Developing an inclusive pedagogy approach for full-service schools: An action research approach

U Ojageer

orcid.org/0000-0002-7891-7543

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Promoter: Prof M Nel

Co-promoter: Dr MM Neethling

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Student number: 28298934

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Abstract

Full-service schools are fairly new institutions in South Africa which have been established in terms of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). Teachers in such schools are envisioned to have the knowledge, skills and expertise to practice an inclusive pedagogy. These full-service education institutions must have the capacity to provide for the full range of learning needs and to address barriers to learning. This requires special attention to the development of flexibility in teaching practices and styles through training, capacity building and the provision of support to learners and educators in these schools. However, the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach within inclusive education is reported by teachers in the FSS of this study as hampered by a myriad of challenges. This includes the lack of adequate training, support, resources and demanding contextual factors impacting on teaching and learning. The purpose of this study was to harness the good inclusive pedagogy practices and strategies that are implemented by teachers in a Full-Service School and extend these inclusive pedagogy practices to all FSS in South Africa through the development of an inclusive pedagogy guideline document. A case study design was used with a participatory action research approach (PAR) within a social constructivist paradigm where teachers were co-researchers in the development of the guideline. The participants and the researcher, within an Action Learning Set (ALS) worked collaboratively for the clarification of ideas, providing access to peer-feedback and promoting the sharing of diverse and alternate perspectives. Data was collected through a baseline questionnaire, classroom observations and document analysis, focus group discussions and reflective diaries. The researcher and participants formed the ALS to share ideas, engage in problem solving, brainstorm, produce artefacts, wrestle with difficult concepts, view and discuss most appropriate inclusive pedagogy approaches to teaching and learning. A first final draft was implemented and reviewed by the ALS with additions and amendments made which developed to the final inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

Opsomming

Voldiensskole is redelik nuwe instellings in Suid-Afrika wat gestig is in terme van Onderwyswitskrif 6 (Departement van Onderwys, 2001). Dit is beoog dat onderwysers in sulke skole die kennis, vaardighede en kundigheid verkry om ‘n inklusiewe pedagogie te beoefen. Hierdie voldiens onderwysinrigtings moet die vermoë hé om voorsiening te maak vir die volle omvang van leerbehoeftes en om hindernisse tot leer aan te spreek. Dit vereis spesiale aandag aan die ontwikkeling van buigsaamheid in onderrigpraktyke en style deur opleiding, kapasiteitsbou en die voorsiening van ondersteuning aan leerders en opvoeders in hierdie skole. Die implementering van 'n inklusiewe pedagogie-benadering binne inklusiewe onderwys word egter belemmer deur 'n magdom uitdagings wat deur die onderwysers in die Voldiensskool van hierdie studie rapporteer word. Dit sluit die gebrek aan voldoende opleiding, ondersteuning, hulpbronne en kontekstuele faktore wat impakteer op onderrig en leer in. Die doel van hierdie studie was om die goeie inklusiewe pedagogiepraktyke en -strategieë wat deur onderwysers in die Voldiensskool geïmplementeer word, te benut en hierdie inklusiewe pedagogiekpraktyke uit te brei na alle Voldiensskole in Suid-Afrika deur die ontwikkeling van 'n inklusiewe pedagogiekriglyndokument. 'n Gevallestudie ontwerp met ‘n deelnemende aksienavorsingsbenadering (PAR) binne 'n sosiale konstruktivistiese paradigma is gekies waar die onderwysers mede-navorsers was in die ontwikkeling van die riglyn. Die deelnemers en die navorser, binne ‘n Aksie Leer Stel (ALS) het saamgewerk vir die opklaring van idees, toegang tot eweknie-terugvoering en die bevordering van die deel van uiteenlopende en alternatiewe perspektiewe. Data is ingesamel deur middel van 'n basislyn vraelys, klaskamer waarnemings en dokumentanalise, fokusgroepbesprekings en reflektiewe dagboeke. Die navorser en deelnemers het die ALS gevorm om idees te deel, probleemoplossing, dinkskrums, artefakte te bestry, met moeilike konsepte te stoei, die mees gepaste inklusiewe pedagogiese benaderings tot onderrig en leer te besigtig en te bespreek. 'n Eerste finale konsep is geimplementeer en hersien met byvoegings en wysigings wat ontwikkel is tot die finale inklusiewe pedagogie riglyndokument.

DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER

I, Yvonne Smuts, hereby declare that I have been appointed by Usha Ojageer ("the candidate") to attend to the linguistic aspects of the research report that is hereby submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD degree from the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus, Vanderbijlpark.

To the best of my knowledge, all suggestions and recommendations made by me in this regard have been attended to by the candidate.

Title of dissertation: *Developing an Inclusive Pedagogy Approach for FSSs: An Action Research Approach.*

Date: …….7 March 2019

(Ms) Y Smuts

BA (Languages) (UP)

HED (cum laude) (UP)

SATI Accredited Translator (1002242)

Member Prolingua

Abbreviations

ADD	**Attention Deficit Disorder**
ADHD	**Attention deficit and hyperactive disorder**
ALS	**Action Learning Set**
ATP	**Annual Teaching Plans**
CAPS	**Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements**
DBE	**Department of Basic Education**
DBST	**District Based Support Team**
FP	**Foundation Phase**
FSS	**Full-Service Schools**
GDE	**Gauteng Department of Education**
HL	**Home Language**
NCSNET	**National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Organization**
PAR	**Participatory Action Research**
SBST	**School Based Support Team**
SGB	**School Governing Body**
SIAS	**Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Training**
UNESCO	**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural**
WP6	**Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education**

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction and rationale

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa places emphasis on the right to basic education for all children in South Africa irrespective of class, colour or disability. This right has major implications for the country's education system. A quality education system has to be provided for all learners, enabling them to realise their full potential and thus contribute and participate meaningfully in society. The Constitution also emphasises the recognition of diversity. This too, according to Prinsloo (2001), has implications for an inclusive approach to education, resulting in the provision of an appropriate inclusive and supportive education system. Similarly, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 states that public schools have to admit all learners without any form of discrimination.

Furthermore, the rights of all learners (including learners who experience barriers to learning) are legislatively provided for in the inclusive education policy as promulgated in White Paper 6 (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2001). White Paper 6 (DBE, 2001) provides a framework for establishing an inclusive education system over a twenty-year period which includes the establishment of Full-Service Schools (FSSs) and resource centres that are staffed by teachers who are trained to support all learners regardless of their special needs or disabilities (Makoelle, 2012).

One of the key strategies and levers for establishing an inclusive education and training system as outlined in White Paper 6 (DBE, 2001) is the phased conversion of approximately 500 out of 20 000 primary schools to FSS, initially commencing with the 30 school districts in Gauteng that are part of the national district development programme (DBE, 2001). The latter involves the roll-out of FSSs in all education districts in the nine provinces of South Africa.

These full-service educational institutions are to be assisted by the national and provincial Departments of Education to develop their capacity to provide education to a full range of learning needs. Consequently, it is envisaged that teachers at these schools will be trained and capacitated to develop flexibility in teaching practices and styles as well as be able to provide support to learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

FSSs have a specific role in catering for learners who require more moderate levels of support. Support in FSSs is, therefore, site-based. Teachers and the district-based support teams (DBSTs) at the various education districts will also be encouraged to develop these schools as resource centres for teachers and learners from neighbouring schools. The Department of Education's document, Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (2005), further suggests that the programmes developed in these schools should be carefully monitored and evaluated by the school-based support teams (SBST) within the schools, the DBST and the provincial offices. In addition to professional support, support can also be provided by non-teachers like the school governing body (SGB), caregivers, families and peers.

However, although much has been constructed to achieve the aims of converting FSSs, the question still remains as to whether these documents have translated into action 14 years later, after the introduction of EWP 6 in 2001 (DoE, 2010). This question especially applies to the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy in classrooms and to ensure that teachers are fully equipped to manage the diversity of needs in an FSS (Makoelle, 2012; Walton, Nel, Muller & Leboloane, 2013). It is acknowledged that implementing an inclusive pedagogy is not an easy task and requires significant transformation to facilitate improvements in the way teachers have been working in the classroom (Sharma, Loreman & Forlin, 2012).

One of the key challenges for teachers is the inability to respond to the diversity of learning needs in ways that include learners rather than exclude them from what is ordinarily

available in the daily life of the classroom (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). The authors further state that meeting this challenge sets a high standard for inclusive practices because extending what is ordinarily available to all learners is a multifaceted pedagogical effort (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). It requires a shift in the teaching and learning approach that works for most learners in which they learn alongside something 'additional' or 'different' for those who experience difficulties, towards one that involves the development of a rich learning community characterised by learning opportunities that are made available for everyone (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2010; Florian & Linklater, 2010). Florian and Linklater (2010) believe that with this approach all learners will be able to participate in mainstream classroom life.

In addition, according to Engelbrecht and Green (2001), teachers in South Africa have developed a resistant attitude towards change due to the autocratic style of change implementation by the Department of Education. The principle question is, therefore, "How can teachers be supported to change their beliefs and attitudes from the traditional methods of teaching (separate education based on classification of disabilities, i.e. the medical deficit model) to using inclusive pedagogy in an inclusive classroom environment within an FSS?"

An additional challenge to the state of inclusive pedagogy in South African schools is the uncertainty of teachers regarding the expectations of an inclusive pedagogy approach (DoE, 2002). In a national education workshop, it was reported that researchers from Botswana, South Africa and Namibia conducted case study research to illuminate inclusive education policy implementation within the local contexts (DBE, 2013). The case studies revealed that often opposing discussion of inclusion and disability existed in teachers' enactment of policy. It was evident that the social rights discourse versus the medical-deficit discourse played out in inconsistent ways with the medical-deficit discourse still being predominantly implemented. For example, teachers still believed that they did not have the expertise or knowledge to support

all learners and much preferred to refer learners for placement in remedial classes as well as special classes (Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel & Tlale, 2014).

Furthermore, the language associated with the medical-deficit discourse continues to operate alongside a social rights discourse. Labels such as learners with severe psychological barriers, learners with learning barriers, remedial learners, slow learners and normal versus disabled learners continue to be used. Within an inclusive education framework non-labelling terminology such as learners in need of support or learners experiencing barriers to learning is much preferred; thus, shifting the focus from the learner's disability to the supportive educational needs. (De Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2009).

However, the question arises: "What is the quality of education offered, especially to learners experiencing barriers to learning?" (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Several researchers (e.g. Engelbrecht, 2013; Kozleski, Gonzalez, Atkinson, Lacy & Mruczek, 2013; Loreman 2010), as well as policy documents (DBE, 2001, 2010, 2014) affirm that teachers play a crucial role in developing FSSs. Teachers should not be merely required to comply with policy but also as enactors and enablers of the inclusive education policy. Yet, despite many teachers fully supporting the concept of inclusive education, they still feel (14 years later) that they are not adequately capacitated to satisfactorily equip learners experiencing barriers to learning with skills to become functional citizens of society (Neethling, 2014).

Since FSSs reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, teachers are expected to ensure that the learning needs of all learners, should be met in mainstream (as opposed to separate or special) classrooms (Walton et al., 2014). This puts greater pressure on teachers who may not have little knowledge or expertise in the field of inclusive education or inclusive pedagogy. It is, therefore, strongly recommended by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) that teacher development programmes need to incorporate creative inclusive pedagogy

methodologies to enable them to reflect on their deep-seated assumptions, ideologies and values that shape their understanding of inclusion.

My personal experience involves being a teacher at the Johannesburg Social Welfare Association (JISWA), a school for the intellectually impaired, as well as teaching learners with special educational needs in a mainstream school has placed me in a position to identify the challenges of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy. My experiences in these fields highlight the challenge of 'practice' versus 'paper'. What is written on paper (i.e. policies such as EWP 6) is often not easily implementable on a practical level, as the context of each school varies; for example, certain schools are better resourced than others. In advantaged schools, teachers are better equipped to deal with diversity in the classroom, as the school is able to secure funding to ensure that in-service training is done regularly to keep teachers abreast of international trends in inclusive education. Some schools have the advantage of employing teacher assistants providing additional support for the teacher in the classroom.

The varying degrees of parental involvement in school activities also has a direct impact on the success of an inclusive approach to teaching and learning. There has to be a collaborative partnership with the teacher, learner, parent/caregiver and the service provider for the success of an intervention plan. Other dilemmas schools face is the high turnover of staff. Schools invest large sums of money in capacitating teachers who often leave the education fraternity due to personal growth, retirement or resignation with no benefit to the school. Further to this is the lack of adequate classrooms leading to serious overcrowding. In most workshops attended by me, teachers have expressed their frustration at the large number of learners in the classrooms. There between 40 to 50 learners in many classes throughout South Africa.. These are but a few contributory factors that have an impact on the success of policy implementation.

I am currently a whole-school evaluation (WSE) supervisor based at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) at head office who is responsible for the monitoring and support of all public schools, including FSSs, resource centres and special schools.

Regular workshops, mediation sessions or information-sharing sessions are conducted with the aim of capacitating teachers in inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. Through these sessions it has been identified that teachers are not prepared to deal with the diversity of needs that exists in classrooms. Adding to their frustrations is the diversity of languages that learners are competent in, this poses a further barrier to effective teaching and learning.

At many of our capacitation sessions, teachers have expressed their fears and insecurities regarding inclusive pedagogy approaches, assessment techniques and the development of intervention programmes that address diverse learning needs.

The argument teachers present is, while the Department of Basic Education preaches learner-paced and learner-based teaching, teachers are faced with demands of inflexible curriculum coverage (completing the curriculum within time constraints) as well as National Standardised Assessments (NA). Although it is administered strictly for the purpose of systemic evaluations, schools are categorised as underperforming, should they achieve below 60%. This contributes to labelling, and could further demotivate teachers towards becoming fully inclusive teachers. More so in FSSs, as these schools have to facilitate a much greater range of learning needs as compared to mainstream schools (DoE, 2005). However, the increasing cultural, linguistic and developmental diversity of today's classrooms demand more inclusive approaches to schooling (Florian, 2012). This is where I positioned the envisioned study, as it is clearly evident that ongoing focused support on a practical level is critical to the success of FSSs becoming implementers of an inclusive pedagogy approach within an inclusive environment.

Moreover, as indicated by Makoelle (2012), various support models seem to imply that the learning problems that learners encounter in the teaching and learning situation stem from the learner, and very little is said about how the environment, the support skills of teachers and specifically, the inclusive pedagogy, could affect the learning process. This study, therefore, supports the belief that a teacher committed to an inclusive pedagogy approach must accept primary responsibility for the learning of all learners in the classroom by providing equal opportunities for them to learn within a classroom community that does not make judgements about ability (Florian & Linklater, 2010).

Teachers are therefore required to have an in-depth understanding of inclusive pedagogy to ensure its appropriate implementation. This refers to the knowledge and skills required by teachers to inform the decisions they make about their inclusive practices (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

1.2 Problem statement

It can, therefore, be summed up that inclusive education represents a significant personal and professional change that requires reconceptualisation of roles and responsibilities, redistribution of resources and new ways of thinking (Makoelle, 2012).

It all begins with the task of developing an inclusive curriculum where teachers ask critical questions about themselves, the school and society in general as well as pedagogical and educational practices (Cesar & Santos, 2006). The authors argue that the key to building an FSS is the transformation of the conventional curriculum and how it is taught (Cesar & Santos, 2006). One can, therefore, not discuss inclusive schooling or even a flexible curriculum (cf. 2.5.6.9.) without reforming existing pedagogy in an FSS. However, for this to be actualised, teachers need ongoing in-service training and support. Hence, using the participatory action research (PAR) approach, with the teachers as co-researchers, an inclusive pedagogy guideline

document was developed for all Foundation Phase teachers enabling them to enact an inclusive pedagogy approach in an FSS.

Having teachers as co-researchers in PAR action learning set (ALS) ensured that the inclusive pedagogy guideline document is more focused on the needs of the teachers in the management of learner diversity in FSSs. The inclusive pedagogy guideline document has been developed by the implementers of inclusive education at "grassroots level"; thus, making it relevant to the needs of the teachers as identified by the teachers for the teachers in the Foundation Phase. Through experiences as an education official with several teachers throughout Gauteng, the feeling has been that the Foundation Phase is where the barriers need to be identified and supported through an inclusive pedagogy approach. If the foundation is well supported, the barriers are minimised or resolved in future years. Early identification leads to early intervention resulting in reduced barriers to learning.

Secondly, the reason for focusing on the Foundation Phase is that teachers in this phase are stationed with their learners throughout the school day for all subjects, namely Literacy, Mathematics and Life Skills. They are thus able to provide opportunities in an integrated manner for holistic learning within an inclusive pedagogy framework to meet the learning needs of diverse learners.

1.3 Research question

The above deliberation lead to the following research question:

How can Foundation Phase teachers be supported to provide for, and respond to, the diversity of learning needs in an FSS through an inclusive pedagogy approach; thus, ensuring that all learners achieve their optimal potential?

The primary research question has been operationalised through the following secondary research questions:

i. What is inclusive pedagogy?

ii. What is the inclusive pedagogy approach currently employed in an FSS?

iii. What kind of support will teachers require to implement an inclusive pedagogy approach?

iv. What can be included in an inclusive pedagogy guideline document for the Foundation Phase of FSSs?

1.3.1 Purpose statement

The primary research aim will therefore be to develop an inclusive pedagogy guideline document for an FSS through a PAR approach to enable Foundation Phase teachers to provide for, and respond to, the diversity of learning needs in an FSS; thus, ensuring that all learners achieve their optimal potential.

1.4 Conceptualisation of the research topic

Inclusive education is defined as a process of meeting the diverse needs of all learners by minimising barriers to learning within the learning environment (DBE, 2001).

Inclusive pedagogy is a teaching and learning approach concerned with redressing the limitations on learning that are often inadvertently placed on learners when they are judged as 'less able' (DBE, 2001).

FSSs are defined as "schools that will be equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs among all our learners" (DBE, 2001, p. 22). In building capacity of these schools, special emphasis will be placed on inclusive principles which include flexibility in teaching and learning and the provision of education support to learners and teachers.

1.5 Research methodology

1.5.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is "a way of looking at the world" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 21). It is a strategy that explains the epistemology, theory and the methodological paradigm and methods used in research (Birks & Mills, 2011). In this research, PAR has been positioned as a paradigm in social science and not merely as a methodology.

1.5.2 Epistemology paradigm

Knowledge creation occurred when the researcher and the participants in ALS were empowered to reflect and transform their meaning schemes (cf. 3.5) in terms of their beliefs, attitudes, opinions and emotional reactions (Mertens, 2010; Mertens & Wilson, 2012; Stringer, 2007). The Action Learning Set (ALS) (cf. 1.7.2.) reflected on current social reality which, in this case, is the effective implementation of inclusive pedagogy in the classroom, identifying factors that need to change, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation (Bohman, 2012).

My role, as principal researcher, (cf. 4.6.4) was firstly to develop a relationship with the teachers in the ALS (cf. 1.7.2) before they could explore the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach in an FSS. Through collaboration and focus group discussions the current problems in the inclusive classroom became clear, and the ALS decided on actions to develop an inclusive pedagogy guideline document to support all Foundation Phase teachers in a FSS. Knowledge, challenges, values and fears were created and shared, and conflicting arguments sought, rather than handing out ready-made truths that assumed solutions for problems in the inclusive classroom.

For this reason, the enquiries were conducted with the participants rather than about them which resulted in developing scholarships of teaching and learning (Hutchings, Huber &

Ciccone, 2011). In the process, the epistemology reflected the basic rationale and methods of inclusive pedagogy as a reality constructed in an FSS in an under-resourced and socio-economically disadvantaged context. The assets were influenced by different factors such as knowledge of the process, understanding of the value of assets and experiences that had been acquired to apply knowledge, and attitudes towards the process (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2010). It was, therefore, important that all members of the ALS were regarded as capable individuals to generate their own theories of practice based on their actual years of experience (cf. 4.6.1) and not as passive followers with their own intrinsic capacity of individual judgment and perceptions (Garrick, 1999).

Furthermore, based on Paulo Freire's epistemology, PAR rejects the view that consciousness is a copy of external reality and that the world is a creation of consciousness. For Freire, human consciousness brings a reflection on material reality where critical reflection is action. Freire's concept of praxis flows from the position that action and reflection are united when he states that "reflection and action on the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1972, p. 149). Similarly, PAR perceives that action and reflection must go together. When action and reflection take place at the same time, they become creative and mutually illuminate each other. Through this practice, critical consciousness develops, leading to further action. As a result, people no longer see their situation as "dense" but instead as "an historical reality prone to transformation" (Freire, 1972). This transformative power is central to the PAR process.

1.5.3 Ontological paradigm in this research

The ontological paradigm in this research is related to the social view of the ALS regarding an inclusive pedagogy in an FSS. To apply ontology in this research, the participation f the ALS in an FSS were developed and shaped by moral, social, political, cultural and economic values indigenous to their social settings. In shaping the reality, the application of dialogical, dialectic and hermeneutic approaches was relevant to this research (Kemmis &

McTaggart, 2000; Schurink, 1998; Strydom; 2005). The nature of inquiry in transformative theory required an open dialogue among the members of the ALS to reflect on the assets and the barriers that were encountered in the action learning process regarding the practical application of such knowledge in an FSS. As participants, they needed to take equal responsibility for the outcome of the research (Cresswell, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Maree, 2010), since all members of the ALS were seen as equally important. The application of the above approaches to the research implied a democratic, empowering and humanising approach (Stringer, 2007). In this manner, the ontological viewpoint linked well with the theoretical viewpoint of the research.

1.5.4 Theoretical framework

My study adopted a social constructive paradigm within a participatory action research approach where, as suggested by (Vygotsky, 1978) human beings create 'meaning' from an educational experience by learning with others. The ALS engaged collaboratively in the development of a guideline document focusing on inclusive pedagogy in an FSS. Collaborative learning facilitates the clarification of ideas, provides access to peer-feedback and promotes the sharing of diverse and alternate perspectives (Nel, et al. 2014). Through four methods of data collection, which were baseline questionnaire, participant observation and document analysis, focus group discussion and reflective diaries, the social constructivist philosophy stressed the importance of social interactions in the construction of knowledge (education.indiana.edu, 2016). The ALS were able to share ideas, engage in problem solving, brainstorm, produce artefacts, wrestle with difficult concepts, view and discuss inclusive pedagogy strategies (Creswell, 2012).

The participatory action research (PAR) approach has a few background principles, namely, it reflects questioning about the nature of knowledge and the extent to which knowledge can represent the interests of the powerful and serve to reinforce their positions in

society. It affirms that experience can be a basis of knowing and that experiential learning can lead to a legitimate form of knowledge that influences practice.

This perspective was strongly supported by the work of Freire (1972) who used PAR to encourage poor and deprived communities to examine and analyse the structural reasons for their oppression. From these roots PAR grew as a methodology; thus, enabling researchers to work in partnership with communities in a manner that led to action for change.

PAR also seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it. So, the process of PAR should be empowering and lead to people having increased control over their lives (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). However, PAR differs from conventional research in three ways.

Firstly, it focuses on research with the purpose of enabling action. Action is achieved through a reflective cycle, whereby participants collect and analyse data, then determine what action should follow. The resultant action is then further researched and an iterative reflective cycle perpetuates data collection, reflection and action.

Secondly, PAR pays careful attention to power relationships, advocating for power to be shared deliberately between the researcher and the researched, blurring the line between them until the researched become the researchers. The co-researchers cease to be objects and become partners in the PAR process, including selecting the research topic and data collection method as well as data analysis and deciding what action should happen as a result of the research findings. PAR posits that the observer has an impact on the phenomena being observed, and it brings to their inquiry a set of values that will exert influence on the study (Creswell, 2012).

Thirdly, PAR advocates that those being researched should be involved in the process actively. Therefore, this study has employed an interpretative paradigm as its framework. Maree (2010) declares that the transformative perspective is based on the assumption that

human life can only be understood from within and cannot be observed from some external point. Interpretivists, therefore, focus on people's subjective experiences, on how people construct their social world by sharing meaning, and on how they interact with or relate to one another. Therefore, the study adopted a social constructivist paradigm within a participatory action research (PAR) approach where, as suggested by Vygotsky (1978), human beings create "meaning" from an educational experience by learning with others.

1.5.5 The PAR design

The two-dimensional research study firstly took the form of qualitative participatory action research involving Foundation Phase teachers in an FSS. The study was transformative and allowed the participants to jointly define the constructs of inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy and FSSs, to identify good practices of inclusion pedagogy through participant observation and document analysis, to adopt other practices in their classes, to determine the effect of such practices on inclusive teaching and learning, and finally, to draw conclusions about the specific practices that were seemingly effective in the context of the school.

Secondly, an inductive analytical framework was used by the ALS to determine the theoretical contributions that the study would make to the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach in current FSSs. The purpose of qualitative PAR within a transformative paradigm was to explore the inclusive pedagogy approach that was practised by Foundation Phase teachers in an FSS to ensure that the needs of all learners were met.

The acquisition of new knowledge and understanding in the field of inclusive pedagogy assisted in the development of an inclusive pedagogy guideline document for Foundation Phase teachers in a FSS. In education, PAR has been used as a methodology and a paradigm to improve and strengthen the curriculum for the professional development of teachers (McTaggart, 1997). The reason for using PAR as a paradigm and methodology is because it is

a systematic approach to help professionals change practice by using a participatory model that includes several individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). PAR involves action, evaluation and critical reflection, and is based on evidence first gathered in practice and then implemented.

PAR promotes change in classrooms and schools; therefore, teachers are involved as participants throughout the study. PAR also promotes greater collaboration among those with a vested interest in the results, an integration of research and practice as well as a willingness to test new ideas (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Furthermore, PAR permits information sharing between the researcher and the participant, affording both an opportunity to share and learn. Typically, the participants in the research, namely the teachers, "own" the problem and become partners in carrying out the research (Maree, 2010).

In addition, qualitative research integrates the methods and techniques of observing, documenting, analysing and interpreting characteristic patterns, attributes and meanings of the human phenomena under study (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). Therefore, the purpose of a qualitative methodology is to describe and understand rather than to predict and control (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995).

In this study, the ALS comprised Foundation Phase teachers in an FSS and me as the principal researcher. The PAR model for strategic planning was iterative and cyclical in nature. The ALS tested their emerging theories, made adjustments, applied new approaches and refined how to address inclusive pedagogy in their respective classroom practices. The research process unfolded in two phases and four cycles (see Figure 1 and Table 1 respectively). The cycles are depicted below.

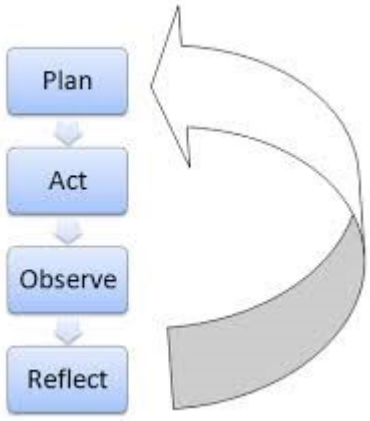

Figure 1. 1. PAR stages (Kemmis & MacTaggart, 2005)

The PAR stages of Kemmis and MacTaggart (2005) were used as a guide in the collection of data and consisted of two phases and four cycles:

1.5.5.1 Phase 1: Planning (cf. 4.4.5.2.).

During monitoring and support visits as the departmental official to mainstream and specifically FSSs in Gauteng, Foundation Phase (FP) teachers repeatedly expressed their frustration and inadequacies with various aspects of inclusive education, especially with regard to the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach. Aspects of concern, as indicated by these teachers, involved the lack of training and support to address the diverse learning needs in their classrooms, simply meaning the accommodation and inclusion of all learners through an appropriate inclusive pedagogy approach. These concerns prompted me to explore an inclusive pedagogy so as to address the needs of all learners in the Foundation Phase in an FSS.

To achieve this goal, the FP teachers and I needed to collaborate, using an action learning set (ALS) approach in which they could explore and investigate, and then develop an inclusive pedagogy guideline document which could support Foundation Phase FSS teachers to implement an appropriate inclusive pedagogy approach.

1.5.5.2 Phase 2: Taking action

An FSS in the Sedibeng East region within the Gauteng Province was selected, since it has been identified by the GDE as progressive in the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy and inclusive education approach. This was evident in that teachers receive ongoing training in curriculum adaptation, differentiated learning, management of learner diversity, learner discipline and refresher courses to keep abreast of all developments in the context of an FSS. This environment, therefore, has allowed for rich data to be collected.

1.5.5.2.1 Cycle 1: Building a relationship of trust (see table 4.3.)

Establishing trust among the members of the ALS is crucial to the success of the PAR process. In this research, trust-building was a process of mutual recognition and acceptance of the participants as knowledgeable and experienced contributors. This approach led to more self-confidence in actively taking part in the study (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014).

The first activity employed in this cycle was a collage (annexure F.) with the aim of breaking the ice, and not gathering data. The reason for this was to encourage collaboration and the spirit of Ubuntu (essential human virtues) Phasha and Condy, (2016), as participants would be working together very closely in the ALS. The collage was done to express their views on an ideal FSS. I was not a participant in this activity. As the principal researcher I merely facilitated the process. The information derived through this activity assisted in preparing for future cycles.

Group facilitation using creative arts provided an opportunity for the co-researchers to share and discuss their metaphorical representations with fellow co-researchers and the principal researcher which potentially opened up new avenues for discussion (Shepard & Guenette, 2010). I decided that this was the most appropriate activity, as the creation of a collage could be a freeing and playful experience. Another advantage of this activity was that

it could lessen anxiety since it is "a non-threatening medium where an individual does not need to feel 'artistic' in producing their piece of work" (Williams, 2000, p. 274). Since the pictures had already been created, the ALS was only required to place them on poster board until satisfied to verbalise their feelings and knowledge.

Because the context of the study was an FSS, I felt it was important to gauge if members of the ALS had knowledge of what components constituted an FSS. For example, adequate physical resources, a flexible curriculum and involved parents. The question for the collage activity reads as follows: "Using the collage as a vehicle, discuss your view of an ideal FSS." The ALS was supplied with magazines and then requested to cut out and paste pictures on a poster size page that articulated their views regarding an ideal FSS.

Every member of the ALS discussed their collage of an ideal FSS. The aspirations and wishes of the ALS were clearly evident. To some extent their understanding of FSS's was disclosed. The principle aim of this activity was also to move towards a vision to guide the study as well as to address aspects in the research question and sub-questions. Based on the contributions of the ALS, a vision statement was coined, namely "to develop an inclusive pedagogy guideline document to support all teachers to teach effectively in an FSS through a process of reflection, critical thinking and knowledge creation".

The second part of the afternoon session involved the administration of an open-ended baseline questionnaire (Annexure D.) to the six members of the ALS. The baseline questionnaire can be defined as an analysis of the situation prior to intervention at an intervention site (Makoelle, 2012). I did not complete the questionnaire but had to facilitate the process.

The purpose of the baseline questionnaire was twofold: it was to establish a relationship of trust through an immediate collaborative analysis of the data after completion of the

questionnaire and secondly, to ascertain the level of understanding of the members of the ALS in the field of inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy and FSSs.

The questionnaire consisted of four basic questions:

1. What do you understand by the terms below?

- Inclusive Education
- Inclusive Pedagogy
- Inclusive Environment
- Full-Service Schools

2. How inclusive, do you think, is your teaching currently? Please explain.
3. How do you feel about including learners with barriers to learning in your classroom?
4. Would you say that your pedagogy is inclusive? Please substantiate your answer.

After the questionnaire had been completed by the co-researchers in the ALS, each question was read out aloud and a discussion session ensued with input from all members of the ALS. They were given the opportunity to vent their frustrations and disappointments, but also encouraged to do it in a constructive manner for the purpose of identifying and/or responding to aspects in the research question or sub-questions. Therefore, I constantly guided them back to the purpose of the research by affirming their statements and probing these further. This focus group discussion session was audio- recorded and played back for analysis, verification of accuracy and member checking.

1.5.5.2.2 Cycle 2: Participant observations and document analysis (cf. 4.4.5.2.)

i) Participant observation

Participant observation can be an important contributing technique of data gathering, as it holds the possibility of providing an inside perspective of the group dynamics and behaviours in different settings (Maree, 2010). According to Atkins and Wallace (2012), the distinctive feature of participant observation as a research process is that it offers the researcher the opportunity to gather "live" data from naturally occurring social situations. The use of immediate awareness or direct cognition as a principal mode of research thus has the potential to yield valid and authentic data (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2007) which is the unique strength of participant observation.

Through participant observation I was able to see, hear and experience reality as the participants did in the research process. I first viewed the lesson planning and preparation document of the participant to be observed. This prepared me for the lesson that was to be delivered by the participant to be observed. For this data collection technique, the first section of the adapted GDE lesson observation instrument, which focused primarily on lesson observation, was utilised.

ii) Document Analysis

Prior to commencement of the participant observations and in the interest of crystallisation of data, a document analysis served to corroborate the evidence from participant observation, the reflective diaries and the focus group discussion. (Maree, 2010). Analysed documents of the participants included the lesson planning, preparation and their annual teaching plans (ATP's). These were given to me ahead of the observation period to gather a healthier insight into the lesson that was to be delivered and the inclusive practices that was to be implemented.

An adapted narrative GDE classroom observation instrument (Annexure E.) was used to guide the process of document analysis, ensuring consistency during the document analysis process.

After each participant had been observed, the data was analysed by the ALS in the focus group discussion. Recommendations regarding the challenges experienced in the implementation an inclusive pedagogy were made by the ALS and piloted by the ALS the next day.

1.5.5.2.3 Cycle 3: Focus group discussions (cf. 4.4.5.2.)

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that focus group discussions are an integral part of participant observation. In this study, there was no predetermination of questions; however, the adapted GDE instrument provided direction to the discussions. As one member commented about findings in the instrument it triggered useful responses from other participants in the ALS. The focus group discussions provided an opportunity for individuals within the ALS to discuss their own interpretations of how they had implemented inclusive pedagogy practices during lesson delivery to meet the needs of diverse learners in the classroom.

This focus group also included discussions on how they proposed to effect any changes to strengthen or improve the implementation of inclusive pedagogy in the delivery of the lesson through a process of trial and error. Again, part of the focus group discussion included document analysis of the planning and preparation of lessons in an inclusive approach through positive critique. This prompted action learning by repeating the cycle. In addition, the ALS utilised their reflective diaries to note any relevant information regarding their practices, feelings or other. This was discussed in the focus group discussions as well. So, in essence the focus group discussion consisted of a discussion of the participant observations and document analysis and reflective diaries of the ALS.

The ALS focus group met after every initial participant observation and thereafter after every follow-up observation (subsequent action stage) to elicit their views on the status of the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy and the best inclusive pedagogy strategies which would meet the diverse needs of all their learners. Through this process of reflection best practices were identified and documented to be included as part of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. A separate folder was used to document and file any suggestions with the aim of building up the first draft of the guideline document. Through the on-going focus group discussions, the inclusive pedagogy guideline document developed progressively from grade one to grade three. All three grades followed the same process of planning, observation, action and reflection.

To reiterate, the aims of using focus group discussions as a data generating technique were to:

i. Obtain the present perception of activities, feelings, motivations, thoughts and concerns through the participant observations

ii. Obtain future expectations or anticipated experiences through the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document

iii. Verify and extend information obtained from other sources such as planning and preparation documents

iv. Verify ideas developed by the participants or researcher through the testing process of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 35).

In addition, focus group discussions are a form of group interviews that capitalise on communication between members of the ALS in order to generate data. Instead of the principal researcher asking each member to respond to a question, members were encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions, exchange anecdotes and comment on one another's experiences

and points of view. The method was particularly useful for exploring their knowledge and experiences. It was used to examine not only what they thought but also how they thought and why they thought that way (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

1.5.5.2.4 Cycle 4: Reflective Diaries (cf. 4.4.5.2.)

A reflective diary is a written record of a researcher's activities, thoughts and feelings throughout the research process from design through data collection and analysis to writing and presenting the study (Bloor & Wood, 2006). The process of self-evaluating one's abilities or one's progress in strategy or skill acquisition is important for cultivating strong self-efficacy (Schunk, 2003). Under continually changing circumstances (such as curriculum changes), a teacher needs to develop a habit of constantly reflecting on his/her teaching practice (Wood & Olivier, 2008, p. 236). The reflective diary is also a legitimate source of data and a qualitative research method. According to Zuber-Skerritt (2013, p. 157), it "constitutes the ALS's subjective perspective that needs to be triangulated with the perspectives of the participants".

For the ALS to be able to effectively find solutions to challenges, it was essential that they reflect on their own learning, dissect their own thoughts, argue with themselves, and think about how their experiences will shape their future (Wallin, 2016). The ALS was encouraged to use reflective diaries throughout the research period reflecting on their own inclusive practices in the classroom as well as for recording their thoughts, feelings and any additional ideas they may have which would form the basis of the following focus group discussions.

After each cycle, the ALS would discuss relevant aspects extracted from their reflective diaries at that stage in the focus group discussion. The relevant data included classroom practices, knowledge created, reflection on their learning, comments on its possible significance, and critical events of the day. However, it should be mentioned that certain members of the ALS were reserved about openly discussing some aspects of the reflective

diaries. This was acknowledged and respected by the ALS. Events in the reflective diaries provided cause for further investigation and action in the cycle.

1.5.6. Participatory action research process

Table 1.1. presents a general overview of the research plan according to phases and cycles. The PAR process composed of two phases and four methods of data collection.

Table 1. 1. An Overview of the research plan

Phase	Cycle	Action
Phase 1 Problem and vision Conceptualising a vision to charter a way forward towards the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.		*Biographical questionnaire* to develop a profile of the participants in the ALS.
Phase 2 Building a relationship of trust	Cycle 1	• *Collage activity* (not for gathering data) Developed a vision statement for the research • *Baseline questionnaire* was administered to determine current knowledge of constructs and to prepare for future cycles.
	Cycle 2	*Participant observation* • Observation of current inclusive pedagogy practices by the principal researcher - *Document analysis* Teachers' planning and preparation files were viewed in preparation for the lesson to be observed.
	Cycle 3	*Focus group discussion* with the ALS includes a discussion of participant observation as well as the reflective diaries
	Cycle 4	*Reflective diaries* on the research process, reporting recommendation, reflecting on inclusive practices implemented
		Piloting of inclusive pedagogy guideline document (iterative cycle continues)

1.5.7 Purposeful sampling

De Vos and Strydom (2011, pp. 223-224) describe a sample as comprising elements or a subset which is selected from the population and used for the actual study. Purposeful sampling is important if a researcher wants to use a few cases in order to gain many insights about a specific topic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 316).

This study made use of purposive sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006), as teachers were selected from an FSS identified by the GDE. This method is supported by Maree (2010) who states that sampling decisions are made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible sources of information to answer the research question. As described in the research setting below, it has been assumed that the teachers in the purposefully selected school can provide rich data. The identified school is seen by the education community as progressive in the field of inclusive pedagogy and inclusive education. The school is fortunate to have teachers who are known to be advocates in the field of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy.

My role in the ALS was to implement the action research method in such a manner as to produce a mutually agreeable outcome for all participants, with the process being maintained and implemented by them afterwards. To accomplish this goal, it necessitated the adoption of many different roles at various stages of the process, including those of:

- Planner-leader (observation schedules, planning for focus group discussion)
- Catalyser-facilitator (facilitator dialogue of focus group discussion)
- Teacher-designer (guideline document developer, note taking)
- Listener-observer (participant observer in the inclusive classrooms)

- Synthesiser-reporter (provide the co-researchers with periodic reports and write a final report)

The primary role of myself, the principal researcher, was to facilitate dialogue and foster reflective analysis among the members of the ALS (Creswell, 2012). This included providing them with periodic reports and writing a final report at the end of the research.

1.5.8 Research site

There are currently 75 FSSs in Gauteng. One FSS was purposefully selected in the Sedibeng East region, since it has been identified by the GDE as a school of excellence in the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers receive ongoing training in curriculum adaptation, differentiation, management of learner diversity, learner discipline and refresher courses to keep abreast of all developments in an FSS. The school is further supported by GDE district and head office officials to ensure that the levels of achievement are sustained. This environment will, therefore, allow for rich data to be collected.

The school has the privilege of accessing the services of an educational psychologist, speech therapist and an occupational therapist as and when necessary. The school also benefits from a transdisciplinary approach to meeting the needs of diverse learners. Through consultation and collaboration with specialists, teachers are continuously capacitated to practice inclusive pedagogy in an FSS.

1.5.9 Data collection methods (see 1.5.5 and chapter 4 for more detail)

Gillis and Jackson (2002) suggest that at least three selected methods are to be used to transcend the limitations of each individual so as to triangulate data generation and produce more effective problem-solving results. With this in mind, the four most commonly cited methods in the literature (see Table 1.2) have been utilised, namely a baseline questionnaire, participant observation and document analysis, focus group discussions together with reflective

diaries. This ensures the trustworthiness of the study in corroborating what has been observed and recorded, interpretations of participants' meaning and an explanation of the overall processes.

Table 1. 2. Data collection techniques

Data Collection Technique	By Whom
Baseline questionnaire	Researcher + ALS
Participant observation - Document analysis	Principal researcher
Focus group discussions	ALS
Reflective diaries	ALS

1.5.10.1 Data management

All the data was managed by the ALS but filed and stored by the principal researcher. Audio recordings of focus group discussions were labelled, together with dates and time. The following data management strategies were preferred

i. Structuring determines how the reflective diaries are written and laid out.

ii. Indexing involves defining clear explicit codes for data to make it identifiable and recognisable.

iii. Abstracting involves summarising long stretches of data into short readable versions.

iv. Pagination involves assigning page numbers to the documents to ensure retrievability.

As stated by Thomas (2003), the inductive approach provides an easy and systematic set of procedures for analysing the qualitative data. It is a straightforward way of deriving findings. Analysis of data involves three steps as depicted in Table 1.3 below.

Table 1. 3: Steps of data analysis (Maree, 2010) (cf. 4.5.)

Analysing data	Identifying key elements	Significant items of information
	Formulating categories	Grouping similar themes
	Formulating themes	Grouping similar categories Linking emerged themes with aims, objectives and agendas

1.5.11. Trustworthiness (cf. 4.6)

Trustworthiness is of the utmost importance in research. Assessing trustworthiness is the acid test of data analysis, findings and conclusion (Maree, 2012). Data derived from the baseline questionnaire, participant observations and document analysis, focus group discussions and reflective diaries was used to verify the findings. Being a PAR study where members of the ALS were active participants in the continuous analysis of the data, member checking was used as a strategy to verify understanding and interpretation of the data. The ALS was involved in the comparison of notes and reflections. Furthermore, information captured was compared with what had emerged from other data-gathering techniques that were part of the study. Data from all these sources pointed to the same conclusion, thereby providing more confidence in the results of the study.

1.6. Ethical procedures (cf. 4.7.)

Because action research is carried out in real-world circumstances and involves close and open communication among the participants involved, the principal researcher paid close attention to ethical considerations in the research process. Brien (1998) and Winter (1996) list a number of principles to which the study adhered:

i. All relevant stakeholders were consulted. Expectations of the study were clarified in detail and accepted by all.

ii. All participants were allowed to influence the work, and the wishes of those who did not wish to participate were respected although all Foundation Phase teachers expressed a keen desire to be part of the study.

iii. The development of the work was transparent and open to suggestions from others.

iv. Permission was obtained before making observations or examining documents produced for other purposes.

v. Descriptions of others' work and points of view were negotiated with those concerned before being published.

vi. Decisions made about the direction of the research and the probable outcomes were collective.

vii. The researcher was explicit about the nature of the research process from the beginning, including all personal biases and interests.

viii. There was equal access to information generated by the process for all participants in the ALS.

It was imperative to obtain clearance from an ethics committee, as human subjects were involved in this study of an empirical nature (Helsinki Declaration, 1992). Therefore, the researcher sought permission from the Gauteng Department of Education and the North-West University to conduct the research study.

Strydom (2002) states that it is essential to understand and pay attention to the following ethical principles:

i) Informed consent

The researcher first obtained verbal informed consent from the school principal and the Foundation Phase teachers to be a part of the research study. During the follow-up visit the researcher presented the co-researchers (participants) with a letter in which the entire research process was clarified, requesting their written consent.

ii) Protection from harm

The researcher was honest, respectful and considerate towards all participants at all times. Participants were free to withdraw from the research at any point of the research.

ii) Ensuring researcher anonymity

The researcher was not introduced as an education official from the provincial head office of the GDE, as this could possibly have inhibited free participation. The researcher was instead introduced as an individual with an interest in the field of inclusive pedagogy in an FSS.

1.7. Possible Contribution

The study of an inclusive pedagogy in an FSS could contribute to knowledge, policy and practice in the following manner; this study could create further awareness of inclusive pedagogies in a Full-Service School, which is a fairly new concept. The PAR approach which

extends research to intervention, doing research via intervention and intervention via research, facilitates significant change within the inclusive classroom environment. The research knowledge gained could contribute to the international literature on an inclusive teaching pedagogy in an FSS. The practical knowledge acquired facilitated the development of an inclusive pedagogy guideline document for all teachers in the field of inclusive education.

1.8. Preliminary structure of the study

Chapter 1 comprises the problem under investigation and the context in which the problem exists.

Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework and related literature on inclusive education in South Africa.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework and related literature on inclusive pedagogy in South Africa.

Chapter 4 provides the theoretical justification and explanation of the research design. It also introduces, describes and explains the research methods, focusing on the two phases and four cycles of the action research.

Chapter 5 discusses the results of the two phases and four cycles of the action research.

Chapter 6 presents the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of the study

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Overview on Inclusive Education

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a theoretical and contextual background to the research study. Owing to the problem statement presented in chapter 1, it is the researcher's intention to explore the literature to conceptualise all relevant issues pertaining to the functioning of FSSs in South Africa. This includes fully understanding inclusive education, as this is the foundational approach on which an FSS is built. Likewise, it is essential to provide an in-depth clarification of inclusive education and an FSS in order to reason why an inclusive pedagogy should be the central teaching approach in such a school.

2.2 Defining inclusive education

Due to the varied contexts of countries, schools, classrooms and learners, it is a complicated process to provide a generalised or global definition of inclusive education, inclusive teaching and inclusive classrooms (Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016). Thus, there is not one perspective on inclusive education within a single country or school (Engelbrecht, 2006), as the meaning of inclusive education is culturally, as well as contextually determined, and depends on the political values and processes of the state for its enaction (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughn & Shaw, 2000).

