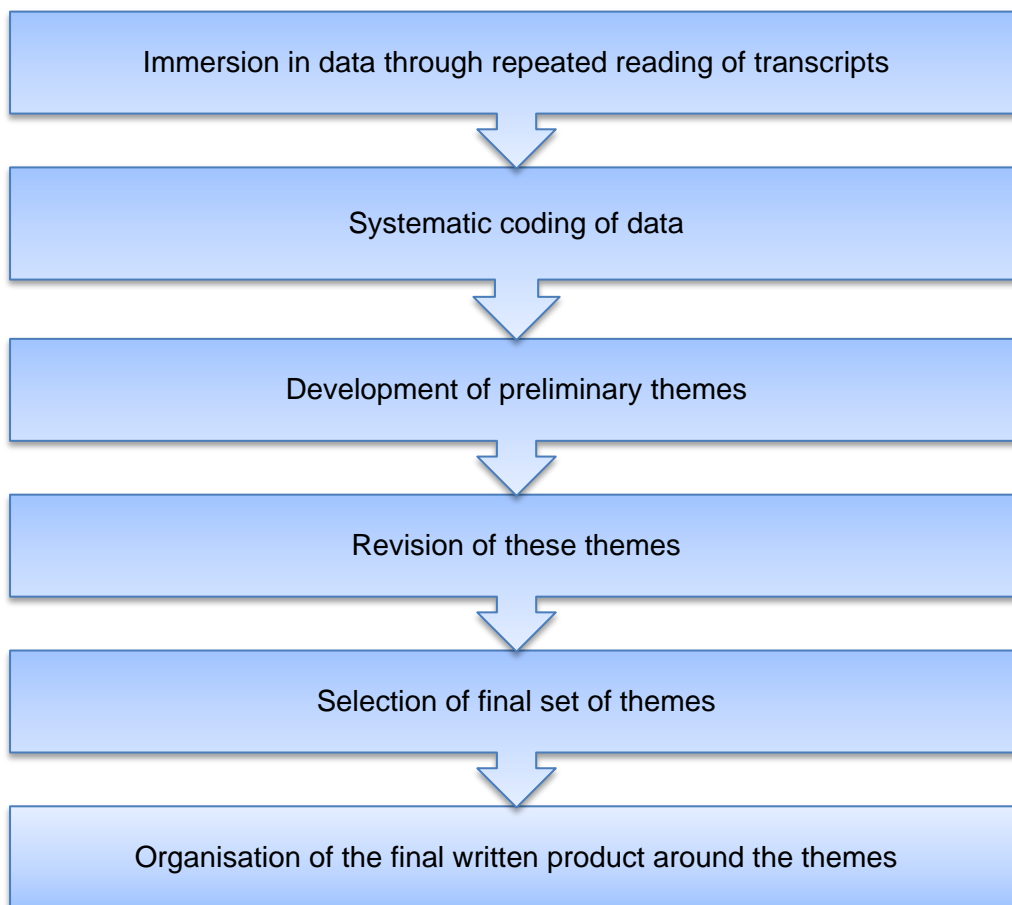
3.7.1 Content Analysis

In this study, data was analysed and interpreted using content analysis. Data was directly analysed as relayed by the research participants. In addition, data was further analysed by breaking it down into categories as directed by the research questions, in order to manage the large flow of data collected. Such categories were formulated through the direction of the research questions. All this was done with the purpose of addressing each single unit of data appropriately (Flick, 2018:258).

3.7.2 Thematic Analysis

To analyse and interpret data, the researcher used thematic analysis. According to Flick (2018:259), thematic analysis refers to a process of induction whereby the researcher processes data by reading and coding the data to form a clear understanding about what the participants have said regarding the research topic in general. This takes the form of a process of six steps; see figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Six steps of thematic analysis (Flick, 2018:259).



3.7 RESEARCHER'S ROLE

In this study, the researcher will not be functioning in isolation in respect of the research proceedings; rather he will form part of the research as a facilitator who allows an objective construction of meaning in the process of the research interviews. According to Lichtman (2013:23), the role of the researcher is highly valued in any research study. In essence, the role of the researcher lies in understanding, interpreting, and making sense of the phenomena according to the participants' experiences (Mertens, 2015:236).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Johnson and Christensen (2017:264) explain that qualitative research validity refers to qualitative research that is plausible, credible, trustworthy and therefore defensible. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:175) describe validity of qualitative designs as the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meaning for the participants and the researcher; the researcher and the participants should agree on the descriptions and

meanings of different events. Mazibuko (2012:44) maintains that validity and reliability of the research are crucial in all social research regardless of disciplines and methods employed. Collected data must be accurate, authentic, and representative of reality.

According to Creswell (2018:277), professional ethics refers to the moral commitment that scientists are required to make to acquire objectives and accurate data about real phenomena. This research was conducted ethically for the following reasons.

- The researcher endeavoured to refrain from falsification and/or fabrication of data.
- The researcher explained the real purpose and the use of the research to participants.
- The researcher also explained everything with regard to their privacy and the informed consent letters were given to the participants with the surety that they will remain to be unknown as far as their privacy is concerned.
- Once the participants were given the open-ended questionnaires they went through a debriefing session as there may have been a possibility that this study might affect their emotions (Cresswell, 2014:275).
- A mechanism will be identified which is publishing the study thus enabling the linking of research results to social action. The information gathered from the subjects will be confidential (Williman, 2005:11). The following is a discussion of the ethical measures the researcher has constantly considered throughout the study in order to guide and assist the investigation.

3.8.1 Permission to Conduct the Research

Quad (2016:1) proposes that it is imperative for the researcher to seek permission from all relevant stakeholders, officials, and management before entering their premises with the intention of gathering data. After the research study was ethically cleared by the North-West University Ethical Clearance Committee, the researcher sought permission from the Department of Education, Mafikeng Area Office, in order to conduct the research in eight primary schools of Ditsobotla sub-district. Permission was further requested from the school principals before collecting data.

3.8.2 Informed consent

Permission was also granted from the school principals before entering their premises and collecting data, since obtaining permission from organisational personnel requires contacting them before the start of the study (Creswell 2014:231). Likewise, informed consent from all the prospective participants (principals and teachers in the school-based support teams) to

participate in the study was obtained after having informed them of its purpose, the procedure to be followed, the risks, benefits, alternative procedures, and the measures implemented to ensure confidentiality (Johnson & Christensen 2017:107).

3.8.3 Voluntary participation

The researcher informed all participants that their participation in the study would be completely voluntary, since participants cannot be compelled, coerced or required to participate in a study against their will. Participants were also informed that the freedom to participate or not is a basic right which includes the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:118). In this way it was ensured that coercion to participate or to remain a participant was not applied, and the participants were not exploited in any way, thereby upholding the highest ethical code.

3.8.4 Anonymity and confidentiality

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:121), the right to privacy refers to the freedom of the individual to pick and choose for him or herself the time and circumstances under which to participate in the research. This author further elaborates that privacy should also involve the extent to which personal attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, and opinions are to be shared with or withheld from others during and after completion of the study. The researcher also made sure that participants' identity was kept private and confidential.

3.8.5 Release or publication of the findings

The researcher will submit an article to a scientific journal for possible publication, with his supervisor as a co-author. The researcher will make sure that all participants who take part in the research study will be informed about the publication of the results. This aspect will also be included in the informed consent letter.

3.8.6 Debriefing of participants

Debriefing involves explaining the true purpose of the research study when completed, along with why the deception was necessary (Creswell 2014:231). Creswell (2014:245) further elaborates that if there is psychological distress as a result of having been deceived by the study, participants must be offered adequate means of addressing this distress. The researcher will make sure that the participants undergo a debriefing session directly after the completion of the questionnaires, specifically the open-ended questionnaires. This will be more focused on going through the experiences and emotions they went through during the process.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with research methodology, and provided information on how the research was conducted. In addition, sampling, method of data collection, method of data analysis, and method of data verification were discussed fully. Details on ethical issues and ethical measures were addressed in depth. In the chapter that follows, the presentation and discussion of the research findings are outlined.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three, the research design and methodology used in this study were clearly outlined. Various ethical considerations in conducting the research as well as measures to ensure trustworthiness were explained in detail. In-depth interviews were conducted at five (5) primary schools in the Ditsobotla sub-district of the North-West province. This chapter analyses the findings of the focus group interviews as well as those of open-ended questionnaires for the principals of the five selected primary schools, and provides a detailed interpretation.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:367) qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories, and identifying patterns among the categories. The findings were guided by the literature study conducted in chapter two. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. At each of the five (5) primary schools, detailed interviews were conducted with school-based support teams. A more detailed profile of the participants of the five (5) primary schools appears in the following section.

4.2 THE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

At each of the five (5) primary schools, interviews were conducted with five (5) teachers who are members of the school-based support teams (as members of the focus groups). To this end, open-ended questionnaires were distributed to and completed by principals of the five selected schools.

In order to ensure that the principle of confidentiality was executed clinically, each of the schools was coded as follows: school A, school B, school C, school D and school E. Each of the principals were coded as follows: the principal of school A, the principal of school B, the principal of school C, the principal of school D and the principal of school E.

