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IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY IN SELECTED MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF CHRIS HANI WEST EDUCATION DISTRICT

By

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A Dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of a Master of Education

At the

University of Fort Hare

Supervisor

Dr. P.N. Tyilo

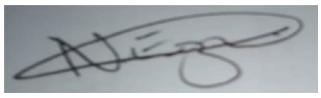
Date

May 2024

DECLARATION underscores

I, Neliswa Ester Zini (201406857) solemnly declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this dissertation entitled “Implementing Inclusive Education Policy in Selected Mainstream Primary Schools of Chris Hani West Education District” is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for the award of any degree or qualification. Where the information from published and unpublished sources of other scholars has been used, I have acknowledged such sources both in the text and in the list of references.

NELISWA ESTER ZINI



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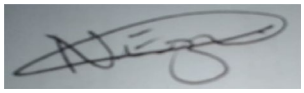

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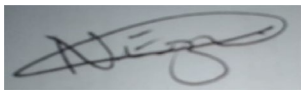

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late father Ngakanani Khulela, who said these words before he died, “Neliswa should never stop schooling no matter what. She is my male child”. To my mother, who went the extra mile and did whatever it took to ensure I was an educated, altruistic, and independent woman.

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First, I would like to thank the Model of oneness, the Promise keeper, and the greatest of power, the omnipotent and omnipresent God. My Most High God for granting me the intelligence, strength, and courage not to give up. He is the Highest God who never ceases to be amazing.

To my supervisor, Dr. Tyilo, who assisted for this study to be completed through her constructive supervision, motivation, dedication, patience, encouragement, and hard work, I would like to express my sincere gratitude. Dr. Tyilo, I sincerely thank you for believing in my ability to do this work.

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive Education as a vehicle for quality education is gaining global momentum. Central to Inclusive Education is equitable access to education, which accommodates learner diversity, including those learners who experience learning difficulties and who experience exclusion when having to attend the same schools with their peers. In response to this gap, most African countries, such as South Africa introduced Inclusive Education policies. The policy was spearheaded by the Department of Education to support learners who experience learning barriers and for them to be accommodated in the mainstream provision. This transformation affected teaching and learning, as teachers had to adopt pedagogies and diverse assessment strategies that accommodate all learners in their classes. However, despite the effort made to accommodate all learners in the mainstream, there seem to be challenges as some children remain out of the school system. Hence, this study aimed to examine the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy in selected mainstream primary schools. The theory of implementation by Rogan and Grayson was adopted for this study as it builds on the strengths of different educational stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, learners and district officials. The theory looks at what constitutes good practice, monitoring systems, resources and support, provided by outside agencies to facilitate innovation in schools. The study adopted an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach. The data from the 12 purposively selected research participants was collected through semi-structured interviews. The results revealed that teachers do not understand Education White Paper 6 and are not clear about what it entails. The inadequate visitation of schools and an absence of school-based training workshops by the DBST raised another concern among participants. In addition, limited classroom-based monitoring and follow-up support challenge the effective implementation of inclusive education. Inadequate training of teachers, non-involvement of parents, and scarcity of resources, which includes human and physical resources, worsen the situation. This study recommends that teachers receive adequate training on implementing Inclusive Education at the school and district levels. Provision of

adequate physical and human resources for DBSTs and the teachers to perform their various tasks needs to be prioritized. The study further recommends strengthened collaboration of all stakeholders to support each other in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream classrooms.

Keywords: District-Based Support Teams (DBST's), Inclusive Education, Implementation, Support, Training workshop, Institutional Level Support Team (ILST).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBSTs	District-Based Support Teams
DoE	Department of Education
EWP6	Education White Paper 6
IE	Inclusive Education
IET	Inclusive Education Team
ILST:	Institutional Level Support Team
ISP	Individual Support Plan
LD	Learning Difficulties
LESN	Learners with Educational Special Needs
NCESS	National Commission on Education Support Services
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NCSNET	National Committee on Special Needs Education and Training
PCG	Provincial Curriculum Guidelines
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SMT	School Management Team
SSRC	Special Schools as Resource Centres
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movement, senses or activities. For this study, disability refers to the learning difficulties experienced by learners. Disability is a national phenomenon; approximately 93 million children have moderate to severe disabilities and many of these children are out of school (Bose & Heymann, 2020). In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2015) reports that in developing countries, millions of children with learning disabilities are out of school. Such learning disabilities pose problems for learners in schools and as a result, some are excluded from education as the system is not fully inclusive and accommodative of their learning difficulties. There are massive implications posed by the exclusion of learners with learning difficulties from education, and later in life, finding decent work and playing an active role in their country's social, political, and economic life, is compromised.

1.2 Background of the study

Learners with learning difficulties have been discriminated against for various reasons. To eliminate discrimination faced by learners with learning difficulties, the international community placed more emphasis on human rights, equal opportunities, independence, and social integration (Engelbrecht, 2018). The exclusion of learners with learning difficulties culminated in the Salamanca Declaration of 1994 which promoted Inclusive Education to fight against discrimination of learners with learning difficulties and to create communities that are more open, welcoming, inclusive, and accommodating to all learners (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). 92 countries were part of the Salamanca Declaration, including South Africa (Gabriel, & Kapalu, 2020).

When South Africa signed the Salamanca Declaration, the aim was to ensure that learners with learning difficulties get equal access to education, just like all other

learners. This is because learners with learning difficulties in South Africa experience great difficulty gaining access to education. Only a few special schools exist and due to capacity, their admission is limited to strictly applied categories (Naicker, 2018). For example, there are schools for the hearing-impaired that only accommodate learners with hearing challenges. This categorisation system only allows those learners with organic, medical disabilities access to support programmes. Learners who experience learning difficulties due to socio-economic factors, like severe poverty, domestic violence, abuse, and so on do not qualify to be accommodated for educational support through special schools. This is despite the acknowledgment that the prevalence of learning difficulties in the South African context, caused by socio-economic and environmental circumstances, is quite high (Nel & Grosser, 2016). This is a crisis that perpetuates inequality and poverty and has the power to bring the country to its knees. In keeping up with the worldwide trends in inclusive education, the Department of Education (DoE, 2001) introduced the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education.