A contributing factor towards defining inclusive education within a country's contexts will be determined by the level of transformation and the national advancement towards inclusivity (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Levi, 1999). Similarly, Murungi (2015) contends that a fundamental challenge to the successful implementation of inclusive education is that there seems to be no consistent or universal definition. Another imposition to a universal definition of inclusive education is the resistance to inclusive education, especially with regard

to the inclusion of children with disabilities by some disability-focused organisations, as well as mainstream education institutions who still argue for separate 'specialist' services (Ainscow, 2010). One of these includes some organisations for people with hearing impairments who believe that separate educational provision is the only way of guaranteeing their right to education through the medium of sign language and access to the deaf culture (Freire & César, 2003).

Currently, Ainscow (2014), as well as Nel (2018), maintain that there are two schools of thought with regard to inclusive education. The one is focused mainly on the inclusion of learners with disabilities in education and the other approach is more broadly seen as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners. The broader social approach seems to be accepted more widely, since it is aimed at eliminating social exclusion as a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion and ability. The principle that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society is a central premise in this approach (Ainscow, 2014). It can, therefore, be said that inclusion is not just about reconstructing access for learners with disabilities, but is a means of extending educational opportunities to a wide range of marginalised groups such as people with disabilities or previously disadvantaged citizens who historically may have had little or no access to schooling (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012).

Although it is argued that the field of inclusive education is still riddled with uncertainties, disputes and contradictions, for the purposes of this study where the emphasis is on an inclusive school, Salad's definition (in Hornby, 2014) seems appropriate:

> "Inclusion is a philosophy that brings students, families, educators and community members together to create schools based on acceptance, belonging and community. Inclusionary schools welcome, acknowledge, affirm and celebrate the value of all

learners by educating them together in high-quality, age-appropriate general education classrooms in their neighbourhood schools" (p. 4).

Subsequently, with the promulgation of the South African Constitution in 1996, the transformation of schools to become democratic institutions requires that schools move from a conservative, exclusionary and authoritarian system to a more inclusionary and democratic system (Engelbrecht & Oswald, 2005). This confirms that inclusive education is characterised by the following: a philosophy of acceptance and belonging within a community, a philosophy of learner, family, educator and community collaboration, celebrating the diversity and value of all learners, valuing educating learners alongside their age peers, valuing educating learners in mainstream classrooms and, more importantly, valuing educating learners in schools in their local community (Walton, 2012, p. 210). In order to meet these characteristics schools are required to reorganise themselves in order to be responsive to the needs of all their learners to bring about an inclusive society (Ainscow, 2010; Artiles & Kozleski, 2007; Engelbrecht et al., 2015). This would involve change and modifications in curriculum content, teaching and learning approaches and strategies, as well as infrastructure (UNESCO, 2005). Equally important would be to adopt a more socio-ecological approach to disability as opposed to a medical-deficit approach which forms the theoretical framework of this study.

2.3 Theoretical framework of the study

Developing a theoretical framework is important, as it demonstrates and allows the reader to conceptualise the study in a broader context (i.e. field of knowledge). Thus, Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework forms the basis of the study. The bio-ecological model incorporates all the knowledge components that are used to support the purpose of the research (Pittman, 2012).

2.3.1 Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model

The bio-ecological model recognises that there is a relationship between human beings and interactions between groups of people (systems) such as families, classrooms and schools. This means that, especially in an education environment where learners can experience barriers to learning, it needs to be acknowledged that what happens in one level or system can affect other systems (Ferreira, Haasbroek, Feldman, Moseki & Weber, 2018). More specifically, when applying this model in a diagnostic and support processes, an eco-systemic perspective should be integrated (Nel & Grosser, 2016), as it is of particular significance for identifying the complex influences, interactions and interrelationships that can either impede or promote learners' progress and performance (Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2014).

This eco-systemic perspective is in contrast with the medical model which predominantly focuses on the child as an individual who needs to be remedied. Nel, Nel and Hugo (2013) recommend that teachers familiarise themselves with this theory, as it will assist them in providing supportive learning and teaching environments in the South African schooling context. Bronfenbrenner has identified four interacting dimensions in this eco-systemic perspective as part of his bio-ecological model of child development which he believes are important in shaping the development of the child (Donald et al., 2014):

i. Person factors (for example the temperament of the child or parent)
ii. Process factors (for example the forms of interaction that occur in the family)
iii. Contexts (for example families, schools, or local communities)
iv. Time (for example changes over time in the child or the environment)

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), child development occurs within four nested systems, namely the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystem (see figure 2.4.). Makoelle (2012) affirms that, to address a learner's needs, it is critical to understand human development and the impact of development through these different ecosystems. As previously mentioned, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is appropriate to this study in providing some theoretical

understanding and explanation of the way in which learners experiencing barriers to learning function within the systems that impact on an inclusive Full-Service environment. With reference to figure 2.1, four different levels of the system in the social context are seen to influence and be influenced by one another in a continuous process of dynamic balance, tension and interplay (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002) The figure outlines the various levels of interaction within Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of child development.

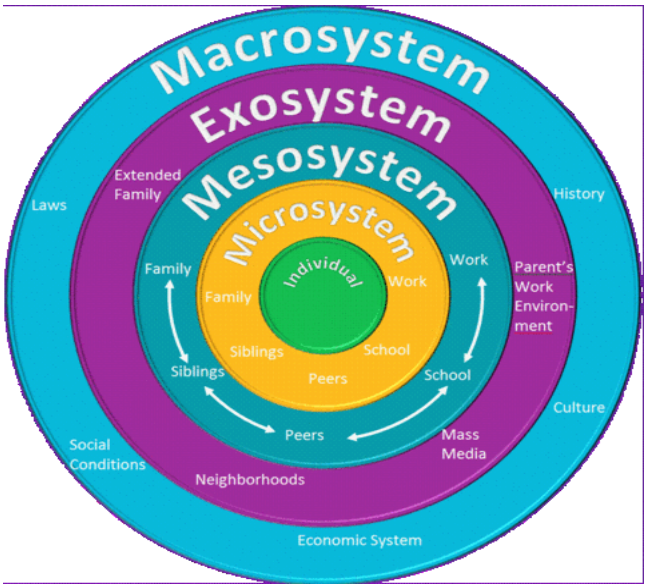

Figure 2. 1. Levels of Interaction of the Bio-ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1990)

Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological systems model, as illustrated in figure 2.1, is often used in inclusive education discourse as a tool to fully understand the layers of interactions and interrelations which have an impact on learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). Bronfenbrenner's theory examines the multidimensional, contextualist model of human development and recognises the physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural layers which influence an individual's development and the interaction between development and these systems (Donald et al., 2010).

a. Microsystems

As can be seen in figure 2.1, there are systems where the individual as a microsystem is in direct interaction with other microsystems such as the child with his family, the school and the peer group (Donald et al., 2014). Such systems involve patterns of daily activities, roles and relationships. It is at this level that the key proximal interactions occur. They encompass the child's human relationships, interpersonal interactions and immediate surroundings. An example of this system would be the child's relationship with his or her parents, siblings and school environment. Simply put: what happens in the home or in the peer group can influence how a learner responds at school and vice versa. For example, a learner who is unsupported at home may experience care and understanding from the teacher at school. Thus, as suggested by Donald et al. (2014), although the lack of support from the family may cause anxiety and insecurity, interactions with the teacher, paraprofessionals or peers over a period may modify the learner's sense of insecurity. In turn, this may modify the interactions the learner has at home.

According to Vygotsky (1931), the creation of an enabling, healthy learning climate and environment for all learners through policy, legislation and pedagogical practices is sure to guarantee full participation for all learners. Therefore, the teacher is instrumental in the creation of an enabling learner-centred environment in an FSS. Every learner will have the space to grow, thrive and glow through dynamic, flexible, enriched, meaningful and relevant activities, as no learner is without ability (Tlale, Ntshangase & Chireshe, 2016). A positive microsystem plays a role in supporting an individual's sense of belonging (Donald et al., 2010; Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

b. Mesosystems

At this level, different microsystems such as the peer group, school and family systems interact with one another, but still have an influence on the individual child; for example, what

happens at home or in the peer group can influence how a child responds at school and vice versa. A child who is unsupported at home may experience care and understanding from a neighbour, peer or teacher at school. Thus, as suggested by Donohue and Bornman (2014), although the lack of support from the home may make the child anxious and insecure, interactions with the neighbours, peers or teachers over a sustained period of time may modify the child's sense of insecurity. This in turn may modify the child's interactions at home.

Furthermore, if a learner lacks support by an adult (such as a parent, teacher or other support personnel) at an early stage, then she could already be at a disadvantage in terms of successful learning (Nel et al., 2016). Consequently, on this level, effectively functioning structures such as the school-based support teams (SBSTs), district-based support teams (DBSTs), Full-Service and Special Schools as Resource Centres (SSRC) are critical role players in the support of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning.

c. Exosystems

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), this level includes other systems in which a child is not directly involved, but which may influence, or be influenced by, the people who have proximal relationships with her in her microsystems. An example of an exosystem could be the work environment of a parent, a brother's peer group or a local community organisation. For example, if a parent was to lose his/her job or have hours cut back, this could affect the child in an indirect way such as with financial strain or increased parental stress.

d. Macrosystems

The macrosystem is said to be the largest and most distant collection of people and places to the learner that still exercises significant influence on the learner. It is composed of the learner's cultural patterns and values, specifically the learner's dominant beliefs and ideas, as well as political and economic systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). For example,

learners in poverty-stricken areas will experience a different kind of development than learners in more affluent communities. It is echoed by many authors (Donald et al., 2002; Donald et al., 2014; Hardman, 2018) that an individual's culture is determined by many external and internal forces, with society's values and norms providing a major influence.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) states that the external influences that affect the individual's behaviour and development are dependent on objective physical conditions and events which, therefore, in terms of inclusive education in South Africa, make allowance for the inclusion of several key components – the government, community, culture, schools and economic status – all of which affect what support learners are receiving and therefore, how teachers perceive learner support in a FSS.

According to Donald et al. (2014), the macrosystem involves dominant social structures, as well as beliefs and values that influence, and may be influenced by, all other levels of systems. For example, a cultural value may include developing obedience to authority (e.g. a teacher in the classroom) and respect for senior members of the community (e.g. a pastor or elder). Teachers too have a responsibility towards their learners to model acceptable morals, values, attitudes, skills and behaviours. Learners spend most of the day in a school environment, and it is in this environment that learners are constantly interacting with and observing teachers. It is for this reason that teachers have to be positive role models, not just academically, but also socially and morally (Moosa, 2016). Thus, while one works with individual teachers, learners or parents, one can never lose sight of the complex systems in which the individual functions (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

Further to this, Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic perspective connects individual psychological development to social context and the systems within it. This perspective, therefore, provides a theoretical framework for understanding why the general challenges of development cannot be separated from more specific challenges of addressing social issues and

barriers to learning (Donald et al., 2002). Donald et al. (2014) maintain that the eco-systemic perspective helps with the understanding of the development of children in more holistic and contextually interactive terms, as well as understanding classrooms and schools by viewing these as systems in themselves and their interaction with the broader social context. In an FSS having a holistic understanding of developmental patterns within the learner will influence the intervention programme. Bronfenbrenner's theory facilitates understanding of the relationship between the different systems at play in an individual's life. Relationships between the environment and characteristics of individuals are in constant interplay and impact an individual's development (Conway, 2017).

South Africa's policy on inclusive education, EWP6 (cf. 1.1.), is based on an eco-systemic perspective which is termed as the socio-ecological model where the focus moves away from the medical deficit-within-child view in which 'special forms of education' are assumed as the best choice for a child with a disability (DBE, 2014; Donald, et al., 2014).Thus, as the term *learners with special educational needs* (LSEN) is appropriated in the medical model, EWP6 recommends the use of terminology such as 'intrinsic' (i.e. disability) and 'extrinsic' (i.e. environmental, systemic and pedagogical factors) barriers to learning. The purpose of these terms is to remove the emphasis from the categorisation of learners because of their disability (i.e. medical model) to acknowledging that there are various (i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic) factors causing barriers to learning and development for learners (i.e. the socio-ecological contributory factors) (Nel & Grosser, 2016). Consequently, this perspective moves away from the "specialness" of learners, and the "special forms of education" that are needed (DBE, 2014). The socio-ecological model in an FSS promotes that all learners should be educated together, and that teaching practice must accommodate individual differences (UNESCO, 1994). This model acknowledges that all children can learn and need support, and

that all children have different learning needs that should be equally valued and respected (EWP6).

2.3.1.1 The social approach to disability

In recent years, the disability movement has advocated a different perspective of looking at disability, resulting in the 'social model' of disability which is embedded in a human-rights approach (Ainscow, 2014; DBE, 2010; Nel, 2018). This model focuses on barriers facing people with disabilities instead of concentrating on impairments and deficits of the person with a disability. Thus, it is deemed that a person's activities are limited not by the impairment or condition, but more by the environment and barriers which are consequences of a lack of social organisation (Carter, 2012). Consequently, the disability experienced is often caused by the approach taken by society/individuals who fail(s) to take account of people with impairments and their associated needs (Ferreira et al., 2018).

The social model is viewed as more inclusive and collaborative in its approach as proactive attention is given to how people with disabilities can participate in activities on an equal footing with non-disabled people (Ainscow, 2002). The barriers erected by society limiting people with disabilities to participate fully in day to day life, accessing work and living independently should therefore be removed. This includes addressing attitudes which society has towards people with disabilities which can create unnecessary barriers to inclusion (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Attitudes range from prejudice to stereotyping to unnecessary inflexible organisational practices, and viewing people with disabilities as objects of pity (Ahmmed, Sharma & Deppeler, 2012).

Nevertheless, the social model has been criticised for not fully considering the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities by failing to address an impairment as a physical and medical reality experienced by the individual (Palmer & Harley, 2012).

2.3.2 The medical-deficit model

The medical model emphasises the impairment that disables people to fully participate in society. Statements such as 'He can't read that newspaper because he is blind' demonstrates that the medical model focuses on the individual as the problem rather than looking more widely at societal, systemic and environmental influences (Nel, 2018; Swart & Pettipher, 2016) (Table 2.1). The focus is consequently placed on the deficit within the person and what can be done to 'fix' this person by providing special services for him/her as an individual (Grosser & Nel, 2016). The disability is considered as a 'problem' that belongs to the individual and is not seen as an issue to concern anyone other than the individual affected (Ainscow, 2010; Nel et al., 2016; Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2010). For example, if a learner using a wheelchair is unable to get into a building because of some steps, the medical model would suggest that this is because of the wheelchair, rather than the steps. Hence the belief, within a medical model approach, that the difficulties associated with the disability should be borne exclusively by the person with the disability, and that the person should make extra effort to ensure that he or she does not inconvenience anyone else (Hart, 2004).

It is, therefore, predominantly a model of diagnosis and treatment where health professionals are inclined to follow the "find what's wrong – and cure it" paradigm (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). This model was primarily used in the previous political dispensation where the categorisation and labelling of learners were over-emphasised based on their impairments. It is consequently not regarded as appropriate within an inclusive education approach (Mkhuma, 2012). The categorisation usually occurred through a series of standardised tests, mainly administered by health professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists. The results of these tests were mainly used to allocate LSEN numbers and place learners in a separate special institute deemed appropriate for the disability of the learner

without much collaboration or consultation with parents, teachers or the learner before the decision is made (Nel et al., 2016).

Nel et al. (2016) assert that this approach was very individualistic as the systemic and socio-environmental influences that could alter the diagnostic profile were not considered fully before learners were placed. However, it needs to be emphasised that the medical information obtained from this practice adds value in the assessment and support process of the learner experiencing barriers to learning and teaching (Nel et al., 2016), as intrinsic barriers to learning and development can be genetic, neurological, arise as a result of pregnancy, birth complications, accidents or illnesses (Nel et al., 2016).

This information contributes to establishing the nature and intensity of the intervention required to address the identified needs experienced by the learner (Massoumeh & Leila, 2012). For example, a teacher will need to know if a learner has epilepsy or asthma so care can be taken during physical activities. A learner with Albinism, who has a visual impairment, will need larger prints during classroom activities and wear protective clothing during outdoor activities due to sensitivity to light. Massoumeh and Leila (2012) maintain that a comprehensive diagnosis of physical, neurological or biological disorders should precede intervention in educational settings. However, Nel (2016) declares that this requires regular consultation between medical and educational personnel on appropriate ways of teaching and learning through flexible methodologies and assessment tasks, thereby addressing individual needs of the learner with an intrinsic barrier to learning.

Despite critique that EWP6 propagates a medical model (Engelbrecht et al., 2015), it has proposed moving away from a medical-deficit model which organises all support based on the category of disability/learning difficulty of the learner and focusing more on the intensity and the nature of support that the learner really needs (DBE, 2005). Thus, adopting a more

learner-centred approach to disability is a slow but progressive shift towards a more social approach to disability (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

Table 2.1 below presents a synopsis of the differences in approaches of the two models' interpretations of intervention.

Table 2. 1. Medical and Social Model. Adapted from World Health Organisation Disability and Health (2015)

Medical Model	Social Model
- Disability is seen as a consequence of a health condition, disease or caused by trauma. - Disrupts the functioning of a person in a physiological or cognitive way	- A person's activities are limited not by the impairment or condition, but by the environment. - Barriers are consequences of a lack of social organisation.

A review into the evolvement of inclusive education on an international level as a prelude to South African schools will be discussed in the next section.

2.4 The global movement of inclusive education

There was a purposeful international movement to address the exclusion of learners with disabilities that began as early as 1960 in the United States of America, sowing the seeds of an inclusive education approach in mainstream schools for learners with moderate levels of learning difficulties (Phasha & Condy, 2016). In the 1970s, the traditional segregation of learners with special needs in separate special schools was increasingly challenged (Engelbrecht et al., 1999). This brought about a call for "mainstreaming" learners with disabilities, i.e. placing them in mainstream classrooms rather than special classes, which eventually led to a call for educating all learners with special education needs (SEN) in mainstream schools. This was initially referred to as "integration" (Bornman & Donohue,

2014) and later transformed to inclusion. Thus, disability was no longer viewed as a handicap which required people to be segregated from the mainstream of society. As a result, the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular mainstream classrooms gained momentum in many countries, such as the USA, UK, Italy and some African countries (Thomas, 2013). The importance of adopting a learner-centred approach became more apparent in many countries.

Commencing in 1990 with the World Education Forum conference in Jomtien, Thailand, two very significant aspects were placed under inquiry: one being the millions of learners of school-going age who were excluded from accessing education, and the other the large number of learners who were dropping out of the schooling system with no opportunity to re-enter the schooling system. Learners with impairments were specifically highlighted at the conference as being vulnerable to exclusion from access to education (Nel et al., 2016). The deliberations at the Jomtien conference resulted in the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs (Nel et al., 2016). The EFA marked a global movement towards providing quality basic education to all learners, youth and adults (Bornman & Donohue, 2014).

However, the driving force for inclusive education was realised in the resolution known as the Salamanca Statements endorsed by 92 countries and 25 international organisations (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1994). A commitment to Education for All (EFA) was endorsed by the attendees, including recognising the necessity and urgency of providing education for learners, youth and adults with special education needs within the regular education system (Nel, 2018). The statement also emphasised the beneficial impact of inclusive schools by declaring that these schools (such as FSSs in the context of this study) can provide the most effective means of educating most learners and is a way of combating discriminatory attitudes. In addition, the statement suggested that inclusive schools should ultimately improve the cost-effectiveness and

efficiency of the entire education system, as there will be just one education system for all to access and thus more available funds to strengthen the move to inclusive education (Forlin, 2012). The Salamanca Statement has since been a primary instrument as a means of stimulating educational change throughout the world, as it is used as foundation for several education policy documents worldwide.

The Salamanca Statement defined the scope of inclusive education according to these learner-centred guiding principles (UNESCO, 1994, p. 59):

i. Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning free from any form of discrimination or prejudice.

ii. Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs which must be considered when addressing his/her educational needs.

iii. Education systems should be designed, and educational programmes implemented to consider the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.

iv. Those with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting their individual needs.

Continuing the EFA campaign in 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action was adopted by 164 countries which was a re-affirmation of the vision set out in the World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien a decade ago (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000). It expressed the international community's collective commitment to pursue a broad-based strategy for ensuring that the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult are met within a generation and sustained thereafter. It therefore re-asserted that governments must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working learners, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, learners, young people and adults

affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health, and those with special learning needs. It states that (UNESCO, 2000):

The inclusion of learners with special needs, from disadvantaged ethnic minorities and migrant populations, from remote and isolated communities and from urban slums, and others excluded from education, must be an integral part of strategies to achieve UPE [Universal Primary Education] by 2015 (p. 62).

In this framework, the achievements, lessons and failures of the past decade of the EFA movement were also assessed (UNESCO, 2000). It shows that at national, regional and global levels progress has been made from 1990 to 2000 towards the vision reflected in the Jomtien Declaration. This is reflected in increased school enrolments since 1990, as well as more girls in schools in 1998 as compared to 1990. Despite these significant improvements, some of the challenges still remain; for example, 60% of girl learners do not have access to primary education (UNESCO, 2000).

It was also emphasised that early childhood education, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health, as well as those with special learning needs should get more funding in the EFA campaign (UNESCO, 2015).

A central influence in the strong movement to inclusive education was the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): Article 24 (United Nations [UN], 2006) which was accepted by the United Nations in 2006 (Du Plessis, 2013). The convention was also signed by South Africa in 2007. The intention of the CRPD was to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities, and to ensure that they experience full equality under the law. The convention served as a major catalyst in the global movement from viewing persons with disabilities as objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing them as full and equal members of society, with human rights (Nel, 2018).

Many countries around the world have adopted a more learner-centred inclusive philosophy since the initiation of the EFA movement and the Salamanca Statements, and are committed to their implementation, but what remains questionable is the effective implementation thereof. For example, in 2015 a publication by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) called *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education* reported that there were still 58 million learners between the ages of 6 and 11 out of school globally. There was also an alarmingly low enrolment of children of lower secondary school age, typically between 12 and 15 years (UNICEF, 2015), implying that a greater number of children did not continue their secondary school education and exited the education system at primary school level. The report emphasised the possible causes for this phenomenon as increasing poverty, war and conflict in countries, continuous gender discrimination, child labour, language barriers, and social, institutional and environmental barriers which are linked to disability.

There is evidence that there continues to be a large number of children with disabilities who have no access to education due to a stigma that keeps them hidden away and out of school, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2015). It can, therefore, be concluded that many children remain marginalised worldwide despite attempts to achieve an EFA policy and promoting inclusive education (Nel, 2018).

More recently, UNESCO together with UNICEF, the World Bank, the United Nations Funds for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women (Entity for Gender Equality) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) organised the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 19-22 May 2015, hosted by the Republic of Korea. Over 1 600 participants from 160 countries, including over 120 ministers, heads and members of delegations, heads of agencies and officials of multilateral and bilateral organisations, and representatives of civil society, the

teaching profession, youth and the private sector adopted the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 which set out a new vision for education for the next fifteen years to transform lives through education (UNESCO, 2015). This declaration is the logical continuation of the Education For All (EFA) movement and the Millennium Development Goals on Education. Many of its goals were based on a review of progress made since the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar (Conway, 2017).

The vision of this declaration is consequently grounded on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 principle of ensuring the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education, and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all (Phasha, 2016). This affirms that education could be the most transformative force to build a better future for all learners and young people and adults across the world (Benavot & Naidoo, 2018).

2.4.1 Inclusive schools – an international perspective

Since the signing of the Salamanca Statement in 1994, various countries have sworn to implement inclusive education and develop a greater number of inclusive schools. Although different versions of inclusive education and inclusive schools have been adopted worldwide, critics have noted that, while inclusion sounds good in theory, it has not yet translated into implementable and realisable ideals (Bornman & Donohue, 2014; Makoelle, 2014). This section highlights how inclusive schools are viewed, defined and practised internationally.

Legislation in the UK prohibits discrimination in education and the British culture fully supports inclusive education, based on coordinated and well-resourced education policies. The most important idea is creating a warm, open and inclusive classroom environment for all. “Inclusive education is about responding to diversity; it is about listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering members and about celebrating ‘difference’ in dignified ways”, states Professor Julie Allan, a British researcher, whose work encompasses inclusive education, disability studies and children’s rights. There are many inclusive schools in the UK whose

focus is on the whole school approach where strategies to promote a safe and caring environment are implemented throughout the entire school. Each learner experiencing barriers to learning has an individual education plan. This is constructed around the individual needs of the learner. It can be as much to do with developing strengths as it is to do with tackling perceived weaknesses.

Learners follow the national curriculum, although some areas need modification to take account of specific learning difficulties. Speech and language therapy are integral parts of the daily curriculum in the UK. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and arts therapies are also key areas of the curriculum.

Moreover, providing services to all learners with disabilities with their non-disabled peers in the general education classrooms is a challenge for any country. In the United States, at least one in every ten school going children is identified with some type of disability. The United States is said to be successful in providing a free and appropriate public education to all learners regardless of their disability status. The U.S. inclusion movement considers the education and instruction of all learners with disabilities to be a fundamental right. This movement has made both the mainstream and special education teachers responsible and accountable to instruct learners with their peer groups. The collaboration between the general and special educators ensures that learners with disabilities receive the appropriate support and services to adequately achieve academic, social and life skills.

Moreover, many learners who do not have disabilities but need additional support to succeed are being educated in general education classrooms. Consequently, almost all school-going children in the United States are being educated in their neighbourhood schools in the general education classroom settings. The nature of a learner's disability determines the services required in order to educate them. These services and interventions are not the same at each educational level. Different approaches and intervention strategies are implemented at

elementary and secondary levels. At the elementary level, learners with mild to moderate disabilities are placed in general education classroom settings for most of the school day.

Similarly, in Finland, separate curricula of special education and mainstream have been abolished and all learners use the same curriculum individualised through individual education plans. In the curricula, the concept 'need for special support' is used when referring to special education. The learner welfare services are included in the curriculum, and municipalities and schools are obliged to include the services they offer in the curriculum. Development of inclusion and production of models regarding municipality, school and learner-level planning, organisation and implementation of inclusive special needs education in co-operation with various interest groups. There are several projects for preventing exclusion of learners by developing productive learning models and models to teach and support learners with barriers to learning.

The strategy stresses the central role of teachers. Developing inclusive education in FSSs requires heavy investments in teacher education. In Finland, teachers have been trusted to do their best as true education professionals. Finnish teachers have been delegated with considerable pedagogical independence in the classroom and schools have likewise enjoyed substantial autonomy in organising their work within the framework of the national core curriculum making their curriculum quite flexible. Recent studies show that the new competence requirements, which arise from societal change, emphasise teachers' ability to meet learners and their parents, as well as colleagues, as co-operative collaborative partners in the education process.

Teachers cannot cope on their own under the pressures set by increasing requirements. A well-functioning multi-cultural school works as a community, whose results depend on its ability to employ the learners' individual and special skills to benefit the common good. As a result of the increase in social problems and in the number of learners who need additional

support, teachers need both pedagogical and social knowledge and skills to work together when solving problems at school. Teachers are also expected to be open to interacting with their environments. The 'teachership' of the future means the ability to teach heterogeneous groups, readiness to actively participate in discussions concerning the direction of education and society, and the will to work for development. Teaching work also involves tasks relating to guidance, counselling and learner welfare.

In addition, any support needs in terms of learning and school attendance are met by differentiating instruction through co-operation among teachers and by modifying teaching groups in a flexible manner. The role of these arrangements becomes pronounced in combined-class instruction. Schools may make use of remedial teaching, as well as learning plans, part-time special needs education and assistants' contributions as means to meet the support needs of teaching groups or individual learners even before transition to the intensified support stage. It is also possible to influence learners' well-being and learning motivation through morning and afternoon activities. Planning these to form part of the learners' day also makes it possible to increase experiences of safety, security and community spirit.

Learners who need regular support for their learning or school attendance or who need several forms of support at the same time must be provided with intensified support that is based on a pedagogical assessment in accordance with a learning plan prepared for them. Intensified support is provided when general support is not sufficient. Intensified support is planned as a whole for each individual learner. It is by nature more intense and persistent than general support. Intensified support is used to systematically support the learner's learning and school attendance, and is designed to prevent problems from escalating, diversifying and accumulating. A learning plan is always drawn up for a learner receiving intensified support. The learning plan must, unless there is an evident obstacle to doing so, be drawn up in co-operation with the learner and his or her parents or guardians and, where necessary, with any

other legal representative of the learner. During a period of intensified support, systematic planning of studies and support measures will support the learner's learning, growth and development.

In Italy, the individual education plan of learners in need of additional support is drawn up jointly by the local health authority, curricular and support teachers, educationists or education assistants (if required), in collaboration with parents. It includes a description of the interventions planned for the learner in a given period. Schools must remove all barriers and offer all facilities (as well as the use of information and communications technology) in the most functional manner suited to each learner's needs. Classes with one or two learners with disabilities usually contain a maximum of 20 learners. The inclusion process is supported by a project which defines strategies and methods adopted jointly by curricular and support teachers, together with the school staff.

Support teachers are part of the team of regular class teachers and participate in all the planning and assessment activities. Support teachers also facilitate all inclusion processes. Assessment for learners with disabilities is carried out according to the goals set out in the individual education plan. Although the same assessment procedures are applied to all learners, they take learners' progress into account rather than their achievements.

The law provides for the creation of mainstream classes as separate sections in rehabilitation centres and hospitals in order to provide education for children who are temporarily unable to attend school (for no less than 30 days). Teachers with specific psycho-pedagogical training are employed to teach in rehabilitation centres and hospitals. 'School in hospital' is highly flexible, taking into account each learner's type of illness, time for medical examinations and therapies, as well as the pace of life in hospitals.

Home tuition is intended for ill children who cannot attend school for at least 30 days. They are taught at home by one or more teachers according to a specific project aimed at their

subsequent re-integration in class. For almost all learners with special educational needs in the Italian school system (including learners with disabilities, specific learning disorders, specific developmental disorders or socio-economic, cultural or linguistic disadvantages), the law provides for the drafting of tailored educational plans which allow them to improve their abilities and knowledge, based on their own skills and the predicted area of improvement. They are called *individual education plans* or *personalised education plans*, and drafted by teachers, medical staff, parents and other professional figures involved in the learner's education/life. Parents also participate in the school's Work Group for Inclusion (GLI) and are represented in the Local and Regional Inter-Institutional Work Group (GLIP-GLIR).

Both the school principal and the teaching staff are responsible for quality assurance in an FSS. The principal organises the school activities according to educational efficiency and efficacy criteria and is responsible for the results of these activities. The teaching staff plan and verify the didactic activities. Starting from the 2013/14 school year, each school has to draft an Annual Plan for Inclusion (PAI) as a basis for the Educational Policy Plan (POF). The POF is the basic document describing the curricular, extra-curricular, educational and organisational resources that each school adopts according to its autonomy. At the end of each school year, FSSs must monitor and evaluate the efficacy of their inclusiveness.

The Swedish inclusive education system is based on the philosophy that all learners have the same right to personal development and learning experiences. The inclusion of all learners in accordance with this principle is crucial, and also important is the fact that the rights of learners in need of special support are not stated separately. The current curriculum for compulsory schools in Sweden does not use the word or concept of mainstreaming but promotes the given that all learners will be educated in general classes or childcare groups. Only about 500 out of 950 000 learners in compulsory schools attend state-run special schools (Financing of Inclusive Education – Sweden Country Report Draft, 2018, p. 14).

Intervention plans are set up for each learner in need of special support in collaboration with teachers, parents and the learner concerned. These plans indicate each partner's responsibility in developing the learner's abilities and knowledge. There are regular health checks in childcare services and schools while health care services and psychologists are available to staff, learners and parents for consultation. Co-operation with services other than the education system, such as healthcare and training, has to be approved by and involve the parents of the child concerned.

If this is not possible, then the school must indicate very clearly why other educational options for learners should be considered. This is an important philosophical standpoint for childcare organisation and operation. Earlier debates have focused on prerequisites for mainstreaming. Now, the focus has shifted to the need to justify segregated options being considered for learners.

Moving closer home, FSSs in Ghana are flawed with challenges. A recent research study by Wisdom, Michael and Isaac (2015) has revealed that support programmes are unplanned, unstructured and unlikely to address the needs of these children, particularly due to the lack of appropriate training, development and knowledge of the teachers. Since the inception of inclusive education, as reported by Wisdom et al. (2015) more than ten years ago, a number of children with special educational needs have received education in mainstream schools although these schools have not been designed to accommodate their needs. However, little is known about what challenges these children encounter and how they are supported.

Another contributing challenge in FSSs is the inaccurate diagnosis of barriers to learning. The sole use of observation to identify barriers to learning has the tendency to overlook the learners with support needs and to wrongly label others as learners with barriers to learning. These findings are confirmed through studies by Gyimah, Sugden and Pearson (2009), as well as Hayford (2013).

In addition, the findings of the studies indicate that children with differential learning needs were not adequately supported in FSSs. The reasons for this are similar to the South African context. For example, a lack of adequate funding, poor human and physical resources, a lack of parental support and a lack of knowledge are all factors that impact these children.

Within the South African context for quality, learner-centred, inclusive education to take place in earnest, all stakeholders at all levels (cf. 2.3.1.) need to become actively involved in transforming the education system to a more inclusive one (Benavot & Naidoo, 2018). This requires that the social, political, economic and technological schooling environment needs to change (Maguvhe, 2016). It is only in this way that adequate resources can be obtained to ensure that FSSs are fully capacitated to provide for a full range of learning needs. The next section involves a discussion regarding FSSs in South Africa.

2.5 FSS in South Africa

According to UNESCO (2009), an inclusive school (FSS in this instance) must offer possibilities and opportunities to ensure that no learner is excluded from companionship and participation in the school. This implies the development of a rights-based, child-friendly school. As human rights are the cornerstones of South Africa's policy imperatives, these are extended to include the right to education and being free from discrimination and prejudice (Winnaar, 2013). Such an approach to education is not only regarded as academically effective, but also inclusive, protective of all children and encouraging the participation of all learners, their families, as well as their communities (UNESCO, 2009).

2.5.1 An overview of FSSs

Through EWP6 (cf. 1.1.) South Africa has expressed a commitment to the development of inclusive sites of learning to ensure the inclusion of all learners in schools where emphasis is placed on accommodating the diverse needs of the learner population (DoE, 2001).

According to this policy, the purpose of an inclusive school is to contribute towards an inclusive society where all members are able to fulfil their potential, participate optimally and principles such as respect for diversity in the context of social integration should be active values (DoE, 2001).

Consequently, one of the primary strategies identified in the EWP6 to transform the South African education system into an inclusive education system is the development of FSSs to address the needs of learners (DBE, 2010).

FSSs should provide site-based (school-level) support through a functioning Institutional-Level Support Team (ILST); support neighbouring schools in transforming towards inclusive education; collaborate closely with special schools which serve as resource centres in exchanging knowledge and skills; and co-operate with District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs) and health professionals such as educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists (DBE, 2005b; Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit & Van Deventer, 2016). This implies that FSSs should be enabled and resourced in order to provide for the full range of diverse learning needs to cater for all levels of abilities (DoE, 2001).

Furthermore, Swart and Pettipher (2016) affirm that FSSs should cultivate an inclusive culture and practice that will improve all aspects of the school, namely the physical and human resources, technology (assistive devices or specialised equipment) and accessible scholar transport.

The Department of Basic Education eventually wants to convert all of the approximately 22 000 ordinary schools in South Africa into FSSs in order to establish a fully inclusive education system (DBE, 2012). Mahlo and Condy (2016) assert that everyone in an FSS should take responsibility for the education of every learner to meet the learning needs in a unified, cohesive collaborative manner. Equally important, it is essential that the teachers

have the knowledge and skills to support all learners to ensure their successful learning (Nel, et al., 2013; Tlale et al., 2016).

This requires that the teachers' capacity and potential for addressing and reducing barriers to learning should be developed (Mahlo & Condy, 2016). To achieve this objective, the learning potential of all learners must be attended to through collaboration between all role players such as parents, teachers, community members, SBSTs, DBSTs and health professionals, and most importantly, the learner, to share expertise and knowledge. Consequently, exclusionary challenges and practices need to be addressed, removed or reduced so that optimal learning and development can take place for every learner (Donald et al., 2014).

In a document developed by the DBE, guidelines are given in order to attain the goals of a fully functioning inclusive school, as discussed in the previous paragraph (DBE, 2010, p. 7). According to this document, an FSS:

i. Is resourced with the necessary learning and teaching equipment, and supported by relevant stakeholders; for example, SSRCs, DBSTs, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists to provide for a broad range of learning needs which is determined by the barrier
ii. Aims at inclusion as reflected in policies, practices, pedagogy and school culture
iii. Understands that barriers to learning are not only intrinsic, but can also be cultural and systemic, according to Bronfenbrenner's model of socio-ecology
iv. Has additional support programmes and structures for teaching and learning
v. Ensures continued capacity-building programmes for teachers, parents and professionals aimed at transforming the entire school
vi. Is a place where both teachers and learners feel safe and supported
vii. Has a collaborative approach to learner support

viii. Welcomes teachers from neighbouring schools to improve on skills of identification and support of barriers to learning through in-service training to ensure and sustain inclusivity for all learners in an FSS.

In order to fully understand the concept of an inclusive FSS, it is essential to discuss the development and background to inclusive education in the South African context.

2.5.2 Policy development

Although the political transformation after 1994 heralded a new and democratic era for millions of South Africans, the government faced the enormous task of rebuilding the economy and the country. Key challenges were reducing unemployment, addressing a serious lack of housing and service delivery, and most importantly, addressing the imbalance of an education system which was predominantly focused on advancing the education of white people (Payne-Van Staden, 2015).

Prior to 1994, South African education was characterised by separation and segregation based on race and (dis)ability (Walton & Lloyd, 2011). Different races attended different schools and learners with disabilities (also called 'special needs') were placed in special classes and schools (Makhalemele, 2011). These special schools mostly accommodated white learners and were well-resourced. Only a few under-resourced special schools for black learners with disabilities were available nationally (Makoelle & Malindi, 2015).

The final adoption of the Constitution of South Africa in 1996 emphasised the new democratic government's commitment to restoring the human rights of all previously disadvantaged people such as the poor, the disabled and marginalised race groups. This included the right to education and freedom from discrimination (RSA, 1996a). In the same year, the South African Schools Act was promulgated. This Act gave effect to constitutional values in education with provisions such as prohibiting admission tests for learners in public

schools, requiring that learners' educational needs be met without discrimination and making physical amenities of schools accessible to learners with disabilities (RSA, 1996b).

In October 1996, the Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (DoE, 1997) to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of "special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa".

A central recommendation of this report (DoE, 1997) was:

> "an education and training system that promotes education for all and fosters the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could develop and extend their potential, and participate as equal members of society" (p. 1).

It was also asserted in this report that the guiding principles for the attainment of this vision were values such as human rights and social justice for all learners which included full participation in society, equal access to a single, inclusive education system, access to one curriculum, equity and redress, and community responsiveness (DoE, 1997; Stofile & Green, 2009, p. 54).

A fundamental premise of the NCSNET/NCESS report is that developing a system of education that is responsive to diversity and addresses barriers to learning and development will make a substantial contribution to the development of quality education for all in South Africa (Donald et al., 2014).

As a consequence of these recommendations and implications, the Department of Education (DoE) introduced the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6): Special Needs Education for building an inclusive education and training system in 2001, which gave rise to the following definition of inclusive education:

i. Acknowledging that all learners need support

ii. Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodology to meet the needs of all learners

iii. Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases

iv. Broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community

v. Within formal and informal setting and structures, changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners

vi. Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions

vii. Uncovering and minimising barriers to learning (DoE, 2001, p. 4).

This policy negates the concept of 'special needs education' and introduced the concept of 'barriers to learning' within an inclusive education framework (DoE, 2001). The reason for this is that the term *special needs* confers a label that can lower expectations (Nel, 2018; Swart & Pettipher, 2016). According to various authors, inclusion is built on the premise that all learners should be valued for their unique abilities and included as essential members of a school community (Ainscow & Booth, 2002; Bornman & Donohue, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2015). By rather using the term *barriers to learning* it emphasises that inclusive education amounts to recognising and respecting learner diversity, acknowledging that all learners can learn and need support, while capacitating teachers to enable them to address a wide range of learning needs by focusing on teaching and learning actions that will benefit all learners who experience barriers to learning (Oswald & Swart, 2011). This resonates with the broader social approach regarding inclusive education (cf.2.3.1).

EWP6 (DoE, 2001) also proclaims that the education system must transform to accommodate the full range of barriers to learning and development, including needs caused

by intrinsic organic/medical barriers (e.g. disabilities, chronic illness), as well as barriers caused by extrinsic systemic barriers such as socio-economic factors, an inflexible curriculum, problems with language and communication, and poorly trained teachers. However, Engelbrecht et al. (2015) declare that, despite a strongly stated position on the socially constructed view on extrinsic contextual barriers, EWP6 primarily depends on the medical model approach (cf. 2.3.2.) when support for learners who experience diverse barriers to learning has been proposed.

2.5.3 Support structures

In an inclusive education system, enabling mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that the system and the curriculum are continuously being adapted to address the needs of all learners (DOE, 1997). In the current South African education system, support structures are prevalent in schools (SBSTs) (cf. 2.5.3.3.) districts (DBSTs (cf. 2.5.3.2.) and at provincial offices with the aim of designing support programmes that allow all learners access to learning (Mahlo & Condy, 2016). Adopting a learner-centred approach (which is a fundamental premise of the study), learning support acknowledges the potential of all learners who develop at their own pace. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model (cf. 2.3.1.) of intervention (1997) highlights that supporting learners relies on effective collaboration among the systems to which learners belong. Collaboration among the various role players within the structures, such as district officials, teachers, principals, parents, paraprofessionals and learning support teachers, could all contribute towards the minimisation of the barriers to learning in a supportive environment.

In order to strategise support, EWP6 (DoE, 2001) and the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy divide support (cf. 2.7.4.) levels for learners ranging from low, to moderate, to high (DBE, 2014). This is evident in that these documents distinguish learners in three categories, namely (see Figure 2):

i. Learners with low-intensive support who receive support in mainstream schools

ii. Learners with moderate support requirements who are accommodated in FSSs (the focus of this study)

iii. Learners who require high-intensive educational support who continue to be educated in special schools as resource centres (DoE, 2001; Engelbrecht & Van Deventer, 2013).

These levels of support have influenced the current Three-Tiered Pyramid of Support, as proposed by the Department of Basic Education and depicted in Figure 2.2 below.

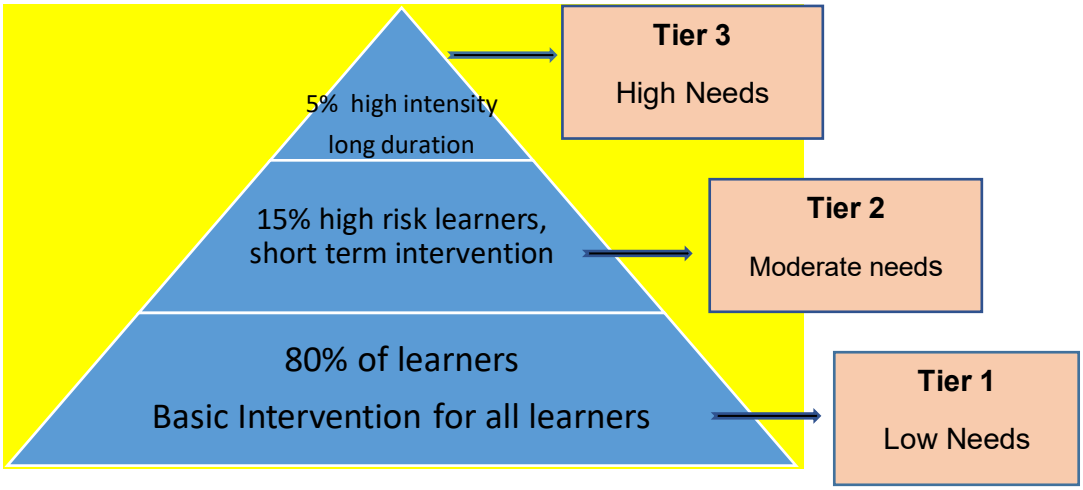

Figure 2. 2.. The Three-Tiered Pyramid of Support (DBE 2015)

The three-tier pyramid of support and intervention illustrated in Figure 2.2, as proposed in the Department of Basic Education's Consolidated WP6 Progress Report 2013–2015, argues that 80% of learners in South Africa will need core interventions which are both preventative and proactive. These include learners with specific barriers to learning; for example, reading challenges, teenagers who are pregnant, victims of abuse, orphans and learners with language barriers who can all be accommodated in conventional mainstream schools.

The 15% of learners classified as “at risk” need moderate intensity interventions which are often short-termed and include learners such as grade repeaters and learners with more serious learning barriers such as dyslexia, dysgraphia or attention deficit and hyperactive disorder (ADHD). These learners can also be accommodated in conventional mainstream or FSSs.

In the third tier, 5% of learners may have high needs requiring intensive and individual support interventions (DBE, 2015) and may be accommodated in Full-Service or Special Schools.

The DBE recommends that the rating of learners should take place on a flexible scale from 1 (low-intensity support) to 5 (high-intensity support), and that assessment should be flexible and continuous in recognising that levels of support can be adjusted as learners overcome barriers (Conway, 2017). The primary aim of rating learners according to their needs is to ensure that the targeted needs are met, and also to determine the degree of support required.

2.5.3.1 Special schools as resource centres (SSRCs)

Though the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) reaffirmed the commitment to work towards including learners with disabilities within mainstream education, the continued existence of special schools is deemed necessary in the South African context (DBE, 2014). This is providing that special schools serve as resource centres to provide high levels of support, as well as support to teachers and learners in full service and ordinary schools (DoE, 2001). This is supported by the following statement in the Salamanca document (UNESCO, 1994):

> Such special schools can represent a valuable resource for the development of inclusive schools. The staffs of these special institutions possess the expertise needed for early screening and identification of children with disabilities. Special

> schools can also serve as training and resource centres for staff in regular schools. Finally, special schools or units within inclusive schools - may continue to provide the most suitable education for the relatively small numbers of children with disabilities who cannot be adequately served in regular classrooms or schools (p. 11).