In each school, the five (5) participating teachers consisted of a fair combination of males and females and their responses were coded as school A (T1-T5), school B (T1-T5), school C (T1-T5), and so on. However, in two (2) schools (schools C and D) there were fewer than five teachers who participated (See table 4.1). This was due to the non-availability of the participants and the circumstances at the school on the day of the interview. In total, five principals completed the open-ended questionnaires and twenty-three teachers participated

in the interviews. The system of coding used ensured that there was no link between the data and the participants, or between the data and the settings, thereby ensuring the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the data (McMillan & Schumacher 2017:134). Table 4.1 depicts the participant profile in specific detail.

Table 4.1 Participant profile and coding (SBST)

SCHOOL	TEACHER(T) INTERVIEW (FOCUS GROUP)	NUMBER OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS
A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500-1000 learners • Township • Ditsobotla district 	T1 T2 T3 T4 T5	5
B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500-1000 learners 	T1 T2	

• Township	T3	
• Ditsobotla District	T4	5
	T5	

Table 4.2 Participant profile and coding (SBST) (continued)

SCHOOL		TEACHER(T)	NUMBER OF						
<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>								INTERVIEW	TEACHER
		(FOCUS	PARTICIPANTS						
		GROUP)							
C		T1							
•	16 learners	T2	2						
•	Rural								
•	Farm in the								
	Ditsobotla district								

D			T1	2
	•	Private	T2	
	•	200-500 learners		
	•	Ditsobotla		
E			T1	
	•	Ex- Model C	T2	
	•	500-1000 learners	T3	
•	Ditsobotla		T4	5
			T5	

4.3 IDENTIFICATION OF THEMES AND CATEGORIES

In order to analyse and interpret the large volume of raw data collected through the process of consulting written records and conducting interviews, a qualitative data analysis process was followed. During the first scanning, the information was read through carefully.

From the readings, the researcher identified 'units of information' that served as the basis for defining or representing categories. A 'unit of information' refers to a sentence or paragraph that has the following two characteristics: first, it is aimed at the understanding that the researcher needs to have and second, it is the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself (Flick, 2018:798). 'Carefully' means to read and re-read the transcripts and listen repeatedly to the tape recording of the interviews in order to formulate reality from them (Flick, 2018:800).

During the second scanning data was coded or categorised, and during the third scanning the main themes were generated (Creswell, 2014:247). The development of these themes and categories was guided by the aims and objectives of the study. This process of categorizing the information assisted the researcher in content analysis and interpretation (Flick, 2018:810). No additional data was found whereby the researcher can develop properties of the themes and categories. As the researcher looks at similar instances over and over again, he becomes empirically confident that themes are saturated.

The main themes identified in the interviews were as follows:

- Effectiveness of school-based support teams
- Educators' role and resourcefulness
- Level of support from District-based support team
- Possible improvements in the implementation of inclusive education in the Ditsobotla district

Table 4.2 clearly outlines the main themes and categories which guided the analysis and findings of the study on focus group interviews.

Table 4.3 Main Themes and Categories (Interviews with SBST)

THEME 1	EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS.
Category 1	Strengths
Category 2	Weaknesses
Category 3	Areas for strengthening

--	--

THEME 2	EDUCATORS' ROLE AND RESOURCEFULNESS.
Category 1	Educator's role
Category 2	Resources
Category 3	Additional skills needed
Category 4	Support strategies

THEME 3	SUPPORT FROM DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAM
Category 1	Support to school-based support teams
Category 2	Support referred learners

THEME 4	POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE DITSOBOTLA DISTRICT
Category 1	Improvements at school level
Category 2	Improvement at district level

Table 4.3 focused on the main themes that emerged from the reading of the verbatim transcripts. Some categories have been omitted owing to the low frequency of responses from the participants. This is in keeping with the view held by Gay *et al.* (2011:469), who confirm that the task of interpreting data is to identify the important themes or meanings in data and not necessarily every theme. A detailed discussion of the research results will follow in the next section.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF DATA ANALYSIS (INTERVIEWS)

As shown in Table 4.2 above, five main themes are highlighted, with each main theme consisting of various categories. These themes and categories will now be discussed in detail to present the major findings of this research based on focus group interviews. In addition, applicable verbatim quotes obtained from the raw data will be used to confirm and justify important findings.

4.4.1 Effectiveness of school-based support teams

Mertens (2015:66) argues that whether the school is a special school as a resource centre, a full-service school, or an ordinary school, it should establish a school-based support team which is responsible for the provision of learning support, together with the teachers involved

in a particular teacher's teaching and learning activities. Teachers are expected to be dynamic, competent and innovative in their teaching methods to accommodate the different learning styles of the learners (Mertens, 2015:66).

White Paper 6 (DoE 2001) states that the primary function of these teams is to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services through support to the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing learner, educator, and institutional needs.

4.4.1.1 Strengths

Teacher 2 of school A regarded the strengths of their School-based Support Team as being able to offer support to learners by addressing their behavioural problems which did not need a social worker.

From school B, teacher 1 conveyed that:

"Being able to refer learners for therapy is our greatest strength. We help them with clothes and food. We also... visit learners' homes to look at the living conditions, talk to parents/ or guardians so as to get the background information of the learners."

Teacher 2 from school A stated as follows, after a short silence:

(Short silence, deep in thought) *"Giving support to other learners by addressing their problems like behavioural problems that do not necessarily need the attention of the social worker."*

When probed to outline how they offer support to other learners, teacher 3 said:

(Agitated) *"By addressing their problems. When a learner has a behavioural problem on a small scale we devise means to help the learner by reprimanding him or her and involve parents to consolidate and reinforce discipline from a learner's side."*

When probed further on the kind of support they offer to a learner with a learning difficulty, looking puzzled, teacher 1 from the same school said:

"What is it that can be done to such learners? Learners who are slow to learn are born and created like as they are, and we cannot change what has been created."

From school D, the greatest strength of their School-based Support Team is the involvement of parents from the onset and the fact that they engage private therapists to help learners for a minimal fee that is paid by the affected learners' parents.

For school E, which is a former model C school, teacher 1 declared as follows:

“The greatest strength of our school’s SBST lies on our extensive consultation and involvement of different stakeholders like parents, all educators, school management team and district official on the special education section. Simply involving stakeholder opens a whole family of people who honestly want to help a learner to overcome barriers as well as an insight on the living condition at a learner’s home.”

Teacher 2 in school C said the following:

“The pillar of strength of our SBST is the qualified remedial teacher who has experience on special and remedial education”

This view was also expressed by teacher 3 from school E, who proudly stated that:

“One complimentary factor on our strength is the fact that we have a devoted qualified remedial teacher who has a vast experience in remedial education.”

4.4.1.2 Weaknesses

On the other hand, teachers from School C, which is a farm school, claimed that there is no School-based Support Team at their school.

Teacher C1 had this to say:

“If you are a two-teacher school you cannot have a School-based Support Team. It becomes the responsibility of the two of you as teachers to identify learners experiencing barriers and report to the District Official when they visit the school. No learner has been referred for specialised therapy here due to the long and vast distance between our school and the office where help is.”

In the same vein, teacher 2 from school B said:

“Other members of staff are less interested and therefore become passive.”

4.4.1.3 Areas for strengthening

School A's school-based support team had the overall feeling that the SBST can be made effective through every educator being actively involved and taking responsibility for identifying learners' problems in his/her subject, and collectively designing a support package for such learners.

This view was supported by teacher 1 at school E who said:

"The strength of our School-based Support Team lies in our extensive consultation and involvement of different stakeholders like parents, all educators, school management team and district official on the special education section."

Schools A, B and E pointed out that they need constant support from district officials to monitor progress as well as speedy attendance to identify and refer learners for specialised attention.

From school C, the two teachers indicated that they needed much more support in every area, by trained personnel from the district office.

Teacher 1 from school E felt that all teachers have to work together with the support team and this view was put as follows:

"The rest of the teachers should work together with the school-based support team. We do not know all the learners with problems and, we need the help of the teachers to identify the learners."

Both schools C and D mentioned parents' involvement as a stumbling block in some instances for learners to get help.

Teacher 2 from school C said:

"There are learners with barriers who could not be referred because parents are reluctant to participate in the referral process that has to be followed."

4.4.2 Role of educators and resourcefulness

In all classrooms, learners have diverse learning needs and if teachers are not responsive to these needs and provide the necessary support, learners may experience barriers to learning. In responding to diverse learning needs of all learners in their classes, teachers

need suitable resources and teaching aids, and they need to be resourceful as curriculum deliverers by being highly knowledgeable (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:23).

4.4.2.1 Educators' role

As alluded to in Chapter 2, Avramidis and Norwich (2019:130) explain that teachers are a key element in the successful implementation of inclusive policies, and their perceptions of inclusive policies will not only determine their acceptance of those inclusive policies, but it will also affect their commitment to implementing such policies. This view is also held by both Cook (2018:204) and Reynolds (2018:476), who state that teachers' attitudes towards learners with specific needs appear to influence the type and quality of teacher-learner interactions, thereby directly impacting on the learners' educational experiences and opportunities (as mentioned in 2.9.5).