The Education White Paper 6 addresses the building of a single and inclusive system of education. White Paper 6 focuses on social justice for all learners, human rights, a healthy environment, participation, social integration and redress, equal and equitable access to education, community responsiveness, and cost-effectiveness (DoE, 2001). The Salamanca Declaration of 1994 and Education White Paper 6, 2001, encouraged practitioners to include all learners with mild to moderate disabilities in mainstream schools where they can learn with their peers.

Some efforts are made worldwide to ensure quality education for all learners through inclusive education, however, the exclusion of learners with learning difficulties from accessing quality and equitable education in mainstream schools still prevails. For example, in some countries like England, special education has flourished in the twenty-first century, and the number and proportion of learners with learning difficulties attending special schools, are increasing (Shaw, 2017; Warnes et al., 2022). This situation has led the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to show concern at the persistence of a dual education system that

segregates learners with learning difficulties in special schools, including based on parental choice and the increasing number of learners with learning difficulties in segregated education environments (UN, 2017). This is despite the efforts made by advocacy groups to ensure that learners with learning difficulties receive the support they deserve. As stated by Kanter (2017), most of the learners with difficulties do not receive the appropriate education experiences as they continue to be isolated in separate education facilities. This, in a way, prevents them from academic interactions with their peers. The exclusion continues to be a common practices despite the efforts created that advocate for the inclusion of learners with learning difficulties (Dreyer, 2017). In Thailand, for example, learners do not spend all day in the mainstream school, as there are times when they receive special services outside the school (Vorapanya & Pachanavon, 2017). In South Africa, education is a basic human right, as enshrined in the Constitution. Hence, school attendance for all learners between seven and 15 years of age, is compulsory. However, nearly 597 953 children with learning difficulties, who are within the school-going age, are out of school (Fish, 2018). However, some learners with learning difficulties still attend separate special schools that cater for learners with specific disabilities. This situation prevails, despite all the efforts made to include learners in mainstream schools. In instances where learners with learning difficulties are included in mainstream classrooms, they do not receive the required support (Nel & Grosser, 2016). The next section discusses the South African Education System.

1.2.1 South Africa Education System

In South Africa, before 1994, the education system promoted race, class, gender and ethnic divisions among people and has emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood. This affected the fiscal allocations where funding allocation was based on race. This has created inequalities as other races enjoyed more funding than others, resulting in a wild scale of disparities, due to inequitable funding allocation (Naicker, 2018; Singh, 2016). These disparities affected all aspects of education service delivery, including the quality and level of teachers' training, availability of resources in schools, and ensuring that learners remain in schools, despite their learning difficulties.

The learners with disabilities were not fully supported, particularly in black schools, even though there were a few schools that catered to them (Walton, 2018. However, the schools that catered for mainly white learners with disabilities, had funds and resources (DoE, 2001). This discrepancy in the education provision prompted the National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS) and the National Committee on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) to investigate and formulate policies to redress the issue of the previously mentioned disparities (Walton, 2018). The findings of these commissions brought about education transformations in the South African Education System after 1994. NCESS and NCSNET (1997) commissions reported that the areas of special needs education and education support services provision have reflected general inequalities in South African society, with most disadvantaged learners receiving inadequate or no provision.

When Curriculum 2005 was adopted, through the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach, the aim was to overcome the curriculum divisions of the past. The implementation of Curriculum 2005 had challenges, as teachers had trouble when teaching. Teachers felt inadequately prepared to deal with so much diversity amongst the large numbers of learners in their classrooms. In addition, there was no continuous support or development when teachers returned to the site after receiving orientation and training from the workshops (Marishane, 2017). This implies that the workshops attended for curriculum did not supply them with applicable knowledge and skills to address the problems they experienced in their classrooms. All the challenges experienced by teachers in South Africa brought about further curriculum reviews, where in 2000, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2000), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2002, Curriculum, and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2009), were introduced respectively. The CAPS was to be a single policy document with a more simplified curriculum, redressing important subject knowledge; ensuring progress and continuity across grades, and assessments were to be more standardised (DBE, 2011).

In all these curriculum policy documents, inclusion and a consequent application of a flexible curriculum area, are fundamental principles. The challenges experienced by

teachers included a lack of classroom follow-up and support from district officials. On the other hand, teachers have no sound knowledge of the policies, and they have trouble in interpreting and implementing them effectively. All these curriculum reforms took place within the 20 years of democracy in South Africa. However, despite these curriculum reforms, mainstream schools still struggle to produce improved academic performance at all levels of the system (Marishane, 2017). This is not surprising, given some of the criticisms levelled against these policy changes, namely that they lack continuous teacher development. During the process of education reforms in South Africa, the Inclusive Education Policy was introduced to ensure that all children remain in school, as education is their basic right. Therefore, Inclusive Education is discussed in the next section.

1.2.2 Inclusive education

After many years of excluding learners with barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties, there has been a significant shift from special education to Inclusive Education worldwide (Onyishi, & Sefotho, 2020). Inclusive Education has developed as a global movement that seeks to challenge unfair, discriminatory, and exclusionary practices by ensuring that all learners are included in basic education. The ongoing journey toward securing basic education for all in the world started with Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948. This affirmed that Inclusive Education is a human right. Thereafter, numerous declarations followed, for example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989); the World Declaration Education for All (World Conference on Education for All, 1990); and the Salamanca Statement and Action Framework on Special Needs Education (World Conference on Special Needs Education, 1994), to mention but a few.