EWP6 affirms that SSRCs should provide expertise and support in curricula, assessments and instruction as part of the district support team to neighbouring schools, especially FSSs, which must address a full range of learning needs (DoE, 2001). It is also required of SSRCs to give appropriate and quality educational provision to learners who are already in their settings and require higher levels of support. Nel et al. (2016) further affirm that SSRCs should, in collaboration with the DBSTs and FSSs, exchange knowledge with other mainstream schools in the area and provide professional development to the teachers. This support to neighbouring schools is essential, since staff at a SSRC usually have specialised skills and have developed learning material to specifically assist learners with various disabilities; for example, how to accommodate physically, visually and hearing impaired learners with special aids, as well as how to apply a flexible curriculum to meet diverse learning needs (Nel, Muller, & Rheeders, 2011).

Yet, there seems to be many challenges to achieve the above-mentioned purpose of SSRCs. In contradiction with EWP6's requirement that the needs of learners must be accommodated, SSRCs are still allocated funding based on the number of learners accommodated, rather than the needs of the learners (DBE, 2010). Mayuba (2008) asserts that, if funding is not allocated according to needs of learners with disabilities, effective intervention will be a slow process. Furthermore, it has been reported that most of these schools are under-resourced and therefore unable to adequately cater for the learning

needs of learners with varying disabilities; for example, learners who need learning material printed in braille, hearing aids, walkers, wheelchairs or other assistive devices to facilitate optimal teaching and learning (DBE, 2006).

As mentioned earlier, teachers in the SSRCs should provide support to neighbouring schools as well. However, a study by Hemming (2009) has revealed that teachers at these schools feel that there is too much planning, preparation and paperwork that have to be done for their own teaching, which leaves them little time to conduct support workshops and meetings with the neighbouring schools.

Another challenge for the SSRCs conveyed by teachers is that they struggle to teach the same curriculum used for mainstream schools, especially for learners requiring intensive high levels of support, i.e. learners with severe intellectual disabilities (Hemming, 2009; Mayuba, 2008).

This is evident in a statement by Dr Brian Watermeyer, a person with a visual impairment (partially sighted), who is a clinical psychologist and a senior research officer at the division of disabilities studies in the Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Cape Town. In his keynote address at an indaba held in Durban, KZN, on 26 October 2016, Dr Watermeyer proclaims that to merely say "that learners with disabilities are in school is not to say that they are receiving a meaningful education". He believed that there are schools without the necessary human capacity and assistive technology to provide meaningful education. Thus, in essence these schools become the dumping ground for learners with a range of impairments, with very little actual teaching and learning.

The district-based support team (DBST), therefore, has a critical role to play in capacitating these schools, especially with regard to an inclusive pedagogy, to achieve the objectives of EWP6.

2.5.3.2 District-based support teams (DBSTs)

The DBST has been constituted to serve as an integrated, cost-effective and community-based support system with the purpose of fostering the development of effective teaching and learning, as well as assisting in the identification and support of barriers to learning (DBE, 2005). The core function is, therefore, to provide indirect support to learners through supporting teachers and school management by focusing on curriculum and institutional development to ensure that the teaching and learning framework is responsive to the full range of learning needs (DBE, 2005).

The DBST comprises health professionals, other government departments such as the Department of Social Development and the Department of Home Affairs as and when their expertise is necessary, as well as non-governmental organisations, teachers and parents. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the DBST to provide coordinated professional support that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated FSSs and other primary schools and educational institutions (DoE, 2005). However, direct support can be provided to learners by the DBST when SBSTs are unable to respond to particular learning needs (DBE, 2010).

It is evident from the above description that the DBST is vital in ensuring the successful functioning of support structures, especially at FSSs where a range of learning needs must be met. However, in studies such as those of Nel et al. (2016) and Makhalemele and Nel (2016), it was found that the duties of the DBST are regarded as too vast and are currently not being executed successfully (Nel et al., 2016). Makhalemele and Nel (2016) report that DBST members find it difficult to fulfil their roles due to the large number of schools that the team must service, inadequate facilities at the district office, poor infrastructure, unavailability of transport, limited human resources, a lack of

skills among the district officials themselves and, more importantly, a lack of support from the National Department of Education. Bornman and Donohue (2014) have also found that the support from districts to schools is inadequate and insufficient, which hinders the teachers' ability to implement inclusive education successfully.

The ultimate purpose of the DBST is to ascertain and address barriers to learning for the purpose of supporting the development of effective teaching and learning (DoE 2003). The primary role of the DBST is to provide support and training to the School-Based Support Team (SBST) to ensure that the learning needs of all learners are met. The DBST is also expected to coordinate external structures of support if and when needed; for example, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) or disabled people's organisations.

In the SIAS process (cf. 2.7.4.) the DBST is responsible for analysing the diagnostic assessments of learners who have been identified as experiencing barriers to learning. These diagnostic assessments are submitted by the SBST. The purpose of this process is to determine whether the school has exhausted all support measures and if further specialised and additional support is needed (DBE, 2014). Furthermore, the DBST need to determine what kind of further is needed and explore methods of providing that support (DBE, 2014). For example, collaboration with other government departments or providing assistive devices to aid learning.

2.5.3.3 School-based support teams (SBSTs)

EWP6 refers to an institutional-level support team (ILST) or school-based support team (SBST)[1], which should be established by an institution in general, further and higher education as a support mechanism whose primary function is to put in place coordinated support services at the institution (DBE, 2008). In the context of this study, an SBST is

1 In this instance, SBSTs will be used, as the focus of the study is on FSSs.

especially relevant, as it has the responsibility to respond to the diverse needs of all learners in an FSS. As it is the first level of support for teachers and learners, it is essential that every school has a well-functioning SBST, especially FSSs, which are required to accommodate a full range of learning needs (DBE, 2014).

According to EWP6 (DoE, 2001), the SBST is responsible for the coordination of all support services within the school by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and institutional needs. Where needed, these teams should be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions (DoE, 2001). SBSTs should be instrumental in engaging with, reflecting on, probing into and enquiring about the inclusive pedagogic practices in their schools to develop and enhance their use in the classrooms (Makoelle, 2014). This requires that a SBST functions as an on-going, collaborative and problem-solving unit of the school (Yukon Department of Education, 2015).

The composition of the SBST can be constituted in the following manner (DBE, 2010):

i. A learning support teacher who is competent in the identification of learning disabilities, the planning and monitoring of intervention strategies, is innovative and possesses good collaborative skills where two or more people work together as equal partners towards a common goal. Collaborative planning and problem solving promotes the collegial relationships associated with effective schools (Makoelle, 2012).
ii. The referring subject teacher, i.e. the teacher who has identified the learner for additional support
iii. A scribe who keeps the records of meetings for future reference

iv. An elected teacher competent in a subject in which support needs to be given, e.g. Mathematics or English

v. A principal who is an accounting officer can participate on a part-time basis.

vi. A member of the school assessment team (SAT) who ensures that adaptation in assessment is maintained

vii. Any co-opted member who might not be a member of staff but has the expertise needed by the school in order to provide support according to the needs of the learner

viii. The learner's parent who is able to provide valuable information about his or her strengths, preferences and needs, as well as support at home

Members of the SBST play a unique role in helping learners, staff and parents to think and act more inclusively. Equally important, as reported by Maseko and Tlale (2014), the SBST should be viewed as the engine of the implementation of the inclusive education policy. However, when this structure lacks knowledge and expertise to support teachers in terms of identifying learners and providing equitable support, the mechanism of providing support to learners can become minimal and ineffective, as the main focus of the SBST structure in a school is the screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS) of learners (DBE, 2014).

As stated by the DBE (2014), the core purpose of the SBST is to support the teaching and learning process, which includes coordinating all learner, teacher, curriculum and school development support, in particular, identifying barriers to learning at learner, teacher, curriculum and school levels whilst collectively developing strategies to address these needs and barriers to learning. The SBST structure should consequently be able to respond flexibly to a range of organisational, individual, staff and family needs (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education [EADSNE], 2009). This

will require a transdisciplinary approach that integrates the knowledge and perspectives of different areas of staff expertise to consider the learners' needs holistically (EADSNE, 2009).

Furthermore, according to EWP6 (DoE, 2001), the SBST should be centrally involved in identifying learners 'at risk' in the learning process with the end purpose of supporting these learners in their immediate school environment. This includes learners who are vulnerable, disabled or at risk; for example, learners who are victims of abuse or from child-headed households, learners with communicable diseases, learners experiencing academic difficulties, or who are orphans. *Learners at risk* is a term used to describe learners who require temporary or ongoing intervention in order to succeed academically (DoE, 2001).

These social and learning barriers can put the learner at risk to repeat grades, which can be prevented if identified and supported timeously. This is where the SBST has a crucial role in ensuring early identification and focused intervention (Abbas, 2016).

In accordance with EWP6 (DoE, 2001), all schools are expected to have functional SBSTs to ensure an enabling environment for inclusive teaching and learning practices, and to provide support programmes that address intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning. The SIAS manual (DBE, 2014) (cf. 2.7.4) requires that, when learners need additional support and have to receive an individual support plan (ISP), the process of referral begins with the class teacher who would have tried various approaches of accommodating the learner in the classroom, which ultimately did not result in successful learning for the learner. The learner is then referred to the SBST together with evidence of all attempts (e.g. adapting teaching methods and assessment, as well as additional support) made by the class or subject teacher. This information is discussed with members of the SBST together with the parent. The team, in conjunction with the

class/subject teacher and the parent, then determines an appropriate support plan to address the identified needs of the learner. In order to monitor the progress of the support plan, subsequent meetings are held during which the referring teacher reports back to the SBST and the parent. The SBST then strategises further, should the outcomes of the support plan be unsuccessful (DBE, 2014).

It is also the role of the SBST to conduct regular scheduled meetings between themselves to discuss new referrals and review the progress of learners on individual support programmes (Makoelle, 2012). In addition to this function, the SBST has a preventative responsibility to support the teaching and learning process at school. This would include the coordination of curriculum support, which is identified through the diagnostic analysis of formal and informal school-based assessment tasks; the identification of school needs, which could be procuring the appropriate assistive devices; the development of strategies to address those needs, and access to the resources from within and outside of the school to address the identified needs (Nel, 2014).

The SBST must evaluate the success of the support in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders (health professionals, the teacher, the parent and the learner) (DoE, 2005). This is an important step, as the support programme may need modification or adjustment to achieve the desired outcomes. However, Mkhuma, Maseko and Tlale (2014) argue that, when this structure lacks the knowledge and expertise to support teachers with respect to the identification of learners who experience barriers to learning and appropriate provision of equitable support, the mechanism of providing support to learners becomes ineffective. In essence it can be inferred that the successful functioning of the SBST is to a large extent dependent on the capability of its members.

Yet, the role of the SBST is not just the support of learners, but the support of teachers as well. Teachers need adequate training in knowledge and skills to address

diversity and to teach learners with specific educational needs in an inclusive environment (Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012). It is, therefore, the role of the SBST to provide on-going internal support to capacitate all teachers within the school environment.

It is also important for the SBST to provide support to all stakeholders (health professionals, the teacher, the parent and the learner) during the SIAS process, emphasising a shift away from a focus on a child-within-deficit to support of the 'whole child'; i.e., taking care of the social, emotional, cognitive and personal welfare of the child.

However, a recent study by Makoelle (2014) on the analysis of the role of the school-based support teams (SBST) in relation to the development of inclusive practices, revealed that many of these members lack critical, reflective and collaborative skills which are essential to affect a functioning support system. Hence, it seems that there is a need to transform the SBSTs to be communities of enquiry, which will probe, critique and reflect on practices on a continuous basis in order to improve and develop inclusive practices, including the application of an inclusive pedagogy.

In addition, Crawford, Gordon and Porter (2004) are of the opinion that at school level the principal, together with the SBST members, should establish positive support and a welcoming climate for all learners, engage in an effective partnership with parents as well as encourage, support and reward teachers' professional development efforts and lastly, cultivate a culture of lifelong learning within teachers.

2.5.3.4 Policy on screening, identification, assessment and support (SIAS)

On 19 December 2014 Minister Motshekga, minister of Basic Education, approved the policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS). The policy was developed over a period of ten years through a rigorous process of field testing

and consultation. It intended at ensuring that all children of school-going age who experienced barriers to learning, including those who were disabled, were able to access inclusive, quality, free, primary and secondary education on an equal basis with other young people in the communities in which they lived (Conway, 2017).

The policy is aimed at standardising the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school (Abbas, 2016) (DBE, 2014, p. 1). The successful implementation of the SIAS policy in an FSS is an important step towards meeting the obligations of government in respect of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as ratified by Cabinet in November 2007, in terms of ensuring an inclusive education system at all levels (Article 24) (DBE, 2014).

The SIAS process in an FSS and mainstream school is a tool for early identification of learner needs in relation to the home and school context in order to establish the level and extent of additional support that is needed (DBE, 2014). It further identifies the responsibilities of teachers, managers, SBSTs, DBSTs and parents/caregivers in the different processes.

The strategy comprises four stages in all schools, namely screening, identification, assessment and support (DBE, 2014).

The screening process finds expression in Stage 1, which applies to all learners upon admission with the use of the Learner Profile, Special Needs Assessment (SNA: Section 1) and any other reports, including a learner progress report as the toolkit.

The identification process is applicable in Stage 2 and only applies to learners who have been identified as experiencing barriers to learning with the use of SNA: Section 2 and SNA: Individual Support Plan.

The assessment process takes place in Stage 3, and is a formal assessment and review of the information provided in Stages 1 and 2 to inform the decision on the level of support needed and the type of support package needed. It comprises the toolkit SNA: Section 3a and b.

Support provisioning and monitoring processes are applicable in Stage 4 of the strategy in which the DBST reviews the motivation for additional support as outlined in the form and comprises the toolkit SNA: Section 4.

Being important role players in the SIAS process in an FSS, *parents* are encouraged to take greater responsibility for the support of their children in the most inclusive setting possible. This requires that they are empowered to understand how the potential of their child can be developed optimally by having access to information regarding the kinds of support needed by their child (Abbas, 2016). The SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) stresses that the parent's/caregiver's participation should not be a choice but rather a compulsion. As parents need to play an integral role in forming a partnership with the teacher to ensure that the support plan is implemented successfully (UNESCO, 2005).

It is strongly recommended by many authors (Abbas, 2016; Blok, Peetsma & Roede, 2007; Bornman & Rose, 2010; Conway, 2017) that the *learner* in an FSS be part of the teacher-parent partnership to assess the progress of the support plan. Learners' own perception about themselves is crucial to the planning of the support strategy (Koegel, Koegel, Asbaugh, & Bradshaw, 2014). The learning needs, social relationships and emotional growth of learners need to be considered when decisions are made about the site where they are to receive additional support, as well as the kind of support. The SIAS policy (DBE, 2014) emphasises consultation with the learner as critical to the success of the support plans.

Loreman (2010) suggests that the role of the *teachers* within the a process such as depicted in the SIAS, in a FSS requires the following: a respect for diversity and an understanding of inclusion; engaging in inclusive instructional planning; instructing in ways conducive to inclusion; engaging in meaningful assessment; fostering a positive social climate; collaboration with all stakeholders, i.e. health professionals, parents, learners; and engaging in lifelong learning for professional and personal growth and development. In an FSS it is critical that teachers remain impartial and do not display any signs of prejudice towards learners who experience barriers to learning, as this could promote exclusionary practices (DBE, 2014). It is, therefore, essential that the identification of barriers to learning be based on sound observation, interviews and consultation with all relevant stakeholders (health professionals, the teacher, the parent and the learner) (DBE, 2014).

Teachers too should be able to plan and apply differentiation of content, adjustment of classroom methodologies and classroom environment, as well as apply the necessary accommodations in assessment and examinations (Florian, 2012). These are significant factors for the application of an inclusive pedagogy. Walton, Nel, Muller and Lebeloane (2014) assert that teachers' capacity to respond with appropriate pedagogies to learners who experience barriers to learning is vital to reverse trends towards marginalisation and exclusion. Therefore, the attitudes, behaviour and teaching methods of the teacher in an FSS are critical to the appropriate design and implementation of support programmes (DBE, 2014; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2010). In essence, the teacher must assume the role of case manager to drive the support process (DBE, 2005).

It is expected that teachers in FSSs have the knowledge and skills to identify, plan and implement a support strategy (DBE, 2014). However, Mkhuma et al. (2014) report that the identification of barriers to learning is a serious challenge faced by many teachers

in most schools, as they lack the knowledge regarding barriers to learning, thus impacting negatively on early identification and early intervention. The SIAS process is specifically designed to help teachers assess the needs at an early stage and then work in collaboration with the family, other teachers and service providers to meet those identified needs (DBE, 2014).

It is also argued by teachers that the national SIAS strategy does not really provide adequate support to the teachers, and that the extra paperwork involved in completing the SIAS toolkit and the ambiguity in some sections add to the reluctance of teachers to use this document (Mkhuma, 2012).

In addition, another common concern raised by teachers at a SIAS training session in the Free State was the lack of practical examples in the policy. Teachers felt that the policy should include a few examples on adapting and differentiating the curriculum to suit the learning needs of all learners, which would ensure competency in accommodating diverse learner needs (Roberts, 2011).

2.5.4 Role players in an FSS

There are several support structures on different levels, which have a significant impact in the successful functioning of an FSS (Nel et al., 2016). This ranges from the national and provincial departments of education to the district and school level, which include structures such as the DBST and the SBST. These structures are instrumental in ensuring that FSSs become fully inclusive schools providing for a range of learning needs. Similarly, as illustrated in Figure 2.3 below, teachers, the school management teams, as well as the parents/caregivers and learners are central within an FSS environment to sustain an effective inclusive environment where diversity is respected and accommodated through an inclusive pedagogy teaching approach.

Other external structures of support would include the Department of Health, health care practitioners, the Department of Social Development, social workers, non-profit organisations, disabled people's organisations, higher institutions of learning and Early Childhood Development (ECD) providers (DBE, 2014).

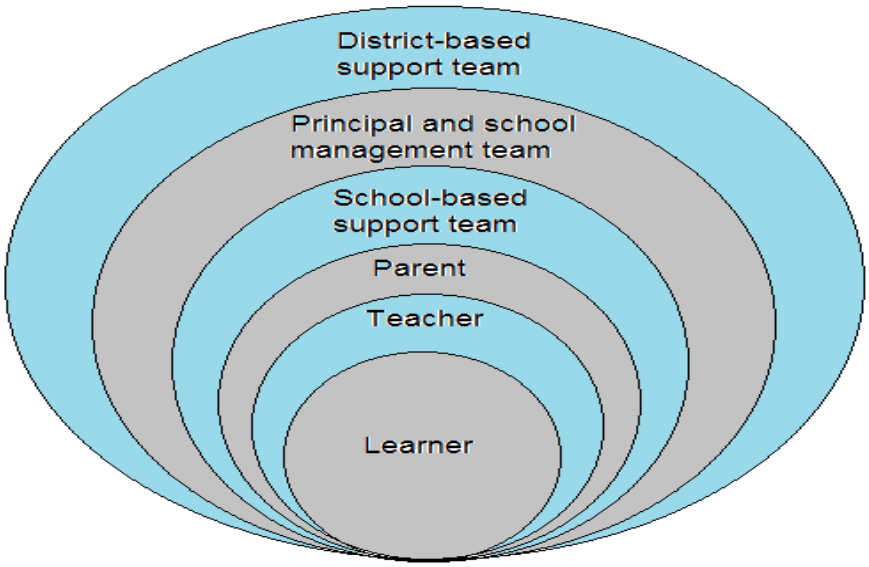

Figure 2. 3. Different role-players in an FSS (Koekemoer, 2016)

2.5.4.1 The role of teachers in an FSS

The basic premise of inclusive education, according to Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel and Malinen (2012), is that schools are concerned with nurturing and educating all learners regardless of their differences in terms of ability, culture, gender, language, class and/or ethnicity. Inclusive schools (i.e., FSSs in this instance) should also provide all learners with a sense of belonging (Savolainen et al., 2012). Forlin and Chambers (2011) add that the role of the teacher is a critical factor in the success or failure in applying the afore-mentioned principles; therefore, they should be empowered and skilled in the application of knowledge (SIAS 2014).

Nevertheless, Forlin and Chambers (2011) found that teachers' increased knowledge about policy related to inclusive educational practices, as well as their

improved confidence in being inclusive teachers, did not always address their concerns or perceived stress about having differently-abled learners in their classes. The reason for this could be that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were often not based on ideological arguments, but rather on practical concerns about how inclusive education could be implemented (Savolainen et al., 2012, p. 51). This supports the notion that drafting education policy is very different from implementing it successfully (Moekelle, 2012).

Furthermore, Savolainen et al. (2012, p. 51) assert that the way in which teachers accept inclusive values has an impact on learners' adaptive academic and behavioural functioning at school. EWP6 describes the role of an inclusive educator as that the educator's main priority must be multilevel classroom instruction, i.e., curriculum differentiation, meaning the educator must prepare lessons with variations for the different needs of each individual learner in the class (DoE, 2001). This includes the promotion of cooperative learning and curriculum flexibility. The teacher should also develop and apply a positive way in dealing with learners with behavioural problems. Moreover, it is imperative for the teacher to focus on problem solving and the development of the learners' strengths and competencies, rather than focusing on their weaknesses or deficits (DoE, 2001), which perpetuates a medical model approach (cf. 2.3.2.).

Applying an inclusive pedagogy in an FSS where teachers demonstrate acceptance of diversity (Ackah, 2010) can result in better motivated learners who are engaged at school, behaving better socially and succeeding academically (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012). However, this requires that they are flexible with regard to teaching, learning and assessment practices; i.e., to apply an inclusive pedagogy (see Chapter 3) and being able to provide educational support to learners (DBE, 2001).

Furthermore, an inclusive teacher in an FSS should be able to work in collaborative teams and find solutions through joint problem-solving; apply teaching approaches that meet the needs of all learners; be flexible in how they implement the curriculum; adapt their classroom methodology to ensure that all learners receive attention; continuously improve their skills to teach in inclusive classrooms; have high expectations of all their learners, and measure them against their own previous best achievements and not against their peers, and lastly, respect the dignity and human rights of learners with disabilities (DBE, 2010; Makhalemele, 2011; Nel et al., 2011; Nel et al., 2016; Payne-Van Staden, 2015).

However, being an inclusive pedagogue in a FSS is challenging in that teachers have to cope with large class sizes, a range of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in one class, developmental variations of learners' skills, social problems and what teachers view as 'unacceptable behaviour' (McLeskey, Waldron, & Reddy, 2014). In order to deal with this, Du Plessis (2013) suggests that teachers need to be well-organised, and have expert skills on differentiation, adaptation and multilevel teaching of the curriculum. They also have to ensure that routines are well-established, and they should be adaptable to ever-changing factors and conditions in the regular classroom. In achieving these aims, the parent plays a critical supportive role.

2.5.4.2 The parent / caregiver

The level of interaction between parent, teacher and child plays a significant role in the learner's progress, especially in an FSS (Nel et al., Muller, & Rheeders, 2011). Ahuja and Sunish (2013) affirm that the success of inclusive education is largely dependent on the ability and support of the families, and essentially having a positive attitude toward inclusion. Gupta and Buwade (2013) have found that parents/caregivers of learners with special needs who have a positive attitude towards inclusion believe that

inclusion facilitates their children's adjustment to the real world and gives them a chance to participate and interact with their classmates.

However, according to Makoelle (2012), parents/caregivers are faced with a dilemma as to how involved they should be. Should they do everything they can to ensure their child receives a good education? Or should they, in the interest of the child, submit unconditionally to the wishes of the school? However, there seems to be a tendency in South African schools for parents/caregivers to not take part in the education of their children due to several factors such as illiteracy and non-recognition by teachers (Moekelle, 2012). The non-involvement of parents places additional stress on teachers, as parents/caregivers play a significant role in the holistic development of their children within the inclusive education paradigm (Maluleka, 2014).

In her study, Maluleka (2014) reports that the socio-economic status of the families has a direct bearing on the degree of parental/caregiver involvement. Research done in black South African schools, especially in rural areas, indicates that contextual factors that hamper parents'/ caregivers' involvement in their children's education are illiteracy, curriculum changes, lack of time, school climate, urbanisation, health problems, economic factors, their attitude and the attitude of teachers, as well as management (Browne & Gordon, 2009).

These are some of the factors to which participants in this study most probably relate. At times, due to work demands, parents are unable to make the time to avail themselves for school appointments. It is also not uncommon to have a large percentage of the learner population consisting of child-headed families, meaning that there is no adult supervision (Phasha & Condy, 2014; Stofile, 2008).

Many parents/caregivers (grandmothers, in many instances) are illiterate themselves with an inadequate education and are, therefore, unable to provide a literacy-

rich environment, as well as academic support for their (grand-)children (Maluleka, 2014). This issue is compounded further where children are learning in a second language, such as English, and the parents/caregivers have a limited proficiency in this language in addition to a low academic background (Phasha, 2014). Jeynes (2003) asserts that parental/caregivers' involvement positively affects the academic achievement of children, as well as facilitating regular school attendance, better social skills, improved behaviour, more positive attitudes towards school, completed homework assignments, completing a school career and continued education.

Furthermore, parents/caregivers play a pivotal role in the early identification of barriers to learning, as their observations and comments can lead the teacher, SBST and/or health professionals to find the exact nature of the barriers that a learner experience (SIAS, 2014). It is imperative that parents/caregivers should at all times be involved in the identification and assessment processes involving their children and should be regarded as equal partners in this process. When choices have to be made about the learner's enrolment into a site where additional support is available, parents/caregivers need to have full information about all options so that they can make informed choices. Parents/caregivers should also be allowed to initiate contact with teachers regarding their children's progress (SIAS, 2014).

Consequently, learners are ultimately the responsibility of their parents/caregivers; hence, they need to take responsibility for the support of their children. The SIAS policy (2014) outlines the involvement of parents as follows:

i. Parents/caregivers should be empowered by teachers and health professionals to understand how the potential of their child can be optimally developed.
ii. They need access to information on the kinds of support needed by their child.
iii. They must know their rights in terms of accessing available support.

iv. Parents/caregivers must make every effort to ensure that their child has access to an appropriate early-intervention programme, which is available in their area.

v. Parents/caregivers who suspect that their child has additional support needs, but have not accessed early-intervention programmes prior to the child turning three years old, must report to the local ordinary school as early as possible, but no later than the age of five (p.95).

In the education of learners who experience barriers to learning and need additional assistive devices within an FSS, parents need to contribute. This can include braille equipment, mobility devices, wheelchairs or a sign language interpreter. In addition, it is suggested that schools, which use South African sign language, are encouraged to run accredited courses for parents and teachers to improve communication with the learners (DBE, 2010). Braille courses should also be run to enable parents to communicate with their children who have visual impairments and assist them with reading and writing in braille (DBE, 2014). A collaborative parent/teacher partnership is, therefore, significant to the success of the learning of a child, especially one who has a physical and/or sensory impairment.

2.5.4.3. The principal and school management team (SMT)

All schools are encouraged to adopt a 'whole school' approach where all staff members are involved in promoting inclusive practices (UNESCO, 2014). Ras (2008) reports that too often in schools this is the responsibility of one or two members of staff. It is, therefore, fundamental that all members of staff within the school are adequately trained on inclusive practices in an FSS. However, this requires good leadership (Ras, 2008).

Whether a school truly adopts an inclusive approach depends on the attitudes and actions of the principal and the school management team members (DBE, 2010). The principal and SMT should ensure that the school's mission and vision statements include elements that would enable the school community to become more inclusive, which would involve the adoption of positive attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning, changing of infrastructure to accommodate diversity, and to implement a more inclusive and flexible curriculum. Together with the School Governing Body (SGB), the principal must commit to developing a conducive learning environment that makes it possible for all learners to access all activities of the school (Engelbrecht et al., 1999; SASA, 1996). Furthermore, the principal and the SMT must ensure that all support structures, for example, the school-based support team (SBST), school assessment team (SAT), learning, teaching support material (LTSM) etc. within the school are fully effective and functional to make certain that the needs of all learners are accommodated (DBE, 2012).

Nevertheless, a report by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on its Inclusive Education Field Test done in 2008 (DBE, 2008b) found that most of the SMTs in the provinces seemed to have a lack of understanding of their roles regarding inclusive strategies and an inability or unwillingness to implement them. Some members of the SMTs even demonstrated a hostility towards implementing inclusive education. It was further reported that many SMT members appeared ignorant of the support mechanisms necessary for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

This is problematic for an FSS to function effectively if school management teams (SMTs) and principals do not play their part in the advocacy and implementation of inclusive education. A key success factor of a functional FSS lies in a transdisciplinary collaboration approach between all the stakeholders (health professionals, the teacher,

the parent and the learner, the teacher assistant). The transdisciplinary team work together towards achieving a common goal for the learner experiencing barriers to learning. (Landsberg, Kruger, & Swart, 2011).

2.5.5 Collaboration

A more collaborative approach to teaching in an FSS can enhance the educational process (Florian & Spratt, 2013). For example, when teachers are team-teaching – with two or more educators, co-teaching one group or class of students – or they meet to brainstorm and reflect about their teaching, learning and assessment it can develop a collaborative educational community, which can improve teacher effectiveness (Loop, 2017). Consequently, teaching, assessment and learning support have to be coordinated effectively throughout the school by allowing time for joint planning in a school day between teams of teachers (Payne-Van Staden, 2015). Furthermore, in an inter-disciplinary collaboration model of teaching, teams are comprised of groups of teachers from different subject areas who work together to coordinate instruction, communication and assessment for a common group of learners (Silverman, Hong, & Trepanier, 2010).

The biggest learning resource in any school is the learners. Consequently, within an inclusive pedagogy approach which is learner-centred, a variety of methodologies of peer support and cooperative learning needs to be employed to foster a school culture that encourages learners to learn collaboratively rather than competitively (DBE, 2010). Learners' exposure to teamwork can also have academic advantages, as well as encourage inclusive principles such as learning to accommodate different ways of learning. Group projects (see Figure 2.3. Collaborative Learning) encourage learners to cooperate with one another, improve social and interpersonal skills, and support the learners to better understand the material at hand through discussion and a team-learning effort (Loop,

2017). This results in learners learning to communicate more effectively, as well as work as a team and demonstrate self-discipline while working collaboratively with their peers (Robinson, 2017).

Furthermore, in order to ensure collaboration that supports the teaching and learning process in a socio-ecological approach, Hornby (2014) purports that role players such as parents, teachers, psychologists, therapists, social workers and counsellors need to have good interpersonal communication skills. The implementation of an inclusive pedagogy in an FSS requires an effective team approach (see Figure 2.3. below) with professionals like psychologists and health care specialists, the school community including teachers, parents and learners, as well as role players within the school district like churches, NGOs and community-based organisations forming part of the team (Nel et al., 2014). A collaborative team approach has emerged as an effective model of addressing the curricular needs of learners who experience barriers to learning in the regular education classroom (Tango, 2013).

Figure 2.3. below portrays a joint planning process with parents, teachers, community members, health care professionals and other paraprofessionals who could contribute meaningfully towards a common goal of ensuring access to quality education for all learners in an FSS (Loreman, 2010).

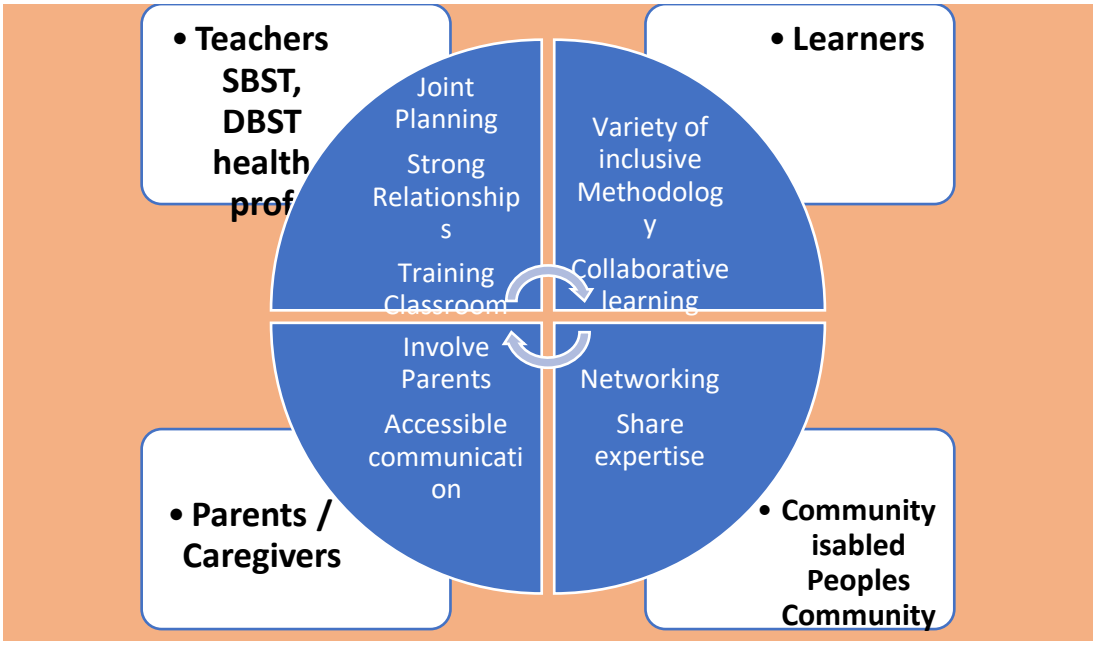

Figure 2. 4. The Collaborative Process (Crous, 2007)

Many professionals believe that the transdisciplinary teaming model, with integrated special services occurring during the regular program in the regular classroom, is the most effective way of delivering instruction. Figure 2.4 represents the partners in the transdisciplinary collaborative process. In this model, everyone works collaboratively on the same goals, sharing responsibility for assessment, planning, sharing of information, problem-solving and decision-making. Experts in each area are responsible for reporting and monitoring progress in goals most related to their area of specialisation, as well as "role release" or training of other team members in the best practices of their specialised area as they apply to an individual learner (Blok, Peetsma, & Roede, 2007).

However, it is argued by Nel et al. (2014) that collaborative partnerships between various role players seem to be a continuous challenge in South Africa. A study by Nel et al. (2014) has revealed that teachers still believe that they are not adequately capacitated to play an equal role in a transdisciplinary collaborative partnership. Teachers seem to rather refer learners who are experiencing barriers to learning to other support

structures (e.g. SBSTs and DBSTs) and professionals, for example, school psychologists or remedial therapists.

Yet, engaging in a transdisciplinary collaborative partnerships among teachers, parents, the learner and other health or education professionals can make a significant difference to the quality of teaching and learning (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011), as alternative or innovative teaching strategies or supplementary instructional materials can be explored and developed.

There are three different approaches to collaborative partnerships, which need be mentioned in the context of this discussion, namely multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration.

In a *multi-disciplinary model*, there is consultation between members of different disciplines contributing their perspectives, but they function independently. Roles are, therefore, clearly defined and rather individualistic in the approach to collaboration, which does not fully fit within a socio-ecological model (Nel et al., 2014). Each professional conducts his or her own discipline-specific assessment of the child and formulates discipline-specific goals. The results are then shared during team meetings (Florian & Spratt, 2013).

The contextual factors and influences are not always taken into consideration and involving parents and teachers on an equal basis is not regular practice (Nel et al., 2014). In order to provide holistic support within a socio-ecological approach to inclusive education, as opposed to providing individualistic intervention, it is essential that a 'whole child' approach to learning support is followed (Bornman & Rose, 2010; Nel et al., Swart, & Pettipher, 2011). In this approach, all the influences and interrelationships are explored by all role-players in the relevant systems working together in collaborative partnerships (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Swart, & Pettipher, 2011; Tango, 2013).

Hence, *interdisciplinary collaboration* asserts that individuals who represent diverse points of view and role responsibilities work together towards goals that cannot be accomplished in professional isolation (Bronstein, 2003). This involves authentic and consequential sharing of expertise and taking collective ownership of mutually agreed goals.

Enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration further is a *transdisciplinary collaborative approach* to learning support, which is regarded by inclusive pedagogues as the preferred model of intervention (Fourie, 2018).

The ultimate goals of the transdisciplinary approach are to promote integrated assessment and to develop a unified support plan that is jointly carried out by all team members, which can include health care professionals, teachers, parents and in most instances, the learners themselves. In the transdisciplinary approach, team members must therefore collaborate, negotiate responsibilities and allocate human resources in an integrated fashion while having the development of the 'whole child' in mind (DBE, 2010).

As suggested by Tango (2013), three primary features differentiate the transdisciplinary model from other team models.

i. Team communication and coordination are emphasised. Thus, it is suggested that team meetings are held and coordinated by a facilitator who fosters open communication for the development of a holistic support plan based on the learner's needs.
ii. There should be a high degree of collaboration among team members when conducting assessments. This requires that team members collectively plan and implement the assessment thereafter results are discussed, and integrated goals are developed during the team meetings for the support plan.

iii. Discipline-specific assessments are supplemented by a global environment-referenced measure, which entails measuring and monitoring the learner's adaptation to environmental demands in daily activities.

Consequently, within an FSS where there is a range of learning needs, collaborative partnerships require that there need to be the following (Conway, 2017; Tango, 2012):

- A sharing and supportive inclusive community in which there is open communication
- Collective decision-making and problem-solving
- Shared responsibility for decisions taken
- A supportive environment
- Cooperation towards shared outcomes
- Accountability for outcomes
- Shared resources
- An environment where every member of the team (including teachers and parents) is valued as an equal partner

Based on the afore-mentioned discussions, FSSs seem to be the answer to transforming the education system into a fully functioning inclusive system within which an inclusive pedagogy can flourish. However, several challenges and obstacles remain in achieving this goal. In the next section some of these challenges will be deliberated.

2.5.6. Challenges to the effective functioning of an FSS

In a recent newspaper article, Charles (2017) emphasises the need for more schools of specialisation to cater for the increasing number of learners with disabilities to be placed in special schools and FSSs. The article reports that there are currently

approximately 11 461 learners with disabilities who are waiting to be placed in non-mainstream schools (Charles, 2017). Currently there are 715 FSSs and 464 SSRCs in South Africa, which do not seem like an adequate number (DBE, 2015). This emphasises the need for more FSSs, but more essentially, it requires that these schools have to be equipped to accommodate learners with diverse learning needs, including those who experience barriers to learning. EWP6 proclaims that FSS schools will be equipped with all the necessary human, technical and infrastructural resources to meet a range of support and learning needs, including learners whose support needs are deemed to be 'moderate' or even 'high' (Walton et al., 2014). However, whether these schools are fully performing the role of inclusive schools, as envisaged in EWP6, is still to be determined (cf. 2.5.).

A recent report on the implementation of Education White Paper 6 (2015) states that Full-Service Schools are not operating at full capacity because of the apprehension that still exists against the practicality of inclusive education. Some of the challenges that cause the ineffective functioning of FSSs include policy implementation, attitudes, funding, physical barriers, socio-economic barriers, language and communication barriers, lack of parental involvement, teachers' lack of capacity and an inflexible curriculum.

2.5.6.1 Policy implementation

Dr Moses Simelane, Director: Inclusive Education, Department of Basic Education, (DBE), presented a paper at the University of Pretoria titled *Reconceptualization of IE: A South African Perspective (2 -3 Dec 2013)*. In this paper, he raised some of the tensions South Africa had been facing in the implementation of EWP6 since 2001. He explained that these tensions included an incoherent understanding of inclusive education across all levels of the system, fragmented and disparate approaches in the development of an inclusive education and training system, a dual

schooling system (special and ordinary) resulting in a misaligned conceptualisation of inclusion and lastly, inclusion/inclusivity not being the core vehicle for re-engineering education systems.

Simelane (2013) argued that inclusive education required a system change to one education system that was equal and accessible to all, the addressing of barriers to learning and increasing participation of relevant stakeholders in education, namely parents, teachers, policy makers, health professionals, etc. Drawing on Humphrey (2008), Simelane (2013) identified four key principles of inclusive education:

i. *Presence*: promotion of visibility of persons (recognition) who are normally excluded from activities of peers in the regular learning context
ii. *Acceptance*: degree to which communities and societies acknowledge the diversity and rights of those who are different from them to operate in similar educational and social settings
iii. *Participation*: involvement of persons with differentiated needs in quality learning experiences
iv. *Achievement*: promotion of high academic standards and achievement outcomes for all learners

It is, therefore, critical that goals towards a fully inclusive education system need to be more explicitly stated and operated in order to prevent uncertainty and misunderstanding of the purpose of EWP6.

When Education White Paper 6 was first published in 2001, South Africa seemed to be following the international trend toward a fully inclusive education system, but subsequent policy implementation seemed to have made little progress over the past decades (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Makoelle, 2014; Walton et al., 2014). The reason for this could be that the six broad key strategies of EWP6 (cf. 2.5.6.1.) for establishing

an inclusive education system lacked in specificity and detail, as EWP6 only had broad strategies without guidance on how to implement this policy effectively in practice (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). Bornman and Donohue (2014) further argued that the divide between policy and practice could ultimately be closed if clarification was provided about the means through which the relevant goals could be met and by the enforcement of policy by the national Department of Basic Education.

Additionally, according to Bornman and Rose (2010, p. 7), "… 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 inclusion". This is evident in that there are various sectors within the Department of Basic Education that compete for limited resources.

The current educational drives to be achieved by 2030 are (among others) the universalisation of early childhood development and the improvement of higher education programmes (National Development Plan, 2030), with significantly little mention of advocacy and implementation programmes for the development of inclusive education through the expansion of FSSs and resource centres (Buys, 2018).

Aggravating this situation is the fact that many policy-makers or politicians do not understand or believe in inclusive education, and these leaders can hamper efforts to make school policies more inclusive. This results in the exclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning from the educational system, preventing them from enjoying the same opportunities for education and employment as mainstream learners (UNESCO, 2000). This, in essence, means that learners with barriers to learning are being marginalised, discriminated against and not treated fairly and without prejudice. For example, Brandon (2006) argues that learners who have historically faced barriers to learning have had few opportunities for further education at tertiary level. The research

study of Stofile (2008) concludes that departmental officials in South Africa are unsure about the goals of an inclusive education system and how ordinary schools, FSSs and special schools need to be transformed into schools that are more suitable to practise inclusive education.

Furthermore, Makoelle (2012), as well as Bornman and Rose (2010), maintain that some officials remain confused about the parameters of what constitutes intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning and exactly how these barriers should be addressed within inclusive schools. According to Bornman and Rose (2010), it appears that it is easier for officials to intervene in learners' intrinsic barriers (e.g. physical or sensory impairment) than trying to address extrinsic barriers to learning (e.g. poverty or child-headed families).

In addition, Makoelle and Malindi (2015) suggest that schools need more explicit guidelines from the DBE to address extrinsic barriers to learning. This will support teachers who are key role players to implement inclusive education. However, Maguvhe (2016) argues that people's attitude sometimes limits their participation and experiences in an inclusive environment. It is these attitudes that will determine the extent to which people will participate in an educational system that would include all learners with disabilities.

2.5.6.2 Attitudes

In recent years, the practice of inclusive education has been widely embraced as an ideal model for education, both in South Africa and internationally (Maher, 2009). However, acceptance of ideal practice has not necessarily translated into what actually occurs within the classroom, which can be strongly related to negative attitudes (Bornman & Donohue, 2014).

Negative and harmful attitudes towards differences in our society remain critical barriers to successful learning and development (DBE, 2010). Discriminatory attitudes

resulting from prejudice against people on the basis of race, class, gender, culture, ability/disability, religion or sexual preference manifest themselves as barriers to learning when such attitudes are directed towards learners in the education system (DBE, 2005). In particular, successful inclusion depends on the attitudes and actions of school principals and the investment of school personnel such as teachers, learners and parents, as they create the school culture and have the ability to challenge or support inclusion (Ainscow, 2002; DeBoer, 2011). Labelling of learners should therefore be discouraged, since it makes it difficult for learners to grow beyond the limitations of the label. It is consequently essential for parents, teachers and peer groups to adopt positive attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning (DBE, 2005). All learners should be viewed in an enabling light, and there should be a determined effort by a transdisciplinary (cf. 2.4.) support system to establish what their real strengths are for the purpose of further development and support (DBE, 2005).

Research reflects that, although teachers often report that they agree with the idea of inclusion, they actually believe that the needs of learners with disabilities are best met in separate classrooms (Campbell, Gillmore & Cuskelly, 2003). However, several researchers (e.g. Florian, 2010; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2010; Florian & Rouse, 2010; Makoelle, 2012) assert that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion could become more positive if they received more ongoing and adequate training, as well as the assistance of appropriate support services for learners who experience barriers to learning.

Many teachers believe that it is not their responsibility to teach learners who experience barriers to learning. This way of thinking poses many challenges to the successful implementation of inclusive education, as it requires teachers to reconsider their attitudes and beliefs about working with learners who experience barriers to learning

and to teach in such a way that the diverse needs of all learners are met (Mahlo & Condy, 2016).

2.5.6.3 Funding

One of the most familiar and powerful arguments against the movement towards inclusion in education is still based on financial and resource considerations (Sayed & Ahmed, 2015). Adequate funding is a necessity for inclusion and yet it seems not to be prioritised by government. This is evident in that schools often lack the adequate facilities, qualified and capacitated teachers and other staff members, educational materials and general support (Stofile, 2008).

When new policies are implemented, sufficient funding and capacity to deliver these policies are assumed (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007). However, Bornman and Donohue (2014) argue that the lack of clarity in EWP6 to specify the funding strategies of the roll-out plan has an impact on the provision of resources.

DBE (2015) reports that the current funding system in South Africa is predominantly a child-based funding model, which counts the number of children identified as having special educational needs. More labelling and a rise in costs are frequently cited as problems in countries that use this model (Peters, 2004). Such a model is also very dependent on an assessment and diagnostic approach (i.e. the medical model), which is difficult to manage in a country with so few professional staff who can conduct individual assessments (DBE, 2015).

It is, therefore, proposed by the National Department of Education that the most effective funding model for accelerating the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa is a resource-based model (DBE,2001). This model is based on services that must be provided, rather than on the number of children. Such a funding model encourages local initiatives to develop programmes and services, and can lead to more

inclusion as a way forward (UNICEF, 2014). The resource-based funding model focuses on teacher resources and support to provide quality education for learners who experience barriers to learning.