It is the responsibility of teachers to turn their classes into inclusive classrooms. In these inclusive classrooms, some learners have special educational needs for a variety of reasons, either intrinsic or extrinsic, which have to be accommodated. No two learners are disabled in exactly the same way, therefore teachers, in collaboration with support personnel have to develop a diagnosis and subsequently plan instructional programmes designed to achieve specific objectives appropriate for a particular learner (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:17).

The teacher's role in an inclusive classroom is the identification of learner strengths concurrently with assistance in overcoming particular weaknesses, by differentiating the curriculum as well as the methods used to deliver it. As far as differentiation of the curriculum is concerned, mixed-ability teaching requires a diverse range of strategies (Swart & Pettipher, 2018:23).

An important aspect to be differentiated in the curriculum is the content (Mitchell, 2018: 104) (as mentioned in 2.8.2.1). This can be done by teachers adapting the content of the curriculum in such a way that it is manageable for a wider range of learners. This should not be seen as a watering down of the curriculum, but rather as a graded process where learners are taken by a different route to a similar destination. Teachers are aware that children arrive at their classes with different abilities, skills and knowledge, socio-economic backgrounds and personalities. In order to respond to learners' diverse needs, teachers need to differentiate teaching methods and strategies. The key to differentiated teaching methods is the flexible use of a wide range of learning materials, methods of presentation, learning activities and lesson organisations (Byers & Rose, 2019:84).

According to Shaddack, Giorcelli and Smith (2017:232), this means that teachers need to differentiate the manner in which activities are planned and organized in a lesson. Byers and Rose (2019:79) maintain that differentiation in the inclusive classroom implies that teachers are to offer adaptations to what learners learn (content), how learners learn (process), and how learners demonstrate what they have learned (product).

Respondents from schools A, B and C indicated that teachers should identify barriers at the earliest stage and offer such learners support through expanded opportunities. Respondents from the same three schools also mentioned that by being a bit patient when dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning, teachers would really help these learners to overcome some barriers and make them feel part of the whole.

Teacher 1 from school E added the following as the role of teachers:

“Teachers should be involved by screening learners during the first term by collecting background information of the learner experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers must inform parents about their child’s scholastic problems. Once problems are identified, teachers should begin with remedial work and offer learners with barriers expanded opportunities.”

Teacher 1 from school D highlighted the importance of collecting the learners’ background information by saying:

“The problem is not always academic; sometimes the learner might have missed a step while growing up.”

4.4.2.2 Resources

Effective learning is fundamentally influenced by the availability of educational resources to meet the needs of diverse learning styles of all learners. Loosely defined, a resource can be defined as a source or supply from which benefit is produced. The challenge is to make the best use of limited funds (Davis, 2015:40).

Respondents from schools A, C and D believed that concrete and tangible teaching aids and sentence-making wall charts are needed to help learners who experience barriers to learning. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, the necessary educational resources such as state-of-the-art textbooks, posters, computer laboratories are not sufficiently provided. This is especially the case at township schools, farm schools, and schools situated in or near informal settlements.

Teacher 3 from school D said:

“Concrete and teaching aids that learners experiencing barriers to learning can touch, feel and identify with daily as well as sentence-making charts will help learners overcome their barriers to learning.”

As far as human resources are concerned, teachers are by virtue of the service they provide to the education system and their membership of the school staff, a knowledgeable and capable human resource at the schools. The term ‘human resources’ can also be defined as the skills, energies, talents, abilities, and knowledge that are used for the production of goods or the rendering of services.

Respondents from schools A, B, C, and D felt that teachers generally lacked specialised knowledge when dealing with learning barriers. Almost all of them expressed the opinion that schools needed the service of a special (remedial) teacher. This view was clearly articulated by teacher 2 from school D who said:

“You see, not all barriers are scholastic and word cards and sentence-making cards would not bring much help. The most irreplaceable resource that will make an unprecedented impact is a special teacher, or highly competent personnel and a special class.”

4.4.2.3 Support strategies

The Department of Basic Education crafted a policy called *Responding to Diversity through the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (DoE, 2011) which is a set of guidelines intended to provide teachers, principals, subject advisors, administrators, and other personnel with parameters and strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classroom through the curriculum. Curriculum differentiation is seen as a key strategy for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning styles and needs (as mentioned in 2.8.2).

Respondents from schools A, B and C knew nothing about support strategies that can be put in practice to help learners experiencing barriers to learning. Two of these schools are public schools in a township and the other is a farm school.

Teacher 2 from school D and teacher 2 from school E admitted that giving learners experiencing barriers extra activities and expanded opportunities, especially in lower grades, work as support strategies.

Teacher 2 from school E said:

“Giving learners expanded opportunities in the community in lower grades helps a lot because these learners are still very young. We are able to work on their problems, do the right things and develop on the identified problem areas.”

Teacher 1 from school D and teacher 1 from school E postulated that referring learners for specialised therapy is a very effective support strategy that could have a huge impact if, and only if, it is effectively implemented.

Teacher 3 from school D had this to say about referrals:

“Referrals are not helping as there is little the District-Based Support Team does to help us.”

4.4.2.4 Additional skills

Respondents from schools A, B and C unanimously agreed that teachers need patience and perseverance when dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Teacher 1 from school C emphasized the issue of teachers being patient by saying:

“Everything about these children is special in its own way. If you are short-tempered you will ‘kill’ these learners. A bit of patience would help.”

Interestingly, teacher 1 from school E, who happens to be a qualified remedial teacher, stated that:

“Teachers need skills on how to differentiate their teaching methods and adapt the curriculum so as to accommodate varying learning needs of all learners, especially those experiencing barriers to learning.”

This response indicates the wealth of knowledge remedial teachers possess compared to that of an ordinary teacher without remedial teaching experience.

4.4.3 Support from District based support team

According to the *Draft guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education* (Department of Education 2002a: 102-105), some of the core functions of the district-based support team are, amongst others, the development and on-going back-up of support teams in the schools and early childhood learning centres in supporting the capacity building of these institutions, identifying and prioritizing learning needs and barriers to learning in their district, identifying the support needed to address these challenges, pursuing these within a strategic planning and management framework, and finally, on-going monitoring and evaluation of support.

They should also link these institutions with formal and informal support systems so that the needs and barriers can be addressed.

4.4.3.1 Support to School-based support teams

The *White Paper 6* (DoE, 2001) states that the primary function of school-based support teams is to put in place properly coordinated learner and educator support services through support to the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing learner, educator, and institutional needs. For school-based support teams to function properly, they need constant monitoring and support from the district-based support teams.

Respondents from all schools argued that support from the District-Based Support Team is minimal, because officials from the education section and therapists take a long time to monitor progress and offer support to both the SBST and referred learners.

Teacher 1 from school C, which is a farm school, put emphasis on the fact that there is no support offered by the District Support Team by saying the following:

“No, they take a long time to visit schools and check on progress made. For example, I know nothing about SIAS and what it means. They do not come to look at work done to try to accommodate learners who experience barriers, or look at referral files of these learners.”

The same view is held by teacher 1 from school D, who emphatically stated the following when responding to the question on what kind of support they get from the district-based support team:

“None, the lady who is assigned to our school does nothing; we get no help from her.”

4.4.3.2 Support to referred learners

Teacher 1 from school C, which is a farm school, emphasized the fact that there is no support offered by the District Support Team to referred learners. She had the following to say:

“They do not come to look at work done to try to accommodate learners who experience barriers or look at referral files of these learners.”

The same view was held by teacher 1 from school D, who emphatically said the following:

“The only support from the district is to give numbers to referred learners which later give parents a problem, as they (parents) have to make large payments for private therapists.”

Generally, there is no impact that is brought by the district as these learners find themselves in the mainstream due to unavailability of professionals to their parents.”

From school B, Teacher 3 said the following on the level of support by the district:

“We get assistance in the form of feedback after screening the child and identifying barriers. We were promised that all referred learners will be awarded clinic numbers for tracing progress, but this was never done.”

The general feeling was that support offered to referred learners by the District-Based Support team is minimal and had little impact on problems faced by teachers and learners.

4.4.4 Possible improvements to be affected

4.4.4.1 Improvement at District level

Respondents from schools A, B and C advised that in order to improve on the implementation of inclusive education, the relevant district officials should respond quickly whenever called by schools for help. This view, that improved support and monitoring would improve implementation of inclusive education in the district, was emphasized by teacher 1 from school D who said:

“First give each school its own District-Based Support person who is at the school at least 1 day per week. You give one person to many schools and they cannot do everything.”

4.4.4.2 Improvement at school level

Respondents from schools A, B, C and E maintained that for inclusive education to be effectively implemented in the Ditsobotla district, teachers have to be trained extensively on the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) process. Educators at school or site level are expected to respond to diverse learning needs of all learners, with limited skills and knowledge which is not possible.

Existence of limited knowledge is evident by the realization that teachers from schools A, B and C had never seen and subsequently knew nothing about the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) document, which is the Department of Education’s *National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support of 2008*.

Teacher 2 from school C confessed that they have made no progress whatsoever, as teachers do not have suitable knowledge.