The Salamanca Conference assured that governments commit themselves to the 'Education for All' initiative where 92 government representatives attended the Conference (Gabriel & Kapalu, 2020). In addition, many countries renewed their commitment to reaching the educational goal of Inclusive Education (Gabriel & Kapalu, 2020). The Salamanca Statement proclaims that every child has a fundamental right to education and as a result, opportunities were created to achieve and maintain an

acceptable level of learning. This implies that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. Therefore, education systems should be responding to the diverse characteristics and needs of all learners. This has resulted in learners with learning difficulties having full access to the mainstream schools to promote a child-centred pedagogy to cater for the diverse needs of all the learners. This is in line with UNESCO (2016) that in inclusive schools, learners should learn together, regardless of their difficulties. Therefore, schools need to respond to the needs of all learners, regardless of their background through provision of curricular opportunities that cater for learners with different abilities and interests (Ainscow, 2020). This means that education systems must provide a personalized educational response, rather than expecting the learners with learning difficulties to fit into the system.

The strides taken to implement Inclusive Education differ from country to country. Research shows that most countries, including South Africa, have made great strides in restructuring education for learners with learning difficulties (Chambers & Forlin, 2021; Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). For example, the inclusion of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools, has for some time been withdrawn for part of the school day to receive intensive intervention programs offered by specialist support teachers (Chambers & Forlin, 2021). This is still a threat that Inclusive Education poses to learners with learning difficulties. Despite that, South Africa made numerous efforts with the implementation of Inclusive Education as discussed in the next section.

1.2.3 Implementing Inclusive Education in South Africa

In South Africa, the introduction of the Inclusive Education Policy aims to transform and support learners with learning difficulties (DoE, 2001). Before 1994, educational support services practiced a medical model of intervention where the placement of learners in special education was a key function (Naicker, 2018). This model presupposes that disability is only associated with impairment or loss within the individual. Little or no attempts were made to establish the deficiencies of the system. Nevertheless, the practice and rationalization of educational exclusion is evident at all levels of education systems, from individual classrooms and schools to national education systems, and the

international educational arena (Walton, 2018). This has resulted in most learners with learning difficulties dropping out of the education system or the mainstream by default, which has exacerbated the exclusion of learners (DoE, 2001). For example, in 2011, an average of 73% of learners with learning difficulties completed their primary education, but only 39% of those enrolled, completed their secondary education (EMIS) (DBE, 2017). There could be numerous factors contributing to that, for example, poor implementation of policy, the perceptions and attitudes of teachers, as well as their lack of skills and knowledge, which may be contributing factors (Dreyer, 2017). Education support services must be strengthened to cater to the different needs of all learners.

The South African Government publicized acts and policies aimed at promoting the inclusion and support of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream education. For example, Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: District Based Support Teams (DBSTs, 2005) and Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS, 2008), are among the legislative documents focusing on promoting inclusion of learners with difficulties in mainstream schools. These legislative documents defined Inclusive Education as a strategy that acknowledges that all learners and youth can learn when support is provided (DoE, 2008; 2005; 2001). In addition, UNESCO (2016) argues that full inclusion implies that all learners are educated together in the same mainstream classrooms, following the same curriculum, and experiencing the same pedagogy as other learners, regardless of the nature of their learning difficulty. This can only be done when teachers are fully equipped on how to support learners with learning difficulties in their respective mainstream classrooms, therefore, supporting teachers to implement inclusive education, is discussed in the next section.

1.2.4 Supporting teachers to implement inclusive education

The implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy requires the preparedness of relevant stakeholders. Teachers are the key stakeholders with an important role to play when the Inclusive Education Policy is implemented. Hence, teachers need to be supported, in order for them to accede to the call of Inclusive Education. This is

because, when teachers receive support, they can be able to make learning contexts and lessons accessible to all learners, particularly those with learning difficulties. Successful and effective implementation of Inclusive Education practices depends on teachers having adequate knowledge and understanding of inclusive practices and the implementation of such practices across the entire educational system. However, the teachers perceive that their initial teacher training and preparation have not adequately equipped them to overcome the challenges posed by diverse classrooms with a range of learners' needs. These challenges include the inability to adapt and differentiate the curriculum so that it can be accommodative to all learners.

In countries like the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), arrangements are made in schools to support teachers in implementing Inclusive Education. For example, in the UK, the teacher assistant supports learning in the classroom where learners with difficulties are included and creates teachers' positive attitudes towards Inclusive Education implementation (Saloviita, 2020). This is because the teacher assistants help learners in terms of behaviour, understanding the lessons, helping teachers to monitor learners' responses to the learning activities and reporting learners' progress. Just like in the UK, in the USA, teacher assistants are also available to provide support and individual attention to learners with other special needs, such as those who speak English as a second language or those who need remedial education. Teaching assistants have been seen as crucial in terms of providing support in inclusive contexts. Subsequently, teaching assistants are resourceful, as they strive to meet individual learners' needs.

In South Africa, the Policy on Inclusive Education is implemented and interpreted according to provincial needs and available resources. For example, the Western Cape Province came up with the criteria of deploying 510 teacher assistants in 160 schools through a pilot project known as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED, 2006). Schools in disadvantaged areas where learners were not learning in their home languages, and schools that were actively helping learners with learning difficulties, received support through these teacher assistants (WCED, 2006). In addition, Western Cape established teams based at

Special School Resource Centres that provided support services to special schools, identified as resource centres (DoE, 2001). These teams gradually moved from supporting the resource centres to supporting both the full-service and mainstream schools to provide on-going training and classroom support to teachers to address the barriers to learning and teaching (DoE, 2001; WCED, 2016). The Inclusive Education Teams (IET) formed to serve as a response to the contextual needs in the inclusive schools. Each IET comprised a school counsellor, a learning support teacher and a therapist (occupational or speech therapist). The WCED (2016) guidelines for the operation of IETs coincide with those of the district-based support teams. Compared to the district-based support teams, however, they have fewer schools, which they support on a weekly basis (Mfuthwana, 2016).