In Finland and Sweden, the resource-based model is used where schools are supported by at least one permanent special education teacher. These teachers provide assessments, develop individualised education plans, coordinate services and provide guidance for mainstream teachers. In Germany, teachers in 'integrated' classes are allocated extra time, depending on the severity of a learner's disability. For example, integrated classes comprise eighteen learners in mainstream classes and two or three learners with special educational needs. In Austria, inclusive education classes can comprise twenty learners and four learners with disabilities (Jahnukainen, 2011; Nilholm, Almqvist, Göransson & Lindqvist, 2013).

One of the criticisms, as reported by UNICEF (2014), is that this model contains a built-in incentive to fit learners to existing programmes, rather than adapting programmes to meet learner needs. Then schools may be penalised for success when learners no longer need services and funding is lost or reduced.

2.5.6.4 Physical barriers

In economically deprived schools, especially in rural areas, dilapidated and poorly maintained buildings can restrict accessibility for learners with disabilities (Conway, 2013). Some of these buildings are unsafe for the learners; for example, in Gauteng there are still classrooms made from asbestos and others are mobile classrooms. This poses a serious health risk for all learners and staff alike, since inhaling the harmful material is a serious health risk.

2.5.6.5 Language and communication barriers

In South Africa, teaching and learning for many learners often take place through a language that is not their first language. As language is an extremely important tool for learning, this can place these learners at an academic disadvantage and it can also lead to linguistic difficulties, which contribute to learning barriers (Motitswe & Taole, 2016). In some instances, learning takes place from Grade 1 in either English or Afrikaans, but mostly mother tongue learning is employed in the Foundation Phase, especially in township schools. Thereafter, from Grade 4 onwards, most learners are expected to learn in English and Afrikaans, which are not the primary languages of the majority (Nel & Nel, 2019).

In all schools in South Africa, it is the task of the school governing bodies to select the language of teaching and learning, and these two afore-mentioned languages are predominantly opted for, while not taking into consideration what the possible impact on successful learning could be (Moekelle, 2012). One of the main reasons for this is that many parents still insist that their children be taught in English, as it is perceived to be a language of access to academic qualifications, work and wealth (cf. 5.2.4.3.8.). There is also the perception that town schools in which primarily English and Afrikaans are used, provide better quality education (Nel & Nel, 2019).

Aggravating this scenario is, at times, the teacher is not proficient in the language of teaching and learning (LoLT) which in itself can cause barriers to learning and teaching (Motitswe & Taole, 2016). A consequence of a limited proficiency in the LoLT is that second-language learners are often subjected to low expectations and discrimination, as they are too easily labelled as ‘slow’ learners because teachers experience difficulties in developing appropriate support mechanisms for them (Nel & Nel, 2019).

In addition, challenges with language compounds the barriers to learning that the child may already experience. These issues are regarded by many researchers as some of the main causes of learners being mistakenly identified as learning disabled and then placed into special education (Heugh, 2015; Kerfoot & Van Heerden, 2015; Nel & Theron, 2008).

2.5.6.6 Socio-economic barriers

As effective learning is fundamentally influenced by the availability of educational resources to meet the needs of society, socio-economic disadvantages have a negative effect on education (Nel & Grosser, 2016). These disadvantages include poverty, physical underdevelopment, poor living conditions, under-nourishment, high levels of violence and crime, abuse (Donald et al., 2010) and a lack of basic services, which are regarded as contributors to learning breakdowns (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2010; Nel et al., 2012). Adding to the mentioned barriers is dysfunctional families and chronic illnesses, including HIV/AIDS (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2002).

2.5.6.7 Lack of parental involvement

The consultation with and involvement of parents are critical success factors in inclusive education (cf. 1.1.; 2.5.6.7.). Constant reporting to and gathering information from parents are imperative if teachers want to know the learner better and provide optimal learning experiences (Florian, 2012; Tchatchoueng, 2014). It is, therefore, important that teachers develop a welcoming approach to encourage open communication with parents (Donald et al., 2014). Parents and learners are active partners in the learning process in the FSS. (Robinson, 2017).

Parents or caregivers need to be involved in the identification and assessment processes of their children, and should be regarded as equal partners in the process. However, it must be acknowledged that parental apathy and involvement in the education

of their children are sometimes as a result of low literacy levels of parents and care givers (Phasha, 2016).

2.5.6.8 Teachers' lack of capacity

Research in South Africa has found that teachers in FSSs experience the implementation of inclusive practices in their classrooms as stressful (Engelbrecht, 2013; Makoelle, 2013; Walton et al., 2014). The reasons for this seem to be that teachers feel that they have limited competencies in adapting teaching strategies to suit the needs of the learner with barriers to learning, skills for modifying and adapting the instructions, techniques to plan according to age, grade and learning style of the learner, and differentiation of the curriculum (cf. 2.5.6.; 2.5.6.8.).

For inclusive education practices to be successful, teachers need to know their subject content, as well as the pedagogics of the subject (Mukwambo & Phasha, 2016). In addition, Bornman and Donohue (2014) argue that teachers need to know how to modify the curriculum to suit each learner's particular needs and pace of learning. This is essential in order for all learners to be able to access the curriculum (DBE, 2001). Consequently, assessment tasks should be developed and adapted in such a way that learners will be able to demonstrate their competence. Furthermore, teachers need to ascertain the kind of support a learner requires and how the achievement of the learning outcomes will be accounted for in the assessment procedures (Motitswe & Taole, 2016).

The Department of Basic Education has envisaged that many teachers will be reoriented to new methods of inclusive teaching via comprehensive training programmes that the department has provided (DBE, 2010). However, these training programmes are often only an afternoon or a week or two long. Although teachers report that these brief training programmes are helpful, they feel that these sessions are not enough to fully capacitate them for diverse inclusive classrooms (Stofile, 2008). The programmes also

tend to focus on developing a few skills, whereas teachers often need far more comprehensive training programmes, which should be on-going and not a once-off programme (Stofile, 2008).

Current teacher education programmes in South Africa encourage a social model approach to disability, and view inclusive education as accommodating diverse learners in a single classroom (Oswald & Swart, 2011). The social model is rooted firmly in the human rights paradigm, arguing for inclusion and the removal of all barriers that hinder full participation of individuals with disabilities.

However, before this model of disability was widely accepted, most teachers in South Africa were trained to teach either general education or special education as the by-products of the tenets of the medical model (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). These practices had, in turn, produced many teachers without the necessary skills to teach learners with disabilities. This approach also created negative attitudes of doubt and uncertainty regarding the education of learners with disabilities. These attitudes became strongly embedded in the South African teaching culture (Ntombela, 2011).

What further complicates matters is the fact that a large proportion of the South African teacher workforce is over 50 years of age (Moekelle, 2012). Hence, reorienting teachers to new ways of educating learners (after many years in the profession teaching a certain way) remains a significant challenge to successful inclusive practices. Yet, the absence of adequate and on-going in-service training of teachers often leads to insecurity, uncertainty, low self-esteem and a lack of innovative practices in the classroom. This may result in resistance and negative attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning. To facilitate a shift in attitude and enable teachers to adapt to changes, require that teachers pursue lifelong learning rather than rigid specialisation within any educational institution (Conway, 2017).

2.5.6.9 An inflexible curriculum

Teachers are the implementers of the curriculum. The success of the curriculum is the responsibility of the teacher. A curriculum needs to ensure that all learners with or without barriers to learning receive their basic human right which is quality education for all (SASA, 1996b). However, it is argued by Meo (2008) that such laws do little to address the biggest barrier to improving learner outcomes: the curriculum. In addition, he states that the inflexible curriculum does not meet the needs of diverse learners. A 'one size fits all' approach to learning will not enhance the development of learner's knowledge and skills. A learner's style of learning, pace of learning, strengths and interests should be accommodated for within the curriculum (Motitswe & Taole, 2016).

FSSs need to ensure that all learners can access the curriculum through flexible teaching methods and the provision of support to learners in multiple ways, preventing quick referrals to other institutions or "special schools" (DBE, 2012). In order to address various barriers and learning needs of learners, FSSs are, therefore, responsible for establishing inclusive teaching methods to assist curriculum and institutional transformation (i.e. an inclusive pedagogy) (DBE, 2012).

However, these expectations have become a challenge to accomplish due to (among others) pedagogical barriers, which can be linked to an inflexible curriculum that causes learning breakdowns, as well as inflexible teaching and assessment approaches that do not cater for diverse learner needs and styles (such as visual, auditory, kinaesthetic) and insufficient support from and to teachers (Nel & Grosser, 2016).

For a curriculum to be flexible, it has to be custom-made to suit learners' learning styles, learning paces and interests. A teacher's inclusive pedagogy approach to teaching will determine the outcomes and effectiveness of the lesson (Motitswe & Taole, 2016). For example, a teacher could use multilevel teaching, curriculum adaptation and

curriculum differentiation as a technique to ensure that learners are accommodated for at their individual levels in the teaching-learning experience (cf. 3.2.; 3.4.1.; 3.4.4.; 3.4.7.; 6.4.4.).

Santiago, Ferrara and Blank (2008) are of the opinion that a fully functioning FSS can represent a promising education approach that improves learning by addressing not only learners' academic needs, but also their social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs. This can be achieved through a curriculum that is customised to suit the identified needs of all learners within an FSS environment.

2.6 Chapter summary

The literature review highlighted the complex nature of inclusion and the importance thereof in the shift towards a democratic society. Framing this review within Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, facilitated the expansion of the concept from medical diagnosis to a more holistic recognition of the extent of barriers to learning. It emphasised the imperative to support learners in overcoming barriers towards participation in mainstream education and society at large. In the next chapter the literature of an inclusive pedagogy approach will be discussed.

Chapter 3

Literature review: Inclusive Pedagogy

3.1. Introduction

As inclusive education has become the predominant approach globally to ensure that all learners have access to equal and quality education opportunities pedagogical approaches came under scrutiny. Pedagogy as a discipline deals with the theory and practice of teaching, and how this influences learning (Florian, Young & Rouse, 2010).

Within the inclusive education movement an inclusive pedagogy emerged as the recommended approach globally (Loreman, 2017). This is regarded as the more appropriate pedagogical approach in order to become more responsive to learners with a diverse range of learning needs, i.e. different cultures, genders, religions, languages, dis/abilities and other situations present in a classroom (Loreman, 2017). In this chapter it will be attempted to create an understanding of an inclusive pedagogy, where it will be defined and discussed. Furhtermoe pedagogical approaches and practices integral to an inclusive pedagogy and different teaching methodologies within this approach will be addressed. Lastly, a review of inclusive pedagogy practices in South Africa will be given.

3.2 Understanding inclusive pedagogy

Over the past decades international research (including South Africa) has found that mainstream teachers remain uncertain about their ability to teach learners who experience barriers to learning, especially those who have disabilities. Most of these teachers believe that you need to have special skills and specialized pedagogies are required (Nel et al., 2016; Bornman & Donohue, 2014; Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012; Florian & Linklater, 2010). Not

negating the fact that teachers need to be highly skilled and motivated to be successful as inclusion demands high levels of teaching competence to promote effective learning (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010), Florian and Linklater (2010) describe an inclusive pedagogy as focusing on expanding what is customarily available in the classroom as a way of responding to different learning needs rather than specifically individualizing for some. Thus, the emphasis should not be on what works for most learners along with something 'different' or additional' for those who experience barriers to learning, but there should instead be an approach of teaching and learning that involves the construction of a rich learning environment characterised by lessons and learning opportunities that are amply made available to everyone so that all are able to participate in classroom life (Florian & Beaton, 2017; Florian & Linklater, 2010). Mintz and Wyse (2015) further asserts that each child must be valued equally by the teacher and the school, which requires that the process of curriculum adaptation is done from the perspective of all learners in the inclusive classroom. This means that, rather than considering the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning as an 'add-on' after providing for the needs of the 'median' child, the process of planning and delivery of teaching in the inclusive classroom reflects the intention of all learners being equal (Mintz & Wyse, 2015). An inclusive pedagogy should therefore be a method of teaching that encompasses dynamic practices and learning styles, multicultural content and a variety of assessment strategies with the goal of promoting successful learning, as well as social, cultural and physical well-being (Florian, 2012). Consequently, the achievement of all learners are raised while safeguarding the inclusion of those who are vulnerable to exclusion and other forms of marginalisation (Florian & Linklater, 2010). Hence, in implementing an inclusive pedagogy approach to learning, teachers should take cognisance of the fact that there is no single classroom where all learners will be the same or learn in the same way. This requires teachers to be creative in using an inclusive pedagogy approach to reach all learners of different ability

levels (Florian & Spratt, 2013).

However, care should be taken that an inclusive pedagogy is not a call for a return to a model of whole-class teaching of "one size fits all" where equality is supposedly addressed by providing identical experiences for all learners. It is rather an approach whereby the teacher provides a range of options and opportunities which are available to everyone in the inclusive classroom (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Diversity is then used as a strength, rather than a problem as learners work together, share ideas and learn from their interactions with each another (Florian & Spratt, 2013). The inclusive pedagogy approach, therefore, nurtures an open-minded view of each child's potential to learn.

Furthermore, Hart (2004) believes that an inclusive pedagogy rejects the notion that learners have a fixed 'ability' and that a child's current learning can be used to predict his or her future 'potential'. Instead, an inclusive pedagogy contends that every child's capacity to learn is changeable. This implies that what teachers choose to do (or not to do) in the present can alter a child's learning capacity for the future. Dweck (2007) affirms that the most motivated and resilient learners are not the ones who think they have a fixed or innate intelligence, but the ones who believe that their abilities can be developed through their effort and learning. Teachers are the key role players in creating the conditions and providing the opportunities to encourage such a growth mindset (Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017; Dweck 2007). Jumaa, Lehtomäkia and Naukkarine (2017) affirm that teachers can be influential change agents in transforming their schools if they regularly reflect on their pedagogical practices, looking for improvements that will help all learners reach their full potential. Moreover, studies have shown that, when teachers have a positive attitude towards their learners, they are more socially responsive and attentive, they often modify their instruction to address learner needs and they are more successful at extracting learners' experiences to make lessons meaningful and contextually relevant. Contrariwise, teachers who have low expectations of their learners

make less of an effort to support them in the learning situation, which discourages them in subtle ways, resulting in these learners achieving lower academic performance (Florian & Spratt, 2013).

In the next section approaches and practices that are integral to an inclusive pedagogy will be explored.

3.3. Pedagogical approaches and practices integral to an inclusive pedagogy

Developing, planning and applying an appropriate pedagogy can lead to academic achievement, social and emotional development, acquisition of technical skills and a general ability to contribute to society (Conn, 2014). According to Warren (2014, p. 395) applying an effective inclusive pedagogy, therefore, requires:

- An in-depth understanding of pedagogical approaches specific to the subject matter and the developmental age of the learners (also called 'pedagogical content knowledge');
- The appropriate employment of whole-class work, small-group work and working in pairs;
- The meaningful incorporation of teaching and learning materials in addition to the textbook;
- Ample opportunities for learners to ask questions, as well as to answer and expand upon responses to questions;
- The helpful use of local terms and languages within the context of the learners;
- A variety of lesson activities; and
- A positive attitude towards learners as well as a belief in all learners' capacity to learn.

3.3.1. Characteristics of an inclusive pedagogy

From the literature review two main characteristics of an inclusive pedagogy emerged, i.e. context-dependent and a flexible curriculum.

3.3.1.1 Context dependent

The effectiveness of pedagogy depends on ensuring that the approach is appropriate for specific schools and national contexts. An important and integral pirinciple of an effective

inclusive pedagogy, as emphasised by Phasha and Condy (2016), is that it is context-dependent. The concept of "education for all" affirms the notion of education as a fundamental right by taking into consideration the educational, social and cultural backgrounds of all learners (Phasha & Condy, 2016). Therefore, teachers need to be enabled in how to make contextual adaptations to their teaching approaches. For example, in mixed-level classrooms, teachers need to have a good understanding of learners' different ability levels in order to alter their instruction and activities to meet the needs of each learner, without excluding anyone. This would also require teachers to also have knowledge about barriers to learning (Conn, 2014). Loreman, (2017) further contends that teacher actions, judgments and teaching approaches must also take into consideration theories of learning, understanding of learners and their needs, and the backgrounds and interests of individual learners.

3.3.1.2 A flexible curriculum

Fundamental to an inclusive pedagogy is a flexible curriculum. The most meaningful way to respond to learner diversity in the classroom is through the curriculum. A curriculum is therefore needed that is flexible, accessible and inclusive; one that will allow learners to develop knowledge, skills and attributes required to meet their needs and ensure that their potential is realised (UNESCO, 2014). A curriculum must be responsive to the educational needs of all learners, and care must be taken to blame learners if they struggle to access the curriculum if it is not designed to accommodate their needs (Moekelle, 2012). However, flexibility or adaptation/modification of the curriculum to suit learning needs should not be viewed as creating a new or alternate curriculum. It should rather be seen as making adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment techniques and support materials to enhance learners' performance and allow participation in learning activities (Phasha & Condy, 2016). As teachers are the implementers of the curriculum it essentially means that the success of the curriculum is the teacher's responsibility (Florian et al., 2010). It is, therefore, necessary that

all teachers understand what a flexible curriculum entails. Phasha and Condy (2016, p. 224) contend that there are four key features to a flexible curriculum:

- It is inclusive. The curriculum allows teachers to adapt their teaching with regard to the content and pedagogy to suit the individual needs of the learners;
- It is responsive. The curriculum must equip the learners with skills in preparation for their future;
- It is appropriate and relevant relating to the learners' developmental age and experience; and
- It encompasses diverse teaching methods.

Figure 3.1 below illustrates all the factors that should be flexible in order to contribute to an inclusive curriculum where different learning needs are accommodated. This includes (adapted from Phasha & Condy, 2016):

- Adapting subject content, as well as teaching and learning pace, to take learners' backgrounds and living circumstances into consideration. However, this does not necessarily involve a change in the content of the lesson but rather a change of the conceptual difficulty of the curriculum which remains the same;
- Accommodating language challenges that learners could experience when learning in a second language;
- Using a variety of assessment strategies;
- Varying teaching methods;
- Accommodating diverse learning needs and different learning styles;
- Accessing and employing various resources for learning material and education equipment, such as using technology; and
- Managing the classroom in such a way that all learners can participate in all classroom, as well as outside classroom, activities.

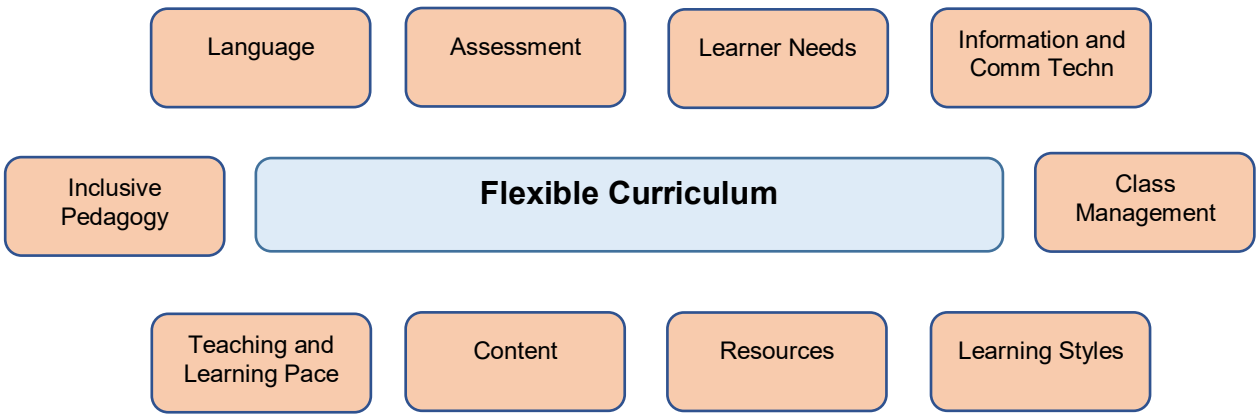

Figure 3. 1. Factors that contribute to a flexible curriculum. (Adapted from Phasha and Condy, 2016)

Yet, it must be mentioned that applying a flexible curriculum is a challenging endeavor in the South African context. The reason for this is that the South African curriculum is dominated by a prescriptive national curriculum, and monitored through standardized and systemic testing (Nel, 2018). Thus, a content-, and results driven policy currently controls the education system, which involves pressure on teachers and learners to complete prescribed content within fixed time limits, as well as a strong emphasis on pass-rates and high levels of performance, and national examinations which primarily test factual knowledge, rather than comprehension or analysis. (Nel, 2018; Goddard, Goddard & Minjung, 2015). This constraints teacher to implement a flexible curriculum and they will have to explore ways to align policies and practices (Goddard, Goddard & Minjung, 2015).

3.3.2. Teaching and learning approaches integral to an inclusive pedagogy

3.3.2.1. Multi-level teaching

Multi-level teaching is an approach that assumes the principles of individualisation, flexibility and inclusion of all learners, irrespective of their personal skills levels (Florian et al., 2010). In contrast to preparing different lessons for different learners, multi-level teaching supports one lesson with varying methods of learning, teaching and assessment (Vaughn et al., 2000). This includes a variety of teacher

techniques aimed at reaching learners at all ability levels and considering different learning styles. This will include involving learners by pitching questions on different levels of thinking, adjusting expectations where needed, allowing learners to choose a learning activity of their preference or competence in demonstrating knowledge, skills and values, while accepting that these different methods are of equal value, and finally, assessing learners in terms of their different learning needs (Adapted from DBE, 2010).

For example, the teacher teaches with the finest detail using various visual resources to keep all learners interested (Phasha & Condy, 2016), or when assigning learner activities, the teacher can divide learners into groups according to their levels of interests, proficiency in the current task, strengths and language skills (DBE, 2010).

3.3.2.2. Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is a way of teaching in which learners work together to ensure that all members in the group have learnt the same content. Goddard et al. (2015) state that, in cooperative learning, groups (two or more learners in a group) are organised and tasks are structured for learners to work together to reach a goal, solve a problem, plan or produce a product. An important goal of cooperative learning is to enable learners to work in diverse groups where they can learn how to socialise, and deal with differences (e.g. ability, gender, religion, language, home backgrounds, etc. with respect and acceptance (DBE, 2010).

3.3.2.3. Scaffolding

Gultig and Stielau (2009, p. 27) describes scaffolding as "the help that teachers give learners that enables them to extend their knowledge and to try something that they would otherwise not manage on their own". Learners need the expertise of professional teachers who can assess their level of understanding of content knowledge and then set adequate challenges to take them from the present level to the next level of understanding (Phasha & Condy, 2016). Learners who experience barriers to leaning may have difficulty working independently and

could require extensive initial support (DBE, 2010). In summary, scaffolding refers to the personal guidance, assistance and support that a teacher or peer provides to a learner which starts at a more intensive level of support and then allowing the learner to become increasingly independent from the guidance (DBE, 2010).

3.3.2.4. Curriculum differentiation

Curriculum differentiation is regarded as a key strategy by the South African Department of Basic Education for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning needs (DBE 2014). In DBE (2011, p.4) guideline document it is described as "involving processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum. It must consider learners' ability levels, interests and backgrounds".

Florian and Beaton (2017) also asserts that an inclusive pedagogy is a pedagogical response to individual differences between learners, but emphasize that it should evade the marginalisation that can occur with differentiated strategies that are designed with individual needs in mind. For example, Slee (2010) states that a learner may be included in the classroom, but can be excluded from the opportunities to participate in group activities, due to work that is differentiated to such an extent that the learner ends up being isolated from the classroom community although he or she may be physically present. Hence, an inclusive pedagogy emphasizes that no learner should receive support without being treated differently from others (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

An example of differentiated support is the Individual Education Plan (IEP) which had been developed for use in segrated special education classrooms. Slee (2013) avers that, while the IEP is becoming less common in some countries, they are still used in many mainstream schools with the intent of promoting inclusion. This is evident in the South African education system and especially in FSS (DBE, 2014). Loreman (2017) is of the opinion that although

IEPs may be challenging in advocating for an inclusive pedagogy approach to learning, if used effectively, it could be helpful in meeting the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning. However, it is argued by Andreasson, Asp-Onsjo and Isaksson (2013) that IEP's often serve to place learners on a different path of learning, ultimately perpetuating a segregated approach. The most effective way to reach all learners is through adopting an inclusive pedagogy approach to learning where the curriculum content for all is the same, but the inclusive pedagogy approach may vary to meet the ientified need of the learner (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Curriculum differentiation can be done at the level of content, teaching methodologies, assessment and learning environment. Each of these levels will be discussed below (DBE, 2011).

3.3.2.4.1. Differentiating curriculum content

Content can be differentiated by adapting it in such a way that it is achievable for a wider range of learning needs. This should not be seen as a watering-down of the curriculum, but rather as a process where learners are taken by a different route to a similar endpoint (Vaughn et al., 2000). Some learners cope comfortably with the level of content and others may still be grappling with what is being taught in the grade (DBE, 2011). The teacher therefore has to offer a variety of teaching and learning methods for learners to access the curriculum.

Content is what the learner is expected to learn; i.e., to know, understand or be able to do. It includes facts, concepts and skills that learners need to acquire within their learning environment (DBE, 2010). In the South African curriculum, i.e. CAPS, the content is mostly prescribed and, in some instances, teachers are able to select the content to suit their learners' needs and contexts (Tchatchoueng, 2016). Engelbrecht et al. (2003) postulate that, because of curriculum demands and time constraints, it is often a challenge for teachers to select content which is meaningful to learners' needs and interests, their environment, current levels of

functioning.

In curriculum differentiation, teachers can modify content to support learners to attain appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies (DBE, 2010).

3.3.2.4.2. Differentiating the learning environment

The learning environment can be a barrier to learning, for example the manner in which the learner is facing the chalkboard could prevent him from seeing clearly. The learning environment should therefore be made as conducive to learning as possible as it is the place or setting where learning occurs. A conducive learning environment includes psychosocial and physical dimensions (Katz, 2013). The psychosocial learning environment refers to the psychological and social factors that influence life satisfaction, health, well-being and the mental ability to perform effectively. This encompasses interpersonal cooperation, classroom and school culture, protection against harassment and mental harm, and effective communication. The physical environment comprises adequate classroom space, infrastructure, arrangement of furniture, level of noise, class size, classroom displays and resources (DBE, 2011).

It is critical for teachers to consider these factors when trying to meet the learning needs of their learners. For example, in a large class, a learner with a hearing-impairment may experience barriers to learning because of noise levels and seating arrangements. The teacher should arrange the classroom to suit the needs of such a learner, while not letting him/her feel being singled out (Vaughn et al., 2000).

3.3.2.4.3. Differentiating teaching methods

Andreasen, Asp-Onsjo and Isaksson (2013) assert that in order to respond appropriately to the diverse needs of learners, teaching methods and strategies need to be differentiated. This is important as learners have different abilities, skills and knowledge, socio-economic backgrounds and personalities. However, Florian and Beaton (2017 argue that it is not only

about the choice of using a certain pedagogical method, but also the way in which it is enacted. This requires that teachers listen to how learners' experience the teaching method/s and then use this feedback to inform future selections of teaching methods.

3.3.2.4.4. Differentiating learning materials

Employing a variety of learning material that accommodates different senses, learning styles and disabilities are essential in an inclusive pedagogy approach (Tchatchoueng, 2016). Furthermore, in a technological advanced world electronic learning, or e-learning, offers a range of options for differentiated instruction that the teacher can tailor to meet learners' needs (Pappano, 2011). For example, a child with poor vision may need larger print material to be able to read easily. A child with an intellectual disability may benefit from the use of pictures in the learning materials. The format of the learning activities can also be adapted to suit the method by which the learner learns best; for example, modifying the task to graphs, diagrams, tables, illustrations and cartoons (DBE, 2011)

3.3.2.4.5. Differentiated assessment

Chapman and King (2012) assert that differentiating assessment involves rethinking the traditional practice of having all learners do the same assessment tasks at the same time. In an inclusive pedagogy approach differentiating assessment implies that assessment should be flexible enough to accommodate a range of learner needs.

The following figure explains the process of differentiating assessment (DoE, 2007)

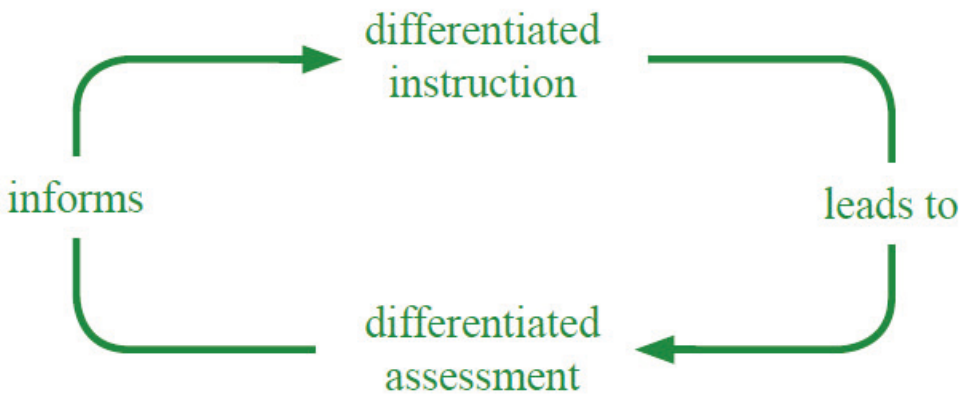

Figure 3. 2. Differentiated assessment process (Department of Education, Alberta, 2007)

With reference to Figure 3.2 differentiation requires the teacher to organise differently when planning lessons, i.e: carry out the lessons differently when teaching and measure progress differently when assessing, based on the needs of the learners in a cyclical manner. Thus, it requires formative assessments (where the learning process and progress are assessed) that informs teaching and learning.

Differentiated assessment, as postulated by Vaughn et al. (2000), is a continuing process of evaluation where the teacher gathers information and data before, during and after instruction to better facilitate learning. This process ensures that data about learners' progress is provided from a variety of sources and consequently it could give an overall view of learner advancement and achievement. Authentic differentiated assessment entails offering learners a variety of tasks, demonstrating real-life skills. This informs the teacher if the learners have acquired the skills or concepts, responding to required criteria to achieve validity or whether it will prepare them learners for their roles in their adult lives (Chapman & King, 2012).

DBE (2011, p. 4) states that the goal of differentiated assessment is to assess where learners are and to help them progress to the next step in their learning. This requires a cyclical process of assessment and instruction which should support and inform each other. Thus, within a differentiated curriculum, the assessment of learners' learning is an integral process to the teaching and learning process. According to the DBE (2011, p.12) differentiated assessment serves six main purposes which are to inform instructional planning;

- Inform instruction;
- Evaluate effectiveness of teaching for all learners;
- Assess learning;

- Identify learner needs and strengths; and
- Evaluate learner achievement against predetermined criteria for the purposes of grading and reporting (DBE, 2014).

One of the key principles for assessment in a diverse classroom is high expectations for all learners (DBE, 2104). The SIAS (cf. 2.5.3.4.) (DBE, 2014) affirms that every learner should have access to the level of assessment best suited to his or her needs, making provision for multiple abilities, learning styles and levels. Assessment strategies should therefore be designed to inform the teacher about what the learner can do at a particular stage as well as what support they need to progress to the next level (GDE, 2014).

3.3.3. Collaboration

There are multiple benefits to teachers working together in a Full-Service School. Collaboration allows teachers to take ownership of creatively solving problems and interacting professionally while sharing their knowledge which inevitably enhances learners' academic outcomes. This can actualise school policies, protocols and processes in building a caring supportive school (Fourie, 2018). Transdisciplinary teams involve individuals of different disciplines (psychologists, speech therapists, social workers, school nurses, parents, teachers) etc. all working together collaboratively in an equal partnership towards supporting learners who experience barriers to learning (Nel et al., 2016). Together with their expertise the transdisciplinary team can deliberate on the most appropriate inclusive pedagogy strategies to support the learner in a unified manner.

3.4 Inclusive pedagogy practices in South Africa

A general challenge in the South African education system is that inclusive practices may be well-supported by well-crafted policies but the successful implementation of these policies is problematic due to a lack of commitment at all levels (such as community, district,

school, teachers and learners) of the education system (Phasha & Condy, 2016; Ferguson, 2008). Thus, a fully functional inclusive education system seems to remain vague which implies that an inclusive pedagogy is also not being implemented in classrooms (Condy & Mahlo, 2016). This includes poorly functional FSS's and special schools as resource centres (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). Furthermore, the continuous implementation of the medical model (cf. 2.3.2.) where learners who experience barriers to learning are predominantly placed into special education settings, perpetuate an exclusionary practice and could result in the limited application of an inclusive pedagogy (Engelbrecht, et al. 2016; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Nel et al. 2014).

Phasha and Condy (2016) assert that an inclusive pedagogy requires that teachers have the ability to differentiate, adapt or flex the curriculum to address the needs of all learners. In addition, competencies should include being able to vary teaching strategies, having collaboration skills, skills for modifying and adjusting instructions, teaching with assistive devices and using ICT equipment (Phasha & Condy, 2016). Yet, research finds that teachers report a doubt in their competence to teach in an inclusive classroom (Walton, 2017). Teacher training in inclusive education and the implementation of inclusive pedagogy seem to be one of the greatest obstacles to the implementation of inclusive education as a whole. Engelbrecht et al. (2016), Payne-Van Staden (2015) and Walton et al. (2014) report that teachers convey to not be sufficiently prepared for dealing with the range of diverse learning needs, including different disabilities, in schools.

Consequently, the question remains whether South African teachers are in a position to change their beliefs about pedagogic practice due to the kind of training they have received and the kind of dominant discourse of special education that seems to have influenced their thinking about inclusive teaching (Bornman & Donohue, 2014). Makoelle (2012) also reports that an analysis of literature reflects only a few South African research studies that report on the way

in which inclusive pedagogy is conceptualised, operationalised and implemented within the South African context.

While there are guidelines on the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies in the classrooms in FSS, published in 2010 (DBE, 2010), it is asserted by Makoelle (2012) that these guidelines do not offer solutions to the problems of pedagogic practice in the inclusive classroom. Makoelle (2012) argues that the guidelines only provide the background of the legislative framework for inclusive education as promulgated in section 12 of the South African Schools Act (1996). The guidelines therefore seem not to address the needs of the inclusive teacher needing support in implementing an inclusive pedagogy approach in a Full-Service School (Phasha & Condy, 2016).

Bornman and Donohue (2014) argue that merely including learners experiencing barriers to learning into mainstream schools or FSS is not sufficient. What happens in the classroom is critical, specifically how all learners participate meaningfully in the various learning activities and the levels of acceptance of learners who experience barriers to learning by both teachers and their peers (Ferguson, 2008; Nel et al., 2013). It is, therefore, a necessity that teachers have an in-depth understanding of inclusive pedagogy to ensure its appropriate implementation which refers to the knowledge and skills required by teachers to inform the decisions they make about their practice (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

3.5 Conclusion

From the above discussion it can be concluded that inclusive pedagogy requires the following:

- A shift in focus from a pedagogy that is concerned only with those learners who have been identified as having an 'additional need' to one that is concerned with learning for all; in other words, the inclusion of all learners (not only most or some).
- Rejection of deterministic beliefs about ability and the associated idea that the presence

of some learners will hold back the progress of other learners.

- Ways of working with and through other adults who respect the dignity of learners as full members of the community of a classroom (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

An important theme to achieve this, as proposed by Florian and Spratt (2013), is 'becoming an active professional' which requires that teachers constantly seek new ways to support the learning of all learners. A key tenent of this principle is finding ways of working with and through others to enhance the participation and to improve the learning experience of everyone in the community of a classroom. (Florian & Spratt, 2013).

According to Vygotsky (1931), adjusting the school system to create enabling and healthy learning climates and environments for each learner through policy, legislation and inclusive pedagogical practices is sure to guarantee full participation for all. Vygotsky's (1931) theory emphasises that no learner is without ability. The teacher's pedagogic approaches, strategies and practices play a significant role in the effectiveness of learning in the classroom.

This chapter highlighted the varied but similar definitions of inclusive pedagogy and the various approaches encompassing inclusive pedagogy, including differentiated assessment, thereby ensuring that equal opportunities extend to all learners rather than "most" and "some".

The next chapter will outline the methodology of the research study.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

As referred to in Chapter 1, the intention of the study was to examine teachers' experiences of an inclusive pedagogy approach in an FSS. As the focus was on inclusive pedagogy, it was important for the researcher to consider the teachers' recommendations for

the formulation of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document, which was the aim of this study. It was also important to first understand the research paradigm, as the methodology and process that followed could only be outlined and implemented once this had been identified and studied.

The research is epistemologically entrenched in a social constructivist paradigm, following a participatory action research (PAR) design, working in a qualitative way to collect and analyse the data. An overview (or outline) of the methodology is illustrated in Table 4.1 below.

*Table 4. 1. **Overview of the research methodology***

Research methodology framework	
Purpose: The purpose of this research was to develop a guideline to implement an inclusive pedagogy for Foundation Phase teachers in an FSS, using Participatory Action Research (PAR), with the teachers as co-researchers. For the effective implementation of inclusive education, transformation of the existing pedagogy and how it is taught are essential to ensure the successful learning of all children.	
Primary research question **How can Foundation Phase teachers be assisted to provide for, and respond to, the diversity of learning needs in a Full-Service School through an inclusive pedagogy approach, ensuring that all learners achieve their optimal potential without prejudice or discrimination?**	
Secondary research questions • What is an inclusive pedagogy? • What are the teaching pedagogies currently employed in the Foundation Phase of a Full-Service School? • What kind of support would teachers require to implement inclusive pedagogy successfully? • What could be included in an inclusive pedagogy guideline document for the Foundation Phase of Full-Service Schools?	
Paradigm **Social Constructivist paradigm**	
Pragmatic assumptions	
Epistemology	Critical transformative theory

Design	Participatory action research (PAR)
Phases of enquiry	
Phase 1 – Planning to conduct research	
Phase 2 – Determining current inclusive pedagogy practices and their challenges **Methods** Baseline questionnaire, reflective diaries, participant observation and document analysis and focus group discussion in the ALS. **Selection of site** A FSS in the Sedibeng East region within the Gauteng Province was selected. The school was identified by the provincial head office of the Gauteng Department of Education as a school to be implementing inclusive pedagogy practices.	
Selection of participants	Purposive sampling: Six Foundation Phase teachers, consisting of two teachers per grades one, two and three
Data generating techniques	**Data documentation techniques**
Cycle 1 **Building a relationship of trust**	1. The ALS collage activity was twofold; first to develop a vision statement for the research and second to "break the ice" with the intention of promoting collaboration and free expression of ideas without inhibition. The instruction for the activity reads as follows: "What, would you say, is the ideal FSS? This was an ALS group activity. 2. Administer a baseline questionnaire to ascertain the level of understanding of concepts; inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy and FSS in the research. The identified gaps through this activity informed future discussion. 3. Focus group discussion with reference to the baseline questionnaire.
Cycle 2 **Participant observation**	I, as principal researcher observed all three grades focusing on the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy. After every observation session focus group discussion were conducted in the ALS to reflect on the observational notes and the adapted GDE instrument, making suggestions and importing good inclusive pedagogy practices, which they then implemented in their own classrooms. This was an iterative process until data was saturated. An adapted Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) instrument was used to ensure consistency during participant observation in all three grades. The analysis of data was an ongoing process involving all members of the ALS.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Through a process of data analysis, consensus was reached by the ALS regarding the key aspects to be included in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Document analysis</td><td colspan="5">The principal researcher viewed the documents before the participant observation to get an idea of the lesson to be observed. Thereafter the ALS met to reflect on the planning and preparation of the observed participants, making recommendations for improvement and implementation in the focus group discussion. This process ran simultaneously with the group discussions of the participant observation cycle. The instrument for document analysis was a part of the instrument used for participant observation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cycle 3
Group discussions</td><td colspan="5">The ALS met after every cycle with the aim of discussing best inclusive pedagogy practices, challenges, analysis of data and aspects for inclusion in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. Sources of information for the focus group discussion were mainly retrieved from the reflective diaries of the ALS, adapted GDE observation instrument and the documents analysed.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cycle 4
Reflective diaries</td><td colspan="5">Teachers were introduced to reflective diaries to reflect on their classroom practices, their feelings, being a part of the ALS and any other experiences, they might have wished to note throughout the research period.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Data analysis</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Thematic analysis and interpretation of all data</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Quality criteria of the research</td></tr>
<tr><td>Trustworthiness</td><td>Process validity</td><td>Dependability</td><td>Inquiry audit trail</td><td>Catalytic validity</td><td>Critical feedback</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Ethical Considerations</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Informed consent, voluntary participation, transparency, trust</td></tr>
</table>

4.2 Purpose of the research

As declared in Chapter 1, during the researcher's monitoring and support visits as a departmental official to mainstream, and specifically FSS's, in Gauteng, Foundation Phase (FP)

teachers repeatedly expressed their frustration and inadequacies with various aspects of inclusive education, especially with regard to the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy. Aspects, as indicated by most teachers, were the lack of training and support to address the diverse learning needs in a classroom, simply meaning the accommodation and inclusion of all learners through an appropriate inclusive pedagogy approach. This concern prompted the researcher to explore an inclusive pedagogy to address the needs of all learners in the Foundation Phase in a Full-Service School. To achieve this goal, the FP teachers and the researcher needed to collaborate, using an action learning set (ALS) approach in which an inclusive pedagogy guideline document could be explored and investigated, and then developed, which would support teachers in implementing an appropriate inclusive pedagogy approach. The vision statement for the research, as coined by the ALS, was therefore, "to develop an inclusive pedagogy guideline document to support all teachers to teach effectively in an FSS through a process of reflection, critical thinking and knowledge creation".

4.3 Paradigm informing the research

The research was a qualitative journey taking place in a social constructivist paradigm of discovering the knowledge and experiences of Foundation Phase teachers at an FSS with regard to inclusive pedagogy. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006) state that paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions, namely ontology, the way in which we view and critically transform the world; methodology, and epistemology, the way in which we create knowledge and where transformation of our knowledge takes place. Kawulich (2012) infers that a critical transformative paradigm believes that knowledge is subjective because it is socially constructed. This means that there is an interactive link between the researcher and the participant in which values are made explicit and where, through the research process, findings

are created. This then encompasses a more interactive and personal mode of data collection (Creswell, 2012).

In this research, the Foundation Phase teachers and the researcher were co-researchers within the ALS, and together knowledge was explored, investigated, interpreted and created. Thus, all of these persons were part of the action in generating knowledge. This underlined the fact that all participants had the opportunity to think about the knowledge claims and to critique their actions within their teaching contexts. Through concrete experiences, they critically reflected on their experiences in the classroom, formulated abstract generalisations from them and tested these newly created concepts in new situations in a cyclical way.

In light of the above, the researcher agrees with Somekh (2008) who states that "the moment knowledge is decontextualised it becomes only theoretical. This is something that the co-researchers want to prevent, since they aim to explore and then develop inclusive pedagogy guideline documents, specifically for the Foundation Phase classroom in a Full-Service School.

4.3.1 Epistemological paradigm

Epistemology is known to be the theory of how knowledge is created, which includes the methods used to create the knowledge, and the limitations of knowledge and beliefs (Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005).

In this research study, a critical perspective as the epistemological paradigm was used and this enabled the researcher to compare and discuss the different attitudes and interpretations of inclusive education and an inclusive pedagogy. The participants were FP teachers who had some degree of knowledge and experience in inclusive education and an inclusive pedagogy in a Full-Service School.

The researcher's role was first to develop a partnership with the teachers in the ALS before various inclusive teaching strategies could be explored to assist them in the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach while learning from one another (Knowles,

Holton & Swanson, 2012). The fundamental idea of using action learning is to bring people together to learn from one another's experiences (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2012) and consequently, in this case, the exchange of expertise seemed to enhance the professional development of teachers as inclusive pedagogues in the Foundation Phase. Through active collaborative inquiry, deliberation and critical reflection on what worked and what did not work within the ALS (cf. 5.2.5.3.), knowledge was created and included in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2012) confirm that teachers can create knowledge on the basis of concrete experience by critically reflecting on their experience, formulating abstract generalisations from it and testing the newly created concepts in new situations, thereby gaining new concrete experience and continuing the next cycle of experiential learning and knowledge creation. In this study, new knowledge was created through constant reflection after each cycle, resulting in the gradual development of a guideline document. This was then tried and tested in the context where teaching and learning took place in the classroom to evaluate their effectiveness.

When knowledge is created in the act, grounded theory is generated which requires critical thinking (Charmaz, 2009). Grounded theory is a research tool which enables one to seek out and conceptualise the latent social patterns and structures of one's area of interest through the process of constant comparison. Initially one will use an inductive approach to generate substantive codes from the data. Later the developing theory will suggest where to go next to collect data and which more focused questions to ask. This is the deductive phase of the grounded theory process.

In this study, the participants (FP teachers) were part of knowledge creation and not only spectators on the side. However, this could only have happened through ongoing cycles, and in the process of continuous cycles the development of grounded theory was based on

qualitative data. Participants created grounded theory by formulating concepts and testing them in new situations through a process of trial and error (cf. 1.5.). This again led to new cycles of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualisation and testing (Corbin & Strauss, 2013).

4.4 Research methodology

Research methodology is the approach used by the researcher to bring the unknown to the known (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). In this action research study, the methodology is a structured but flexible process in order to generate contextualised knowledge. Knowledge gained in this social constructivist research paradigm has allowed the participants to recognise, understand and appreciate one another's different behaviours, attitudes and feelings (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). O'Brian (2001, p. 146) refers to action research as "learning by doing". He explains this as follows: a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, evaluate the success of their efforts, and if not satisfied, try again (p. 148).

Action research is an approach in which inquiry and trying to comprehend the problem at hand are the core actions. To achieve this, ALS needs to ask questions, to reflect critically and to test the outcomes against the practical experience in a cyclical way. This involves discussing ways of improving the imminent problem in a democratic way and using the opportunity to learn from previous mistakes (Zuber-Skerrit, 2012). In this research study, action research has been used as a qualitative approach that will be discussed below.

4.4.1 Qualitative approach

In this study, the research design has influenced the choice of data generating techniques; i.e. participant observation, document analysis and group discussion. The research design starts from the conceptualisation of a problem to the writing process (Creswell, 2014).