Respondents from Schools A and B felt that referring learners for specialised therapy without teachers first exploring all avenues to help these learners, should be avoided. Teachers do not attempt to help learners because they do not know what to do and which intervention strategies to implement.

Respondents from both schools D and E stated that if each school could be awarded the post of a specialised remedial teacher, huge improvements would be visible. Teacher 2 from school E emphasized this view by saying that:

“If possible, the District Office should award each primary school with at least one educator who fully understands and has specialised in remedial education to help learners with barriers. All educators should be trained in the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support process.”

The same view was emphasized by teacher 1 of school E, who impulsively added:

“Give each school a teacher that can do remedial teaching with the learners, and who can help the teachers to do the correct remedial work.”

To highlight the impact the presence of a remedial teacher has in a school, teacher 2 from school E said the following with regard to their school’s progress on the practical application of the SIAS process.

“As a school, we employed an educator who has deep knowledge and vast experience in remedial teaching. We have a year programme wherein progress with regard to responding to the needs of learners experiencing barriers, is monitored. Heads of Departments are actively involved in inclusion of learners with barriers and the bulk of work has been distributed to all, and in this manner inclusion has been made our business and not that of the school-based support team only.”

4.5 DISCUSSIONS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

The policies of the Department of Education expect school principals to be champions of curriculum delivery and instruction. Loeb and Horng (2018:23) define instructional leadership as those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning. In practice, this means that the principal encourages educational achievement by making instructional quality the top priority of the school which will bring that vision to fruition. Cotton (2019:45) adds that effective instructional leaders are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect student achievement, and, as such, a school

principal 'sits' on curriculum mastery and delivery of the highest quality using available resources and tools to achieve that.

It is for this reason that the researcher deemed it necessary to get the principals' perspective on inclusive education in their schools by using a questionnaire to collect data from them.

The biographical data characteristics of the participants (selected school principals) together with relevant logistics on the socio-economic standing of most learners in the school are outlined first. The researcher found it relevant to tabulate biographical information about the five principals who were participants in this study. It should be noted also that this tabulation will not, in any way, compromise the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity guaranteed to the participants during the interview process. This information is necessary in order to understand the background and work situation of the participants in relation to their responses. Such detailed information is portrayed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Principal data

PRINCIPALS		SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C	SCHOOL D	SCHOOL E
Age		51-60	41-50	51-60	41-50	51-60
Gender		Male	Male	Female	Male	Male
Professional		Master's	Master's	Honour's	Bachelor's	Bachelor's
Qualifications		Degree	Degree	Degree	Degree	Degree
School		Township	Township	Rural	Private	Ex-Model C

classification/category						
Learners'	economic	Average	Poor	Poor	Average	Mixed
Status						
Learner enrolment		500-1000	500-1000	0-100	200-500	500-1000
Number of staff		16-30	16-30	1-8	16-30	16-30

Themes from questionnaire

From the readings, the researcher identified 'units of information' that served as the basis for defining or representing categories. The development of these themes and categories was guided by aims and objectives of the study.

The main themes identified in the interview were as follows:

- Understanding of inclusive education
- Educator competence and monitoring
- Barriers most often encountered at school
- Possible improvements

Table 4.5 clearly outlines the main themes and categories which guided the analysis and findings of the questionnaires completed by principals.

Table 4.5 Main themes and categories from interviews

Theme 1	Understanding of inclusive education
Theme 2	Educator competence and monitoring
Category 1	Competence and knowledge
Category 2	Control mechanisms
Theme 3	Most often encountered barriers at school.
Category 1	Systemic barriers
Category 2	Pedagogic barriers
Category 3	Socio-economic barriers

Theme 4	Possible improvements
Category 1	Improvement at school level
Category 2	Improvement at district level

Table 4.4 above shows four highlighted main themes, with each theme consisting of various categories. These themes and categories will now be discussed in detail to present the major findings of the study based on responses of individual principals in the questionnaire. In addition, applicable verbatim quotes obtained from the raw data will be used to confirm and justify important findings.

4.5.1 Inclusive Education

According to Mittler (2018:78) inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners, with particular focus on developing an inclusive community and education system which is based on a value system that invites and celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language, socio-economic background, cultural origin and level of education achievement, or disability.

According to UNESCO (2005:13-14), inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increased participation in learning, cultures and communities, as well as reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, has a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range, and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.

Principals, as 'champions' of the curriculum, are expected, through quality curriculum delivery, to ensure that all learners in the school benefit from the delivery, irrespective of whether they experience barriers to learning or not. The above view is further consolidated

by the Ditsobotla Education District strategic intent which is: “striving for excellence and equality by raising the bar, closing the gap and leaving no learner behind.” It therefore becomes the direct responsibility of principals to ensure that the teaching taking place in classes is inclusive and responsive to the diverse learning needs of all learners in the school.

The principals of Schools B and C understood inclusive education as education intended to cater for, recognize, and respect the differences among all learners, and respond to challenges experienced by learners as barriers to learning. The principals of schools A, D and E understood inclusive education as a part-discipline of education that assists learners at school with severe or partial physical, emotional, behavioural and psychological barriers to learning.

4.5.2 Educator competence and monitoring

4.5.2.1 Competence and knowledge

The principals of school A and school B argued that some teachers in their schools are ignorant as to how to respond to the learning needs of learners experiencing barriers.

The principal of school B stated:

“Our school is not ready to deal effectively with problems encountered by learners experiencing barriers, because most educators are not fully equipped to assist or deal with problems experienced by these learners.”

This view is also supported by the principal of school C, which is a rural school:

“These educators are not equipped at all to address barriers experienced by a host of learners in the school. Teachers understand their role as only filling referral forms and submit them to the District Office for such learners to get help from the child guidance clinic and the inclusive sections.”

On the other hand, the principal of school E, which is a former model C school, conveyed that members of staff are up to the challenge of including learners experiencing barriers in the learning process:

“The educators at my school have enormous capacity of implementation inclusive education. We encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning. Learners are motivated to establish and sustain positive, caring relationships with other learners.”

He added that their strength to respond to the diverse learning needs of all learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning, lies with the special education teacher that the school has, and the confidence that her presence installs in other members of the staff.

He said:

“A remedial or special educator in any school would be the champion of the plight of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Such a teacher highlights to the entire teaching personnel issues and frustration endured by such learners as well as intervention strategies to help to accommodate varying learning abilities of learners with barriers.”

The principal of school D, which is a private school, stated that the majority of educators at that school are not fully competent to accommodate learners with barriers. This was attributed to the involvement of qualified therapists and referral of learners experiencing barriers to them. This implies that teachers do not deal much with learners experiencing barriers to learning because therapists are engaged to help such learners. This level of competence is spearheaded by the active involvement of the principal through leading the curriculum delivery process so that it responds to the diverse learning needs of learners experiencing barriers.

The principal of school E said:

“I encourage lessons which use peer learning activities, which contains mixed-ability activities, which accommodate the broad range of learning styles. The lessons should build upon every learner’s strengths and foster every learner’s success.”

4.5.2.2 Control Mechanisms

For the purpose of quality assurance, instruments should be developed and implemented to control and monitor quality curriculum delivery which accommodates learners experiencing barriers. As a champion of curriculum mastery and delivery, the principal should have instruments and yardsticks since he/she has to measure the level at which inclusive education is implemented in their schools (Davis, 2015:39)

It is noteworthy that the responses of the principals of school A and B were not related in any way to the question of how they ensure that lessons prepared and presented in classes accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. They mentioned issues like the SBST, the briefing of other teachers and themselves as principals, and also the motivation of teachers to remember and accommodate learners with barriers. On the other hand, the

principal of school E pointed out that he controls teacher lessons and ensures that learners are presented with content which progresses from simple to more complex.

This view of principals controlling and monitoring educators' lessons and planning and presentation was supported by the principal of school D, who stated that:

"I control teachers' lesson plans to ensure that provision is made for extended opportunities for learners experiencing barriers to learning. I encourage teachers to always ensure that their lessons accommodate all learners with their varying learning abilities."

4.5.3 Most often encountered barriers

Barriers to learning are difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site, and within the learner, which prevent access to learning for some learners. Known barriers, besides cognitive ones, can be categorized as systemic, socio-economic, pedagogic, and intrinsic barriers (Jansen & Taylor, 2018:30).

4.5.3.1 Systemic barriers

Systemic barriers to learning refer to barriers that prevail as a result of the education system, and which relate to or affect the entire education system (Jansen & Taylor, 2018:27).

The principal from school C pointed out that learning space can present a barrier to learning as well as the school's physical environment, especially for learners with physical disabilities.

Apart from all known and cited barriers, the principal at school D added the language of teaching and learning, if it is not a child's home language, as a barrier to both teaching and learning:

"Being taught in a language that is not a child's home language poses a problem for learners being able to read and listen with comprehension, thus producing low-quality responses to questions."

This view was also shared by the principal of school A, who came up with the concept of teachers 'code-switching' during their lesson presentation. He explained code-switching as an act whereby teachers who are supposed to present a lesson in English switch to the home language of the teacher and learners. For example, mathematical concepts and rules may be explained in the learners' mother tongue, which is not the language of teaching and learning (LOLT), while English is used for writing tests or examinations (Ramoroka, 2017:46).