In the Free State Province, 120 teacher assistants, learner support teachers and counsellors, were employed to be responsible for learners with learning difficulties in schools. With KwaZulu Natal Province, the same strategy of teacher assistants was adopted, while Gauteng Province preferred to use learner support teachers for effective implementation of Inclusive Education. However, with the Eastern Cape Province, there is silence in terms of the plans that are in place in ensuring that mainstream teachers receive support for effective implementation of Inclusive Education. This is despite the attempts made to strengthen the education support services through Education White Paper 6 that established district-based support teams.

There are guiding principles provided on how district-based support teams should function within an Inclusive Education system (DoE, 2005; 2001). The primary function of these district support teams is to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Their key function is to assist education institutions to identify and address barriers to learning and promote effective teaching and learning. This includes classroom-based support, provision of specialised learner and teacher support, as well as curricular and administrative support. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, district-based support teams also build the capacity of school. Schools can then recognise and address learning difficulties and accommodate a range of learning needs. District-based support teams should strengthen the

Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs). The primary function of these teams is to properly co-ordinate learner and educator support services. Despite the duties that district-based support teams are to fulfil, teachers in schools often feel inadequately prepared and not supported to implement Inclusive Education. Learners with learning difficulties remain excluded in mainstream schools, due to insufficient support. It is against this background that the study investigates implementing the Inclusive Education Policy in selected mainstream primary schools of Chris Hani West Education District.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The implementation of Inclusive Education in schools requires not only accepting learners with different learning needs in mainstream classrooms but also providing those learners with the necessary support they need for them to cope in mainstream schools. There are requirements for teachers to respond to diversity in the classroom through differentiating the content, creating, and sustaining conducive environments, diverse teaching methods and numerous forms of assessment (DBE, 2011; Onyishi, & Sefotho, 2020). Although guidelines are issued, teachers' lack of training in differentiated instructional strategies for them to accommodate all learners in mainstream schools, prevails (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). Teachers lack knowledge, skills and instructional strategies, like individualization, differentiation, and adaptation of the curriculum for inclusive classrooms to be managed by them (Ahsan & Sharma, 2018; Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). The district-based support teams are entrusted with the responsibility of supporting teachers in schools to implement Inclusive Education in mainstream classrooms (Provincial Curriculum Guidelines [PCG], 2007). The implementation of Inclusive Education requires teachers who can help and support the learners in their classes. When teachers are sufficiently equipped with knowledge and expertise through the support rendered by district-based support teams, their confidence levels to work with all learners in inclusive classrooms is likely to improve.

Hence, due to a lack of training, teachers often feel unprepared to implement Inclusive Education in their classes, as the inadequate training makes it difficult for them to adopt

an individualized curriculum that accommodates the diverse needs of learners in mainstream classrooms (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). This poses a challenge to learners with difficulties as they may drop out of school, should the teacher leave them behind. Therefore, the researcher seeks to examine the implementation of an inclusive education policy in selected mainstream primary schools.

1.4 The purpose of the study

This study examines the implementation of an Inclusive Education Policy in mainstream primary schools.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Main research question

How is the Inclusive Education Policy implemented in mainstream primary schools?

1.5.2 Sub-research questions

1. How are teachers supported by district-based support teams in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools?
2. How are teachers monitored in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools?
3. What challenges do teachers experience when implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools?

1.6 Research objectives

The study sought:

1. To discover the support rendered by district-based support teams in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools.

2. To find out how teachers are monitored in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools.
3. To understand the challenges teachers experience when implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools.

1.7 Significance of the study

The implementation of Inclusive Education occurred in a context of many fundamental changes. These changes included the radical restructuring of the Provincial Departments of Education and the review of the original Revised National Curriculum Statements to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements. Although several attempts made by the DoE to support, control and monitor the Inclusive Education implementation process, there is a public outcry of teachers' inability to support learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream primary schools. This research is prompted by the researcher's experience in getting to know the roles played by district-based support teams in supporting teachers to implement Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools.

The findings of this study may inform further development of the Inclusive Education Policy in the Eastern Cape Province and the roll-out plan for the implementation of the existing policy. In addition, the study may contribute to the successful implementation of Inclusive Education and may stimulate dialogue related to successful implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. The DoE and schools may consider strengthening professional development in the design of high-quality classroom practices to support the teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education. This study may be a resource for teachers who find themselves in similar situations and may contribute to the emerging research base, focusing on the Inclusive Education Policy in schools.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

This study is limited to the Komani Circuit Management Centre (CMC) office under Chris Hani West Education District where three (3) members of district-based support teams were selected. Three primary schools from the Komani CMC were selected, where six teachers and three members of the school management team were selected for the study.

1.9 Definition of terms

1.9.1 District-Based Support Teams (DBST's)

A district-based support team is defined as a group of departmental professionals whose responsibility is to promote Inclusive Education through training, curriculum delivery, and distribution of resources, identifying, assessing, and addressing barriers to learning, leadership, and general management (DoE, 2014). For this study, a district-based support team means a team of officials who provide support services to the teachers, learners, and schools in the implementation of Inclusive Education.

1.9.2 Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities; supporting all learners, teachers, and the system so that the full range of learning needs can be met and focusing on overcoming barriers to learning in the system (DoE, 2005). DoE (2011) defines Inclusive Education as education that caters for learners with learning barriers and those without, learning together under the same conditions and using materials appropriate for various needs. For this study, Inclusive Education means accepting and respecting that all learners, despite their differences, can learn with the appropriate support provided.