As alluded to previously in this study, research has occurred in a cyclical way, while the research design was flexible, had its own characteristics and developed throughout the research process. This was evident in that one cycle built on the next cycle. Therefore, although steps were planned, they were also flexible. This implies that replication of the research procedure could be difficult (Creswell, 2012). Another reason for the afore-mentioned was that the research happened in a specific environment (the FSS) in which the phenomenon under exploration occurred (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

In the light of the above, participatory action research (PAR), as the research design happening in cycles of moving forward and backwards, was applicable for this research (cf. 1.5.). In a democratic, equitable, liberating and life-enhancing journey (Kearney & Zuber-Skerritt, 2012), all members of the ALS were able to examine the current situation, reflect on what was experienced, planned and implemented, and progressed towards the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline documents for the Foundation Phase in a Full-Service School. The participatory actions in the cycles "valorise the voices, using their concerns, their perspectives and their ways of taking action as the starting point of moving forward" (Stringer & Beadle, 2012, p. 151 in Zuber-Skerrit, 2012).

4.4.2 PAR as a research design

Participatory action research (PAR) is a sub-division of action research, which is the "systematic collection and analysis of data for the purpose of taking action and making change" (Gillis & Jackson, 2002, p. 264) as well as to bridge knowledge and action (Freire, 1970). According to Attwood (1997), the philosophy of PAR proposes that not only the researcher, but also the co-researchers themselves have a right to determine their own development and participate meaningfully in the process of analysing their own answers in order to lead to sustainable development. Marshall and Rossman (2006) assert that PAR liberates research from the conventional perspective methods. PAR moves social inquiry

from linear causes and effects to a participatory framework that appraises the contexts of participants' lives (Young, 2006). Therefore, the *participatory* part in PAR refers to the ALS who collaborate and learn from one another. The *research* part is cyclical in nature, and provides a framework for gathering, analysing, reflecting on and improving the understanding of practice in each stage.

To improve the practice in PAR, the four steps postulated by Kelly (2005) are important to follow. These are the initial, planning, acting and review cycle steps (cf. 4.4.5.2.). They have been combined with the seven key features suggested by MacTaggart (2005). They are the social, participatory, practical and collaborative, emancipatory, critical, reflexive and transformative processes in both theory and practice (cf. 1.5.5.). In this research, the four steps and seven key features have assisted the ALS to understand how a PAR approach can support Foundation Phase teachers in a Full-Service School to develop inclusive pedagogy guideline documents.

The initial step was to become aware of the frustration and inadequacies of various aspects of inclusive pedagogy in a Full-Service School. Secondly, planning the research and setting up the ALS through the development of a democratic, authentic, trusting and supportive relationship among members of the ALS. The ALS collaboratively shared knowledge, reflected, critiqued and improved to transform their actions through all cycles.

In education research, PAR has been used successfully as a methodology to improve curriculum and professional development, educational programmes, system planning and policy development (MacDonald, 2012). According to Zuber-Skerritt (2015), another purpose of PAR is to bring about improvement in any given context through action in terms of enhancing the collective understanding of the context. For this reason it was deemed an appropriate approach for this research

4.4.3 Research setting

A Full-Service School in the Johannesburg South region has been selected, since it has been identified by the GDE as progressive in the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy and inclusive education. This is evident in that teachers receive ongoing training in curriculum adaptation, differentiated learning, management of learner diversity, learner discipline and refresher courses to keep abreast with all developments in the context of a Full-Service School. The school is further supported by the District and Head Office officials to ensure that the levels of learner achievement is sustained. This environment, therefore, has allowed for rich data to be collected.

The staff have access to an educational psychologist, speech therapist and an occupational therapist, making differentiated support available. This multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning is a necessary skill in addressing learners' additional needs (DBE, 2010). Reportedly, through consultation and collaboration with these specialists, teachers are continuously capacitated to practise inclusive pedagogy in this Full-Service School.

The school is situated in the semi-urban area of Sedibeng East with a learner population of 825 learners. The staff establishment consists of 28 teachers, two administrative personnel, four factotums and one support teacher who assists the school with African languages. Initially, this school was an Afrikaans school and served the local community but due to the growing need for schools in the area and the influx of diverse race groups, the school transformed to offer English as the medium of instruction.

Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the current learner population is African whose home language is one of the 11 official languages of the country, and just one percent consists of other race groups. Only a small percentage of the parents are working or have a stable income. Some learners survive through social grants and/or pension provision from their grandparents. It is not uncommon to find some of these learners going to school barefoot. The socio-economic

level of most parents is average to below average. All teachers in the Foundation Phase are white and whose home language is predominantly Afrikaans. The language of teaching and learning (LOLT) is English. English is taught at Home Language level (HL) and Afrikaans at First Additional Language level (FAL) as the second language. The school governing body (SGB) is well-established and fully functional, and plays an active part in most decision-making processes of the school.

4.4.4 Participant sampling

De Vos and Strydom (2011, pp. 223-224) describe a sample as comprising elements or a subset that is selected from the population and used for the actual study. Purposeful sampling is important if a researcher wants to use a few cases in order to gain many insights about a specific topic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 316). This kind of sampling is supported by Maree (2010) who states that sampling decisions are made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible sources of information to answer the research question.

This study used purposive sampling, as teachers were selected from a Full-Service School identified by the GDE. As described in the research setting (cf. 4.4.3.)., it was assumed that the teachers in the purposefully selected school could provide rich data. The identified school was appreciated by the education community in the district to be progressive, enthusiastic and passionate about inclusive pedagogy and inclusive education. This method of sampling is used with a specific purpose in mind, also known as 'judgmental sampling' or 'selective sampling'. It is a type of non-probability sampling (Maree, 2007).

In this study, teachers in the Foundation Phase with two or more years of teaching experience in inclusive education were selected to elicit good practices they were implementing through their knowledge of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy. Although all the teachers teaching in the Foundation Phase expressed a keen desire to be part of the study, only those who met the criteria for selection were included.

The criteria were:

i. The teacher had to be a qualified Foundation Phase teacher.

ii. She should have had a minimum of two years' experience in a Full-Service School. This was to ensure that she had experience in the field of inclusive education in a Full-Service School.

iii. She had to have received pre-service or in-service training with regard to inclusive education, ensuring active collaboration and contributions.

iv. Teaching through the medium of English was important, making it easier to interpret the data and facilitate easy communication among all co-researchers.

v. Implementing inclusive pedagogy in the classroom for Mathematics and English was compulsory, as these subjects formed the core curriculums in the Foundation Phase.

Six qualified Foundation Phase teachers (two teachers from each grade) who met the abovementioned criteria were purposely selected to be part of the ALS, including the Head of Department (HoD) of the Foundation Phase. The HoD was selected, as her core function was to ensure that effective teaching and learning took place in the classroom, which included the identification and support of learners experiencing barriers to learning. They signed the consent forms after being fully informed of the expectations and requirements of the entire research process. The HoD of the Foundation Phase volunteered to develop a schedule of class visits and ALS meetings for the entire duration of the data collection period. It was agreed that the principal researcher would spend a minimum of one week in each grade of the Foundation Phase.

A structured observation technique whereby an adapted instrument currently being used by the GDE for lesson observation in schools was used for all participants to ensure consistency and accuracy of data. The use of this instrument, which required narrative reporting and not scoring, guided the observation sessions and provided material for further

discussion and deliberation in the ALS. It is noteworthy to mention that it was not possible for all members of the ALS to observe lessons, as their learners would have been left without supervision. This would have been a risk, as participant observation was done during contact time. It was for that reason that the participants were observed individually.

As the principal researcher, it was necessary to observe how the grade one participant implemented an inclusive pedagogy approach in her lesson. Following the observation in grade one, the ALS met later in the day to reflect on the lesson and the observation instrument. The reflective diaries of the participants also fuelled the focus group discussion. The observation instrument guided and prompted the group discussion. While the group discussion ensued, all pertinent data regarding the inclusive pedagogy approach implemented, best practices and areas for further development was captured by the principal researcher.

The data was analysed after every focus group discussion by the ALS. The ALS identified recurring themes and categories in the data. The next day's focus group discussion commenced with a review of the previous day to determine whether what was captured was a true reflection of what had transpired. This was done to ensure members of the ALS had checked the accuracy of the information while also probing for additional information in response to the research question. The participants were then requested to action those recommendations in preparation for the next cycle. Immediately after the departure of the ALS the researcher commenced with the written transcription of the group discussion which was dated, labelled and filed.

In the table below the biographical information of the participants is presented.

*Table 4. 2. **Biographical information of the ALS***

Age group	Gender	Race	Teaching experience in an FSS	Qualifications

25 – 35: n = 3 40 – 50: n = 3	Female	White	1 – 10 years 10 – 20 years 20 – 30 years	1 – JPD, B.Tech. Junior Primary Diploma; Bachelor in Technology 2 – PTD, B.Com. Professional Teachers Diploma; Bachelor of Commerce 3 – PTD, BA Primary Teachers Diploma; Bachelor of Arts 4 – BA, HDE Bachelor of Arts; Higher Education Diploma 5 – SPTD, D.Sp.Ed. Senior Primary Teachers Diploma; Diploma in Special Education 6 – B.Prim.Ed. Bachelor in Primary Education

4.4.5 The PAR process

4.4.5.1 An explanation of the PAR process

PAR is said to be research *with* people rather than research *on* people. It involves inquiry as a means by which people participate together to explore some substantial aspects of their lives and to understand these better (Zuber-Skerrit, 2015). The use of PAR in research requires knowledge of the main key features of participatory action research as summarised by different authors (Adams, Burns, Liebzeit, Ryschka, Thorpe & Browne, 2012; Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Kemmis & MacTaggart, 2005; WHO, 2001).

a. PAR is a social process of collaborative learning

This goal was realised by a group of non-scientists (teachers) as co-researchers in a Full-Service School who joined together in changing the practices through which they interacted in a shared social world. Teachers tried to understand how they had been formed and reformed as individuals in relation to one another with the aim of improving the processes of

teaching and learning in the classroom. It could also be seen as a method of research where bringing about positive social change was the predominant driving force (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

b. PAR engages teachers/participants

Being participatory, PAR engaged teachers/participants (ALS) in examining their knowledge, understanding, skills and values. It was thus a process in which all members of the ALS tried to get a sense of the ways in which their knowledge had shaped their sense of identity. The researcher too became part of a community as opposed to being an objective and dispassionate recorder of information. The ALS was involved in the entire research process, from the formulation of the problems, the hypothesis to solve, the interpretation of the findings and the planning of collective actions based upon them, thereby promoting ownership of the situation. In addition, the research was derived and driven by articulated questions and needs, the act of formulating methodology, collecting data and especially analysing the information gathered to draw conclusions (Rajan, 2015). The information and the results were internalised by the stakeholders most directly affected, and the ALS were able to use the knowledge produced to develop the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

c. PAR is practical and collaborative

It is a collaborative process during which the ALS, as participants, and the researcher both benefits. For example, PAR research methodology is helpful in providing researchers with insight into participants' needs, values and customs. It emphasises teamwork and active collaboration where all members of the ALS work together to analyse a problem situation and generate actions to solve the problem.

d. PAR is emancipatory and empowering

This is achieved by respecting and giving importance to participants' thoughts, experiences and spirituality (Blodgett, Schinke, Smith, Peltier & Chris, 2011). It creates a

process where the ALS explore the ways in which their practices are currently shaped. This encourages the adoption of a view that facilitates the development of an inclusive pedagogy guideline document through which knowledge and solutions emanate from conclusions. Through this process, the ALS have been able to solve their own challenges and improve their lives and the lives of the learners.

e. PAR is a reflexive and iterative process

This process assisted the ALS to investigate the reality in the classroom and to possibly change it. Their feelings, views and patterns were revealed without control or manipulation (Charmaz, 2009). It was, therefore, a deliberate process through which the ALS attempted to transform their practices by means of a spiral of cycles of critical and self-critical action and reflection (cf. 5.2.5.3.). It was reflective in that the ALS analysed and developed concepts and theories about their experiences. Integral to the PAR process of this study were the cycles of self-reflection (planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning) which became the dominant features of the action research approach (Kearney & Zuber-Skerritt, 2012).

f. PAR aims to transform both theory and practice

Through the collaborative process of the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document, the theory and practice of inclusive pedagogy was transformed to improve the quality and accessibility of teaching and learning for all learners in the classroom. It focused on bringing change while actively engaging all people within the community to work towards this change (MacDonald, 2012). Atkins and Wallace (2012) proposed that participatory action research tried to demystify research, making it an intellectual tool which could be used to improve the lives of teachers and to change participants' attitudes of being treated as objects of research only.

On the basis of the main key features highlighted above and related to this study, the two phases and six cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting to generate data in which the ALS had engaged to generate data will be discussed.

4.4.5.2. Data generating process

In the figure below, a visual presentation is given of the data generating process in this research. Figure 4.1 illustrates the PAR process that has taken place in four stages of planning, acting, observing and reflecting to generate data.

PAR emerged as the most appropriate methodology for this study, as it was the collective process that engaged teachers as co-researchers in addressing important challenges in an FSS, as well as in solving problems, deepening shared understanding and learning together in the act of creating change and generating knowledge (Brydon-Miller, Eikeland & Greenwood, 2006). The PAR framework applied within this study (see Figure 4.1 below) was adapted from Kemmis and Taggart (2011).

The diagram describes the activities of each planning, action, observation and reflection stage of the PAR process. The insights gained from the initial cycle feed into the planning of the next cycle, with the action plan being modified and the research process repeated.

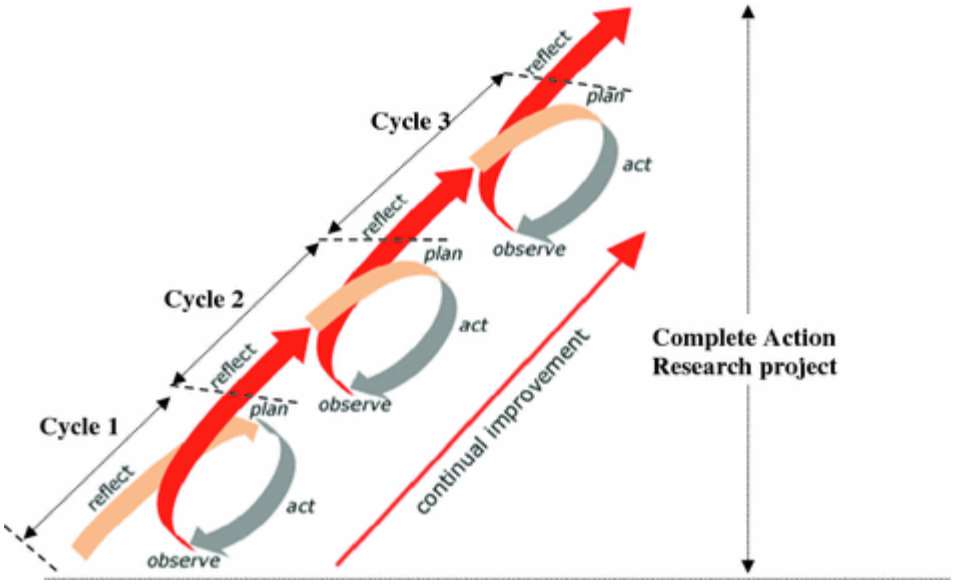

*Figure 4. 1. **PAR model (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2011)***

The PAR spiral consisted of three cycles which involved planning, observing, acting and reflecting on practices and changes (Zuber-Skerritt, 2013).

4.4.5.2.1. Phase 1: Planning

The initial planning began by firstly obtaining permission from the Gauteng Department of Education two months ahead of the data collection process as well as ethical approval from the North-West University to carry out the research project. The identified school was then provided with detailed information notifying them of the proposed study and the intentions of the research outcomes.

The principal was visited and given a detailed project plan on what, when and how the planned lesson observations and interviews with teachers would take place. The researcher liaised directly with the principal and the Foundation Phase Head of Department in all correspondence. It is important to note that all discussions with teachers were planned to take place after school hours. However, lesson observations took place during contact teaching and learning time. This was necessary to elicit the best inclusive pedagogy practices currently being implemented in the inclusive classroom by teachers, and to test and try impending

recommendations of the ALS. The school principal granted permission in writing (see Annexure C.) for access to the research site during the entire duration of the research period.

At the first official visit to the school the researcher delivered a PowerPoint presentation based on the topic, the planning and the expectations of the research study. This was delivered to the Foundation Phase teachers and the school management team. Teachers were given an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarity. Teachers were also given a copy of the PowerPoint presentation setting out the roles and expectations of the research.

They were requested to think about their participation in the research carefully in preparation for the visit the following day. It was emphasised that participation in the research was purely voluntary. This approach was taken to prevent teachers from feeling pressured into participating, giving them time to contemplate which would ensure full cooperation, should they consent willingly. The meeting closed by requesting those teachers who wished to be part of the research to meet in the staff room the following day. All eleven teachers in the Foundation Phase expressed a keen interest participating in the research.

The next step involved prospective participants to respond to a series of biographical questions. Their academic qualifications, pre-service or in-service training, number of years' experience in inclusive education and their ages were inquired about, which helped to compile a biographical profile of the teachers. However, the administration of the biographical questionnaire revealed that only six teachers met the set criteria for selection. A democratic group was formed where all participants were equal while learning from one another (cf. 1.5.3.). The six teachers and the researcher comprised the ALS.

Action learning set (ALS)

An ALS is a structured method enabling small groups to address current issues related to challenges experienced. This is done by meeting regularly and working collaboratively

towards a common purpose (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015). The ALS of the research study consisted of six Foundation Phase teachers teaching grade one, two and three respectively.

The process of establishing the action learning set (ALS)

Figure 4.2 below outlines the process of forming the ALS and their expected roles within the ALS. PAR encourages participants' commitment through three key features as mentioned by Zuber-Skerritt (2011): (i) the start-up workshop; (ii) the creation of action learning sets; and (iii) celebration of achievements and milestones. These features foster relationships, reflection and recognition, and ultimately participant learning which lead to sustainable and successful outcomes.

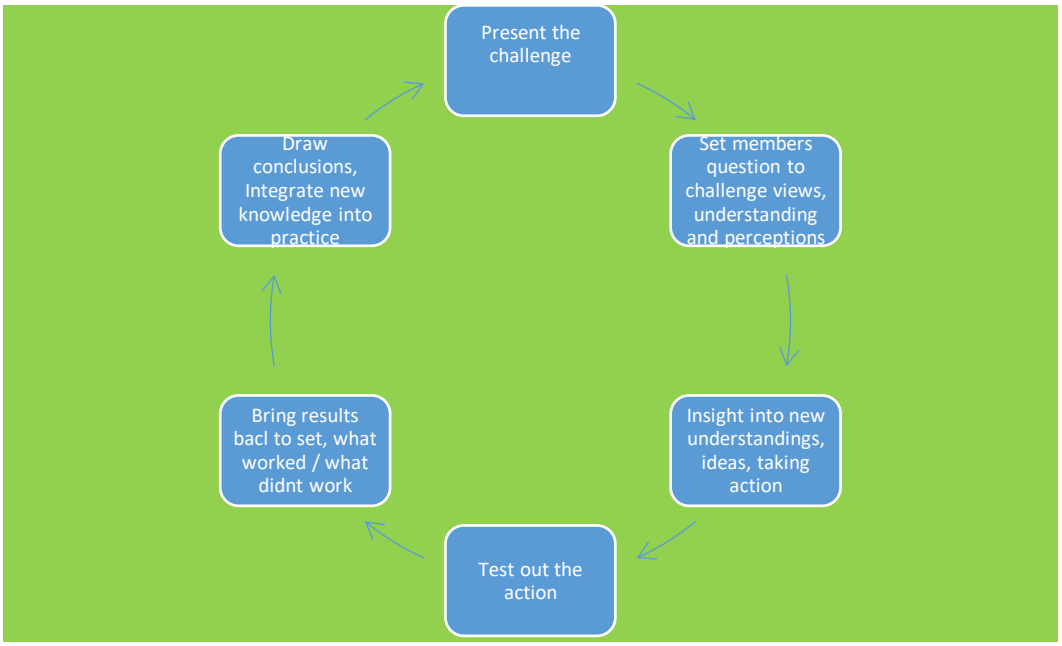

Figure 4. 2. The process of ALS (adapted from Zuber-Skerritt, 2015)

Seeing that the ALS was fully constituted, the researcher had to establish a trustworthy relationship with the teachers to facilitate full cooperation with and commitment to the process. The ALS and the researcher had to begin developing ground rules for working together, member questioning, listening and reflection skills, and ensuring that the process, timing, principles of action research and ground rules were agreed upon. These initial steps impacted

on the effectiveness of the ALS as a group and therefore, had to be clearly understood by all co-researchers in the ALS.

The process of relationship building was initiated through five preceding visits to the school which began a month before the official commencement of the research. The researcher visited classrooms, interacted with teachers and attended extra- and co-curricular activities, for example, mini netball, soccer and a readathon, at the school. As the researcher's relationship developed with the teachers and the school, she was invited to attend team planning and lesson preparation sessions conducted by teachers of the Foundation Phase. The researcher's intention to become more familiar with the school community was not only to establish a relationship with the intended participants but to also become familiar with the learners in the classes to avoid them viewing her as a stranger in the classroom during her forthcoming participant observations.

Two weeks before the actual research, an informal meeting was held with all Foundation Phase teachers in the FSS, as the researcher wanted a more varied perception of the contextual and academic challenges experienced at the school. During the unstructured informal discussion with the teachers the interpretation of the purpose of an FSS was discussed. Teachers were also probed about the inclusive pedagogy approach they were using and the success thereof.

Some of the challenges being experienced regarding the aforementioned issues and the contextual factors of the school environment (see Stage 2, Figure 4.1) were discussed in detail. Through the collaborative identification of numerous needs consensus was reached that the best course of action would be the development of a pedagogy guideline which would be of immense support to facilitate the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy in the FSS. The effective use of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document by all teachers would ensure that all learners had access to quality education that was free of prejudice and discrimination.

4.4.5.1.2. Phase 2: Data generation

The table below briefly highlights the timeline of the data generation process. Together with this, the purpose, activity and goals to be accomplished are noted in summary.

*Table 4. 3. **A brief overview of the data generation phase***

Session **Phase 2**	**Purpose**	**Activities**	**Goals to be achieved**
Week 1 April 2017	Building a relationship of trust	1. ALS collage activity to develop a vision statement for the research. The instruction for the activity reads as follows: "What, would you say, is the ideal Full-Service School (FSS)?" This was an ALS group activity.	To develop a vision statement for the research study. The outcomes of this activity could lead to further discussion at a later stage.
		2. Administration of a baseline questionnaire	To ascertain their prior knowledge of the constructs in the research. The identified gaps

			through this activity informed future discussion.
Week 2 – 4 May 2017	Data generation	Participant observation Document analysis Focus group discussions Reflective diaries	To gather data for the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document
Week 5 May 2017	Piloting of the guideline	Development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document	To amend and/or adjust the guideline after the testing process

Participatory action researchers often use qualitative data generation techniques, for example, interviews, informal discussions, classroom observations, reflective diaries and document analysis (Creswell, 2014). In this study, data was generated by means of group discussions, participant observations, document analysis and reflective diaries. The cycles and the data generation techniques are described next.

i) Cycle 1: Building a relationship of trust, deciding on the focus of the study and how to work collaboratively to address the identified challenge

Establishing trust among members of the ALS is crucial to the success of the PAR process. In this research, trust building was a process of mutual recognition and acceptance of the participants as knowledgeable and experienced contributors. The trust led to more self-confidence in taking part actively (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014).

The first data generation activity to build a relationship of trust entailed using a collage building strategy to express the teachers' views on an ideal FSS. For this activity, the researcher

was not a participant, but merely facilitated the process as the principal researcher. Group facilitation using creative arts provided an opportunity for the co-researchers to share and discuss their metaphorical representations with fellow co-researchers and the principal researcher. This activity potentially opened up new avenues for discussion (Shepard & Guenette, 2010). The researcher decided that this was the most appropriate activity, as the creation of a collage could be a freeing and playful experience because there are no rules.

Another advantage of this activity is it may lessen anxiety as it is "a non-threatening medium where an individual does not need to feel 'artistic' in producing their piece of work" (Williams, 2000, p. 274). The pictures have already been created, and the individual is only required to place them on poster board until satisfied to verbalise her feelings and knowledge. Since the context of the study was an FSS, the researcher felt it was important to gauge if members of the ALS had knowledge of the components of what constitutes an FSS.

The instruction for the collage activity reads as follows: "Using the collage as a vehicle, discuss your view of an ideal FSS." The ALS was supplied with magazines and then requested to cut out and paste pictures on a poster size page. They had to articulate their views regarding an ideal FSS on this page (refer to annexure F.). Every member of the ALS discussed her collage of an ideal FSS in the ALS. The aspirations and wishes of the ALS members were clearly evident. The principle aim of this activity was to move towards a vision for the study as well as to address aspects in the research question and sub-questions. Based on the contributions of the ALS, a vision statement was coined which was "to develop an inclusive pedagogy guideline document to support all teachers to teach effectively in an FSS through a process of reflection, critical thinking and knowledge creation".

A baseline questionnaire can be defined as an analysis of the situation prior to intervention at an intervention site. The second part of the afternoon session involved the

administration of an open-ended baseline questionnaire (see Annexure D.) to the six members of the ALS. This obviously excluded the principal researcher.

The informal questionnaire was administered before the actual commencement of the planned study to ascertain the level of understanding of the ALS in the field of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy in Full-Service Schools.

The questionnaire consisted of four basic questions:

i. What do you understand by the terms below?

- Inclusive Education
- Inclusive Pedagogy
- Inclusive Environment
- Full-Service Schools

ii. How inclusive, do you think, is your teaching currently? Please explain.

iii. How do you feel about including learners with barriers to learning in your classroom?

iv. Would you say that your pedagogy is inclusive? Please substantiate your answer.

After the questionnaire had been completed by the co-researchers in the ALS, each question was read out aloud and a discussion session ensued with input from all members of the ALS. They were given the opportunity to vent their frustrations and disappointments, but also encouraged to do it in a constructive manner for the purpose of identifying and/or responding to aspects in the research question or sub-questions. Therefore, the researcher constantly guided them back to the purpose of the research by affirming their statements and probing these further. This session was recorded and played back for analysis, verification of accuracy and member checking.

ii) **Cycle 2: Participant observation and document analysis**

This cycle comprised two data collection techniques, namely participant observation and document analysis coupled in one classroom observation. The lesson planning and preparation records had to be viewed in anticipation of the participant observation in the classroom.

Participant observation

Participant observation can be an important contributing technique of data gathering, as it holds the possibility of providing an inside perspective of the group dynamics and behaviours in different settings (Maree, 2010). According to Atkins and Wallace (2012), the distinctive feature of participant observation as a research process is that it offers the researcher the opportunity to gather "live" data from naturally occuring social situations. The use of immediate awareness or direct cognition as a principal mode of research thus has the potential to yield valid and authentic data (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2007) which is the unique strength of participant observation.

Through participant observation the researcher was able to see, hear and experience reality as the participants did in the research process. The researcher first viewed the lesson planning and preparation document of the participant to be observed. This prepared her for the lesson that was to be delivered by the participant to be observed. For this data collection technique, the first section of the adapted GDE lesson observation instrument, which focused primarily on lesson observation, was utilised.

Document analysis

Prior to commencement of the classroom observations and in the interest of the crystallisation of data, a document analysis served to corroborate the evidence from classroom observations (Maree, 2010). Analysed documents of the participants included their lesson preparation and annual teaching plans (ATPs) as well as the assessment records of the learners

which were all done anonymously. These were given to the researcher ahead of the observation period so as to gather a healthier insight into the delivery of the lesson and the inclusive pedagogy implemented.

An adapted narrative GDE classroom observation instrument (Annexure E) was used to guide the process of document analysis and thereby ensured consistency during the analysis of the documents of the ALS. The instrument currently used by GDE includes four broad criteria, namely:

i. Creation of a positive inclusive learning environment;
ii. Knowledge of the subject;
iii. Lesson planning, preparation and presentation; and
iv. Learner achievement.

Each broad criterion has sub-bullets; for example, learning space, learner involvement, discipline and diversity management (Annexure E). After each participant had been observed, the data was analysed with the collaborative efforts of the participant in the focus group discussion. All sets of data (classroom observation, reflective diaries and focus group discussion was analysed collectively at this stage to prevent repetition of the themes and categories.

iii) Cycle 3: Focus group discussions

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) state that focus group discussions are an integral part of participant observation. In this study, there was no predetermination of questions; however, the adapted GDE instrument provided direction to the focus group discussions. As one member commented about findings in the instrument it triggered useful responses from other participants in the ALS. The focus group discussions provided an opportunity for individuals within the ALS to discuss their own interpretations of how they had implemented inclusive pedagogy practices during lesson delivery with diverse learners in the classroom.

This focus group also included discussions on how they proposed to effect any changes to strengthen or improve the implementation of inclusive pedagogy in the delivery of the lesson through a process of trial and error. Again part of the focus group discussion included document analysis of the planning and preparation of lessons in an inclusive approach through positive critique. This prompted action learning by repeating the cycle.

The ALS focus group met after every initial participant observation and thereafter after every follow-up observation (subsequent action stage) to elicit their views on the status of the implementation of an inclusive peadgogy and the best inclusive pedagogy strategies which would suit the diverse needs of all their learners. Through the process of continued reflection, best practices were identified and documented to be included as part of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. A separate folder was used to document and file any suggestions with the aim of building up the first draft of the guideline document. Through the regular focus group dicussions held, the inclusive pedagogy guideline document developed progressively from grade one to grade three. All three grades followed the same process of planning, observation, action and reflection.

To emphasize, the aims of using focus group discussions as a data generating technique were to:

i. Obtain the present perception of activities, feelings, motivations, thoughts and concerns through the participant observations
ii. Obtain future expectations or anticipated experiences through the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document
iii. Verify and extend information obtained from other sources such as planning and preparation documents
iv. Verify ideas developed by the participants or researcher through the testing process of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 35).

iv) Cycle 4: Reflective diaries

A reflective diary is a written record of a researcher's activities, thoughts and feelings throughout the research process from design through data collection and analysis to writing and presenting the study (Bloor & Wood, 2006). The process of self-evaluating one's abilities or one's progress in strategy or skill acquisition is important for cultivating strong self-efficacy (Schunk, 2003). Under continually changing circumstances (such as curriculum changes), a teacher needs to develop a habit of constantly reflecting on his/her teaching practice (Wood & Olivier, 2008, p. 236). The reflective diary is also a legitimate source of data and a qualitative research method.

For the ALS to be able to effectively find solutions to challenges, it was essential that they reflect on their own learning, dissect their own thoughts, argue with themselves, and think about how their experiences will shape their future (Wallin, 2016). The ALS was encouraged to use reflective diaries throughout the research period reflecting on their own inclusive practices in the classroom as well as for recording their thoughts, feelings and any additional ideas they may have which would form the basis of the following focus group discussions.

After each cycle, the ALS would discuss relevant aspects extracted from their reflective diaries at that stage in the focus group discussion. The relevant data included classroom practices, knowledge created, reflection on their learning, comments on its possible significance, and critical events of the day. However, it should be mentioned that certain members of the ALS were reserved about openly discussing some aspects of the reflective diaries. This was acknowledged and respected by the ALS. Events in the reflective diaries provided cause for further investigation and action in the cycle.

4.5. The role of the researcher in the ALS

The role of the researcher in the ALS involved the management of the smooth running of the ALS, helping the ALS develop ground rules for working together, developing members' questioning, listening and reflection skills, and ensuring that the process, timing, principles of action research and ground rules were agreed upon. This was done through a brainstorming session held at the initial establishment of the ALS. It was equally noted that all members of the ALS were equal, although I would take the lead in a discreet manner, gently probing and subtly directing the course of events.

Further to this, I introduced myself as a researcher and not as an official from head office; this ensured that participants did not feel intimidated by a GDE official during discussions and reviews. I led from behind, as I did not want my position to intimidate them because this could have negative consequences for the ALS. The reason was that, in this learning set, all members were equal partners with the aim of seeking a possible solution to aid all teachers in developing and applying an inclusive pedagogy approach in an FSS.

In addition, my role in the ALS was not to judge, but to request members to determine for themselves what went well, what was learnt and how they could improve (Merriam & Cafarella, 2005). Questions posed were always open-ended and precise to guide the action process forward. My approach was collaborative and provocative of thought rather than directive.

My role as researcher was to implement the action research method in such a manner as to produce a mutually agreeable outcome for all participants with the process being maintained and implemented by them afterwards. To accomplish this goal, it necessitated the adoption of many different roles at various stages of the process, including those of a planner

and a leader which involved planning the observation schedules, interview schedules and topics for discussion (Neethling, 2014).

As a facilitator, I had to engage with the participants of the ALS through dialogue and frequent discussions. More importantly, I had to be a good listener and observer, especially during classroom observations. Finally, I was a reporter, reporting to the participants of the ALS periodically, and with a completed ultimate report.

Due to the fact that I was involved in the rigorous experience with the participants, it was necessary to continually recognise participant bias, values and personal interests with regard to the research topic and process (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, my role was to facilitate dialogue, foster reflective analysis among the participants, provide them with periodic reports and write the final report when my role as the primary researcher ended.

*Table 4. 4. **A summary of the research process***

Steps that were followed for the data collection process	**Data collection procedure**
Phase 1 Planning	i. Appointments with school principal and ALS were made to provide more information about the study. ii. Permission was requested to conduct the data collection at the school. iii. The principal signed the consent form approving collecting data at the school. iv. After obtaining the principal's and the members of the ALS's consent, a date was identified for the introductory, information and invitation session with the relevant stakeholders.

	v. The principal agreed to inform all Foundation Phase teachers about this session, requesting their attendance without any insistence. vi. It was emphasised that participation in the study was purely voluntary.
	vii. An introductory, information and invitation session for all Foundation Phase teachers was conducted on the identified date, as confirmed by the principal and the ALS. A PowerPoint presentation was done. viii. Expectations were clarified in detail. This included a discussion of the purpose of the research as well as an explanation of all activities and research methodologies which form part of the study. ix. They were given an opportunity to pose questions to allay their fears or misconceptions regarding the study. x. All teachers who were interested in being part of the study were requested to complete a biographical questionnaire. Upon completion of the questionnaire only six teachers met the selection criteria. xi. These six teachers formed the ALS. Consent was given in writing. xii. Thereafter a brainstorming session was held to develop ground rules for working together, developing members questioning, listening and reflection skills, and ensuring

	that the process, timing, principles of action research and ground rules were agreed upon by all in the ALS.
Phase 2 **Cycle 1**	i. A relationship of trust was built through the collage activity with the ALS to develop a vision to direct the research and in response to primary questions and sub-questions of the research study. ii. A baseline questionnaire was administered to the participants to establish their level of understanding the concepts inclusive pedagogy, inclusive education, inclusive environment and full-service schools to prepare for future developments in the study and prepare for the next cycle. iii. Focus group discussion was held pertaining to the questionnaire. To determine the way forward and examine what improvement could be effected to strengthen the current inclusive pedagogy approach in a FSS. iv. Questionnaire was analysed collaboratively by the ALS.
	All data gathered in phase 2, cycle 1 was neatly transcribed, labelled and filed.
Cycle 2	**Monday – Day 1 (Week 1)**

	The researcher observed Mathematics and English (FAL) lessons in grade 1A and B that were conducted by the respective class teachers. i. The adapted GDE class visit instrument was used to guide the observation and document analysis process. ii. Document analysis of the teachers' planning and preparation files was done by the researcher.
	iii. At the end of the day a focus group discussion was conducted with the ALS to discuss the observations and document analysis. The adapted GDE instrument served as guide for the discussion. iv. Teachers reflected on their delivery of the lessons. v. The ALS reflected on new ideas or ideas to strengthen the existing inclusive pedagogy approach. It was implemented the next day by the two grade one teachers.
	Tuesday – Day 2 (Week 1) The researcher once again observed the grade 1A and B teachers to monitor the pilot implementation of the recommendations as suggested by the ALS the previous afternoon.
	i. At the end of the day a focus group discussion was held with the ALS to discuss the observations and document analysis once again. The adapted GDE instrument served as guide for the discussion.

	ii. The ALS deliberated on new ideas or ideas to strengthen the existing inclusive pedagogy approach. It was implemented the next day by the two grade one teachers. iii. The ALS reflected on aspects that would need to be included in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. iv. The ALS suggested that a separate folder be used to document any agreed upon aspects for the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. v. The development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document had commenced progressively through this process.
	Wednesday – Day 3 (Week 1) The researcher observed Mathematics and English (FAL) lessons in grade 2A and B, which were conducted by the class teachers. The adapted GDE class visit instrument was used to guide the observation and document analysis process. Document analysis of the teachers' planning and preparation files was done by the researcher.
	i. At the end of the day a focus group discussion was held with the ALS to discuss the observations and document analysis. The adapted GDE instrument served as guide for the discussion. **ii.** The ALS reflected on new ideas or ideas to strengthen the existing inclusive pedagogy approach. It was implemented the next day by the two grade two teachers.

	Thursday – Day 4 (Week 1) The researcher once again observed the grade 2A and B teachers to monitor the pilot implementation of the recommendations as suggested by the ALS the previous afternoon.
	i. At the end of the day a focus group discussion was held with the ALS to discuss the observations and document analysis once again. The adapted GDE instrument served as guide for the discussion. ii. The ALS deliberated on new ideas or ideas to strengthen the existing inclusive pedagogy approach. It was implemented the next day by the two grade two teachers. iii. The ALS reflected on aspects that would need to be included in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. iv. Suggestions pertaining to the inclusive pedagogy guideline document was put into the separate folder.
	Friday – Day 5 (Week 1) The researcher observed Mathematics and English (FAL) lessons in grade 3A and B. These were conducted by the class teachers. i. The adapted GDE class visit instrument was used to guide the observation and document analysis process. **ii.** Documents analysis of the teachers' planning and preparation files was done by the researcher.
	i. At the end of the day a focus group discussion was held with the ALS to discuss the observations and document analysis

	once again. The adapted GDE instrument served as guide for the discussion. ii. The ALS deliberated on new ideas or ideas to strengthen the existing inclusive pedagogy approach. It was implemented the next day by the two grade three teachers. iii. The ALS reflected on aspects that would need to be included in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. **iv.** The ALS suggested that a separate folder be used to document any agreed upon aspects for the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. The development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document had commenced progressively through this process.
	Monday – Day 6 (Week 2) The researcher once again observed the grade 3A and B teachers to monitor the pilot implementation of the recommendations as suggested by the ALS the previous afternoon.
	i. At the end of the day a focus group discussion was held with the ALS to discuss the observations and document analysis once again. The adapted GDE instrument served to guide the discussion. ii. The ALS deliberated on new ideas or ideas to strengthen the existing inclusive pedagogy approach which was then implemented the next day by the two grade three teachers. iii. The ALS reflected on aspects that would need to be included in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

	iv. Suggestions pertaining to the inclusive pedagogy guideline document was put into the separate folder.
3	**Tuesday – Day 7 (Week 2)** i. The ALS met in a focus group and reviewed the first draft of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. ii. The ALS was provided with an opportunity to critically reflect on their learning and their experience of implementing an inclusive pedagogy in the classroom through their reflective diaries. iii. Once again recommendations were made to improve the inclusive pedagogy guideline document for implementation the next day.
	Wednesday – Day 8 (Week 2) – Day 12 (Week 3) Teachers were requested to pilot the draft inclusive pedagogy guideline document for final comments for a period of five days.
	Wednesday – Day 13 (Week 4) i. The ALS met in a focus group to discuss the outcome of the pilot week. What worked and what did not? ii. Recommendations were made for the final inclusive pedagogy guideline document and factored into the guideline.
	Thursday – Day 15 (Week 4) The ALS piloted the guideline document for an additional five days.

	Thursday – Day 20 (Week 5) i. The ALS met in a focus group to discuss the outcome of the pilot phase. ii. Recommendations were once again factored into complete and final inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

4.6 Data analysis (cf. 5.1.)

Qualitative data analysis is based on an interpretative philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). Simply meaning, as stated by Kemmis and McTaggart (2014), that it tries to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their construction of the phenomenon.

Analysis of the study data was influenced by my epistemological and ontological paradigm (cf. 1.5.2.) towards the reality of teaching in the FSS classroom environment. The research focused the lens through which the data was considered. The initial baseline data was analysed collaboratively by the ALS in the first informal discussion session which was recorded.

It is critical to bear in mind that in a PAR study, content analysis is ongoing and iterative throughout the entire research process by means of critical reflection by the ALS. This implies that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined and not merely a number of successive steps (Creswell, 2014). At the end of each cycle data was analysed which informed the next cycle. Data was then analysed for common themes through the teachers' conversations and discussions. The data was, therefore, examined and interpreted using

interpretative and inductive approaches such as categories, themes and patterns. Data collection and data analysis were concurrent processes, and commenced from the first step of the data collection process.

Due to the vast amount of data collected through reflective diaries, classroom observations, focus group discussions and audio transcripts it was necessary to approach the data analysis in a highly organised and systematic manner. Creswell (2014) suggests that, to keep a clear mind and prevent being overwhelmed, the data analysis needs to be approached in a highly organised manner. The organisation of data will be explained in the next section. It must be acknowledged that during the entire data analysis process the ALS was involved (by being part of data generation), signifying member checking (Maree, 2010).

When analysing qualitative data, as summarised below in Table 4.5, the goal is to summarise what has been observed or heard in terms of common words, phrases, themes or patterns that aid the understanding and interpretation of that which has emerged (Maree, 2010). Table 4.5 explains the steps followed in analysis of the data. The aim of data analysis is not to measure but to interpret and make sense of what is in the data, and this requires creativity, discipline and a systematic approach (Niewenhuis, 2008).

*Table 4. 5. **Data management process (Adapted from Maree, 2007)***

Analysing the data	Identifying key elements	Significant items of information
	Formulating categories	Grouping similar themes
	Formulating themes	Grouping similar categories Linking emerged themes with aims, objectives and agendas

The qualitative data collected was very comprehensive and required intensive examination, understanding and reading. To prevent repetition, all four data sets were analysed

collectively as some themes and categories recurred in every cycle. To emphasise data analysis with the ALS was ongoing.

All the analysed data was stored and managed by the researcher. Audio recordings of the group discussions were transcribed verbatim and checked with the ALS members afterwards.

4.7 Trustworthiness (reliability, dependability)

Herr and Anderson (2005) feel strongly about quality in action research, and suggest five quality indicators, namely outcome validity, process, democratic engagement, catalytic validity and dialogic validity. Trustworthiness is of the utmost importance in research, as assessing trustworthiness is the acid test of data analysis, findings and conclusions (Maree, 2007). Data from different sources, for example reflective diaries, participant observations, document analysis, focus group discussions and audio transcripts, was used which helped to verify the findings.

In this study, triangulation and member checking were employed to establish trustworthiness. There are a few steps to which the researcher had adhered to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Data and interpretations were taken back to the ALS so that they could assess the accuracy of the data (Creswell, 2014).

4.8. Verification of raw data

Member checking was done by the ALS members to ensure that what had been captured was a true reflection of every participant's contributions. Atkins and Wallace (2012) suggest crystalisation, clearing research bias and peer examination as strategies to ensure internal validity. Peer examination solicits the opinions of members of the ALS, ensuring equal opportunities for all involved in the study.

The focus group discussions gathered after every classroom observation or as and when the ALS felt they needed to meet. The 'outline' for the focus group discussion was i) a review

of notes from the previous day to confirm themes and categories to signify member checking, ii) a discussion of classroom observation using the adapted GDE instrument as a guide, iii) discussion of reflective diaries iv) discussion of any other relevant aspects pertaining to the inclusive pedagogy guideline.

4.9 Ethical considerations

In this research, action research was carried out in real-world circumstances, and it involved close and open communication among the participants involved. Chevalier and Buckles (2013) list a number of principles which were adapted and made relevant for this study. They were:

i. The relevant participants and authorities were consulted, and the principles guiding the work were accepted in advance by all.
i. All participants were allowed to influence the work, and the wishes of those who did not wish to participate was respected.
ii. The development of the work was visible and open to suggestions from others.
iii. Permission was obtained before observations and documents was examined
iv. Descriptions and points of view was negotiated with those concerned
v. Decisions made about the direction of the research and the probable outcomes were taken collectively.
vi. The principal researchers was explicit about the nature of the research process from the beginning, including all personal biases and interests.
vii. There was equal access to information generated by the process for all participants.

It is imperative to obtain clearance from an Ethics Committee when human subjects are involved in any kind of research of an empirical nature (Helsinki Declaration, 1992). Therefore, permission from the Gauteng Department of Education was sought.

Further to this, Strydom (2002) states that it is essential to understand and pay attention to the following ethical principles:

4.9.1 Informed consent (see Annexure A & C)

Verbal informed consent was obtained from the school principal and the Foundation Phase teachers. During the follow-up meeting the members of the ALS were presented with a letter requesting written consent. The entire research process was described in this letter. Before acknowledging the consent form, a PowerPoint presentation explained the aims, objectives and method of the study as well as the research expectations. Participants were also given an opportunity to ask questions for further clarity. This was done in great detail to ensure that the participants were fully aware of their role in the research study.

4.9.2 Protection from harm

The researcher strived to be honest, respectful and considerate towards all participants. Participants were free to withdraw from the research at any point during the research. Participants were rewarded at the end of the research with a token of appreciation and lunch for participating in the study.

4.10 Chapter summary

This chapter gave an account of the justification for using qualitative research within the epistemological and ontological paradigms. It justified PAR and its manifestation as a medium of change. This chapter also discussed the data collection process and included a detailed account of the various stages of the PAR process.

The next chapter will present an in-depth analysis of the data gained from the cycles to arrive at an inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion of the Findings

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I described the methodology that was selected based on the PAR approach and explained how it informed the generation of data for this study. I also discussed my research design and how the data was generated throughout the PAR process in the ALS. In this chapter I firstly present the findings of the research. In the discussion thereafter, I provide my interpretation of the data, as integrated with literature.

The intention of the study as introduced in chapter one, was to develop a guideline document for the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach in an FSS with the participation of Foundation Phase participants. This chapter presents the analysis of the data from two phases and four cycles of the qualitative Participatory Action Research (PAR) process. In Phase one a biographical questionnaire was administered. The teacher's academic qualifications, pre-service or in-service training, number of years' experience in inclusive education and their ages were inquired about. Phase one involved the planning stages of the research where permission had to be gained from the different authorities namely the Gauteng Department of Basic Education as well as ethics approval from the North West University.