Put in his own words:

“In most township public schools, teachers teach and explain in Setswana, and assess learners in English.”

This practice outlines a mismatch and non-existence of coordination between teaching and assessment; assessment is intended to reflect on the effectiveness of teaching and should indicate the extent to which learning took place.

4.5.3.2 Pedagogic barriers

Pedagogic barriers to learning are barriers brought into the picture by inappropriate teaching methods, unqualified and under-qualified teachers, inappropriate assessment procedures, lack of support for teachers, and an inflexible curriculum. At times the curriculum can be very inflexible in nature and not be able to meet the diverse needs of all learners if educators do not accommodate all learners' learning styles. Key components of the curriculum include the style and tempo of teaching and learning (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:19).

The principal of school A said:

“There are specific topics and number of assessment activities that teachers have to cover per term, while on the other hand the policy states that learners should be allowed to work at their own pace so that no one will feel left out.”

The principal of school B added that:

“Sometimes educators, as a result of inadequate training, use teaching styles which do not meet the needs of some, especially those experiencing barriers to learning. At times an educator teaches at a pace which accommodates learners who grasps quickly, thus ignoring and excluding others.”

Other barriers arising from the curriculum are those which result from the medium of teaching and learning. For too many learners, teaching and learning takes place through a language which is not their home language, and this leads to linguistic difficulties (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016:20).

The principal of school B added the following:

“In most township public schools, teachers teach and explain concepts to learners in Setswana, which is their mother tongue. The very same teacher assesses those learners on

the same concepts in English and as a result thereof these mismatches between teaching and assessment create a problem, thus becoming a barrier to both teaching and learning.”

This view was further supported by the principal of school E, who said the following:

“Code-switching, which is teaching learners in home language and assessing the very same content on English, which is a language of teaching and learning, outlines a mismatch and non-existence of collaboration between teaching and assessment. Assessment is intended to reflect on the effectiveness of teaching and indicate the extent to which learning took place.”

4.5.3.3 Socio-economic barriers

Societal barriers differ from community to community, and the socio-economic context within which schools are located greatly affects learning.

High on the list of socio-economic barriers that affect teaching and learning adversely is the impact of HIV/AIDS on learners, through either being infected or affected (Sharma et al., 2012:34).

The principals of all the schools cited and also acknowledged that conditions like HIV/AIDS manifest itself as a barrier to learning, because learners are frequently absent due to being ill or having to care for their ailing parents or siblings.

The principal of school C said that:

“Children whose parents are living with HIV/AIDS often experience many negative changes in their lives and they may consequently suffer neglect, including emotional neglect, even long before they are orphaned. Eventually they may suffer the death of their parent(s) and the accompanying emotional trauma. Under these circumstances they have to adjust to a new situation, with little or no support, and may suffer exploitation and abuse.”

The principal of school D commented as follows:

“Children orphaned by AIDS may miss out on school enrolment, have their schooling interrupted, or perform poorly in school as a result of their situation.”

Principals also mentioned expenses such as school fees and school uniforms, which present barriers to school attendance if orphans' caregivers struggle to afford these costs. Schools should play a crucial role in improving the prospects of AIDS orphans and securing their future. A good school education can give children a higher self-esteem, better job prospects,

and economic independence. Apart from lifting children out of poverty, such an education can also give children a better understanding of HIV and AIDS and decrease the risk of becoming infected themselves. Schools can also offer benefits to AIDS orphans outside of education, such as emotional support and care (Webster, 2015:267).

The principal of school A added:

“Emotional and sexual abuse as well as poor parenting are social factors that project themselves as barriers to learning in schools, and these factors affects learner performance adversely.”

One point worth noting is that none of the five principals who completed questionnaires identified poverty as a possible barrier to learning that affects a multitude of learners in public schools.

4.5.4 Possible improvements

Improvement, in the context of inclusive education and inclusion, is an act of making profitable use of inclusive education to accommodate the varying learning needs of all learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning. To inform the future direction and development of inclusive education policy and practice in the Ditsobotla education district, it is important that current practices related to school and district levels be monitored and evaluated (Webster, 2015:121).

4.5.4.1 School level

The principals of school A, C, D and E mentioned that regular workshops can be of great help to educators to enable them to identify each form of barrier as well as possible intervention strategies to remedy the situation.

The principal of school A further suggested the following:

“Teachers in early childhood development (ECD) classes should be trained thoroughly so that they are the first people to identify developmental delays or health needs in a child, and apply intervention strategies.”

The principal of school B acknowledged training done for teachers who are members of the school-based support team, but further suggested that training should include all teachers across all phases, even those who do not serve in the school-based support team. In the

same vein, the principal of school A suggested that research be conducted in order to help learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Parental involvement was cited by school B's principal as a basic necessity in trying to respond to the learning needs of learners with barriers.

The principals of schools A, B, C and D indicated that the support offered by the District-Based Support Team is minimal, very poor, and of low quality. The principal of school D bluntly stated:

“There is no meaningful support from the District at this moment.”

This view was supported by the principal of school A, who expressed his view like this:

“Support is minimal. In some cases the quality of support given is of poor standards. Visit to school is sporadic and workshops presented are also of poor quality due to time frames which are presented.”

Both principals of schools B and C advised that improved visits, assistance and monitoring from departmental officials from the inclusive education section will bring the desired change and improvement.

The presence of a specialised teacher in special needs education or remedial education is seen as a pivotal activity that would help schools improve with regard to addressing diverse learning needs of all learners in the school, including those experiencing barriers to learning (Hoppey, 2016:19).

School C's principal added that the supply of relevant and suitably adapted teaching and learning resources by the department is one solution to schools' poor response to the inclusion of learners with learning barriers in learning activities. In the same vein, the principals of both schools D and E felt that the most irreplaceable resource in any school is its human resources. According to them, schools need at least one qualified special education or remedial teaching educator who could assist learners with learning or cognitive barriers.

The principal at school A supported this view and added that schools need the SIAS (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support) tool-kit with clear guidelines.

4.5.4.2 District level

At the district level it is expected that a District-based Support Team has to be established with the function of managing the implementation of inclusive education.

With *White Paper 6* (DoE, 2001) the Department of Education commits itself to strengthen education support services through the establishment of district-based support teams to provide a coordinated, professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, whilst targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools, and educational institutions (See 2.6.3.3).

The principals of schools A, B and C argued that in order for the Ditsobotla district to improve its performance on the implementation and monitoring of inclusive education, the district should employ enough special education officials and therapists to monitor and help schools with the implementation. The principal of school E emphasized this point by saying:

“Improvement on implementation can be affected if a lot of posts are created for subject advisors with knowledge and experience and each is assigned to fewer schools to help and monitor implementation.”

This need for increased support personnel is supported by the principals of both schools C and D, who added that visits to schools by district officials would then be regular because each official would be assigned to fewer schools to help with implementation, support and monitoring. These officials would then be able to train educators effectively across all phases so that they are able to identify barriers to learning individually. The principals of both schools A and D were of the view that district officials dealing with inclusive education and support teaching needed to be capacitated more.

The principal of school A stated that:

“There are more problems that our district officials are unable to handle in our schools. This is explained by the long time officials take to respond and give feedback once a situation of a case had been referred to them. District personnel dealing with support teaching and inclusive education should be capacitated to handle school problems.”

This view was supported by the principal of school D, who stated that:

“District officials in the special needs education section need to be capacitated intensively so that they become a team that is solely devoted, knowledgeable and capable to assist schools to become fully inclusive.”

One of the key aspects which were identified to bring about improvement in the effective implementation of inclusive education in the Ditsobotla district is the provision of suitable resources to schools by the District officials.

This view was supported by the principal of school E, who said that:

“We need the District Office to supply us with suitable teaching aids especially designed for learners with special support needs.”

4.6 THEMES FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

From the readings, the researcher identified ‘units of information’ that served as the basis for defining or representing categories. The development of these themes and categories was guided by the aims and objectives of the study.

The main themes identified in the questionnaire were as follows:

- Understanding of inclusive education in White Paper 6
- Educators’ involvement in the inclusive education of the school
- Support given by School-based Support Team to teachers
- Possible improvements

Table 4.6 clearly outlines the main themes and categories which guided the analysis and findings of the questionnaires completed by principals.

Table 4.6 Main themes and categories from interviews

Theme 1	Understanding of inclusive education in White Paper 6
Theme 2	Educators’ involvement in the inclusive education of the school

Category 1	Educators' role
Theme 3	Support given by the School-based Support Team (SBST) to teachers
Theme 4	Possible improvements
Category 1	Improvement at school level
Category 2	Improvement at district level

Table 4.6 above shows four highlighted main themes, with each theme consisting of various categories. These themes and categories will now be discussed in detail to present the major findings of the study based on responses of individual teachers in the questionnaire. In addition, applicable verbatim quotes obtained from the raw data will be used to confirm and justify important findings.

4.6.1 The teachers' understanding of inclusive education in White Paper 6

Most participants acknowledged that they understood inclusive education, and stated that they were practicing it in their schools by including all type of learners with different learning abilities in the mainstream.