1.9.3 Implementation

Implementation is the process of putting into practice a programme or set of activities, new to the people attempting or expected to change. It refers to what really happens in practice (Fullan, 2015). For this study, implementation involves changes in the knowledge, actions, and attitudes of people and can be seen as a process of

professional development and growth, involving ongoing interactions, feedback, and assistance.

1.9.4 Support

Support is defined as all the activities, which enhance the capacity of a school to cater for diversity and ensure effective learning and teaching for all learners (DoE, 2005). This means identifying and addressing learner, teacher, and institutional support needs on an ongoing basis. For this study, the concept 'support' implies any activity that assists people to perform optimally.

1.9.5 Training workshop

A training workshop is defined as activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise, and other characteristics as a teacher. It is an important competency component to support fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices (Shannon et al., 2019). For this study, a training workshop refers to the school and district-based training workshops that had been provided to teachers as a way of supporting them to effectively implement Inclusive Education.

1.9.6 Institutional Level Support Team (ILST)

ILST is a team of teachers whose focus and functions are to develop and empower colleagues in the identification of learning difficulties, intervention, and preventative strategies, if possible (DoE, 2014). The team consists of the principal as the ex officio, the Head of Department (HOD) per phase, (one foundation phase and one intermediate and senior phase), teachers who have specialised skills, guidance and counselling, a representative from the school assessment team and a learner support teacher. ILSTs are headed by a co-ordinator, who has been elected by other teachers at school.

1.10 Chapter outline

The study is organised into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 contains the background of the study. It lays the groundwork for the research project and includes the statement of the problem, the research questions, the purpose of the study, the significance for undertaking the study and the delimitation of the study, as well as the definition of items.

Chapter 2 represents a literature review, which includes the views of empirical studies related to the studied phenomenon and the guiding theoretical framework that will inform the study.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology of the study, which explains the research design, paradigm, approach, population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, ethical considerations, credibility, and trustworthiness.

Chapter 4 presents data, interprets, and discusses the findings.

Chapter 5 is the summary of the study that encompasses the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

1.11 Summary

This chapter laid and provided an outline for the study. A broad background of the study and the problem statement was given to inform and explain to readers what prompted this investigation. The research questions and the sub-questions, that guided the study, were stated. The significance of undertaking the study was explained. The scope of the study has been clearly articulated. Key concepts were defined to avoid any misunderstandings. A brief overview of each chapter has been given to give the reader insight into the contents of each chapter. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework, and a review of the literature related to the studied phenomenon.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review describes theoretical perspectives and previous research findings regarding the problem at hand. The aim of reviewing the literature is to find the literature that is like the studied phenomenon, though not necessarily identical to one's own area of investigation (Randolph, 2019). This section begins by discussing the theoretical framework and the theory that underpins this study. It also discusses the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools internationally, nationally and in the South African context. In addition, support given to teachers, monitoring and challenges encountered in implementing Inclusive Education, are also discussed. The next section discusses the theoretical framework that underpins this study and its relevance to the studied phenomenon.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is one of the most important aspects in the research process. The theoretical framework is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed for a research study. It serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance, and the research questions. The theoretical framework provides a grounding base, or an anchor, for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis, therefore a lens for how the study processes new knowledge (Collins & Stockton, 2018). It introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study, exists. The theoretical framework defines the key concepts in the research, proposes relations between them and discusses relevant theories and models, based on a literature review. The theoretical framework is important in research, because it gives research a sound scientific basis, demonstrates the researcher's understanding of existing knowledge on

the topic, and allows the reader to evaluate the researcher's guiding assumptions. It gives the research direction, allowing the researcher to convincingly interpret, explain and generalise from the findings (Vinz, 2015). Rogan and Grayson's (2003) implementation theory was chosen to guide the study and is discussed in the next section.

2.2.1 Rogan and Grayson's (2003) implementation theory

The implementation theory by Rogan and Grayson (2003) was adopted for this study. This theory was suitable for this study because it puts into consideration current realities that exist in different institutions of learning. The theory focuses on the key components that are key to the education system. For example, teachers, learners, schools, resources, and the support provided to the teachers in schools are the important aspects that the theory addresses. The theory has three major constructs, namely (i) profile of implementation, (ii) capacity to support innovation, and (iii) support by outside agencies. The three constructs are discussed below.

2.2.1.1 Profile of Implementation

Profile of implementation looks at what constitutes a good practice (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). The construct profile of implementation assumes that there is at least a defined notion of what constitutes 'good practice' and what this looks like in the classroom. It recognises many ways of putting a curriculum into action through teachers who are seen as the implementers. This calls for multi-level instruction, curriculum differentiation, and adaptation to ensure that all learners are catered for, regardless of their learning difficulties. For this study, this construct looks at whether the principles of Inclusive Education are being implemented in the mainstream classroom by teachers with the help of district-based support teams.

For any implementation to be feasible, Fullan (2015) suggests that there are steps that need to be followed. Hence, the construct profile of implementation has conceptualized the levels of curriculum implementation, according to the following levels, namely (i) the

beginning levels, orientation, and preparation; (ii) mechanical and routine used levels and (iii) refinement, integration and renewal. When these levels are followed, they provide a useful starting point, as they acknowledge different degrees of how a new curriculum should be implemented.