In phase two data was generated by the ALS through a baseline questionnaire, participant observations and document analysis, focus group discussions and reflective diaries. To establish data trustworthiness, triangulation was used as it is critical in facilitating interpretive validity, mainly because all data collected through a variety of methods should correlate positively (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Triangulation also augmented the credibility of the findings. Discussions from the phases and cycles are presented and supported by statements of the participants. In addition, this chapter also discusses the outcomes of the analysis by presenting the themes identified by the ALS during the analytical process and

providing evidence to support the interpretations. It is important to emphasise that the data of all the data collection methods was integrated and will be presented as one data set. However, please note that the review by the ALS of the proposed inclusive pedagogy guideline document will be presented separately at the end of chapter 6 and the reflection of the ALS on their experiences of the research process will be given in chapter 7.

5.2. The Data Generating and Analysis Process

The PAR data generation and analysis process will be explained in this section.

5.2.1. Data generating Process

Being a PAR qualitative study, data collection and data analysis were not treated as two separate processes, but was an ongoing, cyclical and iterative process. The reason for this as proposed by Maree (2010) is that most qualitative studies are guided by the criterion of saturation when no more new ideas and insights are brought to the fore. In this study it is the interim data analysis that continued until the data was saturated, due to the cyclical and iterative process (see figure 5.1.) of data collection, reflection and analysis (Lodica, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). The following diagram (figure 5.1.) depicts this process:

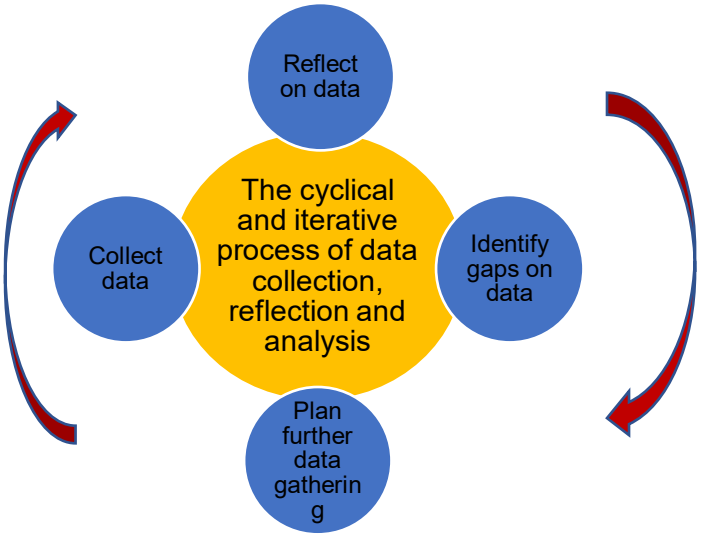

Figure 5. 1. The cyclical and iterative process of collection, reflection and analysis of data (Maree,2010)

The study being a participatory action research approach required that the ALS play an active role in the organisation and analysis of the data. Creswell (2008) states that when a considerable quantity of information from focus group discussions, participant observation and reflective diaries are collected in qualitative research, it is crucial to organise the data as they are collected. Analysing the data after each cycle helped us facilitate and prepare for the discussions the following day. This also provided the ALS with an indication whether sufficient data was derived to arrive at my interpretative conclusion. The daily process of analysis is summarised as follows:

When analysing and interpreting the data every possible perspective was looked at to find patterns and to seek new understanding among the data. Analysing the data was a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making. It is suggested by Ngulube, (2015: pp 256) that a "qualitative data analysis is concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognising, coding, mapping, exploring and describing patterns, trends, themes and categories in the raw data, in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meanings". Patton (2002) refers to this process as inductive analysis and creative synthesis. The data analysis process was guided by Lofgren's, (2013) 6 stages of qualitative data analysis, as reflected in Figure 5.2.

5.2.2. Data Analysis Process

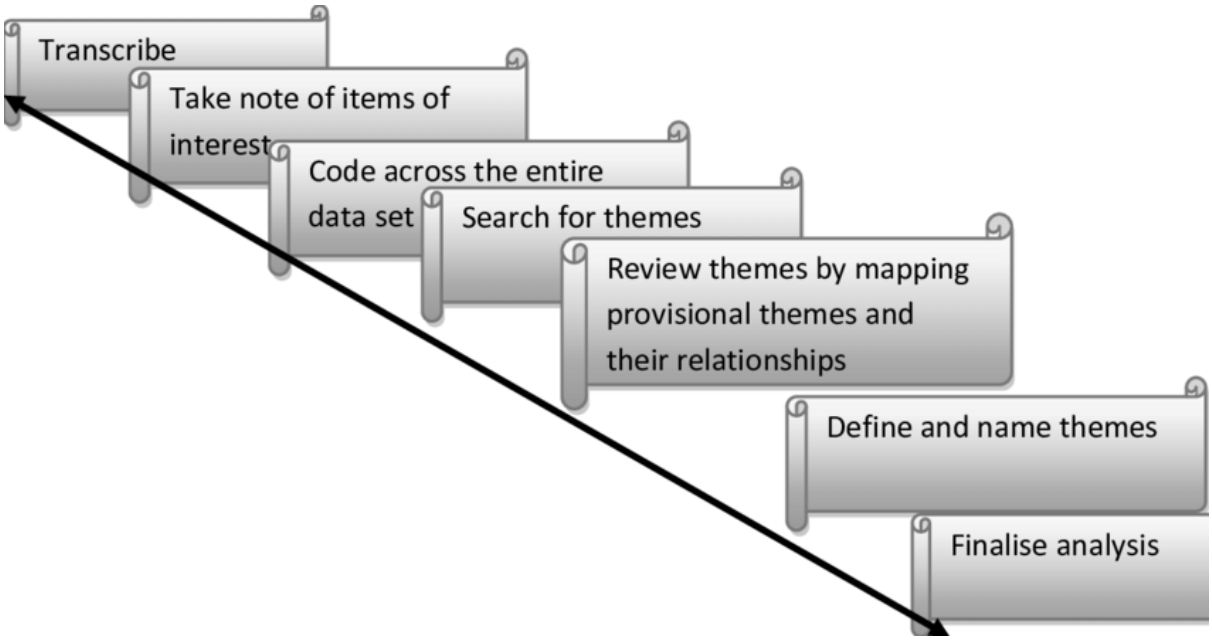

Figure 5. 2. Steps in thematic analysis (Adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2013)

Step One – The transcripts was read as a whole by the ALS. Notes were formulated regarding the overall first impression (see figure 5.2.). Thereafter the transcriptions were read through carefully line by line to ensure that all information was captured as it was interpreted.

Step Two – Relevant words, phrases and sentences were labelled whilst keeping the research question in mind. Emphasised repeated suggestions were also labelled as the ALS indicated its importance.

Step Three – The ALS deliberated on which themes were most important and categories were created by bringing together several themes in an unbiased, creative and open-minded manner (figure 5.2.).

Step Four – The ALS labelled the categories and deliberated on which are the most relevant as well as its connectedness to each other. The connectedness between the categories was thereafter described. This became the main results of the study. New knowledge was now generated from the ALS's perspective.

Step Five – The ALS discussed if there was a hierarchy among the categorisation. However, it was felt that all categories were equally important to respond to the research questions.

Step Six - The principal researcher commenced with the writing of the final report (see figure 5.2.), which was then reviewed and accepted by the ALS. Being a PAR method, the data analysis continued until the data was saturated, due to the cyclical and iterative process.

Data was analysed using an inductive approach, i.e. themes and categories were chosen during and after scrutiny of the data to respond to the research questions.

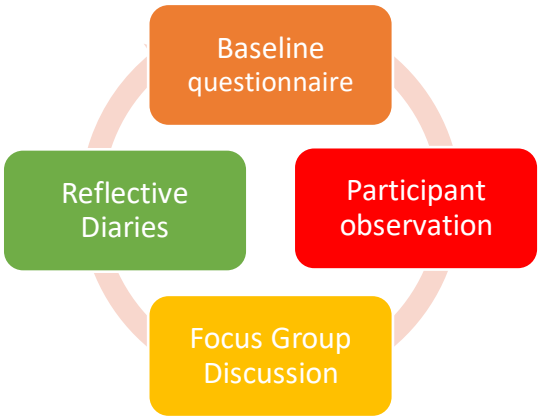

Figure 5. 3. Triangulation of data adapted for my study (Makoelle, 2013)

The ALS used triangulation to cross-validate the four data sources (see figure 5.3.) namely; the baseline questionnaire, focus group discussion, participant observation and reflective diaries to find regularities in the data. The different sources of data were compared to see if the same pattern kept recurring. Nieuwenhuis (2010) argues that triangulation of data collection leads to trustworthiness, furthermore the collective interpretation of the data by the ALS enhanced trustworthiness and the credibility of the findings could be ensured.

5.2.3. Findings of my Study

Phase 2 - Cycle 1 involves the creation of a relationship between the participants and the principal researcher where there is mutual trust, openness, transparency, equal participation

and total commitment to the research study. For this purpose, a collage activity was done to "break the ice" and allow participants to be spontaneous and free in their discussions.

5.2.3.1. Building a relationship of trust

Establishing trust between members of the ALS was crucial to the success of the PAR process (cf. chapter 3). Trust-building was a process of mutual recognition and acceptance that led to the participants expressing feelings of self-confidence to participate in this study (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014). A collage activity was employed as a tool for trust-building and allowed the ALS members to verbally express their feelings, attitudes and their perspectives of an FSS (cf. 2.5.1.) at the present moment (see annexure F.) in a group. Members of the ALS knew each other well, as they were all Foundation Phase staff members in the school. Thus, good relations already existed, which needed to be sustained throughout the research process through compliance with the group's rules created by members of the ALS during the constitution of the ALS. An additional purpose of the collage activity was to "break the ice" in order to promote further collaboration, self-confidence, a feeling of trust, free expression of thoughts and ideas without inhibition. The outcome of this activity was achieved with success as all participants were at ease and contributed freely and willingly with minimal prompting or probing. However, although relationship building formed cycle 1, in phase 2 it did not generate data to answer the research question. Its purpose was merely to activate the data-generation process and for the development of a vision to help direct the aims of the research (cf. chapter 4).

5.2.3.2. The Baseline Questionnaire

The purpose of the baseline open-ended questionnaire was to ascertain the ALS members' level of knowledge and understanding of inclusive education, an inclusive pedagogy and what an FSS entails. Being staff members of an FSS I assumed that, their in-service training would have capacitated them in these fields, as it has a direct impact on their classroom

implementation of inclusive education and an inclusive pedagogy. However, my assumptions needed to be affirmed or contradicted. Consequently, the ultimate purpose of the questionnaire was to determine their level of understanding and knowledge pertaining: to the concepts' inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy; an inclusive classroom environment at a FSS; what their feelings are regarding including learners who experience barriers to learning; reflecting on their current inclusive pedagogy practices in the classroom; as well as the challenges they experience in the implementation of inclusive education.

All nine Foundation Phase participants affirmed their eagerness to participate however, only six participants met the criteria for selection. All six participants completed the baseline open-ended questionnaire which ended with a lively interaction in the ALS group pertaining to their varied perceptions of the concepts as mentioned above. This confirmed their enthusiasm and level of commitment as participants in the PAR. I allowed the focus group discussion to continue while ensuring that it remained confined to the questions included in the questionnaire. The entire ALS group discussion of the questionnaire was recorded using a tape recorder. The recording of the group discussion was played back to the ALS which was collectively analysed by the ALS for recurring themes and categories. The intention of the collective analysis was to further develop an ownership of the research project and to sustain a relationship of trust amongst all participants in the PAR approach (Neethling, 2015). Through the ALS analysis of the data (the questionnaire and focus group discussion) certain themes and categories became more prominent. This was noted by the principal researcher and examined in greater detail independently to confirm the themes and categories identified by the ALS in the focus group discussion session. The ALS began the focus group discussion the following day with a review of the identified themes and categories from the previous day. This was done to affirm the themes and categories as identified by the ALS. The entire process of the baseline session is presented in steps to show logical flow in arriving at themes and categories.

Table 5. 1. Steps in the analysis of the baseline questionnaire

Table 5.1. Steps that were followed in the analysis of the baseline questionnaire
Step 1: The questionnaire was handed out to members of the ALS for independent completion
Step 2: Focus group discussion ensued after the completion of the questionnaire. All members of the ALS discussed their responses to each question. The focus group discussion was recorded using an audio tape recorder.
Step 3: On conclusion of the focus group discussion the tape recording was played back to the ALS with the intention of analysing and identifying recurring themes and categories.
Step 4: Themes and categories were identified by the ALS and noted down in writing by the principal researcher. This step concluded the activities of the day with the ALS.
Step 5: The recorded focus group discussions was transcribed verbatim by the principal research to corroborate and confirm the identified themes and categories. The transcription of the tape recording was written in a question by question format to capture what the ALS had to say regarding each and every question.
Step 6: The confirmed themes and categories was presented to the ALS after the transcription process the following day for member checking and validation.
Upon the data analysis of the participant observations, focus group discussion and the reflective diaries it was discovered that there were recurring themes and categories. It was therefore decided to integrate the findings from all data sets which had increased the validity and reliability of the study.

5.2.3.3. Participant Observations

The purpose of the participant observation was twofold. The objective of the first phase of participant observation was to ascertain the current inclusive pedagogy practices of the participants. The observations were structured by means of the adapted GDE classroom visit

instrument, used by departmental officials which also addressed the research question. Detailed notes were made by the principal researcher using the instrument as the lesson progressed. The observations were scheduled as per the classroom timetable to minimise disruptions and maintain routine. The data acquired through the completed GDE instrument was reflected upon with the participants after the observations in group discussions. Through the focus group discussions new ideas and improved inclusive pedagogy approaches were generated by the ALS to be a part of the pilot implementation.

The objective of the second phase of participant observation was primarily to observe the pilot implementation of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document as developed by the ALS during the focus group discussions. Once again, the GDE adapted instrument was used as guide for the observations together with the reflection diary of the participants. Here, the successes and challenges of the draft inclusive pedagogy guideline document were noted in preparation for deliberation at the next focus group discussion session.

Table 5. 2. Demographics of learners

Class	**Number of Learners**	**Home Language of Teacher**	**Home Language of Learners**	**Language of Teaching and Learning**	**Age of Learners**
Grade 1A	38	English/Afrikaans	Sesotho	English	Between 7 - 9 years
Grade 1B	46	Afrikaans	Sesotho	English	
Grade 2A	32	Afrikaans	Sesotho/Zulu	English	Between 8 – 10 years
Grade 2B	44	Afrikaans	Sesotho/Afrikaans	English	
Grade 3A	42	Afrikaans	Sesotho/Afrikaans	English	Between 9 – 14 years
Grade 3B	43	Afrikaans	Sesotho/Afrikaans	English	

The schedule for the participant observations will be subsequently depicted in table format:

Table 5. 3. Schedule of participant observation sessions for the duration of the study.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Lesson Observation Schedule</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Week One First phase of participant observation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monday
Gr 1
A & B</td><td>Tuesday
Gr 2
A & B</td><td>Wednesday
Gr 3
A & B</td><td>Thursday</td><td colspan="2">Friday</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mathematics (A)</td><td>Mathematics (A)</td><td>Mathematics (A)</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="4">Participants implemented the recommendations made by the ALS during the weeks focus group discussions. Reflective diaries were used for this purpose.</td></tr>
<tr><td>English (Home Language) (A)</td><td>English (Home Language) (A)</td><td>English (Home Language) (A)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mathematics (B)</td><td>Mathematics (B)</td><td>Mathematics (B)</td></tr>
<tr><td>English (Home Language) (B)</td><td>English (Home Language) (B)</td><td>English (Home Language) (B)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Focus Group Discussions to discuss findings of the participant observations</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Week Two Second phase of participant observation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monday
Gr 1
A & B</td><td>Tuesday
Gr 2
A & B</td><td>Wednesday
Gr 3
A & B</td><td>Thursday</td><td colspan="2">Friday – Review</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mathematics (A)</td><td>Mathematics (A)</td><td>Mathematics (A)</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="4">Participants implemented the recommendations made by the ALS during the weeks focus group discussions. Reflective diaries were used for this purpose.</td></tr>
<tr><td>English (Home Language) (A)</td><td>English (Home Language) (A)</td><td>English (Home Language) (A)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mathematics (B)</td><td>Mathematics (B)</td><td>Mathematics (B)</td></tr>
<tr><td>English (Home Language) (B)</td><td>English (Home Language) (B)</td><td>English (Home Language) (B)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Focus Group Discussion
The ALS met in a focus group to discuss the outcome of the pilot implementation week. What worked what didn’t?</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Recommendations were made for the final inclusive pedagogy guideline and factored into the guideline for the next week.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Week Three Review</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monday</td><td>Tuesday</td><td>Wednesday</td><td>Thursday</td><td>Friday</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Review of the first draft of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document
Reflective diaries and focus group discussions were the main source of data generation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Focus Group Discussion
The final inclusive pedagogy guideline document had been piloted and all amendments to the guideline was made by the ALS. At this point data was saturated.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Week Four Final Revision</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">The final review of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document through the focus group discussion session with the ALS. Data was now saturated.
The inclusive pedagogy guideline document is finalised.</td></tr>
</table>

The table above highlights a summary of the Foundation Phase classrooms, comprising of grade one, two and three where the participant observations took place. I observed 2 classes of grade one, two classes of grade 2 and two classes of grade 3. The inclusive pedagogy guideline document progressively developed after each cycle and trial of the recommendations. The cyclical and iterative process continued up until data was saturated and the ALS was satisfied with the outcome of the final guideline document.

During the participation observations I was guided by the observation schedule (cf. 5.2.). This technique was used to note inclusive pedagogy practices that were implemented before the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document which was the primary purpose of the research study. During the observations I also made notes in my reflective diary (where relevant) which had bearing to inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy, with the aim of responding to the research questions. *What is the teaching pedagogy currently employed*

in an FSS? and *What kind of support would participants require to implement an inclusive pedagogy?*

5.2.3.4. Reflective Diaries

The ALS agreed to maintain a reflective diary throughout the research process at the first meeting of the ALS (figure 5.2.). Notes from the reflective diaries including the diary of the principal researcher contributed to the ongoing focus group discussions held after each and every participant observation and pilot implementation session, including during a final review of the PAR process. It is important to highlight that the reflection process was an ongoing process throughout the research period. It was not a just summative reflection examining the research process only at the culmination of the PAR process. The reflective diaries gave participants the opportunity to voice their thoughts or comment on aspects taking place in the classroom or the school as a Full-Service School environment. The primary purpose of the reflective diaries was to; record their feelings on the PAR process; reflect on how inclusive they feel their teaching is in terms of accommodating all learning needs; identify the most appropriate inclusive teaching and learning strategies for an inclusive pedagogy guideline document; suggest strategies to address the challenges of applying an inclusive pedagogy in a FSS

As the participants were not familiar with reflective diaries previously, I had to accentuate the purpose, process of maintaining a diary and reasons for the use of a reflective diary. I also made certain suggestions on key indicators that would guide their reflective recordings at various stages of the research, although they were not restricted or confined to the suggested indicators. Recommendations of the key indicators were; what are some of the activities that worked well, what challenges were experienced and how do you plan to intervene to achieve the desired outcome, what have we learnt from this process?

Participants were also encouraged to write about positive or negative feelings that they had experienced, what it meant to them, and what they may have learned from that experience and their personal growth through participating in the PAR study. Additionally, the ALS used the reflective diaries as a means to self-evaluate and record the success or challenges they experienced with the inclusive pedagogy approach that was used in their classrooms. As mentioned by Juma, Lehtomaki andNaukkarinen (2017) participants can be influential change agents in transforming their schools if they regularly reflect on their pedagogical practices in an attempt to look for improvements that will help all learners achieve their full potential. At every focus group discussion participant would discuss relevant aspects of their reflective diaries thereby contributing to the discussion in a meaningful and constructive manner.

5.2.3.5. Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion sessions were conducted after every participant observation in phase one, the initial observation and in phase two, the monitoring of the pilot implementation of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document (see Table 5.2.). Through the focus group discussions in phase one and in phase two, the ALS was able to build on each other ideas, thoughts, suggestions and new discoveries related to an inclusive pedagogy approach. The focus group discussions in phase one and phase two commenced with a candid reflection of the day's inclusive pedagogy classroom practices i.e. what went well, what didn't work so well and the possible solutions for the identified methodological challenges. Whilst the focus group discussions continued, I as the principal researcher had to play a dual role; one being an active participant in the ALS and the other as a capturer of the discussions in writing. Further to this the discussions involved suggestions and techniques related to the strengthening and amendments of the piloted inclusive pedagogy methods for inclusion in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

Week three involved the review phase (see Table 5.2.) of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. After the first draft of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document the ALS commenced with a review process, incorporating all final additions and amendments to the document. Focus group discussions were conducted on a daily basis, through the reflective diaries and previous captured notes of the focus group discussions. This exercise proved to be fruitful ensuring that the final inclusive pedagogy guideline document is a valuable contribution to knowledge. The final week involved the structuring and logical ordering of the sections which led to the final inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

5.2.4. An integrated participatory inductive analysis of the data

Please note that the findings presented here are an integrated data set from the baseline questionnaire, first and second phase of participant observation, focus group discussions and the reflective diaries.

When analysing the data, I made use of direct quotations (which will be presented in *italics typeface)* from the participants to substantiate the themes. The abbreviation FPt refers to Foundation Phase teacher and as indicated below their responses to specific themes.

- "Some" refers to between two to four participants;
- "Many" refers to between four to five participants;
- "Most refers to between five to six participants.

The PAR method being cyclical in nature, it was best to analyse the data in an integrated manner, to eliminate constant repetition of prominent recurring themes and categories, to increase the validity and reliability of the research and to answer the research questions. The ALS was involved throughout the process of data analysis (being part of data generation), signifying member checking (Ngulube, 2015). Three prominent themes emerged subsequent

to the participatory inductive data analysis. Table 5.4 represents the themes, categories and subcategories derived from the four data sets.

The identified themes and categories are presented in Table 5.4. below

*Table 5. 4. **Themes and Categories***

Theme	Categories	Subcategories
Theme 1: Understanding inclusive education	All learners	
	Different kinds of dis/abilities	
Theme 2: Understanding inclusive pedagogy	Different learning styles	
	Different teaching methods	Training not sufficient
	Innovative teaching practices	Light classical music
		Paired reading
		Maintaining a schedule
		Own working space
		Using colours
Theme 3: The inclusive classroom environment	All learners Feeling welcome Interaction Resources Physical environment Teacher-Learner Ratio Discipline Language Policies, CAPS completion	

It is important to mention that, while participants conveyed their understanding of inclusive education, pedagogy and classroom, it seemed that their predominant line of thinking was about the challenges or difficulty of being able to implement or apply inclusive practices, which will be integrated into the presentation of the themes and categories.

5.2.4.1. Theme 1: Understanding inclusive education

During the data collection process, the participants' understanding of inclusive education and the specific factors influencing their understanding were probed. Two categories that became evident were: all learners and different dis/abilities.

5.2.4.1.1. All learners

A general belief that has been asserted by the participants is that inclusive education should address the needs of all learners irrespective of age, race, disability, level of competence or personal problems. Most participants made use of words such as "every", and "all,". This is reflected in the quote's underneath:

"Inclusive education is where every learner gets to be involved, no matter age, race, level of competence or personal problems" (FPt 1).

"Inclusive education means that all learners have a right to education on their level of performance" (FPt 4).

"At times it can be a challenge but both learners and the teacher can benefit from this approach" (FPt 6).

One participant told this story as integral to how she views inclusive education:

"I want to cite an example that really affected me, and this is just one example that we have to go through on a daily basis. A little girl Thembi (not her real name) in my class who lives in the informal settlement close by has had to endure so much. Her dad left the family when she was just a few months old, with two younger siblings, her mother resorted to prostitution to ensure that there was food for the kids to eat. This business took place in the shack, in presence of the learners and while consuming substances. Her mother was too tired to keep awake in the day and left the two younger siblings in her care. As a result, she missed school quite a lot. I was suspicious and because we have a good relationship with the local social worker who could speak Sesotho, I requested that she join me in visiting the child. We

were accompanied by the school's groundsman who knew the area well. What we saw was just too sad, the shack was barely liveable and smelt of urine. It seemed Tembi knew of our visit and hid under her bed. She had to be lured out with the promise of sweets and chocolates. Her mother was under the influence of alcohol and her two siblings were unbathed and extremely hungry. Fortunately, the social worker through the correct processes removed the learners to a place of safety until the mother was rehabilitated. How much longer will the mother be sober and free of prostituting herself? I don't know. Incidents like this get to us, we go home very heavy hearted at times. But there are days when we have good stories" (FPt 5).

5.2.4.1.2. Different kinds of dis/abilities

Some of the participants also regarded inclusive education as working with learners with disabilities, but also catering for the needs of learners on their level of ability.

"It is working with learners with different kinds of disabilities" (FPt 5).

"By inclusive education we know that we have to cater for the needs of every individual learner on their level or ability" (FPt 2).

One participant asserted that it gets learners with disabilities involved in everyday classroom activities:

"Good – they (learners with disabilities) get to be involved in everyday classroom activities" (FPt1).

5.2.4.2. Theme 2: **Understanding inclusive pedagogy**

The categories in this theme that became apparent include different learning styles and different teaching methods.

5.2.4.2.1. Different learning styles

The mostly used key phrases in this theme that were used included: *"using different learning styles"; "accommodate all learners' learning needs'; and each child has strengths and weaknesses".*

The following quotes encompass how most participants viewed inclusive pedagogy as addressing different learning styles, equal learning opportunities and accommodating everybody, but also mentioned that the *how* part is a problem:

"The way to teach learners- the slow learners with their different learning styles and where there are equal learning opportunities for all learners" (FPt 4).

"Inclusive Pedagogy is to adapt the curriculum to accommodate everybody no matter their ability, in practice is this happening? "the problem is the how part, how do we do it properly to make a difference to learning" (FP 3).

During the classroom observations it seemed that the participants understood the most appropriate learning styles of their learners, for example a learner with poor vision preferred to use a magnifying glass rather than his glasses to touch and feel (tactile learning style) objects. The participant ensured that the resource is provided for the learners to aid their ability to learn. It appeared as more learners in the classes were visual learners, therefore participants made use of pictures, graphs, illustrations and other visual stimuli to enhance learning. Learners became actively involved in the learning process when information was presented in a visual way.

5.2.4.2.2. Different teaching methods

Linked to addressing different learning styles and accommodating everyone, it seems that participants also believed that it is about different teaching methods:

"I don't know that much but I think that it aims to teach and include all learners through teaching differently in the education process. Learners should not be excluded because of their learning problems" (FPt 5).

"I understand that inclusive pedagogy is a method of teaching that incorporates dynamic practices and learning styles, multicultural content and varied means of assessment, however that is what we try to do, but it's not working as well as policy dictates" (FPt 1).

"Yes, but I think it (implementation of inclusive pedagogy) can improve. I use real objects, counters, pictures, puppets, radio, CD to accommodate different learners" (FPt 3).

"Yes, I incorporate diversity into my lessons. Made my classroom appropriate for an inclusive education environment. I modified course materials, but you must remember al lot of the resources we buy using our personal money. It is not provided by the department (supportive aids)" (FPt 6).

"I found that through differentiated teaching and learning approaches I am able to reach all my learners somehow" (FPt 3).

"Yes, we include everyone in their own way. I accommodate learners with barriers by having them seated in the front of the classroom and giving them constant additional support as I teach. Making sure they understand the content being taught" (FPt 1).

When the participants reflected on their own current inclusive pedagogy approaches, they seem to believe that their teaching was minimally inclusive, and that more could be done to improve their implementation of inclusive pedagogy. The participants also asserted that they were doing all they could, given the limited resources and the numerous (cf. ….) challenges that they had to deal with:

"I try so hard to make sure that I differentiate my teaching and assessment techniques, but you know the contextual factors are a compounding challenge. And discipline is hard to manage in a class of forty-five learners" (FPt 6).

"I make sure that my learners read well from most sources, for example they read newspaper articles, magazines, library books including their class readers. This exposes them to all styles of reading material. If they leave my class being well literate and numerate given all the challenges then I have done my job" (FPt 3).

During classroom observations it was evident that participants tried to accommodate all learners through the use of varied teaching methods i.e. some learners thrived in group work

activities where learning took place through discussions and deliberations to understand the information they presented with. Participants made provision for these learners through group work activities, providing opportunities for oral expression.

5.2.4.2.2.1. Training not sufficient

A few participants mentioned that they do not have sufficient training:

"I am for it, but my training is not sufficient enough to deal with all these barriers; intellectual, social and behavioural. It is too much for one person to handle, we don't have class assistants as in the States. The contextual factors are too complex and it is getting progressively worse each year. It's easier for us to refer the learners with barriers than to have to deal with all these issues. It's all too overwhelming" (FPt 3).

"In my class among other I have six learners who have ADHD and two learners who have mild autism and one learner with FAS (Foetal Alcohol Syndrome) and I still have not received any workshop on how to manage so many disabilities altogether in one class. I want to give them the best possible standard of education because these learners do not receive the necessary attention from their parents so they look at me for that motherly love and affection. There is so many roles that I have to play. The SIAS process was not properly workshopped as well, although we are trying to use it as best as we can, we still not 100% sure if we are doing the right thing" (FPt 4).

5.2.4.2.3. Innovative teaching practices

During the participant observations a few innovative teaching practices were noted and reflected upon in the ALS. One example of this is where the participant conducted a reading lesson in the garden of the school. Learning was thus not only confined to a physical classroom. More innovative teaching practices are included in the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

5.2.4.3.2.1. Light classical music

The participant explained that she uses light classical music to assist learners' ability to improve their concentration and calm them:

"The music (light classical music) works for me; this technique improves the learner's ability to focus and concentrate. Discipline management is a serious challenge in our school and this is all due to the large classes." When I first introduced this technique, I was surprised to see how much it had helped me in calming the learners." (FPt 4).

During the classroom observations it was evident that immediately after the first recess, learners were rowdy and unsettled, after the participant played classical music, it seems to calm the learners and improved focus in learning.

5.2.4.3.2.2. Paired Reading

During the observation of one reading lesson, the participant paired learners with poorer reading skills with learners with better reading skills. According to the participant this technique proved to be effective:

"Paired reading is about introducing learners to learning in a very pleasurable way. It's a positive technique. If the child fails to read a word, the peer simply says the correct word and the learner with the barrier continues reading. Learners are praised for their performances but never criticised for making mistakes" (FPt 6).

5.2.4.3.2.3.Maintaining a schedule

All members of the ALS asserted that *"behaviour is a huge problem in the school".* Most felt that *"it is as a result of working parents, as often learners are left to fend for themselves at home, there is no control, they do just what they like" (FPt2).*

In all the classrooms participants asked the learners to compile classroom schedules and rules which were then clearly displayed on the wall. Participants specifically added that learners who have Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity disorder have improved their behaviour

through maintaining a strict schedule as these learners have a difficult time learning rules and routines. All the participants maintained "*that these rules are not changed on a regular basis as change is difficult for leaners to adjust to and often promotes behaviour problems" (FPt5).*

5.2.4.3.2.4. Own working space

In the grade 2 class it was observed that a particular learner with mild autism was assisted by a member of the ALS through creating his own work space area by marking his boundary with yellow masking tape. She reported that this seemed to make the learner feel a lot more comfortable knowing that he could venture within these boundaries reflected in yellow tape. The other learners also acknowledged that was his space and no individual should step into his space without permission.

5.2.4.3.2.5. Using colours

During the observations it was noted that all the participants highlighted and underlined the important instructions and key words with different coloured pens, highlighter markers or felt tip pen when doing a worksheet. One participant also used a variety of coloured chalk which she believed is just for the benefit of an individual learner who experience barriers to learning, but all learners in the class. The participants reported that this technique appeared to sustain a sense of interest in the activities as learners could more easily understand the instructions.

5.2.4.3. Theme 3: The inclusive classroom environment

A variety of categories that were mentioned by some participants under this theme and then confirmed in the discussions by all participants, comprise:

All learners, feeling welcome, interaction, resources, physical environment, teacher-learner ratio, discipline, language, CAPS completion**.**

Most participants seemed to believe that their school or the classroom is an inclusive environment.

"I think we trying hard to be inclusive in all respects including our classroom and school environment. Although a lot of what we as teachers offer is through our own initiatives" (FPt 2).

"I for one bought a magnifying glass for the one learner whose vision is fading each day, I also make sure that his worksheets and all his tasks are on large print" (FPt 6).

"My reading activities is based on the level of reading that the learners can cope with, so I have approximately ten groups reading on different levels, and they progress to the next level at their own pace, I decided to use this approach because English is not their first language". (FPt 5)

"But you know there is a lot more that we as teachers can do to make our classes and school more inclusive, and we have to do it, …… our playgrounds definitely do not accommodate for the disabilities in this school, ……..at the moment we only have one toilet that has wheelchair access"(FPt 4).

"But lets look at the collage activity that we did last week, there we discussed all wants and wishes for an inclusive environment like class size, resources, functional families, warm friendly, fun environment , but the challenge is how do we get to that level without district or Head Office support or budgets" (FPt 1).

5.2.4.3.1. All learners

Most participants' definition of an inclusive environment appears to be that a class or school should be "*accommodative of all learners" (FP4).* This definition is also encompassed in the following statement of a participant:

"It would include a variety of activities addressing visual, auditory and tactile learners. Provision should be made for strong, average and weak learners. Learners with disabilities both minor and more severe should be included in all activities" (FPt 2).

5.2.4.3.2. Feeling welcome

Some of the participants described an inclusive classroom as welcoming. This is apparent in the following quotes:

"An inclusive environment is where these above-mentioned (learners experiencing barriers to learning) learners feel welcome and at ease. FSS provide the environment for all these learners" (FPt 1).

"A welcoming classroom environment is important for them to feel the support and love. Many of them don't feel the love as parents are uninvolved in the development of the learner. I make sure that they have all the resources to make learning easier for them" (FP1).

During the classroom observations it was noted that all learners received a hug from the participants in the morning and before they left for home promoting a feeling of belonging, warmth and affection in every learner.

5.2.4.3.3. Interaction

Positive interaction between teachers and learners, where there is respect and honesty, as well as using appropriate language, appear to be regarded as an important aspect of an inclusive classroom. This is reflected in the following quote:

"The environment is like the classroom; the learners feel safe and it is quiet. It would also include the teacher positively interacting with the students in a respectful way, encouraging open and honest discussions. Using inclusive language and appropriate models of address" (FPt 3).

5.2.4.3.4. Resources

Different resources such as support programmes, learning and teaching materials, support assistants, specialists and structures are mentioned as important for inclusive teaching and learning environments. The following quotes affirm these:

"Correct support programmes correct resources, diverse learning and teaching materials and most important of all decent learner to teacher ratio is what would make a good inclusive teaching and learning environment" (FPt 4).

"The various structures within the Full-Service School environment is also important, like if I can say ……the SBST is not really functional to be honest with you…. even the DBST is non- functional……. the district doesn't help us much" (FPt 5).

"*Various strategies and approaches to teaching (e.g. A scribe), learning aids to assist learners with barriers (e.g. A posture pillow), having specialists on site (e.g. Speech therapists, occupational therapist, physio-therapists, psychologists) and having a class assistant that is trained in special needs. This would be the ideal inclusive learning environment which is not restricted to the classroom only but the entire school community)" (FPt 6).*

"We are a Full -Service School so we should be better resourced than other schools, unfortunately this is not the case. Our school is classified as a quintile five school (advantaged school) which is incorrect, we actually need to be a quintile two school as all our learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds and most do not pay school fees. This impacts on the school budget as we don't have the available funds to buy all the necessary resources to implement inclusive education. But that does stop us, quite often we use our personal money to buy some resources." (FPt 5).

"I want to know, is this school not a Full-Service School? Then why are we not provided for as such? Where are our smartboards? Our physical resources are not adequate. The mobile classrooms are really not conducive" (FPt 3 + FPt 5).

Another inefficient resource which contributes to them struggling to practice *good teaching*, that was mentioned by one participant is the scholar transport system:

"Learners who are not using the scholar transport system are forced to take public transport like trains or taxis which are not reliable. If there is a taxi strike or the trains are not

running, they miss school for the day" (FP 6). There is also a large number of learners who commute to school using the train and thereafter have a long distance to walk to the school. These learners miss the first two periods of teaching and learning almost on a daily basis.

5.2.4.3.5. Physical environment

In all the classes that I observed there was a reading corner which was stocked with age appropriate books. The classes were print rich with brightly coloured charts, which had related visual stimuli promoting incidental learning. Some classes had beautiful curtains which added to the positive ambiance of the classroom environment.

However, in one class the participant indicated *".... the noise level is amplified in my mobile class to due to the wooden flooring, learners push and pull their furniture all day which can become quite disturbing when you busy with a group in the front."* In this particular class, the class teacher was unable to reposition the learner's tables and chair to suit her activities due to the limited size of the classroom and 42 learners sat in rows facing the front of the classroom. There was no floor space to accommodate a carpet for storytelling or group activities.

These participants teach in mobile classrooms which they describe as *"falling apart"*. The classrooms are built on stilts and consequently wheel chair access is not possible. One participant (FP2) reported that she and the learners would literally carry a learner with a disability on a wheelchair into the mobile classroom as ramps were not constructed.

5.2.4.3.6. Teacher-learner ratio

The teacher-learner ratio appeared to be a general problem for all participants as is affirmed in the following statements:

"I am all for inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy in a mainstream class, however I feel that all learners who with barriers to learning should be placed in a class with a fewer number of learners so that the participants could differentiate their teaching to the

benefit of all learners. We have far too many learners in our class to focus on so many that have barriers to learning. Besides, discipline becomes a problem and affects our ability to implement inclusive pedagogy. The department must do something about overcrowding in our classes. We need smaller numbers to make a substantial difference, we are not having an effect with so many problems with our learners" (FPt 4).

"If we are to include more learners with disabilities, classroom numbers must be lower than 30. Participants need to give individual attention to all learners. Only then will it work well" (FPt 4).

"*The department needs to understand that we can't cope with the ever-increasing class size. Each new learner comes as a package with so many challenges attached and I am just one person. We don't have an additional support person in the class as in other countries. The Department needs to provide an assistant for us because we are a Full-Service School" (FPt 1).*

5.2.4.3.7. Discipline

One participant felt that positive discipline is important for an inclusive classroom environment. This was confirmed by all the participants during the discussions:

"*To enforce positive discipline the learners and I decide on the classroom rules together so they know and are a part of the process" (FPt3).*

When learners misbehave, participants call them to order and continue without losing focus on the objectives of the lesson. Participants promote tolerance and mutual respect amongst learners. Participants depended on a reward system to encourage and promote good behaviour and good performance. After every ten stars achieved by the learners they are rewarded with a voucher from the tuckshop. After learners achieved 50 stars, they received a certificate of merit and acknowledgement in the school assembly.

5.2.4.3.8. Language

A few participants felt strongly about the language of learning and teaching:

"The government must resolve the language issue, up until that is sorted out, we will not be able to ensure quality teaching and learning (FPt6)."

"The language issue is a serious one as it does have an impact on teaching and learning. Almost all the learners in the school are Sesotho speaking but they are taught in English, this is what their parents want. Besides we don't have that many Sesotho participants who are able to teach the subject through a medium of Sesotho. Teaching the language and teaching in the language is different" (FPt 5).

5.2.4.3.9. Policies

The issue of policies not giving the participants sufficient clarity about the implementation of inclusive methods of teaching and learning was also emphasized, as evident in the next statement"

(FPt 2) You know I also have a serious problem with the policies, if we look at the much spoken about inclusive education white paper 6, how much of the policy speaks to the actual implementation of inclusive methods of teaching and learning? So even the only inclusive policy does not give us sufficient clarity". All "yes, yes, so true" (FPt 2).

5.2.4.3.10. CAPS completion

The pressure from district offices to complete the curriculum and them seemingly not caring about quality make the participants feel that it results in learners feeling incompetent when they are unable to perform:

".... it might be overwhelming for them as the work must be done, we have CAPS to complete before they can progress to the next grade" (FP t 1).

"On the one hand, it could push them a little more. But on the other hand, they might very soon feel incompetent when they are unable to perform" (FPt 2).

"Not really, as I try to cater for the most learners, which tend to be average. With the full syllabus for grade 3, there is no time to waste, as a matter of fact, to finish the work in time is very difficult as we get pressured from the district office" (FPt 2).

"As I previously mentioned that when the district visits our school all they wish to monitor is how far are we with curriculum coverage in terms of the annual teaching plan (ATP). They don't care about the quality but just the quantity, they don't care that we have so many problems in the class." (FPt 2)

"It's easier for us to refer the learners with barriers than to have to deal with all these issues as the curriculum demands and an inflexible curriculum is a serious challenge." (FPt 3).

"with the pressures of completing the ATP's there is not enough time for re-teaching a concept or any form of remedial work, it is too rigid and doesn't allow us to be flexible" (FPt 1).

5.2.4.3.11. Parents

Parents not showing interest in the education for their learners was identified as a problematic in the support of learners. This is reflected in the following statement:

"When are the parents going to show more interest in the education of their learners? when we have parents' evenings, it's only the parents of the better performing learners who attend, those parents who we really want to see never turn up. How then do we collaboratively partner to support the learner? (FPt 4).

All six participants of the ALS created a "what's app" group to facilitate easy, quick communication and collaboration with parents.

5.3. Interpretation and Discussion

The participants in the ALS generally understood that inclusive education is about accommodating all learners with a diversity of learning needs (cf. 5.2.4.3.), including those

with disabilities, which is affirmed in EWP6 (DoE, 2001) (cf. 5.2.4.3.). However, a common trend that was noted throughout the data collection, even during the implementation and review phase of the inclusive guideline document, was that although the participants believed that inclusion can and must work, there was apprehensiveness about the successful application of an inclusive pedagogy due to the complex education context of South Africa. A specific participant mentioned (and she held this opinion throughout the research process) that all learners who experience barriers to learning should be placed in a separate class so teaching could be differentiated to suit their individual needs (cf. 5.2.4.1.). She felt that it was unjust to pressurise learners experiencing barriers to keep up with the CAPS requirements and Annual Teacher Plans (ATP) which is fixed and does not allow time for re-teaching or remedial support activities. Several researchers (E.g. Bornman & Donohue 2014; Makoelle 2012; Ainscow, Booth & Dyson 2006; Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2003; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) found that although participants often agree with the idea of inclusion, they actually believe that the needs of learners with disabilities are best met in separate classrooms particularly those learners with greater special educational needs and more severe disabilities. Furthermore, according to Bornman and Rose (2010:7), "[a] general lack of support and resources, as well as the prevailing negative attitudes toward disability, all contribute to the general bewilderment in South African schools towards inclusion". This assertion of the one participant was not explicitly affirmed by the other participants. Yet, supporting her misgivings is the continuous mention (even during and after the development and implementation of the guideline document), by all of the participants, that they believe that they have a limited ability to teach inclusively. This belief was amplified by the challenges that they feel contribute to the difficulty of fostering an inclusive classroom and applying an inclusive pedagogy. Insufficient training to deal with learners with various kinds of barriers to learning and disabilities was generally emphasized by the participants as a key challenge (cf.5.2.4.2.2.1.). This could be a

critical component of the concern that participants asserted about their own inability to affect an inclusive pedagogy. Conn (2014) averts that the effective implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach, requires that teachers have the knowledge to identify the barrier experienced by the learner and then also have the skill to employ an approach to meet the identified need. A plethora of other research studies (e.g. Stofile 2008; Makoelle 2012; Pasha & Condy 2016) confirm that South African teachers unceasingly view this as an obstacle to the successful implementation of inclusive education. In addition, Bornman and Donahue (2014) assert that most schools currently lack teachers who have the capacity and knowledge to instruct a diverse body of learners in a single classroom without considerably increasing their workload, which could add to their reluctance towards an inclusive pedagogy.

Other challenges that were pointed out include the lack of adequate support resources, such as learning and teaching materials, support assistants, specialists and structures, which the participants felt is particular needed for a FSS (cf. 5.2.4.1.; 5.2.4.2.; 5.2.4.3.) and in enabling them to apply an inclusive pedagogy. Nel, et al (2016), as well as Makhelemele and Nel (2016), confirm that ineffective and insufficient support services and structures (including the SBST and DBST) are critical contributing factors to teachers' apprehensiveness towards the implementation of inclusive education.

The teacher-learner ratio (cf. 5.2.4.3.6.), discipline (cf. 5.2.4.3.7.) problems and the language of learning and teaching (cf. 5.2.4.3.8.) were also regarded as factors that create obstacles for a fully functional inclusive classroom. According to the participants large numbers in the classroom, where there is a diverse range of learning needs, especially learners who have disabilities, cause difficulties in being able to accommodate learning needs and apply an inclusive pedagogy (cf. 5.2.4.2.). It appears that the participants feel that, aggravating their frustration with large classroom numbers, are also discipline problems and the fact that the education department is not addressing the language problem where learners are mostly

learning in their second language. These challenges have been repeatedly reported in numerous research studies (E.g. Muthukrishna & Schoeman 2010; Donohue & Bornman 2014; Walton, Nel, Muller, & Lebeloane, 2014; Nel & Grosser 2016) (cf. 2.4.1.) and seem to remain on the forefront of the participants' minds when planning and applying an inclusive pedagogy approach in an FSS.

Furthermore, outside of the classroom, poor parent involvement (cf. 5.2.4.3.11.) and the unreliable scholar transport system has been noted by the participants as negatively influencing their capacity to apply an inclusive approach and accommodating all learning needs. Parent involvement is central in the teaching and learning process and research confirms that if this is lacking it could make it very difficult for teachers to accommodate every learner's needs in a diverse and inclusive classroom (Cotton & Wikeland, 1982).

Poor infrastructure of the classrooms, which for example increase noise levels, and inaccessibility for learners with physical disabilities (cf. 5.2.4.1.2.) also add to the many challenges the participants were reporting. Accessibility to and in buildings for learners with disabilities is a fundamental strategy of EWP6 (DoE, 2001) and therefore the participants felt that as they are a FSS it should be urgently addressed by the department. Conversely, the participants tried to address these difficulties by creating a small reading corner which was stocked with age appropriate books, putting up brightly coloured charts, to promote incidental learning and hanging nice curtains to enhance a warm and welcoming classroom environment.