Teacher 2 of school A said that:

“Inclusive education stipulates including all learners in the mainstream education and supporting all their needs.”

From school B, teacher 1 conveyed that:

“It means not discriminating against learners in class, teaching all learners, disabled or not, with learning barriers or not, all races in one class.”

For school E, which is a former model C school, teacher 1 explained as follows:

“Inclusive education, I think, is education where all children are catered for, that is, learners with barriers and learners that are doing well, in one school.”

The participants understand inclusive education, as explained in the literature and the Constitution of South Africa (1996), as meaning that all learners should be taught at the same ordinary public schools, despite their capabilities and abilities. The Bill of Rights, as contained in the Constitution, states that each and every learner has a right to basic education (RSA, 1996). Most participants are aware of inclusive education because the government requires schools to comply and implement this policy in all ordinary South African public schools. Inclusive education requires all learners to be taught together in one classroom. Inclusion, therefore, caters for more than just mainstream education, as it is considered a moral issue of human rights and values. Although the research participants had different explanations, they all agreed on their understanding of inclusive education, and their explanation can be summed up as “the non-discrimination of learners” (Michael & Oboegbulem, 2013:315).

In talking with the participants, it was discovered that, although some of them had seen White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 1996), they never had an opportunity to read it. Participants complained about the large number of learners in a class and their heavy workload. They also complained about the Department of Basic Education giving them too many handouts to read and that there was no time to read them, suggested these participants.

Teacher 2 in school C said the following:

“I have heard about the White Paper, but I know very little about the contents of the White Paper. The policy talks about many things, especially the special needs of learners who have to be in the mainstream. Before a particular child can be admitted to a special school, you need to follow particular requirements and procedures as indicated in the White Paper.”

This view was also expressed by teacher 3 from school E, who proudly stated that:

“White Paper 6, I think, talks about everything about inclusive education – what is to be done to the learners, how schools must admit without discriminating, and then what must be done with learners that got barriers in their schools.”

4.6.2 Educators role in the inclusive education of the school

In all classrooms, learners have diverse learning needs, and if teachers are not responsive to these needs and provide the necessary support, learners may experience barriers to learning. In responding to diverse learning needs of all learners in their classes, teachers need suitable resources and teaching aids, and they need to be resourceful as curriculum deliverers by being highly knowledgeable (Michael & Oboegbulem, 2013:313).

4.6.2.1 Educators’ role

According to Shaddack, Giocelli and Smith (2017:232), for inclusion to show positive benefits, the learning environment and instructional models must be carefully established to provide strong learning opportunities for all learners. Special education and general education teachers must have mutual respect and open minds toward the philosophy of inclusion, as well as strong administrative support and knowledge of how to meet the needs of learners with disabilities. The involvement of a special education teacher is crucial to the success of a combined learning environment in a number of areas.

Special education teachers must craft the lessons for inclusive classrooms to ensure that the needs of learners with disabilities are considered. Teachers may work together to develop a curriculum that is accessible to all learners, or the special education teacher might make modifications to the general education teacher’s lesson plans. A special education teacher will also create supplemental learning materials for specific learners, including visual, manipulative, text, and technology resources, and determine when one-on-one lessons might be needed. Teachers must examine learners’ strengths, weaknesses, interests, and communication methods when crafting lessons. The learners’ IEPs must be carefully followed to meet achievement goals (Byers & Rose, 2019:84).

Respondents from schools A, B and C argued that teachers should identify barriers at the earliest stage and offer such learners support through expanded opportunities. Respondents from the same three schools also mentioned that by being a bit patient when dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning, teachers would really help these learners to overcome some barriers and make them feel part of the whole.

Teacher 2 from school B added the following as the role of teachers:

“Teachers should be involved by screening learners during the first term by collecting background information of the learner experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers must inform parents about their child’s scholastic problems. Once problems are identified, teachers should begin with remedial work and offer learners with barriers expanded opportunities.”

Teacher 1 from school D highlighted the importance of collecting the learners’ background information by saying:

“The problem is not always academic; sometimes the learner might have missed a step while growing up. Teachers should be involved by screening learners during the first term by collecting background information of the learner experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers must inform parents about their child’s scholastic problems. Once problems are identified, teachers should begin with remedial work and offer learners with barriers expanded opportunities.”

Teacher 1 from school D highlighted the importance of collecting the learners’ background information by saying:

“The problem is not always academic; sometimes the learner might have missed a step while growing up.”

4.6.3 Support given by the School-Based Support Team (SBST) to teachers

The third research question explores the support given to educators by SBST members. In the schools selected for the study, the SBSTs are responsible for supporting educators in inclusive classrooms. Educators are divided according to phase representatives and assigned roles, in order to assist other educators teaching inclusive classrooms. Educators who participated in the interviews related the following:

Teacher 3 from school D said:

“As educators, we must support each other by giving each other strategies that we can use in our classes in order for us to help learners with learning difficulties.”

“They do help us identify those learners and to support them and deal with their problems. We do attend workshops and sometimes they do some workshops for us so that we are able to cater for those learners.”

“It’s like teamwork at our school, we meet twice a week and mainly our aim is to develop the programmes or the activities that we can use to help learners with problems or barriers.”

The above extracts seem to suggest different ways in which the SBSTs support educators practising inclusive education. Educators rely on support and information from colleagues. Most of the participants spoke about ways of developing intervention strategies for learners with special educational needs, suggesting that there is a gap in educator preparation for practising inclusive education. Therefore one recommendation is that regular classroom educators need to be capacitated with the necessary skills to adequately address the discipline of diverse learners.

Some participants found it necessary that supporting educators in inclusive classrooms need to be compared with some countries who have attended to the inclusive education support using intervention strategies such as task forces, short-term professional development, long-term studies, and short-term payment incentives. Some authors advocate that the support educators needs includes community support and parental involvement, as well as appropriate training. Some experts suggest that one of the barriers to practising inclusive education is the educators’ attitude in accepting diverse learners, and that inclusive education requires educators to adapt to a different teaching (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015:48).

4.6.4 Possible improvements

4.6.4.1 Improvement at school level

The teachers from schools A, C, D and E mentioned that regular workshops can enable teachers to be well-equipped with the inclusive education policies as well as possible intervention strategies to remedy the situation at schools.

The teacher from school A further suggested the following:

“Maybe if the SBST and the Principal can apply for a mobile teaching class or have a centre for remedial education or some teaching aids facilities, we may have educators who can be available in that class to give support to these learners, I think...”

The teachers from school B acknowledged training has been done for teachers who are members of the school-based support team, but further suggested that training should include all teachers across all phases, even those who do not serve in the school-based support team. In the same vein, the teacher from school A suggested that research be conducted in order to help learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Parental involvement was cited by school B's teachers as a basic necessity in trying to respond to the learning needs of learners with barriers.

The teachers from schools A, B, C and D suggested that the support offered by the District-based Support Team is minimal, very poor, and of low quality. Teacher A from school D bluntly stated:

"There is no meaningful support from the District at this moment."

4.6.4.2 Improvement at District level

Respondents from schools A, B and C advised that in order to improve on the implementation of inclusive education, the relevant district officials should respond quickly whenever called by schools for help. This view, that improved support and monitoring would improve implementation of inclusive education in the district, was emphasized by teacher 1 from school D, who said:

"First give each school its own District-Based Support person who is at the school at least 1 day per week. You give one person too many schools and they cannot do everything."

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter entailed the analysis and interpretation of the research findings after in-depth interviews were conducted at five selected primary schools, and a questionnaire completed by teachers from the schools used in this study, with regard to the implementation of inclusive education. This analysis was preceded by the identification of the main themes and categories. The chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of biographical and interview data as well as the data from questionnaires. A brief profile of the participants was firstly presented. The data interpretation focused on the understanding of inclusive education as well as the extent and level of implementation of inclusive education in the Ditsobotla district.

The researcher experienced great satisfaction in conducting the interviews. Empathy was displayed by each of the participants as they described some of the emotionally-touching cases of some of their learners. The refusal of some learners to welcome learners experiencing barriers to learning in their groups during group-work and labelling them as incompetent, was cited as an example.

Chapter five will provide an overview of this investigation, a synthesis of the significant findings, and recommendations for further research, as well as a concluding remark.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter focuses on the contributions of the study, its limitations, and recommendations for future research. The aim of the study was to investigate the challenges for the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office.

5.2 ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the position of implementing inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools. On the basis of the findings, a literature review was carried out to contextualise the results, observed by a description of intervention programmes that can be used at school level and district level. The following part offers the contributions of this study.

Firstly, the study provided information about the strategies that teachers in the mainstream primary schools can use to effectively implement the inclusive education policies in their schools. The study showed that teachers have had very limited or even no exposure to and experience of the inclusive education policy statements and guidelines in terms of information, training or support in preparation for the development of an inclusive system of education. Moreover, the study indicated that the Department should provide teachers with inclusive education policies as well as intensive training. The study furthermore provided insight into the ways in which the schools differed in terms of their implementation strategies as well as the specific resources which they required to provide adequately for the implementation of inclusive education.