The beginning levels, orientation and preparation essentially encompass the period of becoming aware of and preparing to implement the new curriculum. This implies that in this level, mainstream teachers need to be trained on what Inclusive Education entails. This will equip them with the insightful knowledge about inclusive pedagogical practices, such as multi-level instructions, curriculum adaptation and differentiation. Meanwhile, mechanical and routine levels are the levels during which the curriculum is used as envisaged by the developers with little addition or adaptation to the local context. For this study, in this level teachers are trained on how to implement Inclusive Education, as envisaged by EWP 6. Here teachers are equipped with the knowledge on how to prepare a multi-level instruction and how to adapt and differentiate the curriculum. This is supposed to be an in-class hands-on practice by the district-based support teams. This is because the profile of implementation also deals with the nature of support provided to mainstream teachers by district-based support teams and how adequate is the support provided. This calls for the provision of on-site support that encompasses on-site training workshops. In these on-site training workshops, the content of teacher training workshops for Inclusive Education must include locally proven, workable approaches and practices.

On-site training workshops should be in a form of on-going hands-on support in class (classroom-based support) and following up on implementation. With the final levels, refinement, integration and renewal, the teacher begins to take ownership of the curriculum and may enrich it or even reconceptualise it by making major modifications (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). Here teachers now feel more equipped, confident and competent enough to teach in an inclusive classroom. They own Inclusive Education implementation. They can even make their own adjustments, whilst they consider the context of their relative schools. This is because teachers now fully comprehend the concept of Inclusive Education and know how to implement it. They can effectively

apply Inclusive Education implementation strategies, such as multi-level instruction, curriculum adaptation and differentiation.

In connection with the above argument DBE, (2011) and Onyishi and Sefotho (2020) argue that for Inclusive Education teachers to create a high-quality environment, recognize which learners require special education, and implement the principles of inclusive education, these teachers need to be able to use methods and techniques related to the program's content to ensure that no learner is left behind. In addition, Individual Support Plans (ISPs) must be prepared, implemented, and evaluated by teachers. ISPs are the legally binding documents that must be created for all learners with special needs, including those with learning difficulties. The ISP describes the services and accommodations learner will receive in the mainstream school. Teachers are responsible for preparing these ISPs with the help of Institution Level Support Teams (ILSTs) and/or district-based support teams. These are the key issues to making teaching more inclusive. Capacity to support innovation is another key construct of the implementation theory.

2.2.1.2 Capacity to support innovation

Capacity to support innovation attempts to understand and elaborate on the factors that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas in a school system (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). Capacity to support innovation construct is comprised of four indicators, namely (i) physical resources, (ii) teacher factors, (iii) learner factors, and (iv) the school ecology and management.

i. Physical resources

Physical resources influence capacity, because poor resources may negatively impact the performance of teachers and learners. Physical resources refer to science laboratories, a library, transport, and curriculum materials other than textbooks, and good teaching and learning resources (e.g. computers, models) (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). For this study, physical resources refer to the availability of instructional

materials (e.g. worksheets, models) and comprehensive practical handbooks; transport; technical assistive devices, that is, IT equipment, like telephones and computers, as well as human resources. These important resources enable the effective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. These resources are important, because they influence what takes place at the classroom. For example, teachers can help learners with learning difficulties to easily understand the content when they are practically involved in the lesson with the use of models. Transport helps a lot during on-site support visits. Worksheets fall under multi-level instruction. Here, teachers prepare or plan a lesson or instruction that caters for three learners: the best, average, and poor performing learner, instead of one learner, the average performing learner. Worksheets can also be used in individualization practices where learners with learning difficulties are supported individually with the instruction that caters for their different learning styles, abilities and level of understanding.

ii. Teacher factor

The teacher factor refers to the teachers' own background, teachers' qualification, training and level of confidence, and their commitment to teaching. The teachers' qualification may enable them to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their instructions. Furthermore, mainstream teachers might not be trained on dealing with learners experiencing learning difficulties in their initial training and this may negatively impact the implementation of Inclusive Education. In addition to these basic factors are those that relate more directly to the extent to which teachers will embrace innovation. This is because change is essentially a learning process, which entails the willingness to try out new ideas and practices. This means that the teachers' attitudes towards Inclusive Education implementation and their willingness to collaborate with other stakeholders and support one another, is fundamental.

One of the starting points in the model of teacher development is an awareness on the part of teachers and that being isolated from their colleagues is a problem. However, in many developing countries, teachers have neither the experience nor the expectation of collaborating with their peers. On the contrary, they may shun peer collaboration for fear

of exposing their areas of weakness (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). This means that Inclusive Education may not be implemented. Shunning of peer collaboration negatively impacted on the implementation of Inclusive Education, because collaboration is considered as a first step in implementing Inclusive Education. Collaboration establishes a sustainable partnership amongst teachers when supporting learners with learning difficulties. Cooperative experiences motivate the teachers to adapt and differentiate the curriculum. Thus, collaboration improves Inclusive Education implementation.

iii. Learner factor

The learner factor relates to the background of the learners and the kind of strengths and constraints that they might bring to the school. Learners may come from different socio-economic backgrounds where no support is provided for them when learning. This poses a challenge to the learners, more especially with learners who have learning difficulties. In this study, the learner factor refers to the nature of a learning difficulty (e.g. inability to read and write, difficulty in solving Math problems, performance below the expected outcome), involvement of the parents in their learners' learning and the support they receive from home when learning.

iv. The school ecology and management factor

The school ecology and management factor are perceived to be fundamental in the implementation of Inclusive Education, because their emphasis is on quality of leadership (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). Quality leadership creates a safe and supportive environment for all the learners in school. If the school is in disarray and not functioning well, this often challenges the innovative endeavours to be implemented; in this case implementation of Inclusive Education. Research has shown that the leadership role of the principal is crucial when it comes to implementation (Acton, 2021; Sharif et al., 2020; Terziu et al., 2016). As the innovation becomes a reality, the principal begins to take new dimensions. Change must be realistically planned and subsequently

monitored. Those charged with the implementation of change, that is, school management teams, including the principal and teachers, need to be empowered and be enabled to communicate and collaborate.