Nevertheless, participants' uncertainty about what an inclusive pedagogy entails as well as their own doubt in their ability to apply such a pedagogy (cf. 5.2.4.2.) they seem to have a relative passable understanding of it. A general feature of their understanding was that it involves accommodating different learning styles (cf. 5.2.4.2.1.) and using a variety of teaching methods (cf. 5.2.4.2.2.) which could be seen as a pedagogical response to individual differences between learners (Florian & Beaton, 2017). Yet, it needs to be noted that their

descriptions could have been influenced by the definitions given in policy documents (i.e. DBE, 2014; DBE, 2010) of curriculum differentiation: "Curriculum differentiation is a key strategy for responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning styles and needs. It involves processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum. It takes into account learners' levels of functioning, interests and backgrounds. Curriculum differentiation can be done at the level of content, teaching methodologies, assessment and learning environment" (DBE, 2014, p.8). Nevertheless, Florian and Beaton (2017), as well as Loreman (2017), maintain that an inclusive pedagogy should avoid the marginalisation that can occur with differentiated strategies intended for individual needs. In the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy different theories of learning, understanding of learners and their needs, as well as their contextual backgrounds and interests should be taken into consideration (Loreman, 2017). This requires a pedagogy that is concerned with learning for all; in other words, the inclusion of all learners (not only most or some) (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Integral features of an inclusive classroom, which are also important for encouraging an inclusive pedagogy, and were mentioned by the participants, are that all learners need to feel welcome (cf. 5.2.4.3.2.) in the classroom and that teachers must have positive interaction (cf. 5.2.4.3.3.) with their learners. As these should be integral features of any nurturing teaching and learning environment it is commendable that the participants explicitly mentioned it. Knoop (2013) affirms that teachers should create an environment where specific positive events are present which will incline learners to learn more and will contribute to the greater good of learning (Knoop, 2011).

Furthermore, they mentioned innovative techniques they employ to make their teaching and the classroom more inclusive. These included using light classical music, maintaining a schedule, creating own work spaces, utilising different coloured pens, highlighter markers or

felt tip pen, as well as coloured chalk and paired reading. Findings of a study on the effect of background music in a classroom environment by White (2007) reflected that implementing background music in the classroom was very effective in improving concentration. Each learner improved their behaviour, became motivated to learn, and enhanced their ability to stay on-task. According to White (2007) the music not only helped eliminate disturbing "white noises", but also created a sustained supportive ambiance. As a result, it reduced the learners' frustration levels enough to perform tasks effectively and efficiently. This kind of strategy, as well as maintaining classroom schedules and creating protected spaces for learners have been found successful in managing challenging behaviour and enabling a safe learning environment to reduce the stress levels of teachers and learners alike and foster meaningful learning (Moen, Sheridan, Schumacher & Cheng, 2019; Sheppard & Levy, 2019; Institute for Education Sciences, 2008). The use of different coloured pens and chalk has value in that it develops pattern recognition, memory and assists with absorbing new information (Simpson, 2018). Simpson asserts that it also visually guides locating, comparing, understanding and recalling information faster. Furthermore, colour affects children's moods and their behaviour positively (Five ways colour can affect learning, n.d.) Since Keith Topping developed paired reading in 1988 it has been recognised as an effective method to develop reading fluency and improve the reading ability of young beginner readers (Villiger, Hauri, Tettenborn, Hartmann, Näpflin, Hugener & Niggli, 2019). It is therefore an appropriate method to use by the participants.

In summary the findings showed that there are many external factors that make the participants apprehensive about inclusive education and the application of an inclusive pedagogy. Central to this is their uncertainty about their own ability to practice an inclusive pedagogy. This is despite their efforts in making their classrooms environments as conducive for learning as possible and trying different teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning needs. The purpose of this study was to develop an inclusive pedagogy guideline with the

participants in the ALS. It was therefore important to reflect on these findings in the group discussions and reflective diaries in order to compile such a guideline document in an attempt to accommodate the challenges, but also create useful and practical strategies. The outcome of these reflections and discussions will be presented in the next chapter as the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

5.4. Conclusion

In chapter 5 the ALS participatory data analysis and discussion were presented. Data from the four data sets were thematically analysed, interpreted and discussed in an integrated manner thematically.

The collaborative PAR process highlighted that they need each other to strengthen their knowledge and skills in the field of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy to respond to the learning needs of all learners. My next chapter will outline the inclusive pedagogy guideline document that was developed, implemented and reviewed by the ALS.

Chapter 6

Inclusive Pedagogy Guideline Document

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will present a suggested guideline document on how to apply an inclusive pedagogy for Foundation Phase teachers in an FSS. This guideline document was developed in a participatory manner, where all the members of the ALS (cf. 4.4.5.2.). were involved from the onset of the empirical research. As these members were teachers in the classroom, they made invaluable contributions and inputs based on their own practices and experiences. Several data collection methods, such as observations by myself as principal researcher, as well as group discussions and reflective diaries were used to determine what is the current educational context influencing the planning and application of an inclusive pedagogy approach for the ALS members of this FSS. The reflective dairies were used to keep note, throughout the research process, of issues that the ALS felt should be addressed in the guidelines. During the research process and thereafter, these notes were compared and discussed, guiding our thoughts on how to compile the guidelines. However, several publications on teaching and learning methods and strategies were also consulted, especially those that the ALS felt bring value to the inclusive classroom. In addition, the participants also conferred within their professional learning committees (PLSs) as well as with their peers, family and friends in the education fraternity to obtain the best possible advice, suggestions and ideas for the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. A key decision that was taken in the ALS is that these guidelines must be easy to follow, practical and relevant to the contextual factors of South Africa.

The general conclusion that was reached in the ALS is that the following encompassing themes should be used as the main headings for the document: Learner-centred classroom(cf. 2.3; 2.3.1; 2.5.1.), discipline (cf. 5.2.4.3.7.), language in the classroom (cf. 2.5.6.5.), inclusive

pedagogy strategies (cf. 2.5.4.1; 3.3.1.), collaboration and team work (cf. 2.5.5; 3.4.), and our future leaders (See figure 6.1.). As principal researcher, I have inserted some theoretical background into the guidelines in order to give scientific substantiation to these themes.

Figure 6. 1.: **An overview of the chapter**

In building a more democratic society and an equitable and quality education system, South Africa has embraced the implementation of inclusive education in which the needs of the learners must be met (Nel et al., 2016). This transition has placed massive pressure on teachers to adapt their instruction, curriculum and the classroom environment to increase learner involvement and minimise the exclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning.

This chapter gives insight into the primary research question which deals with the development of an inclusive pedagogy approach for FSS using action research (see Chapter 1 and 4).

The fundamental aim for the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document was to provide teachers, administrators, parents, district officials and other educationists support on strategies to accommodate learners in an inclusive classroom environment in a simplistic way.

This inclusive pedagogy guideline document therefore has four main aims which are:

i. To share with teachers on how to adapt the classroom and school environment to overcome barriers to learning faced by learners
ii. To describe inclusive pedagogy strategies that teachers can implement to respond to the diverse learning needs of learners
iii. To provide teachers with important facts about various impairments and how to overcome the common learning difficulties that result from them
iv. To suggest techniques for teachers to work collaboratively with the parents, other personnel and social services in the community.

6.2. The learner-centred enabling classroom environment

A range of learning needs exists among learners which require that all these needs must be met if effective learning and development are to be provided and sustained. In recognising this, teaching and learning must be structured and function in such a way that it can accommodate a diversity of learner needs (cf. 2.3; 2.3.1; 2.5.1; 5.2.4.3.). The key to preventing barriers from occurring is the effective monitoring of and meeting the needs of every learner (Florian, 2012). Furthermore, the ALS acknowledged that inclusion is more than just including learners with disabilities (cf. 2.2.; 2.5.1.; 3.3.; 5.2.4.1.1.; 5.2.4.3.1.). Sands and Kozleski (2000) state that inclusion is about accepting the idea that diversity is real and every child is a unique individual in his or her own way. This therefore necessitates the reorganisation of the curriculum, employing a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods with a focus on

a learner-centred pedagogy in order for every learner to maximally benefit from education (Nel, 2018) (cf. 1.5.4.;3.5.; 3.6.). In the cartoon underneath the message is given that each learner needs are to be accommodated in order for him or her to learn successfully. Thus, using the same teaching and assessment strategies for everyone are most probably not going to ensure an inclusive learning environment.

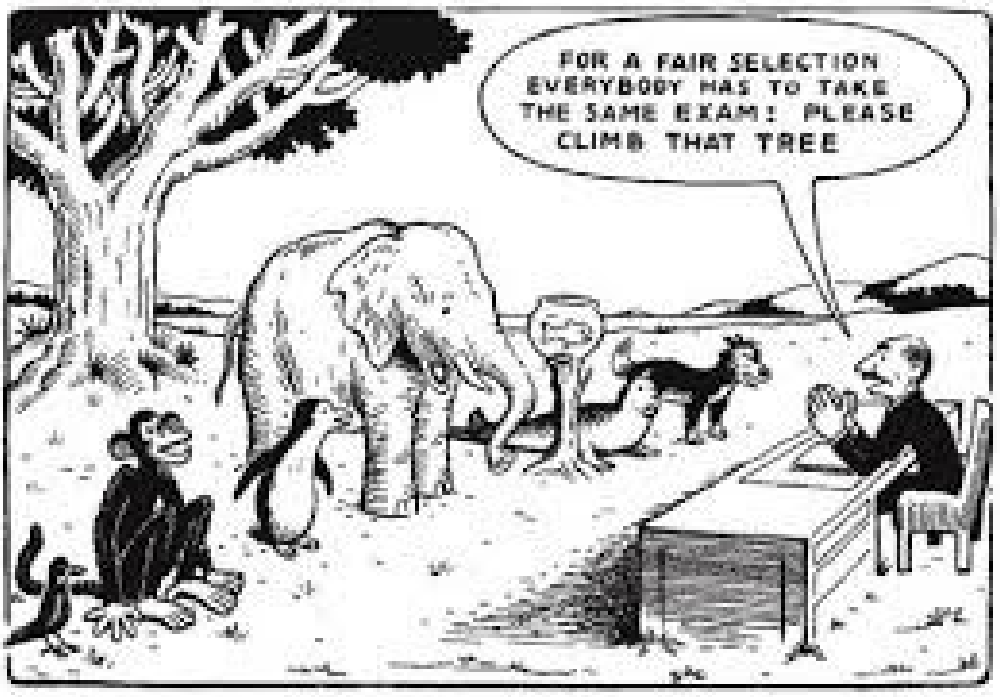

Figure 6. 2. **Diversity in the classroom (Source: google.com)**

It is the responsibility of teachers to support the learning process by creating an enabling learning environment (cf. 3.6; 6.2.). Thus, the following suggestions were made by the participants in the ALS with regard to the classroom environment. In this section the classroom space (cf. 3.4.7.3.), a supportive and safe learning environment, (cf. 5.2.4.3.) as well as incorporating praise and rewards (cf. 6.2.) were identified as important by the ALS.

6.2.1. Classroom space:

Using the space inside and outside of classrooms, can aid or hinder a learner's learning (cf. 5.2.4.3.). Some ideas to attend to this have been adapted from Balson (1982):

- Some learners who experience barriers to learning (such as ADD and ADHD) need to sit close to the teacher and the chalkboard to prevent any distractions and improve focus on the subject matter to be learnt.
- If space allows try to arrange the room so that learners can move freely, especially if some have mobility or visual problems. Likewise, some learners might need extra light while some might have light-sensitive eyes.
- The learners' desks or tables can be arranged in mixed ability or similar ability groupings depending on the task so that they can easily work together and help one another.
- If space permits, try to set aside an area of the classroom so that you can work with certain learners on a one-to-one basis or in small groups for short periods. This area could be screened off, using a moveable screen to reduce the distractions for the child.
- Have a variety of activities ready which learners can use if they have completed their work ahead of others. This may include a small library with worksheets and games.
- Display charts and posters at learners' eye level rather than high up on the walls. Use large writing, pictures and symbols so that these are easily seen and understood by all learners.
- You can also incorporate different textures and real objects for touching. This will especially be helpful to learners with visual difficulties.
- Some learning is better done outside of classrooms. For example, lessons about plants and animals may be done on the school grounds or neighbouring farms if available.
- Let learners have the opportunity to practise in real-life settings, for example, going to buy food at a shop.
- Remember, learners with visual and hearing impairments may find it more difficult to learn if classes are held outdoors due to the many distractions outside the classroom environment for example moving cars or pedestrians on the street, barking dogs etc.

6.2.2. A supportive and safe learning environment:

New learning can be a frightening and an uncertain experience (cf. 2.5.2; 5.2.5.2.) Yet, learning cannot be successful without taking risks. This compels a learning environment where everyone feels encouraged and safe, making it easier to make mistakes and take a risk. If a person feel that they are not allowed to make a mistake, they will be hesitant to risk anything (DBE, 2010).

Did You Know?

"If you have never made a mistake you have never learnt anything."

Source: Unknown

Consequently, in making sure that classrooms are safe and supportive learning environments that help learners to achieve their best, the following questions can be asked:

- How do the learners feel?
- Are they frightened?
- Are they worried?
- Are they excited?
- Are they happy?
- Do they feel secure?

For most learners, feeling is more important than thinking. If they feel that they are loved, they are happy and will try their best. If they feel insecure, they will be anxious to try at all. Providing an environment where the learner is made to feel that making a mistake is part of the learning process prevents anxiety and encourages learning. Similarly labelling a learner experiencing barriers to learning can result in the learner and teacher reducing their expectations and goals for what can be achieved in

the classroom. In addition to lower expectations, the learner may also develop low self-esteem and experience issues with peers as well. Labelling can create a sense of learned helplessness. The learners may feel that since they are labelled, they just cannot do well, thus preventing them from making any attempt to learn at all (Council for Learning Disabilities, 2002).

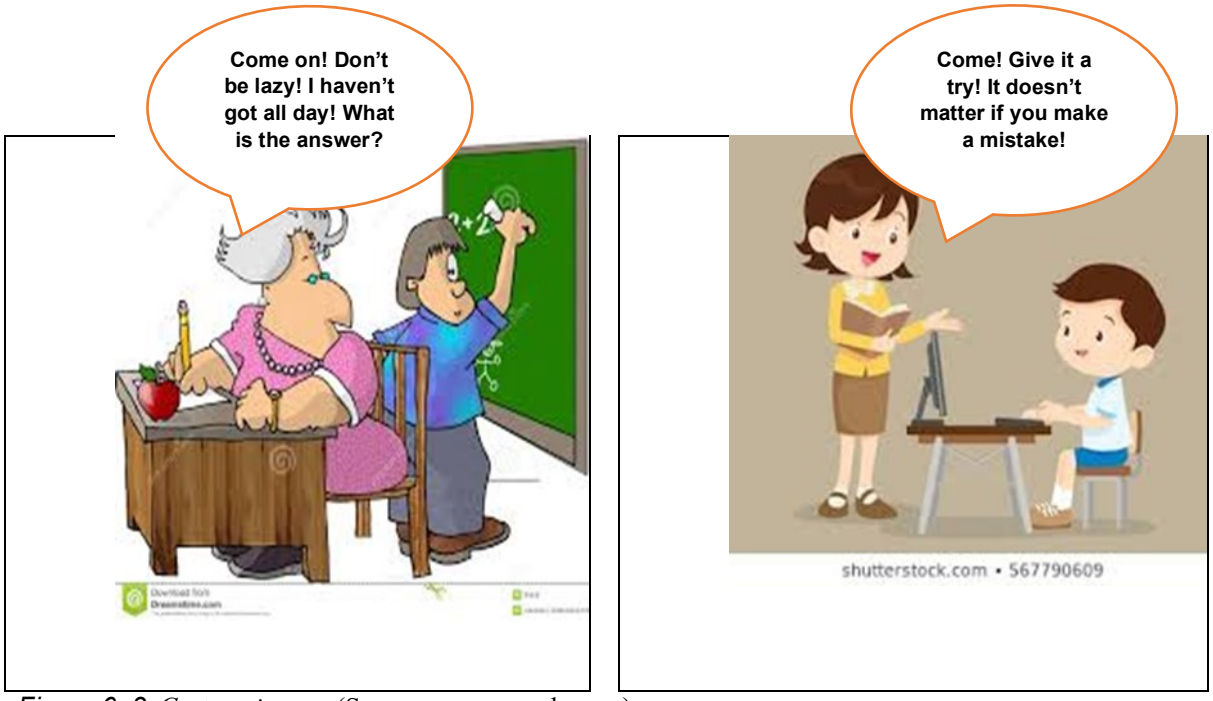

Figure 6. 3. Cartoon images (Source: www.google.com)

These two cartoon images illustrate the conventional approach to teaching and learning versus the inclusive approach. The conventional approach does not build self-confidence or promote risk-taking in an inclusive class. The inclusive approach promotes self-confidence, risk-taking and enthusiasm in an inclusive class, thereby improving self-esteem and possibly minimising barriers to learning.

6.2.3. Incorporating praise and rewards

One of the participants emphasized the importance of praise and rewards: "*When learners are in primary school they do not know how to learn. We have to first teach them how to learn. The use of positive and encouraging comments motivate them further. If we*

praise them and show them how pleased we are about their progress, they will always try to do their best. Encouragement and praise work wonders" (FPt 3).

Praise can encourage learners in many positive ways, like helping them pay more attention to detail and giving them more incentive to try harder towards the achievement of their educational goals. Thus, praise is critical to developing a learner's self-esteem, which can in turn influence academic performance. This can be done through an acknowledgement, a kind word, a pat on the back, or a gentle nudge. Rhett (2011) believes that learners with low self-esteem should be praised about their behaviour and not what is perceived as their ability. This allows for a learner's sense of self to fail without being a failure (Rhett, 2011).

Please see 6.3.1.2 for some strategies on praise and rewards

6.3 Managing discipline in an inclusive classroom environment

Managing discipline is usually a predominant concern for teachers as they see it as central in ensuring that an inclusive classroom is successfully and effectively enacted. (cf. 1.7; 5.2.4; 5.2.4.3.). Thus, the ALS asserted the following. In their experience learners like rules. When learners play, they spend a lot of time talking about the rules of the game before they begin their play. Learners also find it easy to accept that learning at school has its own rules too. The easiest way of talking about the rules of learning is to ask learners these two questions:

i. Why are we here in the class?
ii. What are the rules of the game (learning)?

Learners who experience barriers to learning often experience behavioural problems as well and therefore they need clear concise rules which help them to cope in

class. If a learner worries about failure, he or she finds unexpected changes very stressful. Classroom rules and maintaining schedules (cf. 5.2.4.3.) help them to feel more confident and at ease in the learning environment for the following reasons:

i. They want life to be predictable because their problems with learning often make them feel insecure.
ii. They need help with their relationships because, with a low self-image, they often struggle to make friends with other learners in the class. Learners need to respect each other without labelling or bullying.

The class rules should be clear guidelines for behaviour, and once learners understand how they are expected to behave, they will become more aware of the effects that disruptive behaviour has on the class as a whole. For example, a learner's disorderly conduct in class may result in loss of teaching and learning time, as the teacher may need to constantly call him/her to order.

The most difficult part about making rules is that teachers, must also learn to play the game according to their own class rules. This requires being always firm, fair and consistent. If the rules are changed as and when teachers feel it necessary without consulting or explaining, learners will not believe that rules apply at all times. Furthermore, rules work best if the whole school applies them. If the whole school is involved in managing classes in a similar way, it becomes possible to develop a systematic approach to dealing with behavioural problems.

Two examples of the classroom rules observed in this research were 'talk to your classmates only when doing an activity that requires you to do so' and 'always be polite and respectful'. Getting learners to collectively develop the classroom rules facilitates easy compliance by all, as it creates a sense of ownership.

It must be remembered that behaviour problems can be as a result of learners' struggling to concentrate. This can be as a result of being hungry, an unhealthy diet, or a child having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

In the next section some ideas are given around strategies to manage discipline.

6.3.1 Strategies to manage discipline in an inclusive classroom environment

Balson (1982) developed some strategies which the teacher participants in the ALS have found to be valuable for their classrooms. Adaptations were made by them to make it more applicable to their environment.

6.3.1.1 Stop!!

In every classroom a method is needed that tells the learners to stop what they are doing, to settle down and to listen to the teacher. Many teachers use a special signal that tells learners to stop what they are doing and pay attention to the teacher. Some examples of the signal method include the following:

i. The teacher raises her hand without speaking. When learners notice the signal, they do the same.
ii. The teacher claps her hands three times and repeats the rhythm until the learners respond to the signal.
iii. The teacher beats a drum, sing a song or rhyme to signal to the learners that it is time to listen to the teacher.

It is important that the teacher does not tell the learners to be attentive but rather allow them to respond to the signal. This teaches them vigilance and self-control.

In the case of learners with concentration problems, which could result in behaviour problems, the following strategies can be followed:

i. Seat the learner in the front of the class.

ii. Discuss with the learner where would be the best place for studying or taking an assessment.

iii. Allow working with partners or in small groups. If they want to ask questions, when uncertain about instructions or tasks they can verify this with peers.

iv. Place visual aids for learning around the classroom e.g. pictures, graphs, puzzles.

v. Many learners with ADD/ADHD are particularly sensitive to additives, flavourants, colourants and salicylates. Teachers and parents should be mindful of this as this can increase concentration and behaviour problems.

vi. Increase spacing between desks so learners could be comfortable in their personal work space.

vii. Help reduce distractibility by:

   a. Arranging desks to face the same direction

   b. Having no brightly coloured posters or displays in the classroom

   c. Lighting should be efficient. For example, florescent bulbs may be distracting.

   d. Timing devices can be used to remind learners to get back on track; for example, an alarm watch

   e. Provide a firm, stable class schedule and routine.

   f. Be a firm but friendly and patient teacher.

6.3.1.2 Praise and rewards

Most learners respond very well to praise and small rewards for good behaviour. Some successful reward systems include:

Star charts: The teacher places stars on the class lists pasted on the wall. The learners can earn rewards for good behaviour, as well as academic progress.

Beans in a jar: The teacher puts an empty jar on her desk. Anyone in the class can be rewarded with a bean which is then put into the jar. When the jar is full, the entire class is rewarded with a treat. This helps the learners to work together as a team and support one another to do well.

Badges: Learners love to wear badges. Some teachers make their own badges and award learners for behaviour they want to encourage; for example, 'Worker of the week', 'Helping hands', Kind heart', etc.

Time out: If learners are disruptive in class, many teachers use the 'time out' method. The purpose of time out is to remove learners from a situation in which they cannot control themselves. They are placed in an area where they will receive no attention from their friends. This gives the learners a chance to calm down and it teaches them that they must control themselves if they want to be part of a group.

Daily report: The purpose of the daily report is to help learners reflect on their bad behaviour patterns and to give them a daily chance to improve. This must be done in a positive interactive manner. Parents are also informed about this in order to request their continuous assistance in explaining to their children why behaviour is important.

The whole-school approach: The ALS regards this as essential to effectively manage difficult behaviour. This obliges the school to have clear rules informing all learners how they are expected to behave. This can be included in the school's learner code of conduct which all learners are expected to acknowledge and sign. Attached to these rules and code of conduct there must also be procedures to be followed in case of indiscretions. The procedures could involve parent interviews or referral to a psychologist or the school's guidance counsellor. As a result, the parents, the teacher, the principal and the learner share the responsibility for the management of behaviour at school.

6.4 Language in the classroom

A key concern that was identified in the literature review (cf. 2.5.6.5.) and by the ALS (cf. 5.2.4.3; 5.2.4.4.) was the learners' language ability. It was therefore decided by the ALS to address this specifically in the guideline document.

Proficiency in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is very important for learning (Motitswe & Taole, 2016) (cf.2.5.6.5; 5.2.4.3.8.) Teachers rely on language to bring new knowledge to the learners. It is for this reason that learners who have a language barrier will have difficulty to learn. However, in most South African classrooms it is a challenge for teachers to meet the language needs of learners in such a way that they can use language effectively to think and acquire new knowledge (Motitswe & Taole, 2016) (cf. 2.5.6.5.). Underneath are some of the general language problems identified by the ALS, as well as a few strategies on how to deal with this.

6.4.1. General language problems in the classroom

Learners who do not understand spoken instructions:

i. Get confused about order and forget important key words
ii. Do not have good comprehension skills
iii. Do not know the meaning of words used in the instruction
iv. Do not understand the language used by the teacher

a. Learners who do not have a good vocabulary:

i. Do not know many adjectives or verbs
ii. Are slow in learning or using new words
iii. Are not confident in the use of language
iv. Are not fluent readers and do not have a good comprehension ability?

6.4.2. Supporting learners who have language barriers

Teachers can support learners who cannot understand spoken instructions by:

i. Speaking at an acceptable pace which is easy to follow, as well as clearly, when giving instructions

ii. Checking on instructions by asking learners to retell the given instructions

iii. Making sure that learners know the meaning of key words in an instruction for example, colour in, draw, circle, cut out etc.

iv. Asking learners in the class to repeat the instructions to their partners

More guidelines and strategies to support learners who struggle with the LoLT:

v. Care must be taken to make assumptions about the level of understanding of a learner who has language barriers. The teacher should regularly check this through interaction and questioning.

vi. Create a scrapbook with the learners where new words are organised into themes or categories. For example, exciting words to describe clothes. The learners then cut out pictures, paste them into the scrapbooks and add labels to the new words. Allow learners to interact with the teacher and their classroom peers about the pictures.

vii. Use visual aids (e.g. pictures and real objects) to explain new vocabulary and concepts. Facial expressions (be careful to overdo it and then it diminishes meaning) also can be employed to enhance understanding.

viii. Play language games; for example, Charades, Scrabble and Pictionary. The value of language games is that it enables learners to absorb language in a stress-free environment (DBE, 2018).

ix. Encourage translations by peer learners. As peers' function on more or less the same level it has been found that this supports better understanding of unclear vocabulary and concepts (DBE, 2010).

x. Introduce new vocabulary and concepts at the beginning of a new lesson or theme. This must be incorporated across the curriculum in all subjects. Special attention should be given to abstract concepts, e.g. measure, higher, bigger than, summarise, etc.

xi. When explaining concepts or giving instructions, using shorter sentences with pauses between sentences can facilitate better understanding.

xii. When learners do not seem to understand it also helps to rephrase what has been said and not simply repeat it.

xiii. Learners who have language barriers often experience more difficulty with adjectives, pronouns and prepositions. It is therefore advisable to rather start with the concrete (demonstrating using objects and actions), moving to semi-abstract (pictures) and then to abstract (writing).

xiv. Gently provide learners with the correct language when errors are made, for example:

Learner: "I eated meat at home."

Teacher: "Yes, you ate meat at home."

However, this strategy should be used with caution, and should not lead learners to feel like a failure or that the content of what they are saying is not important to the teacher.

An expansion of learners' language can also be employed, for example:

Learner: "My mommy is wearing a dress."

Teacher: "Yes. Mommy is wearing a pretty dress today."

xv. Focus on *what* the learner is telling you (the message) and not always on *how* the language is used (e.g. the pronunciation).

xvi. Plenty of opportunity should be given to speak the language, informally as well as formally.

xvii. Involving the parents is vital to establish the background behind the learner's language barriers. Details such as home language, age at which additional languages were introduced, learner's exposure to these languages including television and radio, etc. are crucial to know.

xviii. Furthermore, share ideas with parents on how they can stimulate and enrich language at home. E.g. conversations, reading and telling stories, and going on excursions and talking about it

6.5. Teaching strategies for the learner-centred classroom

The classroom is a dynamic environment, bringing together learners from different backgrounds and with various abilities and personalities. Therefore, being an effective teacher, requires the implementation of a variety of creative and innovative inclusive teaching strategies (cf. 3.3; 4.3.1.) to meet all learners' individual needs. It is important to remember that there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

Underneath are various suggestions:

6.5.1 Visualisation

Visual and practical learning experiences, help learners to understand how their schooling applies in the real world. For this interactive whiteboard (if available), pictures, photos, and videos can be used. However, if there is any possibility for learners to conduct experiments, or to view and experience the real-life objects or situation by doing field trips and excursions and local field trips it is strongly recommended. This can ensure that learners are actively and interactively involved in their own learning.

6.5.2 Cooperative learning

Create groups (two or more) of learners of mixed abilities to work together. In these groups co-operative learning is encouraged where learners can verbally express their ideas and respond to other learners. Thus, communication and critical thinking skills which are vital throughout life are enhanced (cf. 3.4.2.). A few techniques which can be effectively used in cooperative learning can include solving mathematical puzzles, conducting scientific experiments and acting out short drama sketches. However, there needs to be clear criteria for these activities to ensure that all learners benefit from this kind of strategy. A code of conduct can also be developed together with the learners.

6.5.3 Inquiry-based instruction

Inquiry-based instruction involve posing thought-provoking questions which inspire learners to think for themselves and consequently become more independent learners. Conversely learners also need to be stimulated and taught how to ask questions and investigate their ideas. This helps improve their problem-solving skills and can enthuse a deeper understanding of academic concepts, both of which are important life skills (Chiapetta & Adams, 2004).

Inquiries can be science-based or maths-based such as “Why does my shadow change size?” or “Is the sum of two odd numbers always an even number?” However, they can also be subjective; where the teacher should encourage learners to express their unique views when asking questions such as “Do poems have to rhyme?” or “Should all learners wear uniforms?”

6.5.4 Technology in the classroom

Incorporating technology into teaching is an innovative way to engage learners actively, especially as digital media is an integral part of young people in the 21st century.

Interactive whiteboards or mobile devices can be used to display images and videos, which could help learners to visualise new academic concepts. More interactive learning can occur, for example learners can instantly research their ideas which, in turn, develops autonomy.

Mobile devices such as iPads and/or tablets can be used in the classroom for learners to record results, take photos/videos or simply as a behaviour management technique through the provision of expanded opportunities for learners who have completed sooner than the rest of the class.

6.5.5 Motivating learners

The participants in the ALS declared that it is sometimes difficult to keep up learners' energy and willingness to learn. The following strategies are suggested in an attempt to motivate learners and keep them motivated.

6.5.5.1 Keep the lessons fun and varied

Employing various short and fun activities for example, role playing, dramatisation, puppetry or show and tell activities to sustain the interest of the learners make lessons enjoyable.

6.5.5.2 Make time to know the learners

Teachers need to explore what are the interests and characters of the learners in their class. This will help discover the strengths and weaknesses of every learner and getting to really know them. For example, some learners might enjoy role-playing activities while other might prefer learning in a more systematic way. Other learners are good in mathematics, but struggle with art; some are good readers, but battle with mathematics.

It is also important to know and understand learners' home and living circumstances. For example, if they live in an informal settlement, with no electricity or water and little food, traveling a long distance to school it will definitely influence his ability to learn successfully. In order for these learners not to become labelled as "slow" learners it is essential to make accommodations when they arrive late, is hungry and tired (Nel, 2018).

The following reflective questions can be asked in order to verify if teachers know and understand their learners.

Interests

i. Are learners engaged in the lessons and activities?

ii. Are they showing interest in a new topic or area of study?

iii. Are they sharing their interests with others?

Characteristics

i. What are their preferred learning styles (e.g., whole-class teaching or

    a. pair work)?

ii. What are their responses to the materials?

iii. What are their responses to the difficulty level of instruction?

iv. What are their responses to the pacing of instruction?

v. What are their responses to the environment? (UNESCO, 2004)

Progress with the curriculum

i. Are learners learning what they have been taught?

ii. Are they at the right entry point to grasp the content worked on in the

    a. classroom?

iii. Are they practising and performing as expected?

iv. Are they applying the facts, concepts and/or skills being learned?

6.5.5.3 Make activities achievable for learners

The ALS report that they have found that in many instances the size of the task (e.g. too many criteria, limited time for completion, or too many activities within the task) overwhelms learners and that it is not that they do not know how to do it. It is, therefore, suggested to break tasks up into smaller, more achievable activities. The successful achievement of the smaller tasks motivates the learners further and then boosts their self-esteem.

6.5.6 Differentiation

Curriculum differentiation relate specifically to instruction or content of a curriculum which deals with the adaptation, modification and any adjustment needed to (i) the learning, teaching and assessment environment; (ii) learning, teaching and assessment techniques; (iii) learning, teaching and assessment support material that enhances a learner's performance or allows at least partial participation in a learning activity; and (iv) the structure and number of

learning programmes (Motitswe & Taole, 2016) (cf. 2.5.4; 3.4.7; 3.4.7.2.).. A key focus of differentiation is to ensure that no one gets left behind by assigning classroom activities according to learners' unique learning needs. This implies that individuals, who for example complete tasks successfully faster are challenged with more enhanced tasks and those who are struggling with tasks receive the appropriate support (cf. 2.5.4.1.).

Baseline assessment (cf. 2.5.3.3.2.) (cf. 6.4.9.2.) tasks are an important entry point to enable teachers to establish the current level of performance of all learners, as well as determining their weaknesses and strengths. This will provide important data for the teacher to ascertain how each lesson can be differentiated and adapted if and where needed to accommodate all learners in the class. This will also inform all support planning and developmental assessment.

Important note:

A key feature of differentiation within an inclusive pedagogy is not to label and stereotype learners into ability cohorts. Thus, teaching, learning and assessment strategies must be planned and organised in such a way that all learners have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities pitched on different difficulty levels.

It also requires continuous reflection on how appropriate these strategies and activities are for learners as they progress.

Following are suggestions on how to employ differentiation within inclusive pedagogy. These have been adapted from different sources (Human, Langson & Soper, 2015; Kurgan, Soper & Westraad, 2014; James & Tuck, 2011 ; Paizee, Saadien-Raad, & Siegruhn, 2002; Gous & Mfazwe, 2002).

i. Learners come from different backgrounds and may respond differently to a specific situation for example a learner not making eye contact when spoken to may be regarded as being disrespectful, however on the contrary it is being respectful in some cultures. It is important for the teachers to be aware and respect this type of behaviour.

ii. Using worksheets that vary in complexity.

iii. Use a mixture of high- and low-interest tasks for example most learners prefer to complete artistic activities with ease, the teachers could combine artist activities together with narrative activities to complete an assessment task.

iv. Setting up a range of work stations around the classroom which contain an assortment of tasks for learners to choose from.

v. More time can be provided for the execution of a task if needed.

vi. Learners can communicate using SA Sign Language, braille, assistive devices or any other communication method. However, this requires training.

vii. Assessment tasks can be broken into smaller components.

viii. Time allocation to tasks and activities should be flexible and adapted to the needs of the individual learner.

ix. Verify before, during and after lessons if learners understood key concepts

x. The level of abstract content can be reduced to first ensure that learners have obtained an understanding of all the fundamental concepts.

xi. Set a substitute task of similar scope. The teacher needs to plan ahead for diversity in the class. Tasks are to be differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. It is important for all learners to experience success. Goals should therefore be achievable and realistic for all learners.

xii. A more challenging or complex text can be selected for learners who need expanded opportunities.

xiii. Shorten the tasks. If a learner has mastered the concept set fewer examples and move on to more challenging concepts.

xiv. Select texts and books that are culture-sensitive.

xv. Provide reading material that will interest learners and that is not too linguistically difficult to read.

xvi. Allow the learner to undertake a task at a later date if the learner is ill or is suffering from trauma or other.

xvii. The teacher could provide guidelines for the learners when setting a project or assignment for example the task could be broken down into smaller pieces to provide clear direction on how to progressively lay out the work. The mark allocation for each section could also be given to the learners to show how much of information is required to complete the task.

xviii. Implement graphic organisers. This approach helps learners to organise their thinking and writing process to enhance learning. They build on maps and diagrams, whilst making connections to understand the subject content.

xix. Demonstrate, model and prompt the expected response. The teacher could use verbal or written cues to direct learners towards the expected outcomes.

xx. When doing reading, choose texts that have illustrations

xxi. Use a variety of types of texts that link and expand concepts. For example, the use of mind maps and spider diagrams simplifies and dismantles complex concepts.

xxii. Reteach the content if necessary, but also determine if a different teaching strategy is maybe needed.

xxiii. Use supplementary materials. For example, when teaching learners to tell the time, the teacher and the learners could make a clock using craft paper, activity worksheets could used to draw the hands to tell the time.

xxiv. Provide for wordlists. For example, during story writing, the teachers could develop a word list after discussing the topic in detail. The learners use the wordlist as a guide for sentence construction.

xxv. Provide individual one on one support.

xxvi. Consider the format in which the task is presented, e.g. the complexity of graphs, diagrams, tables, illustrations, cartoons, etc. A range of strategies can be followed to make these more accessible. Use elements such as:

a. Simplify pictures or diagrams or show differently without compromising the complexity of the question. For example, a graph should always be accompanied by a write up to interpreted the graph. By actively exploring and analysing data learners develop data literacy. This makes learning more meaningful. Data literacy allows the learner to ask and answer meaningful questions by collecting, analysing and making sense of the data.

b. Pictures or diagrams can be replaced by written descriptions and/or a real item or model

c. Remove unnecessary pictures or diagrams that could clutter text

d. Reduce amount of information

xxvii. Encourage learners to read for meaning as well as for personal satisfaction.

xxviii. Provide opportunities for shared learning to encourage speaking and listening. Learners learn more from engaging with each other in group activities. It enhances their level of confidence. It also improves their social and interpersonal skills. They learn to listen and respect other points of view and wait to speak in turns.

xxix. Allow for knowledge to be constructed through group discussions. Group discussions improve concentration as learners are constructively engaged in debates or deliberations regarding the given topic.

xxx. Pace or scaffold the activities. Over loading learners with too many activities at the same time could often confuse the learners and compromise the quality of work. A year plan could be developed by the teacher plotting all projects and assignment evenly throughout the year allocating sufficient time between each activity. This could be given to the learners at the beginning of the year so learners and parents are aware of the timeframes.

xxxi. Allow for extra time to complete the task if needed.

xxxii. Keep observation portfolios for certain learners who need additional support to monitor progress or to implement an alternate approach if progress is not achieved.

xxxiii. Learners can be allowed to do tasks orally where reading is difficult for them. For example, learners could answer questions to a comprehension passage orally, after the passage is read to them.

xxxiv. Alternative activities and assessment tasks can be given without compromising standards for example learners could be tasked to present their projects through the medium of a poster.

xxxv. Provide tasks which require short answers.

xxxvi. Allow learners to use a computer or assistive devices if they have poor fine motor and writing skills such as an iPad.

xxxvii. Include organisational and study skills such as colour coding and assignment books as part of the curriculum. The use of colour coding in learning cannot be overemphasised, for example learners could be asked to highlight the verbs in yellow, the nouns in green, the adjectives in pink and the pronouns in blue in a given

written passage. Assignment books can be related to a personal planner of diary book. This is also an important means of communication between parents/ caregivers and the teacher.

xxxviii. Use visual references for auditory instruction such as writing instructions on a blackboard and giving verbal instructions.

xxxix. If reading is poor, provide additional reading time and use visual clues in the form of pictures. Furthermore, select texts with fewer words on a page and lessen the amount of reading required.

xl. If oral expression is poor, pick topics that are easier for learners to talk about, but also provide learners the opportunity to do alternative tasks.

xli. If written language is poor, non-written forms of reports can be allowed such as displays, oral projects, or using computers. Large amounts of written work can be lessened and multiple-choice or fill-in questions can be used for assessment.

xlii. If learners are poor in Mathematics, allow the use of a calculator as well as graph paper to help them space numbers. Additional time can be given to complete tasks. It is also important to provide immediate feedback via modelling of the correct computational procedure.

6.5.7. Specific strategies for reading and mathematics difficulties

Members of the ALS felt strongly that some general strategies on how to accommodate reading and mathematics' difficulties should be included in the guideline document. The reason given for this is that the ability to read well and do mathematics are fundamental skills necessary for academic progress after the Foundation Phase. Thus, in the next section some common reading and mathematics errors and ideas for interventions will be provided.

6.5.7.1. Common reading errors and intervention strategies

Table 6. 1. Common reading errors and interventions (adapted from Assessment Training for Foundation Phase Teachers, DBE, 2009).

Common errors made by learners	**Intervention strategies**
Omission Leaves out one or two sounds when reading Leaves out a word or part of a word	• Call the learner's attention to the error made without making him feel inferior or incapable. • Teach scanning – allow the learner to go through the entire text rapidly, looking for an important word or key phrase, when this is located the learner can proceed at a slower more thorough pace. • Teach sound-letter relationships and then blending of sounds e.g. initially single sounds are taught c-a-t, and then blends are taught 'at' giving us words such as c –at, m-at, f-at, s-at, r-at, b-at etc.
Addition and insertion Adds a sound in the middle of the word or at the end of the word	• Draw attention to the insertion • Teach the difficult words before the learner is given the passage to read
Substitution Replaces a word with another word	through the use of flash cards for words that present difficulty. The teacher prepares flashcards with all the difficult words in the reading passage. This is

	taught in advance. When the reading passage is eventually given to the learner, he/she is already familiar with the difficult words, this improves his/her fluency and comprehension ability. • Revise the sounds that cause difficulty
Repetition Reads a word repeatedly or goes back to try it once again	• Use easier and interesting material • Develop an adequate sight vocabulary e.g. words that are used every day and can be recognised without having to decode e.g. the, in, at, are, there, was etc.
Mispronunciation Pronounces words incorrectly, especially when influenced by mother tongue	• Use a taped reading lesson • Use easier and interesting reading material • Develop an adequate sight vocabulary
Word by word reading Reading word by word without fluency	• Give the learner practise in group reading. This will allow the learner to hear how his/her peers do it • Tape the learner's reading and allow the learner to listen to it • Teach the learner to read in phrases

Reversal Reverses a sound or word when reading e.g., ‘b’ for ‘d’ or ‘on’ for ‘no’	• Ask the learner to sound out the first letter of the word • Use diagrams to help show the learner the correct spelling. Use the chalkboard together with verbal cues as the letter is being formed, include small little arrows showing the starting point and direction of the letter. • Use sight word cards for the words that are often reversed; e.g., ‘saw/was’, ‘bed/deb’

6.5.7.2. Additional strategies to support reading barriers (Grabe, 2009)

i. Use visual clues such as pictures to help learners better comprehend what they are reading

ii. Do paired reading with another learner. A more fluent reader could be paired with a less fluent reader, they could read to each other in a paired group.

iii. The learner could also listen to a tape-recording and follow in the reader, where after he/she reads the text him/herself

iv. Print can be enlarged for learners with visual impairments.

v. A contrasting background can be used for print. For example, yellow will support some learners experiencing a visual impairment, but it also assists in better focusing on the printed text for learner who struggle to concentrate.

vi. Discuss pictures and illustrations beforehand that are in the text. This helps with comprehension.

vii. Talk about the text with the learner after reading to make sure he/she has understood it.

viii. Employ group or peer discussions about the text.

ix. Reading assignments can be shortened according to the objective of the reading lesson. Once the teacher is satisfied that the objective has been achieved the learner can be encouraged to move on to other challenging exercises as part of expanded opportunities.

x. Summarise the main points of the story before reading it and discuss it afterwards with learners.

xi. Rewrite text for learners in shorter and less complicated sentences.

6.5.7.3. Mathematics

Numbers and mathematics play a crucial role in our lives. The ability to count, measure, estimate and be spatially aware enable us to carry out everyday tasks like shopping, cooking and doing many other tasks that require mathematical ability. Thus, teachers need to use every available opportunity to bring numbers into the daily routine in the classroom.

6.5.7.3.1. Some common barriers in Mathematics as identified by the participants themselves

The following barriers can be experienced by learners in Mathematics

i. Poor number concept

ii. Poor understanding of the language of mathematics

iii. Not mastering the skill of counting

iv. Poor memory skills

v. Number problems – cannot isolate the problem and then solve it

vi. Struggle with word sums due to poor reading and comprehension competence

vii. A negative attitude towards numbers which leads to anxiety

viii. An inability to express what problems are being experienced

ix. Poor reading skills and comprehension skills. Learners have not acquired adequate mathematical language and therefore experience challenges with the interpretation of the mathematical problem.

x. Overlooks detail for example number operations (+, -, ÷, ×)

xi. Experiences a lack of self-confidence in being able to do mathematics

xii. Poor sense of direction and spatial orientation

xiii. Confusion with charts, long division or spider sums

6.5.7.3.2. Common mathematical errors and intervention strategies

In this section mathematical errors that commonly occur and how to intervene will be dealt with.

Table 6. 2. Common mathematical errors and interventions (adapted from Assessment Training for Foundation Phase Teachers, DBE, 2009)

Mathematical Errors	Intervention Strategies
Reversal Reversing the direction of numbers (E for 3, or 6 for 9)	i. Highlight 6 and 9 in different colours ii. Put these numbers on the wall iii. Use number cards stating the number in words and digits. The learner learns the number name together with

	the digit and the quantity it represents. iv. Practise the correct number formation through tracing over the number or join the dots activity v. Use visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and touch methods when providing instructions. Cut out the number on a sandpaper, allow the learners to touch feel and trace out the number whilst using verbal prompts to indicate direction of movement.
Sign confusion Confusion of the + sign with x	i. Use different colours for different signs ii. Teach learners to STOP, THINK and use the correct sign iii. Narrate a story to distinguish the different signs
Carrying and borrowing Learner forgets to carry over to the 10's column or 100's column, and also forgets to borrow from the tens and hundreds when a big number cannot be taken away from a small number	i. Make use of bundles of sticks i.e. bundle the sticks in packs of 10, any stick less than 10 cannot be in a bundle and therefore becomes the units ii. Make use of bottle tops until the learner grasps the concept. The

	learner is given a magnetic board with H T U all marked out and places the bottle caps in the different columns as the number sentence states iii. Make use of place value cards with the number values in H T U. These could be are activity work cards as well.
Horizontal addition with double figures (unable to do cross calculations)	For example: 24 + 32 i. Colour code numbers in the ones and the tens place ii. Allow the learner to master the addition of single digits first
Careless mistakes Too much focus on completion of the task rather than accuracy of the task	i. Self-checking involves the learners rechecking the work to ensure errors are corrected ii. Ask the learner to verbalise the sum as he/she is reading it
Lack of mathematical literacy A lack of numeracy and pre-numeracy skills	i. Teach vocabulary and maths language

	ii. Use relevant familiar names for example greater than, less than, is equal to etc. iii. Use a variety of concrete apparatus to achieve pre-numeracy skills i.e. counting blocks, abacus, unifix cubes

6.5.7.3.3. Additional strategies to support mathematical barriers (DBE, 2011).

i. In Mathematics activity-based learning is essential. Practical experience and examples are a critical element in making sure that learners understand and apply Mathematics. Using real objects, pictures, graphic or concrete objects, etc. for a longer period in order to ascertain if learners grasp mathematical concepts are effective tools. Furthermore, moving into abstract concepts too soon may hinder the understanding of concepts. (DBE, 2011).

ii. Practising memory training techniques, especially for numbers, is very important e.g. Number songs to remember timetables or bonds.

iii. The use of resources such as balances, counters and different tools helps learners in seeing and understanding the relationships between numbers. A calculator should be allowed to verify calculations once a learner has understood the basic concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

iv. Learners experiencing mathematical difficulties may also require more time for mastering concepts and understanding the terminology, executing tasks, and acquiring mathematical thinking for assessment activities. The number of activities to be completed can be lessened, but the thinking process used to do the calculation or to solve the problem should not be compromised.

v. A step-by-step formal approach is recommended. For example, first teach count sequences, then cardinality (how many), then count on, and then do addition before the learner will understand commutative property and place value.