Furthermore, this study added to the knowledge base in this field, complementing existing literature, which shows how teachers in primary schools are actually implementing inclusive education, rather than reporting briefly on the implementation in general. The study looked at the strategies in primary schools in depth by specifically naming the strategies employed, affording teachers the opportunity to show the knowledge that they had with regard to inclusive education.

Secondly it was anticipated that the study will convey the gaps in the management and governance of the schools by outlining the role of institutional development and support

officers play in schools. This would facilitate the implementation of school policies as there will be systems in place.

The study is also expected to expand knowledge in terms of developing learners' portfolios from the day they enter grade R. The portfolio will ensure that teachers and schools understand the support needs of all learners so that the delivery of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum is enhanced. In this way learners' participation will be maximised in the classroom situation. Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) would help practitioners find ways to develop learners for maximum participation in classrooms, hence its primary focus is to facilitate school access for learners, especially those learners who are not supported or totally excluded; for this to become a reality, appropriate support must be available.

Lastly, the study addresses the gap between the Department of Education and the schools, as well as support of professional staff as part of the District-Based Support Team. Such professional staff should provide curriculum support, including assessment, in respect of specialised teaching methodologies and use of specialised equipment to teachers in primary schools, which meet the needs of all learners.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings and conclusion derived from the views of the participants in the study, the following recommendations are made to effectively implement inclusive education in primary schools in the Ditsobotla Education District. The recommendations that emanate from the results of this study are divided into general and further research.

5.3.1 General recommendations

5.3.1.1 Role of the Department of Education

The Department of Education at national level has a pivotal role to play in giving direction to schools, educators, and all role-players in terms of policy formulation and provision of guidelines on the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The literature study has confirmed that after issuing the White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training system (DoE, 2001), the Department of Education drafted a number of policies and guidelines as a follow-up to the White Paper to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education in schools. Some of these policies and guidelines are the following:

- The report on Implementing Inclusive Education in SA (2008)

- The National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS: 2008)
- Guidelines for Full-Service/Inclusive Schools (2010)
- Guidelines for Inclusive teaching and learning (2010)
- Responding to Diversity through the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011)

Based on the above, it is recommended that the Department of Education should:

5.3.1.2 Ensure that all schools have copies of all relevant documents

The data from interviews indicated that members of SBST, especially at farm and township schools, are not aware of the existence of other policy developments besides the White Paper 6, and they claim to have been trained only in the completion of forms on the background information of the learner for referral to specialised therapy. This implies that they have not seen copies of the documents. These findings suggest that teachers have had very limited or even no exposure to and experience of the inclusive education policy statements and guidelines in terms of information, training, and/or support in preparation for the development of an inclusive system of education.

Data from the literature study confirmed that the Department of Education developed and supplied policies, guidelines, and resource packs as resources to utilise, in order to include learners with barriers, but teachers are not aware of the existence of such guidelines.

Based on the above, it is strongly recommended that the Department should ensure that all schools have copies of all relevant documents and that teachers are exposed to those documents, as well as the training and/or support needed in preparation for the development of an inclusive system of education.

5.3.1.3 Develop capacity building through ongoing training

Data from the interviews confirmed that members of the school-based support teams are not clear on what their duties and responsibilities are with regard to dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning. Most members of the SBST think that their role is to complete referral forms to refer learners for specialised therapy and to capture information of such learners on the school's electronic information system. White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) states that the primary function of these teams is to put in place properly-coordinated learner

and educator support services through support to the teaching and learning process by identifying and addressing learner, educator, and institutional needs.

Based on the above, the researcher recommends that school-based support teams be trained and capacitated on all policies and guidelines so that these teams are able to develop other educators and ensure stakeholder consultation. Training should focus on supporting all learners, educators, and the system as a whole, so that the full range of learning needs are met.

5.3.1.4 Reduce learner- educator ratio

The large number of learners per class was an issue reported by the participants, as well as the understaffing in schools. The concern raised was that a learner with an impairment demands more attention, yet no provision is made for this by the Department of Education with regard to class sizes. Based on the above, the researcher strongly recommends that the educator-learner ratio should be adjusted in order to enable an educator to pay effective attention to the needs of each learner. This may be accomplished by reducing the number of learners in a class, especially in the foundation phase, to a maximum of thirty in a class.

5.3.1.5 Ensure availability of enough District support staff

The Education White Paper 6 (2001) states that educators in mainstream education will be assisted so that they are better equipped to assist learners with special needs. The White Paper 6 (2001) calls for Learning Support Teachers at district level who provide support and services on an itinerant basis, and they could, if properly trained, also provide support in matters such as curriculum differentiation.

Data from the interviews and responses from the questionnaires indicated that support from the District-Based Support Team is minimal, because officials from the education section and therapists take a long time to monitor progress and offer support to both the SBST and referred learners. This is a consequence of overloading departmental officials and therapists with too many schools to work with, to monitor, and support.

Based on the above, the researcher strongly recommends that the Department of Education develop Human Resource Provisioning Norms for an inclusive system that will result in the employment of more support personnel, so that one official is given fewer schools to work with, monitor and support.

5.3.1.6 Review the post-provisioning system

Information gathered from the interviews indicated that school-based support teams are strengthened by the existence of a teacher who has specialised in remedial teaching or special education. It further confirmed that teachers who did not specialise in remedial teaching struggle to respond to the learning needs of learners experiencing barriers. This situation is aggravated by ill-informed school-based support teams, who cannot assist such teachers with their predicament. These struggling teachers become frustrated by the slow performance of these learners. They consequently start to develop negative attitudes towards them to the extent that these learners are ignored and thus excluded from the learning activity.

At school level, the researcher strongly recommends that a special education teacher or remedial teacher should be appointed in every school over and above the post-provisioning norm of the school. The special education teacher will lend practical assistance to educators with strategies to deal with learning barriers that learners face. Alternatively, the Department of Education could award bursaries to at least one currently employed teacher per school for remedial teaching part-time, with a portfolio of practical evidence as one of the pass requirements.

5.3.1.7 Orientating subject advisors on Curriculum Differentiation alongside the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

The literature study indicated that educators in mainstream education have to be empowered so that they are better equipped to assist learners with special needs. The White Paper 6 (2001) calls for Learning Support Teachers at district level who provide support and services on an itinerant basis, and they could, if properly trained, also provide support in matters such as curriculum differentiation. Data from interviews with participants exposed the fact that teachers do not know how to accommodate learning needs of learners with barriers in their classes through curriculum differentiation.

In an effort to institutionalise curriculum differentiation, it is recommended that subject advisors be orientated on Curriculum Differentiation alongside the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). These subject advisors should include curriculum differentiation in their control and monitoring tools that they use to monitor curriculum delivery at schools.

5.3.1.8 The role of the teacher in implementing inclusive education

The role of the teacher in ensuring that the diverse learning needs of all learners in the class are catered for cannot be overemphasised. Teachers play a pivotal role in observing and identifying children in their classrooms who experience barriers to learning and in devising interventions in an attempt to address such barriers. Over and above this, the following recommendations are made with regard to teachers to ensure that their classes and teaching are not only inclusive, but also responsive to the diverse learning needs of all learners, including those who experience barriers to learning. Accordingly, teachers should:

- Present their lessons in the official language of teaching and learning of the school and assess learners in the same language, and moreover refrain from explaining concepts to learners in the vernacular.
- Be life-long learners who read publications, periodicals, and journals on recent international trends, intervention strategies and helpful practices that would help them make their classes more inclusive.
- Institutionalise curriculum differentiation by differentiating content that they teach to accommodate all learners without lowering the standard and compromising quality.
- Differentiate assessment activities in class knowing that assessment should not be pitched on the same uniform cognitive level for all learners, because learners differ in the way they learn.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Based on the information gathered in this study, the following recommendations are made for further study:

- The researcher recommends that since there is a need for effective implementation of inclusive education in schools, it is important that the role of institutional development and support officers should also be looked at. This would facilitate the implementation of inclusive education policies as there will be systems in place
- In mainstream primary schools, there is a need to develop a portfolio for each learner from the day they enter Grade R. The profile must be structured in such a way that it ensures that teachers and schools understand the support needs of all learners so as to enhance the delivery of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum. In this way, learners' participation will be maximised in the classroom situation.

- Since only principals and teachers were part of the study, further studies should incorporate the viewpoints of parents to add to the literature currently available.
- Further study on the phenomenon of the implementation of inclusive education should include special- and full-service schools so that similarities and differences in implementation of inclusive education can be established.
- Furthermore, a major part of responding to the diversity found inside the classroom is through effective and efficient teacher preparation. Special education teachers often feel that they are inadequately prepared to address the needs of learners with varying categories of needs. A change in the national teacher preparation programme is needed to prepare these teachers.
- The Provincial Department of Education in the North West Province should provide quality support for professional staff as part of the District-Based Support Team. The professional staff should be part of the teams that monitor the School-Based Support Team in schools. They should support schools in the implementation of the strategy that enables all learners to learn effectively, and provide a network of support to mainstream primary schools in collaboration with other community-based support structures to enhance the implementation of inclusive education policies.
- This study was conducted specifically in primary schools. Further study on the same phenomenon could be researched in secondary schools as well.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study include the following:

- This study entailed eliciting the viewpoints of principals and teachers who are members of the school-based support teams regarding the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools and, as such, only the viewpoints of these participants were included in this study.
- This study used purposive sampling – the limitations of this method might be that participants can easily manipulate the data, causing invalid research outcomes.
- Although the study intended to use focus group interviews as one of data collection strategies, not all interview processes were conducted in that manner, due to the unavailability of teachers during specific scheduled times.