Whilst the teacher factor has the most direct bearing on the researcher's chosen unit of analysis, resources, and school ecology also influence the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. School ecology gives a picture of whether the school is fit for the purpose. For this study, school ecology gives an insight into whether the school is ready to implement Inclusive Education. This may be shown by several factors, such as the nature of the classes, availability of resources (human and physical), and adequacy of trained teachers. In some schools, classes were overcrowded, depriving a good implementation of Inclusive Education, for example, a school's ratio of 47:1. Resources were not available, making it difficult for teachers to support learners with learning difficulties, for example, one teacher taught more than one subject in more than one grade from Grade 4 to Grade 7 (multi-grade teaching). Insufficiency of trained teachers negatively impacted on the implementation of Inclusive Education. For example, a criterion of inviting only two teachers per school to attend a two-day workshop deprived many teachers of acquiring special skills and knowledge to deal with learners with learning difficulties. Hence, mainstream primary schools seem to have difficulty with implementing Inclusive Education. Capacity to support innovation was useful in this study because it addressed the school ecology, resources, the learner, and the teacher factor where mainstream teachers might not be trained in dealing with learners experiencing learning difficulties in their initial training. The teachers' qualifications may enable them to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their instructions. Hence, this study explored the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. Support by outside agencies is another important construct of the chosen implementation theory.

2.2.1.3 Support by outside agencies

Support by outside agencies focuses on the monitoring system, resources and professional development and support provided when the programme is implemented.

Outside agencies are defined as organizations outside the school, including the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which interact with a school to facilitate innovation. In the context of this study the innovation of interest is the implementation of Inclusive Education. Outside support for innovation is one area where developing countries differ markedly from developed ones. In developing countries, educational innovation is often sponsored and funded by countries in the developed world (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). Hence, the management teams of these innovation projects often consist of people from a variety of countries with diverse backgrounds and philosophies.

Support from outside agencies, in the South African context, comes from both traditional and unique sources. On the traditional side are the DoE and nine Provincial Departments. The National Department is charged with making major policy decisions, while the Provincial Departments are responsible for their implementation and for the day-to-day running of the schools under their jurisdiction (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). This means that Provincial Departments have the duty of training district-based support teams on Inclusive Education implementation, and they must make sure that Inclusive Education is implemented in schools.

The support from outside agencies describes the actions undertaken by outside organizations, such as DoE to influence practices (Rogan & Grayson, 2003), as well as the way in which they manifest their intentions. The profile of outside support deals with two forms of support to schools, that is, (i) material and (ii) non-material. Material support is divided into two categories: the provision of physical resources, such as buildings, books, or apparatus on the one hand, and direct support to learners on the other, which might include school lunch programmes, as well as safe and quiet places beyond class time. These kinds of support can be provided at various levels.

The non-material support is in the form of professional development and is perhaps the most visible and obvious way in which outside agencies attempt to bring about changes in schools. For this study, non-material support refers to the training workshops of the teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education. Non-material support has two sub-themes. The first is the purpose or focus of the training workshop, while the second one is about the duration of the training.

At level one, the training workshop concentrates mainly on providing information about expected changes emanating from the policy and about what teachers are expected to do as a result in their classrooms. There is an increasing emphasis on a training workshop, which is focused on implementation of change rather than just providing information, and a greater sense of teacher ownership of the process. As the second sub-theme has to do with extent and duration of the support, the levels here range from a one short workshop to continuous, school-based development (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). This means that during training workshops, firstly, teachers need to be made aware of the Inclusive Education Policy and what it entails. They need to be told that due to the introduction of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools, their existing schemas must be changed. The way they used to plan and teach learners must change, as they will now include learners with learning difficulties in their classes. They need to be made ready to learn new schemas. Thereafter, teachers need to be continuously trained on how to implement Inclusive Education. The focus now of the training workshop will be on how to individualise, differentiate and adapt the curriculum to accommodate all learners. Teachers need to be practically shown in their inclusive classes, while the contextual factors are considered.

When teachers are fully equipped with the skills, this is when they will start to embrace and own the implementation of Inclusive Education. They can make their own adaptations in the curriculum as they feel more competent and confident to do so. The duration of the training workshop is very important, as it determines the amount of knowledge and understanding teachers have acquired during the workshop. If the workshop is short, this means the focus is only on providing information. A continuous practical workshop indicates an in-depth insight into Inclusive Education implementation acquired by teachers. This includes repetition of explanations and hands-on exposure in multi-level instruction, individualization, adaptation, and differentiation of the curriculum up until teachers master these new skills and knowledge required to implement Inclusive Education. This implies that pre-service and in-service teacher training should move away from teaching the Inclusive Education definition to include those who experience barriers to learning, but rather to develop sound inclusive pedagogical practices and practical experiences that include all learners in authentic learning.

However, South Africa is employing an under-resourced education and support system that does not address the contextual dilemmas experienced in schools in general (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). As a result, the implementation of Inclusive Education is still hampered by a lack of resources in mainstream inclusive classrooms.

Support from outside agencies and the profile of implementation seem to address the same aspects but differ. Support from outside agencies focuses on professional development that may take place outside the school, whereas the profile of implementation focuses on on-site training workshops, that is, at the school level.

All the constructs are relevant to the study because they seek to explore the implementation of Inclusive Education through support from the district-based support team. District-based support teams are supposed to support teachers to meet the learning needs. This means that learners with diverse learning needs can be supported by a district-based support team through the training of teachers. The emphasis is on the development of good teaching strategies that benefit all learners and on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent this education system from meeting the full range of learning needs. These constructs assisted the researcher to better understand how teachers are supported when implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream schools.