6.6 Collaboration

The ultimate goal of teacher collaboration is to provide pedagogical support for maximising learner achievement (cf. 2.5.5.). Effective collaboration allows teachers to take ownership of solving problems as teachers support each other with challenges they experience (Fourie, 2018). It is through this type of transdisciplinary collaboration that enabled the ALS to develop the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

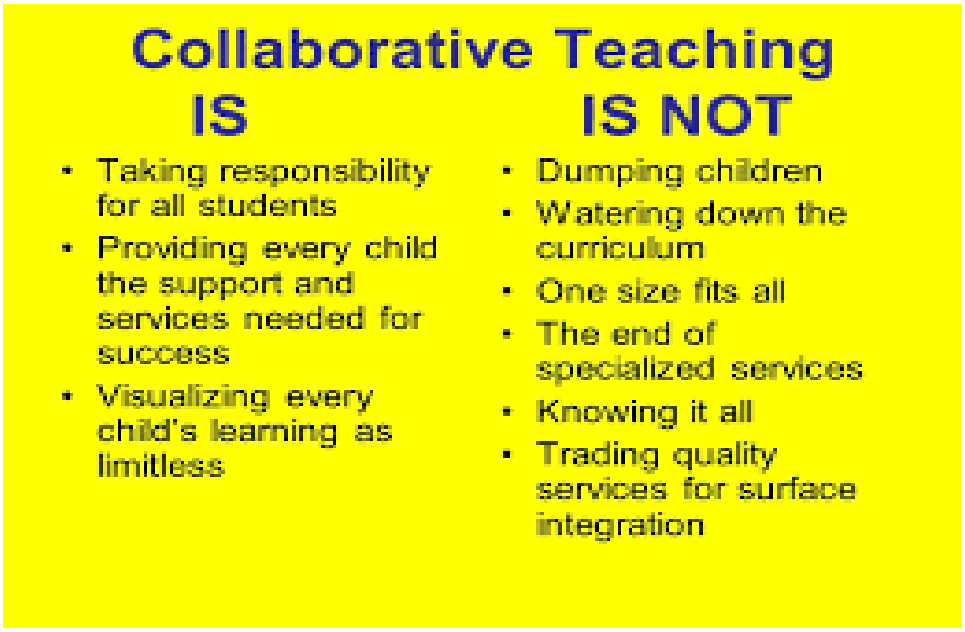

Table 6. 3. **Summary of what collaborative teaching is and is not (Source: google.com)**

The members of the ALS asserted that teaching can be exhausting and emotionally draining. This can be as a result of difficult learner behaviour or balancing work and home life (or both). Consequently, they acknowledge that stress is part of the job, and therefore other teachers can be invaluable sources of support. Loop (2017) affirms that when teachers support one another they tend to develop relationships based on trust and empathy. This can result in

forming lasting professional and mentorship relationships. Furthermore, when teachers feel supported, they can better expand that same support to their learners (Loop, 2017).

Effective and continuous collaboration between teachers is therefore an important strategy to enact team work. During collaboration, the interests, backgrounds and strengths of each teacher should be acknowledged and utilised in a meaningful manner. When teachers work in a team, tasks can be delegates according to the personality and expertise of each team member. A greater sense of trust and accountability can result from this, allowing teachers to feel confident about contributing their most dynamic skills toward implementing an inclusive pedagogy (Loop, 2017).

As most of the participants indicated that they are still uncertain about their ability to apply an inclusive pedagogy (cf. 3.3; 5.2.4.2.2.1.). Collaboration in a team is a critical mechanism to assist teachers in capacitating and enabling themselves. In addition, collaboration with other educational and health professionals can develop and enhance new knowledge and skills. However, this requires that enough time is made available to plan, implement, review and reflect with each other on mistakes, gaps and successes. As learners' learning needs develop and change this is a crucial strategy.

The figure below summarised the benefits of collaboration:

Figure 6. 4. **Benefits of collaboration (Source: google.com)**

6.7. The creation of future leaders in the classroom

An integral feature of an inclusive education approach is that educational practices must not only provide all learners with equal learning opportunities, but also enable them for enact an inclusive attitude and practices outside of the classroom (Paterson, 2017) (cf.2.5.2.). Thus, the ALS felt that capacitating learners to become leaders could be a good strategy.

Put leaders in charge: In an inclusive classroom all learners should be given leadership opportunities, from leading the discussion of the lesson to handing out papers. It benefits both the peer as well as the peer leader, as the leader develops leadership abilities and the peer learns to respect and work within the group roles.

Show leadership and good behaviour: Talk to learners about why you expect certain behaviour or how you organise your class as its leader to enable and enact inclusion. Share your understanding and ideas of this kind of leadership by pointing out demands, responsibilities and shared leadership. Add specific examples of leadership responsibilities in order to encourage inclusive attitudes and practices.

Provide some good examples: Use role models as examples for good or bad leadership with regard to the inclusion or exclusion of people. The learners can select these role models themselves.

Get them invested in improving the school culture: Find ways to get learners to change the school culture to a more inclusive one by being leaders. For example, how to stop bullying, raise environmental awareness or promote understanding of learners from other cultures. This can be done in small way. For example, inviting a lonely learner to join a group at lunch.

Give them space: When learners are given leadership, opportunities allow them to struggle and even fail but always guide and support them (Adapted from DBE, 2016).

6.8 Review of pilot implementation

The primary purpose of reviewing the implementation of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document was to evaluate whether or not we as an ALS have met our target of developing a document that would serve many purposes namely; to advocate for the implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach, to provide a practical simplistic method of implementation, to move towards a more inclusive environment, and more importantly to provide support to all stakeholders (teachers, principals, health professionals, education officials, learners and parents). In this phase the ALS piloted the implementation of the guideline making recommendations to further strengthen the document up until they were satisfied. The ALS were of the opinion that participation at all stages of the research study had been an emancipating process. Through this process the skills and knowledge developed has empowered and capacitated the ALS to confidently implement an inclusive pedagogy with ease. Some comments were as follows:

"What we gained through this level of participation, we would have not got through being in a workshop or seminar" (FPt 3).

"I for one loved this hands-on approach, I loved the fact that I could try out the recommendations and give my opinion about it, and my opinion mattered." (FPt 6).

"I feel more confident about advocating for an inclusive pedagogy approach, as I know that the document has been piloted by the very people that developed it making amendments as we went along." (FPt 4).

Participants have indicated that being involved in the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document has contributed more towards their level of professional development and lifelong learning than being in a workshop for a day where there is no opportunity to experience, learn, apply, collaborate and reflect.

"I prefer to be part of more research studies of this nature to continue my personal development. This has proved that teachers learn best from teachers." (FPt 4).

Although participants felt that the guideline did address most of the areas of need in an FSS, a few more could have been included. For example, the language barrier that is experienced by learners who are not competent in any of the 12 official languages of South Africa. Secondly the challenge of overage learners, these learners not only experience barriers to learning but social barriers as well. Most times they become the bullies due to rejection and becoming social misfits.

Participants indicated that they hoped to have had more time to pilot the implementation of the guideline to suggest more alternatives to learning barriers in the classroom. Future research could possibly involve monitoring the impact of the guideline document on learner achievement.

6.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, the members of the ALS presented the inclusive pedagogy guideline document that was compiled, piloted and reviewed by them. The ALS was adamant that the language for the guideline was to be of a level that can be easily understood by first and second language English speakers. They expressed that previous documents had made the implementation of inclusive pedagogy difficult due to the level of the language used in the documents.

The next chapter entails the final summation of the research study.

Chapter 7

Findings, Implications and Conclusion of the Study

7.1. Introduction

Chapter 7 attempts to answer the primary research question and sub-questions through analysing the collected data and the emerging themes.

I tacitly address the question with regards to the contribution this study makes to the scientifically knowledge on inclusion and inclusive pedagogy in a Full-Service School. Firstly. I analyse what the study has achieved in relation to the research questions; secondly, I contextualise the study comparatively within the existing knowledge on inclusive pedagogy, I briefly articulate the implications of the findings for inclusion and inclusive pedagogy in the Foundation Phase of a Full-Service School. In conclusion I discuss the limitations of the study and the areas for further research.

7.2. Aim of the Study

The principal aim of the study (cf, chapter 1) was to answer the research question:

How can Foundation Phase teachers be assisted to provide for, and respond to the diversity of learning needs in a Full-Service School through an inclusive pedagogical approach, thus ensuring that all learners achieve their optimal potential?

7.3. Overview of the Research

Chapter 1 presents the overall theoretical orientation by sketching the background to the study, and presenting the problem statement. The context and aims of the research are discussed through an introduction of the research design and the justification of the research

approach. An overview of the research site is presented and the chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 contains a review of research literature as well as the international developments in inclusive education. This chapter further entails the background to the inclusive nature of the current education policies of South Africa from a theoretical and legislative perspective.

Chapter 3 discusses the conceptualisation of inclusive pedagogy. This chapter also provides some descriptions of the various strategies and practices within an inclusive pedagogy approach, for example differentiated teaching and multilevel teaching.

Chapter 4 presents the research methodology and outlines the instruments used in the research process. This is done by outlining the epistemological stance, the nature, and process in participatory action research (PAR). The methods of data collection, management and analysis are articulated. This chapter concludes by briefly explaining how triangulation/crystallisation and trustworthiness were maintained.

Chapter 5 discussed participatory action research as a process and presents data according to the different stages. The four stages being planning, observation. action and reflection are discussed in detail, thus displaying how data was gathered and interpreted within each stage. This chapter also articulates the findings of the interpretative analysis of the data collected throughout the four PAR stages.

Chapter 6 includes the inclusive pedagogy guideline document.

Chapter 7 presents a summary of the study, the findings, the implications and limitations of the study and the areas for further study. The chapter ends by stating the final conclusion.

7.4. Findings of the study

In this section I attempt to deconstruct and interpret the findings to answer the research questions and draw my final conclusions from that.

Teachers knowledge

Regarding the teacher's conceptualisation of the concept's inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy in a South African context the following was revealed;

Table 7. 1. A summary of the key findings:

Research question 1: What is inclusive education?			
Key Findings	**Quotes of Participants**	**Reference to Empirical Data**	**Reference to literature**
In conceptualising inclusive education teachers believed that it should address the needs of all children irrespective of age, race, disability, level of competence or personal problems.	*"Inclusive education is where every learner gets to be involved, no matter age, race, level of competence or personal problems" (FPt 1).* *"Inclusive education means that all learners have a right to education on their level of performance" (FPt 4).*	cf. 4.2.3.1.1	Education WP6, (2001), Mkhuma, Maseko, & Tlale, 2014; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Makoelle & Malindi,2015; Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht, & Nel, 2016 and Nel, Muller, & Rheeders,2011)
The above quotation highlights the significance of the participation of learners in the teaching and learning	*"it is working with children with different kinds of disabilities" (FPt 5).*	cf. 4.2.3.1.1.	

process as an important characteristic of inclusive education.			
It is interesting to note that most participants made use of words for example “every”, and “all,” which clearly emphasised the view of accessibility to education in responding to learner diversity (DBE, 1997). From the responses it is apparent that participants perceived inclusive education as education that embraces all children, condemning	*“By inclusive education we know that we have to cater for the needs of every individual learner on their level or ability” (FPt 2).* While (FPt 3) indicated *“I am for it, but my training is not sufficient enough to deal with all these barriers; intellectual, social and behavioural. It too much for one person to handle, we*	cf. 4.2.3.1.1 cf. 4.2.3.2.	

segregation based on race, disability, level of competence or personal problems. The idea of one education system for all children is viewed more positively. Participants believed that although they were positive with including learners with barriers, they are not capacitated to deal with the complex diversities that currently exist in the classroom.	*don't have class assistants as in the States. The contextual factors are too complex and it is getting progressively worse each year. It's easier for us to refer the learners with barriers than to have to deal with all these issue issues. It's all too overwhelming".*		
It seems evident through these responses that the participants are overwhelmed by the diverse challenges they are faced with on a daily basis. Similarly, as maintained by other researchers (Mkhuma, Maseko, & Tlale, 2014; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Makoelle & Malindi,2015; Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht, & Nel, 2016;Nel, Muller, & Rheeders, 2011) many teachers report that the numerous challenges that they are faced with on a daily basis has an adverse impact of the implementation of inclusive education and an inclusive pedagogy approach.			

Research question 2: What is your understanding of inclusive pedagogy?			
Key Findings	**Quotes of Participants**	**Reference to Empirical Data**	**Reference to literature**
This participants allude to the ability of the teaching situation to accommodate the different learning styles and levels. Bringing attention to the phrase 'learner based' and 'learner paced" which was one of the key principles of outcomes-based education embracing accommodation and adaptation to learning and teaching. The general consensus could be interpreted as, through a process of collaboration and continued reflection	*"I understand that inclusive pedagogy is a method of teaching that incorporates dynamic practices and learning styles, multicultural content and varied means of assessment with the goal of promoting learner academic success, as well as social, cultural and physical well-being" (FPt 1).* *"The way to teach learners with their different learning styles and levels where there are equal learning opportunities for all learners" (FPt 4).*	cf. 4.2.3.1. 2.	Black-Hawkins & Florian, 2012; Florian (2010); (Rouse & Florian, 2012) Makoelle (2013)

the best inclusive pedagogy approach could be explored to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners. Being a part of this PAR has modelled the process of continued reflection which participants had indicated they were not entirely aware of previously.	*"it aims to teach and include all learners in the education process. Learners should not be excluded in the knowledge content being taught because of their learning difficulties." (FPt 5).* *"Inclusive Pedagogy is to accommodate everybody no matter their ability, in practice is this happening?" (FP 3).* *" its very tough, I am not too clear but I think it is something like the teaching methodology, people must understand that we as teachers have too much to deal with on a daily basis"* *"Who listens to us?"*		

From the responses it appears that many participants felt inclusive pedagogy had to do with accommodation of learning styles using varied teaching methodologies. Whilst others experienced difficulty trying to decipher the difference between inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy, most used key phrases like *"accommodate all learners learning needs, each child had strengths and weaknesses, using different learning styles, different assessment methods"*. From these responses we could gather that almost all six participants had a reasonably good conceptualisation of inclusive pedagogy. Constant references were made during the informal discussions regarding the many challenges inhibiting the implementation of inclusive pedagogy and the functioning of a Full-Service School as envisaged in EWP 6. Implementing inclusive pedagogy extends what is ordinarily available so that it is accessible to all learners in a FSS (Florian, 2010).

Research question 3: What inclusive teaching pedagogy is currently employed in the Foundation Phase of a Full-service School?

Key Findings	**Quotes of Participants**	**Reference to Empirical Data**	**Reference to literature**
According to the above extracts, there were those who believed that	*"Yes, we include everyone in their own way. I accommodate learners with barriers by*	cf. 4.2.3.1.5. cf. 4.2.3.1.5.	DBE (2010)

their teaching was minimally inclusive, whilst others felt that more could be done to improve their implementation of inclusive pedagogy. The participants felt that they were doing all they could, given the limited resources and the numerous challenges that they had to deal with. For example, the language of learning and teaching is not the first language of the child, the disadvantaged backgrounds, lack of parental support, inaccessibility to health professionals (psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapist) etc.	*having them seated in the front of the classroom and giving them constant additional support as I teach. Making sure they understand the content being taught" (FPt 1).* *"Not really, as I try to cater for the most learners, which tend to be average. With the full syllabus for grade 3, there is no time to waste, as a matter of fact, to finish the work in time is very difficult as we get pressured from the district office" (FPt 2).* *"Yes, but I think it (implementation of inclusive pedagogy) can improve. I use real objects, counters, pictures, puppets, radio,*		(Rouse & Florian, 2012)

	CD to accommodate different learners" (FPt 3). *"yes, I incorporate diversity into my lessons. Made my classroom appropriate for an inclusive education environment. I modified course materials, but you must remember al lot of the resources we buy using our personal money. It is not provided by the department (provided supportive aids)" (FPt 6).*		
Up until recently teachers mainly adopted the medical approach to barriers to learning and this was reflected by almost all of the participants. Since the school achieved FSS status the participants took it upon themselves to learn more about the functioning and expectations of an FSS. Participants made reference to the surmounting challenges currently experienced by them, the critical challenge being the issue of language in all schools. The lack of clarity in the national language policy of the country contributes to the barriers to teaching and learning in the classroom.			

Often teachers are not adequately competent to teach in the language offered by the school. Finding a common language that all learners are comfortable with in a classroom with many dialects poses a challenge as well.

Data in response to the following two questions was obtained from cycle 2 and 3 rep

Question 4: What is your understanding of an inclusive environment?			
Key Findings	**Quotes of Participants**	**Reference to Empirical Data**	**Reference to literature**
Some participants felt that the school or the classroom is the inclusive environment. One of the basic understandings was that an inclusive environment had to be a class or school that was accommodative of all learners.	*"Correct support programmes correct resources, diverse learning and teaching materials and most important of all decent learner to teacher ratio is what would make a good inclusive teaching and learning environment" (FPt 4).*	cf. 4.2.3.1.3. cf. 4.2.3.1.3.	Education (WP 6) (DoE, 2001) DBE (2014) DBE (2012)

	"It would include a variety of activities addressing visual, auditory and textile learners. Provision should be made for strong, average and weak learners. Learners with disabilities both minor and more severe should be included in all activities." (FPt 2). "*Various strategies and approaches to teaching (e.g. A scribe), learning aids to assist learners with barriers (eg. A posture pillow), having specialists on site (e.g. Speech therapists, occupational therapist, physio-therapists, psychologists) and having a class assistant that is trained in special needs. This would be the ideal inclusive learning environment which is not restricted*		

	to the classroom only but the entire school community). (FPt 6).		
This meant that an inclusive environment could be defined as an environment where all learners are welcome and where learners feel safe and accepted regardless of their diverse backgrounds.	*"If we are to include more learners with disabilities, classroom numbers must be lower than 30. Teachers need to give individual attention to all learners. Only then will it work well" (FPt 4).* *"The various structures within the Full-Service School environment is also important, like if I can say ……the SBST is not really functional to be honest with you….. even the DBST is non-functional……..the district doesn't help us much". (FPt 5).*	cf. 4.2.3.1.3. cf. 4.2.3.1.3.	DBE (2010) Makoelle (2012)

Generally, most participants seem to have a good understanding of what an FSS should be. They indicated that it should be one that has only between 20 to 25 learners in a class to ensure that all his/her learning needs could be taken care of with ease. The appointments of teacher assistants would be an "added bonus" as reflected by the teachers. The physiological needs of the learners also have to be addressed i.e. correct diet, appropriate clothing, transport to and from school, supportive parents or caregivers and a good home structure. Participants noted that appropriate and relevant resources had a direct bearing to the success of FSS. Further to this was the preparedness of the teachers which was also noted as a critical aspect.

The next two questions formed part of the reflection and are interrelated and are therefore cluster to prevent repetition.

Research question 5: Reflection What could be included in an inclusive pedagogy guideline document for the Foundation Phase of a Full-Service School? What kind of support would teachers require to implement inclusive pedagogics?			
Key Findings	Quotes of Participants	**Reference to Empirical Data**	**Reference to literature**
Although the school is classified as an FSS it is not treated as such by the Department of Education. The school does not receive an added budget allocation as they should as an FSS. Resources are limited and scarce. The play equipment is not well maintained and could a risk to the learners.	*"We are a Full -Service School so we should be better resourced than other schools, unfortunately this is not the case. Our school is classified as a quintile five school (advantaged school) which is incorrect, we actually need to be a quintile two school as all our learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds and most do not pay school fees. This impacts on the school budget as we don't have the available funds to buy all*	Cf. 4.2.5.2.	DBE (2010) Makoelle (2012) Conway (2014) Sharma, Loreman & Forlin (2012) Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel, Tlale (2014)

There are no assistive devices to address the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Most importantly there are no ramps for wheelchair access. The toilets cannot accommodate wheelchairs. It is through the initiative of the teachers that the school has achieved great strides in attempting to transform the school into a functional FSS.	*the necessary resources to implement inclusive education. But that does stop us, quite often we use our personal money to buy some resources." (FPt 5)*		
Participants welcomed the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document to provide the necessary support to	*"I make sure that my learners read well from most sources, for example they read newspaper articles, magazines, library books including their class readers. This*	Cf. 4.2.5.2.	

accommodate for diverse barriers to learning	*exposes them to all styles of reading material. If they leave my class being well literate and numerate given all the challenges then I have done my job." (FPt 3)*		
	"In my class among other I have six learners who have ADHD and two learners who have mild autism and one learner with FAS and I still have not received any workshop on how to manage so many disabilities altogether in one class. I want to give them the best possible standard of education because these learners do not receive the necessary attention from their parents so they look at me for that motherly love and affection.	Cf. 4.2.5.2.	

	There is so many roles that I have to play." *(FPt 4)*		
The development of the guideline document was reported to be a valuable experience for all members of the ALS. Participants' knowledge was used to develop a better theoretical understanding of inclusive pedagogy. In this way as stated by Florian and Spratt (2013) the work is dependent on a "dialogic cycle of knowledge creation" by which all members of the ALS challenge the thinking and practices of each other by drawing on and sharing their varied types of knowledge. The participants provided various strategies (cf. chapter 5) as new tried and reviewed inclusive pedagogy approaches that could be implemented in addressing the learning needs of all learners.			

7.5. Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study could be difficult to transfer to other schools, as the research was limited to just one FSS. Schools in the Gauteng province may have similar but not identical contexts, which makes it difficult to generalise the findings.

Although this school was identified by the Gauteng Department of Education as a Full-Service School it does not function as it should, as envisaged in Education WP 6. Teachers however, are making progress in the implementation of inclusive pedagogy through their own innovative and collaborative efforts. The initial aim of the study was to select an FSS school that is being largely supported in all areas (budget, human resources, physical resources and in-service training) by the Gauteng Department of Education to elicit the best inclusive pedagogy approaches. However, there was a serious lack of adequate resources.

A limitation of the inclusive pedagogy guideline was the restricted time frame for piloting the document. Participants were of the opinion that more time could have led to further examples of good practices and how to deal with different barriers to learning. The limited time frame was as a result of the many activities that the school participates in, which led to a limited negotiated timeframe for the study.

7.6. Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the study I attempt to emphasise some recommendations towards the improvement of the state of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy in a Full-Service School. First, to make teaching and learning more inclusive there needs to be a paradigm shift from the current special needs embedded approach to one that enhances the creativity of teachers and focus on the teaching of all learners.

The research provided an opportunity to obtain a broad description of teachers' perspectives of inclusive pedagogy in a Full-Service School, although the limited nature of the research means that the findings of this research cannot be generalised.

In addition, the importance of the role of parents in the education of learners is a well-documented factor. Whatever elaborate programmes are conceived by the school will be in vain if they are not supported by parents. Parent cooperation has to be solicited because as the natural educators of their children, they sometimes have information about their children which the schools do not necessarily have. The schools will need this type of information if they are to intervene effectively with these learners. Parents are the first socialization agents for children and their efforts have to be recognized and built upon by the schools. Thus, it is necessary that a strong relationship be sustained between the school and parents, and that parents be enlightened about the important role they can play in the education of their children. Parental choice and parental participation are mandated by the South African Schools Act and parents should be encouraged to embrace this responsibility.

It is also imperative, in light of the fact that the majority of learners receive instruction in a language different from their home language, that appropriate language enrichment programmes be put in place to enable learners to access the curriculum despite their language difficulties.

Furthermore, attention needs to be paid to the (in-service and pre-service) training of teachers with special emphasis on inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy, the identification of learning barriers and the designing of appropriate intervention strategies.

More importantly, the DBE should reconsider the employment of teacher assistants with inclusive education knowledge at all FSS's. This will relieve the teachers and ensure that learners receive adequate and appropriate support.

I concur with Makoelle (2012) that while the political intentions are clear in policy, there needs to be a major shift from policy to practice. A practical school-based, teacher driven course of action as in this study could lay the foundation for developing inclusive practices which may lead to the capacitation of teachers enabling them to implement an inclusive pedagogy with confidence.

There needs to be a more rigorous move towards all schools becoming inclusive centres of learning to ensure that all learners have access to the type of support they need to address the barriers to learning.

Working in collaboration has found to be a pivotal role in probing practice; therefore, a professional learning community (PLC) should be created where teachers can collaborate and reflect on their teaching practices to generate innovative inclusive pedagogy.

Schools experiencing the same contextual factors could be clustered together to brainstorm, share ideas and resources through research teams. This could be driven by teachers themselves to initiate change through conducting research.

Since the Department of Basic Education seem to be slow in providing the necessary capacitation in inclusion and inclusive pedagogy, teachers, parents and learners could be proactive in self-development and skill development through research and networking with various organisation that can render cost effective support. The use of ALS in PAR as exhibited in this study could enhance the study of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy through the process of continued reflection.

A revision of Education WP 6 and the guidelines DBE (2010) is necessary. While Education WP 6 makes provision for the implementation of inclusion in schools, it is silent on how such practices can be developed. Teachers are expected to implement the guidelines

provided by the DBE (2010) but little thought was given to the varied contexts of schools. In addition, Education WP 6 does not elucidate issues of budget to meet the needs of the learners in Full-Service Schools and Resource Centres. As a result, provision is still not made in national budgets to accommodate for learner diversity. In this study the teacher in grade three has to carry the wheel chair into the mobile classroom due to a lack of ramps.

In light of the above I urge teachers, parents, policy makers and communities to probe the current inclusive practices in Full-Service Schools to develop more effective inclusive practices within their context moving away from a 'one size fit all' approach currently evident in the guidelines of DBE (2010) to a more learner centred approach towards disability.

7.7. Possible contribution

All participants expressed their satisfaction at being part of the ALS. Reflecting on one's teaching methodologies is a critical skill that participants were encouraged to develop in order to reflect on strengths and weaknesses. The participants also asserted that the PAR was an excellent way to motivate them to try new inclusive pedagogy strategies. All members of the ALS reported that the process of reflection was a very useful strategy which assisted them to critically reflect on the practices in the classroom to the ultimate benefit of the learners.

They indicated that this is the first time they have been invited to participate at such an active level:

"I am so proud to be a part of this process; I didn't know I had it in me. It also gave me an opportunity to introspect at my teaching in the classroom. I am not sure if I am doing justice to these learners. "FPt 3).

"Having to note down all my insecurities, thoughts and feelings was an excellent way to get rid of baggage that I had been sitting with for all my years of teaching, as participants

no one listens, as others feel that you are always complaining. At times it's just too much for me to handle. I even though of changing my profession." (FPt 6).

"I especially loved the interactive and consultative manner this study was conducted, it showed me that my opinions do matter, and that I am capable of making a difference in the process." (FPt 4).

"Another aspect the PAR process highlighted is that collaboration and working as a team gives us strength to want to persevere and achieve more with our learners, the focus group discussions sessions helped me regain my confidence as I sometimes doubted myself." (FPt 2).

"I must be honest in stating that I was a little intimidated by having someone in my class observe me in action, but then I told myself 'Kerry' (not her real name) lets be objective here, it's all for a good purpose, if we can help these learners – why not!" (FPt 1).

In reflecting on their practices as implementers of inclusive pedagogy many participants initially felt they were not reaching all learners which made them feel unsuccessful. They often felt overwhelmed by all the demands at various levels namely the head office, the district and the school. Most participants felt that parents are becoming less involved in the education of the learners as parents aspire for an improved standard of living, job security becomes the priority over the involvement of their child's education.

"I know I am trying to implement inclusive pedagogy; however, I feel I still can do much more than I am doing right now. This process that you are putting me through is developing me as an individual, it is forcing me to look at myself and the approached I use with my learners." (FPt 1).

This quote highlights the fact that participants feel overwhelmed with all the support needs that learners need. Through the PAR approach participants became more aware of the

diverse barrier's learners were experiencing. It increased their understanding of those barriers and support mechanisms were investigated to respond to and overcome those barriers. This aspect was discussed at length during the focus group discussions session. Moreover, participants had referred to various barriers that inhibited their implementation of inclusive pedagogy in their reflection.

This process of reflection was the first for all members of the ALS. They asserted that it added value towards their professional and self-development. More importantly it provided in-depth qualitative data in response to the research questions of the study.

Without a capacity to evaluate assumptions, participants will be more inclined to remain 'prisoners of (their) programs' (Argyris & Schön, 1976, cited in Day, 1985, p. 137) and, as a result, their professional effectiveness in circumstances which inevitably change over time will be decreased. Secondly, in engaging in reflective practice is a means of helping individuals towards greater self-knowledge and self-challenge which is a useful way of achieving personal development (Johnston and Badley, 1996). When teaching is reflective, judgements become skilled and thoughtful, and practice is enriched and improved (Burbank, 2003).

In this study participants not only reflected on what happened in the class but they reflected on their feelings, thoughts and emotions. This can be of benefit for deep understanding and meaningful context-bound data generation (Neethling, 2015). This information is not generally obtained in an interview or questionnaire as participants are merely responding to questions posed by the researcher. In this study participants were encouraged to utilise the diary to record any curriculum issues that they need clarity or support in.

The study of an inclusive pedagogy in an FSS could contribute to knowledge, policy and practice in the following manner; this study could create further awareness of inclusive pedagogies in a Full-Service School, which is a fairly new concept. The PAR approach which extends research to intervention, doing research via intervention and intervention via research,

facilitates significant change within the inclusive classroom environment. The research knowledge gained could contribute to the international literature on an inclusive teaching pedagogy in an FSS. The practical knowledge acquired facilitated the development of an inclusive pedagogy guideline document for all teachers in the field of inclusive education.

7.8. Conclusion

It is clearly evident from the study that there is room for more research pertaining to inclusive education and inclusive pedagogy. The reflection of practice is an influential tool with which beliefs about practices of inclusion and inclusive pedagogy could be challenged and strengthened. The PAR methodology allowed the voices of the teachers to be heard as teachers as participants were actively involved in all stages of the research process and progressively in the development of the inclusive pedagogy guideline document. This study has uncovered a few tensions and inconsistencies between the ideal policy and theoretical state of inclusive education in Full-Service Schools and the reality of the classroom, with the result that future research should be aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practice. It is also evident from the study that exclusionist, suppressive policies and subjective practices can make way for constructivist and humane approaches to inclusive educational practices (Makoelle, 2013). The study further highlights that there is currently little guidance in the literature regarding the actual implementation of an inclusive pedagogy approach in the practical setting of an FSS classroom through an action research approach. It is hoped that this inclusive pedagogy guideline document will provide the necessary support needed teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners in an FSS. It is also hoped that teachers continue the process of reflection in their quest to find the most appropriate inclusive pedagogy.

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Annexures

Annexure A - Consent Form – Teachers

Developing an inclusive pedagogy approach for Full-Service Schools: An Action Research Approach

Instruction to the participants (co-researchers): Please print, write your name and sign in the space provided before you participate in the study. Once the study is concluded a debriefing meeting will be held to clarify any misconceptions you may have pertaining to the study.

_____

I _____, voluntarily consent to participating in this study. I have been fully informed about my role and responsibilities in the study. I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time and my anonymity will be protected.

_____

Signature of Participant (co-researcher)

_____

Date

Appendix B – Letter to Participants

Usha Ojageer Cell: 0835647914

Enquiries: usha.ojageer@gmail.com

Re: Participation in a PhD study – March 2017 to September 2017

Dear Colleague

I am currently registered for a PhD study at the North West University for academic years 2016 to 2018 (see attached registration documents).

The research title is: Developing an inclusive pedagogy approach for Full-Service Schools: An Action Research Approach

I wish to take my research field work from March to September 2017 at your school and humbly request your support and participation for the success of the study.

If you agree to be a participant in the study you will be required to do the following:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Be observed in your classroom environment
- Be prepared to share your observation experiences of your colleagues
- Be willing to reflect on your practice and share your experiences with the researcher and your colleagues
- Jointly with the researcher identify evidence-based practices that effective in promoting inclusive pedagogics
- Contribute towards the development of an inclusive pedagogic guideline programme

Kindly note that you will be informed of the details of the research study prior to you taking part which will include the ethical issues such as the confidentiality of information and the consent form that will indicate your right to stop participating at any time you deem necessary.

Permission will be obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education and such permission will be made known to you. Kindly complete all the necessary documentation and return to the researcher.

Yours Sincerely

Usha Ojageer

15/04/2016

Appendix C – Consent of Principal

The Principal

Randvaal Full-Service School

Request for Research Study

I, Mr/Mrs _____ (name and surname) principal of Randvaal Full-Service School hereby permit Usha Ojageer to conduct her research study at this school. I further permit the teachers of the Foundation Phase to voluntary participate in the research study. I am informed that the teachers may with draw at any given time during the course of the research study. I am also aware that the biographical information will remain private and confidential.

_____

Signature of Principal

_____

Date

Annexure D – Baseline Questionnaire

Please answer all questions as best as you can. Should you need extra paper, kindly request.

1. What does inclusive education mean to you?

2. What does inclusive pedagogy mean to you?

3. What inclusive pedagogy approach is currently being employed in a FSS?

4. What is your understanding of an inclusive environment?

5. i) What could be included in an inclusive pedagogy guideline document of a FSS?

ii) What kind of support would teachers need to implement an inclusive pedagogy approach?

- **Participants managed the time effectively:** All lessons commenced and concluded on time. Learners settled quickly and began without any interruptions. All lessons were presented per the lesson plans.

- ***The Inclusive Classroom Environment***

- **All observed teachers created a positive, suitable environment and climate for learning and teaching**

    - **Learning space**: Of the six classes visited, two classes were a little congested and did not allow for free movement of learners as the class roll was between 43 to 49 learners. These two classes were mobile units which was built for thirty learners, however there are currently 44 learners. These mobile units do not have ramps for wheelchair access. Participants arranged the furniture in a manner that creates an inviting learning environment for teaching and learning. The light and ventilation in all classes are good and the classrooms are clean. Participants have text and pictorial rich posters and charts displayed to enhance incidental learning. All six classes observed had reading corners with all forms of reading material e.g. magazines, story books, newspaper and readers.

    - **Learner Involvement**: Learners were actively involved and this contributed to knowledge creation and acquisition of skills. Lessons were carefully structured to allow meaningful engagement with learners who were enthusiastic to respond to questions posed in a meaningful manner. Learners felt confident enough to communicate their ideas openly and were encouraged to participate constructively and think creatively and ask clarity questions during the class presentation. Four of the six participants made use of soft classical music at certain parts of the day to calm the learners and improve concentration.

- **Discipline**: Generally, all participants preferred if learners were a little more self-disciplined and showed more respect for teachers, peers and school furniture. Discipline was expressed as a challenge. Three participants outlined workspace boundaries for learners with attention deficit disorder who tend to walk around the class unnecessarily. This approach helps to maintain control as the learner is not expected to move outside those boundaries unless permission is granted by the teacher. This approach helps with the management of discipline in an overcrowded classroom.

  Learners listen attentively to the instructions given by the participants. When learners misbehave, participants call them to order and continue without losing focus on the objectives of the lesson. Participants promote tolerance and mutual respect amongst learners.

  Participants depended on a reward system to encourage and promote good behaviour and good performance. After every ten stars achieved by the learners they are rewarded with a voucher from the tuckshop. After learners achieved 50 stars, they received a certificate of merit in assembly. All six participants created a "what's app" group to facilitate easy, quick communication and collaboration with parents.

  All participants maintained a strict schedule, the classroom timetable was pasted on the wall, learners knew the subject that was next and the time allocation for each subject. The participants reminded learners of the time for each activity.

- **Diversity:** Participants promote a democratic learning atmosphere in the classrooms. Learners are treated equally without any form of discrimination. Participants are sensitive to cultural, religious and gender diversity. No discriminatory practices were observed. Participants interact well with the learners, know all their names and share a good rapport with them. Learners who experience barriers in the subject were assisted by participants

during the lesson. Learners experiencing barriers to learning were seated in one section of the classroom for "more one on one attention" (as indicated by the participants).

- ***Presentation of Lesson***

- **Observed teachers had adequate knowledge of curriculum and learning programme**

  - **Knowledge of Subject**: All the participants observed demonstrated adequate knowledge of the subject/topic. Participants are appropriately qualified and have experience in teaching the observed subjects. Participants' and learners' language usage is commensurate to that of the subject for example, English at a Home Language level, etc.

  - **Skills**: Most of the lessons observed involved participants using learner-centred techniques which provides for the acquisition of thinking and application skills and promoted creative or critical thinking and problem solving. Participants allowed meaningful interaction in their classrooms. All participants made satisfactory use of the question and answer method in teaching. The resources used during lessons were prepared in advance and were ready for use and properly introduced at relevant intervals.

  - **Goal Setting:** Participants made an effort to set realistic goals to achieve curriculum outcomes. The observed lessons were logically sequenced. Participants used their Lesson Plans as a guide towards achieving the goals and objectives of the lessons. It was clearly evident that all participants planned and worked together. Learners in grade 1, 2 and 3 did the same activities in the same subjects. Worksheets were shared.

  - **Involvement of subjects:** Participants participate in cluster meetings as well as workshops, organized by the District Office or other service providers, which are related to the Subject. Participants determine the success

of their lessons by using the question and answer method or through assessment of learners' work. In all lessons observed, learners knew what was expected of them

- **Teachers demonstrated competence in lesson planning preparation, presentation and management of learning programme**

  - **Planning/Preparation**: Participants have the necessary two levels of planning viz. Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) which are aligned to the CAPS policy document as well as the Lesson Plan. The Lesson Plans in participants' files have sufficient details to teach per the requirements of the ATP.

  - **Presentation:** The presentations of the lessons were logical and coherent. Observed lessons were presented with enthusiasm and covered different topics in the various grades in compliance with CAPS.

  -

Grade	Subject	Method of Instruction	Resources
1 Maths	Addition and Subtraction e.g. 5 + 4 = ☐ 10 – 5 – 2 = ☐	Use of concrete objects to reinforce the concept of addition. Differentiated group work.	Abacus, unifix cubes, counting sticks, worksheet
English	Storytelling - "The Leaping Frog" Comprehension worksheet	Learners were seated on the carpet where the participants told them the story of the leaping frog. Discussion of story Worksheet comprehension activity	A large storybook with bold pictures

2 Maths	Fractions Half, Quarter, Thirds, Fifths	The participants used fruit to show fractions.	Cut out cards showing fractions, real fruit
English	Paired Reading lesson Phonics “th” sound The participant then called upon each group to pair and read to each other while observing the learners.	Participant went through the “th” phonic sound and discussed words with the sound. Learners were required to build sentences with the phonic words.	Pictures, charts, worksheet, readers
3 Maths	Story sums Mum baked 24 cup cakes. Tom took 16 cup cakes to schools. How many cupcakes does Mum have left?	Participants used differentiated activities for this section of maths. Learners in need of support were given more simpler examples	Abacus, unifix cubes, DBE books. Story cards.
English	Storywriting My Excursion to the Zoo	The participant discussed the schools recent visit to the zoo. Learners were expected to use the vocab chart to build sentences. Learners in need of support were requested to choose one animal that they liked and write three sentences.	Pictures, vocabulary chart

- **Recording:** Essential records such as the CAPS Policy document, planning documents, a Subject Policy, minutes of Subject meetings are neatly filed in the participants' Subject files.

- **Management of subjects:** Participants are able to manipulate the ATP in a manner that will allow them to conduct their Task 2 assessment within the required timeframe as well as being able to complete all other aspects from the ATP within the allocated time during the term. Four of the six participants completed the Reflection portion in their Lesson Plans, effectively.

- ***Assessment Techniques***

  Teachers demonstrated competence in monitoring and assessing learner progress and achievement

- **Feedback to Learners**: Participants provide constructive, positive feedback to learners during the lessons and in learners' books. Learners are praised and guided in class on their responses. The comments and motivations stickers are found in learners' books which indicate that the participants mark the learners' books thoroughly and are able to motivate learners who do well.

- **Knowledge of Assessment**: It is apparent that participants have knowledge of the various forms of assessment and learners are assessed accordingly. A Programme of Assessment is developed by participants and is provided to each learner which contains the various tasks and activities for the term and space for learners to indicate the mark obtained for each activity. Parents are required to sign after marks have been entered.

- **Application of Techniques**: Participants use different assessment techniques and tools to assess learners, these include, roleplaying, show and tell, rubrics and memos.

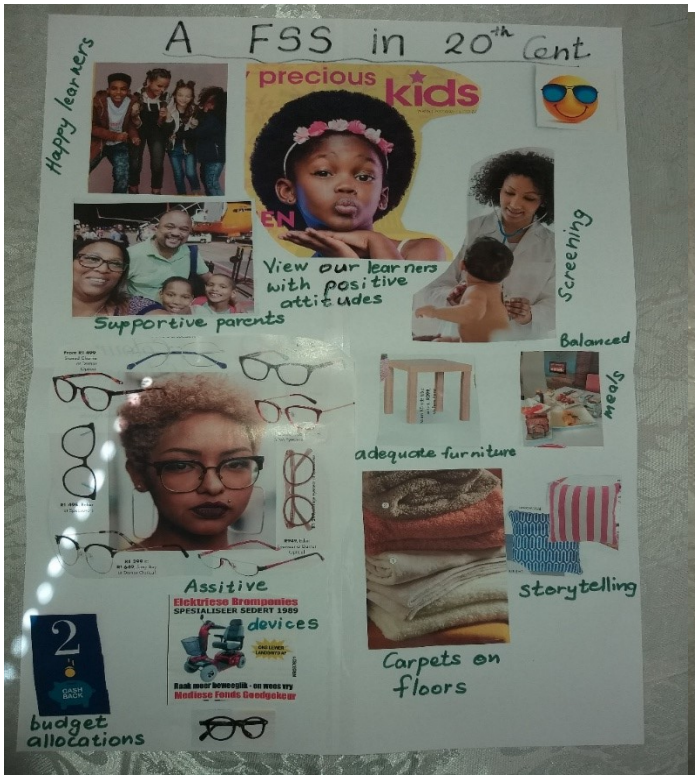
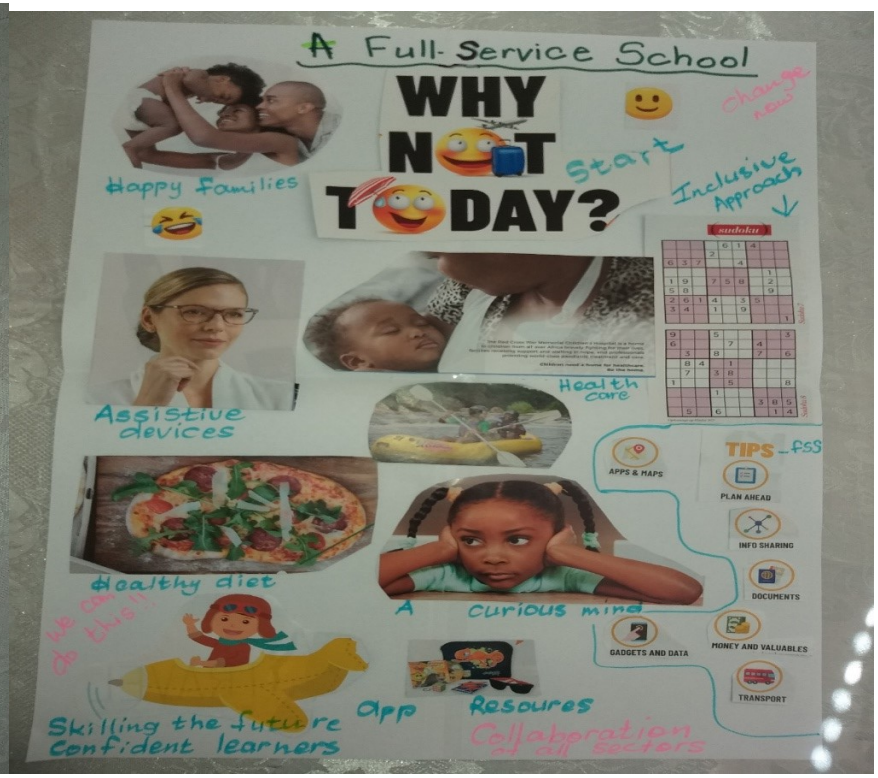
- **Record Keeping**: Participants use name lists with columns for each of the various activities for marks to be captured. Level and diagnostic analysis are conducted by participants. The diagnostic analysis informs teaching and learning.

Adapted GDE Classroom Observation Instrument

Phase Two - Observation

Grade	Subject	Method of Instruction	Resources
1 Maths	Addition and Subtraction with double digits e.g. 12 + 5 = ☐ 10 – 5 – 2 = ☐	Use of concrete objects to reinforce the concept of addition. Differentiated teaching and differentiated instruction	Abacus, unifix cubes, counting sticks Number work cards were planned for four groups
English	Comprehension passage Learners read the story with the learners aloud	Discussion of story Worksheet comprehension activity Each group were called to the front and the questions were explained in detail	Individual group instruction with clear and concise questioning
2 Maths	Halving and doubling	Smaller numbers were halved and doubled with those learners in need of support. The participants used a method of peer teaching	Counters, workcards, peer teaching
English	Listening and Speaking Show & Tell	Oral expression – Their favourite toy	Real objects

	Learners brought an object from home and explained more about the object to the class		
3 Maths	Story sums - multiplication There are four cars? How many wheels the cars have altogether?	Participants used differentiated group activities for this section of maths. Learners in need of support were introduced to the concept with simpler examples.	Abacus, unifix cubes, DBE books. Story cards.
English	Story writing Write about your favourite animal you saw at the visit to the zoo	This lesson was a follow up from the previous lesson. This time the participant showed the learners how to plan story writing using a mind map to plan in logical sequence the direction of thoughts.	Pictures, vocabulary chart, mind map worksheet.

It was evident that participants improved on the inclusive approach that was previously used. The inclusive pedagogy was more refined and suited to the learning barriers experienced by the learners in all grades e.g. sentence construction in grade three was noted as being a challenge, the participant used the mind map approach to facilitate to support sentence writing in a logical sequential manner.

Annexure F – Collage Activity of Participants