- Due to the restrictions posed by the socio-economic problems, experiences, and the distances between schools, the researcher applied a qualitative approach that could involve as many participants as possible on one occasion. The limitations of this method might have restrained the collection of in-depth rich data. Therefore, the work session was video-recorded and interviews were audio-taped, and an assistant was used to make sure that all the data were properly captured.
- Furthermore, this study focused on the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office. Accordingly, secondary schools were not part of the study and the findings can therefore not be generalised to all schools.

5.6 SUMMARY

This study set out to determine the extent of the implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in primary schools of the Ditsobotla Area Office. It further sought to establish ways and strategies that could be employed to effectively implement inclusive education in primary schools of the said district. A qualitative research design and methodology was adopted to investigate the phenomenon of inclusive education through an interview process with school-based support teams of selected primary schools. The study found that the nature of support in the mainstream primary schools towards the implementation of inclusive education policies has been lacking.

This study found that Inclusive education practices in mainstream primary schools have not been adequately established, and thus the practical implementation stage appears to have not taken its course.

Teachers have been found to function in isolation, with non-existent support from the District and the school. Despite the well-written government policy documents guiding the implementation process of inclusive education practices, there have been few efforts from responsible structures, for example, the District-Based Support Team (DBST) from the Department of Education, to embark on making this a reality. As a result, teachers remain untrained and unprepared to tackle the complex tasks that come with attending to the diverse learning needs of learners, while learners' learning needs remain unsupported. Among the many other strategies that can be employed in mainstream primary schools, active teacher training/preparation and the provision of resources stand as urgent matters to be attended to. The limitations of the study were also recorded and recommendations for further study were outlined.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – APPROVAL TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH



education

Lefapha la Thuto la Bokone Bophirima
Noord-Wes Onderwys Departement
North West Education Department
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Corner Nelson Mandela and
Bantjies Street,
Lichtenburg 2740
Tel.: (018) 832-7091
Tel.: (018) 633-8800
e-mail: tmaboe@nwpg.gov.za
e-mail: lmoshunyane@nwpg.gov.za

**OFFICE OF THE SUB-DISTRICT MANAGER: DITSBOTLA SUB-DISTRICT OFFICE
NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT**

Enquiries : NM Dlamini
Cell No : 0634368047
Tel No : 018 367 3544/2928
Email : nmdlamini@nwpg.gov.za

Date : 10 May 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Permission is herewith granted to Mr E.M. Doyi ID No: 9409075843080(student No: 26590123 to conduct research on:

TOPIC

The implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of Ditsobotla sub district

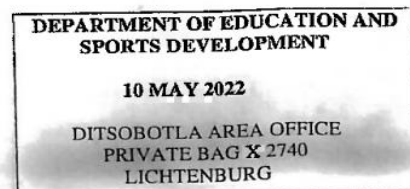
Disturbing lessons and teaching time must be totally avoided. A copy of the research finding should be made available to the Area Office and the schools that you will be attending to.

NB. The research will be done from June

Wishing you well in your study

Dr. T.P Maboe

Ditsobotla Acting Sub-District Manager



APPENDIX B – LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL



67 3rd street.
Burgersdorp
Lichtenburg
North West Province
2740

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Faculty of Education

ROE

Tel: 072 261 5514
Email: candicehyde4@gmail.com

13 June 2022

The Principal
.....

Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a M.Ed. student at the North West University Potchefstroom Campus and in the process of collecting data at primary schools in the Ditsobotla sub District. My research topic is

"The implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools of Ditsobotla Sub District.

Methods to be used to collect data are by a questionnaire for the principal and a group focus interview for the school-based support team (SBST) and Educators

Based on all at the above, I go on bent knees and request you to complete the enclosed questionnaire and allow me to conduct group interviews with the SBST on

_____ at 14h00 or any date and time that is convenient for the school.

I hope that you find all of the above in order.

Yours fraternally

Cell no: 0739649088

Email: doyimacibo@gmail.com

APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW QUESTION



Faculty of Education: Research & Innovation - M&D Administration

Interview Schedule for participants.

My name is Doyi E.M. I am a teacher at one of the primary schools around Ditsobotla cluster and doing research. I thought it would be a good idea to interview you, so that I can hear your experiences and challenges about the implementation of inclusive education.

A. (Purpose) I would like to ask you some questions about your experience as a primary school teacher towards inclusive education, and some of your strategies or intervention in order to learn more from you as teachers and share this information with others.

B. (Motivation) I hope to use this information to help Schools, Districts and the Department on how to implement inclusive education successfully.

C. (Time Line) The interview should take about 20-30 minutes.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT TEAM (SBST)

The Implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in primary schools of the Ditsobotla area office.

For your information, please note the following:

- Participation in the interview is voluntary
- Participants are free to opt out of the process at any time
- All responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for purposes of the study. Audio-cassettes will be destroyed after the research has been finalised. Anonymity will be guarded at all costs
- Your participation and contribution will be regarded as highly valuable.

QUESTIONS

1. Which areas in your School-Based Support Team (SBST) need strengthening and improvement?

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2. Which resources do you as teachers need so that you can make your teaching inclusive?

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3. What additional skills do teachers need to effectively implement the inclusive education policy?

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4. What type of support does the District Based Support Team (DBST) provide you with to implement inclusive education effectively?

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5. How is curriculum being modified to accommodate those learners experiencing barriers to learning?

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6. What should the Ditsobotla Education District do to effectively implement inclusive education?

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.....

QUESTIONNAIRE: THE TEACHERS

IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF THE DITSOBOTLA AREA OFFICE.

For your information, please note the following:

- Answer as honestly as you possibly can
- Participation and completion of this questionnaire is voluntary
- All responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for purposes of the study.
- Anonymity will be guarded at all costs
- Your participation and contribution will be regarded as highly valuable.
- Kindly return your completed questionnaire by using the enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope.

1. What do you understand by inclusive education?

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2. How are you involved in the inclusive education at the school?

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3. Do you believe that the current curriculum has been transformed in such a way that it caters for learners with barriers to learning?

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4. In your opinion, how do learners experiencing barriers to learning affect the school's academic performance?

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5. Are you empowered in your learning area by School -Based Support Team (SBST)?

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6. Are their training and workshops developmental to you?

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.....

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF THE DITSOBOTLA AREA OFFICE.

For your information, please note the following:

- Answer as honestly as you possibly can
- Participation and completion of this questionnaire is voluntary
- All responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be used for purposes of the study.
- Anonymity will be guarded at all costs
- Your participation and contribution will be regarded as highly valuable.
- Kindly return your completed questionnaire by using the enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope.

1. What are the intervention strategies that you provide to the School Based Support Team at your school?

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.....

.....

2. How often do you mentor your School-Based Support Team (SBST)?

.....
.....
.....

3. What Challenges do you encounter when mentoring your School Based Support Team (SBST)?

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4. To what level has the White Paper 6 Policy been implemented in the Ditsobotla District schools?

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.....

5. Does the School-Based-Support Team (SBST) use the SIAS Strategy effectively at your school?

.....
.....
.....

6. What is the vision of your school with the successful implementation of inclusive education policies?

.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX D – ETHICS CLEARANCE



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 24 February 2022, the Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: The implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in primary schools																
Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Dr N Shaikhmag																
Student / Team: EM Doyi (MEd student – 26590123), Dr S Naidoo																
Ethics number:	N	W	U	-	0	1	0	4	3	-	2	1	-	A	2	
	Institution						Study Number				Year			Status		
	Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation															
Application Type: Single study																
Commencement date: 24/02/2022											Risk:	Low				
Expiry date: 23/02/2023																
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

<p>General conditions:</p> <p>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the ES-REC:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and– without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.• The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the ES-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.• Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.• The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.• In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRC and ES-REC reserves the right to:

- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the ES-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The ES-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the ES-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof Jako Olivier
Chairperson NWU Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\DSS118533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Certificates\Templates\Research Ethics Approval Letters\9.1.5.4.1 ES-REC Ethical Approval Letter.docm
5 December 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

APPENDIX E – PLAGIARISM REPORT

26590123:Doyis_MASTERS_Dissertation.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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7	docplayer.net Internet Source	1 %
8	www.scielo.org.za Internet Source	1 %
9	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	1 %

APPENDIX F – LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

House 367

Hex River Lifestyle Estate

Waterkloof East Ext 17

Rustenburg 0299

07/09/2022

This is to certify that the Masters' thesis entitled

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Submitted by

EDWARD MACIBO DOYI



orcid.org 000-002-5100-7128

For the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION
(SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION)**

At the

NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY

Has been edited for language by

Mary Helen Thomas (B.Sc. Honis. PGCE)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Mary Helen Thomas'.

Email: thomashelen712@gmail.com

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