Since the South African movement towards Inclusive Education originated within an international development, it is important to provide some background on this. Therefore, the following section discusses Inclusive Education and how it is implemented from an international and national perspective.

2.3 Implementing Inclusive Education

2.3.1 International perspective

Inclusive Education is a global movement that emerged as a response to the exclusion of learners who were viewed as different (e.g., learners with learning difficulties, learners of colour, learners from lower caste backgrounds, and learners from low socio-economic backgrounds) by educational systems (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). The global movement towards Inclusive Education formally started in 1948, with the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which recognised that each citizen has a right to education. UDHR was adopted by the countries that are part of the United Nations (UN). This declaration was central in ensuring that people, regardless of their disabilities, have the same equal rights as other citizens to gain access to similar opportunities (Frederickson & Cline, 2015). Furthermore, the UN Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) also reiterated the importance of a child's right to access education.

In 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand. At this conference, the focus on deficiency (i.e. medical model) was noted as upholding exclusionary practices and denying the rights of all learners to have access to learning (DBE, 2010; DoE, 2001). However, the EFA movement is not progressing (Ainscow, 2020). The reason is that within certain countries, the rights of particular groups, previously discriminated against, were more emphasized in the movement towards Inclusive Education instead of having engagements that aimed to improve the teaching and learning environments for all learners (Ainscow, 2020). The EFA movement could focus more on culturally and contextually appropriate educational programmes to address social and educational inequities (Ainscow, 2020). This would include enabling teachers to adapt and differentiate the curriculum to promote an environment of participation and acceptance. In addition, around 2006, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) endorsed Inclusive Education as a way of addressing diversity and the needs of all learners. Moreover, countries and national policymakers had to ensure that Inclusive Education and equity are overarching principles that guide all educational policies, plans, and practices (UNESCO (2018).

In 1994, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education came into being at the World Conference on Special Needs Education, advocating that mainstream schools should provide effective education to all, where discrimination can be combated (UNESCO, 2016). During the Salamanca Statement, Inclusive Education was regarded as a guiding principle in the accommodation of all learners in mainstream schools with support provision, regardless of their physical,

intellectual, linguistic, social, or emotional needs and differences. Adaptive and differentiated curriculum to address a diversity of needs, was realised globally as a key issue to making teaching more inclusive after the Jomtien and Salamanca Conferences (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020).

In addition, the worldwide trends towards Inclusive Education have brought forth many reforms, both nationally and internationally, to reduce inequities existing in education systems ((Van der Merwe, Fourie & Yoro, 2020). This implies that schools must adjust all systems of teaching and learning to accommodate all learners, regardless of their diverse needs. Decades after the declarations and conventions were accepted by many countries, other countries still struggle to implement policies on Inclusive Education effectively within the system. As Inclusive Education is implemented in education systems around the globe, the question remains as to whether justice to those included, is served. For example, the section below presents how countries like India, the United States of America, Greece and Georgia have implemented Inclusive Education.

2.3.1.1 India

In India, The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act (1995) ushered in a new era for the education of learners with disabilities, including those with learning difficulties. This law included and encouraged the full participation of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools. In addition, this law guaranteed non-discrimination of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools. However, most teachers had neither received any training in special education nor had experience in teaching learners with learning difficulties in this country (Gulyani, 2017). As a result, teachers did not have a clear understanding about Inclusive Education (Islam et al., 2016). Teachers viewed themselves as incompetent in Inclusive Education. Most of the research indicates that when mainstream teachers are not adequately trained to work with learners who have learning difficulties, they tend to resist the implementation of Inclusive Education programs (VanCleef, 2019).

2.3.1.2 United States of America

In the United States, prior to 1975, the inclusion of learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms was not only unheard of, but discouraged. Many believed that the best place to serve learners with learning difficulties was either in the self-contained special education classroom or a special school. Many mainstream schools did not have special education classrooms, and learners with learning difficulties were excluded from mainstream schools and refused public education (Kirby, 2017). With landmark cases, such as the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, many advocacy groups began forming, to support the educational rights of learners with special needs, including those with learning difficulties. Public pressure on Congress to ensure rights for those with disabilities culminated in the formation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973 (Yell, 2016). Section 504 prohibits disability discrimination in any institution that receives federal funds. It was stipulated in this Section that all learners with special needs should be provided with an Individual Support Plan (ISP) and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). An ISP is a legally binding document, which must be created for all learners with special needs. The ISP describes the services and accommodations that the learner will receive in a mainstream school, regardless of whether they are in a special education classroom or a mainstream classroom. The LRE mandate requires that all learners be educated in the mainstream classroom with their peers (Yell, 2016).

While Inclusive Education has been identified as a priority in this country, its implementation can be quite challenging as many barriers continue to hamper the progress. For example, many mainstream school teachers agree that learners with learning difficulties benefit from both the mainstream education curriculum and interaction with their typically functioning peers (Kurth & Forber-Pratt, 2017). However, these mainstream school teachers do not wish to teach learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms, due to lack of sufficient training in Inclusive Education, specifically the adaptation of lesson materials (Allam & Martin, 2021). As a result, mainstream school teachers do not feel that they are competent enough to teach learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms (Allam & Martin, 2021; VanCleef, 2019). Furthermore, as mainstream school teachers lack special education

knowledge for implementing Inclusive Education, this compromises planning for academic instruction to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms. Planning the accommodations for learners with learning difficulties then limits the amount of time that they must focus on most of the learners in their classroom. Another challenge identified by mainstream teachers, is large classes. Large classes affect the education outcomes of learners with learning difficulties and compromise their inclusion as there is difficulty with accommodating them in mainstream activities (Faragher et al., 2021). Moreover, adaptations to lesson and assessment materials jeopardize the integrity of their teaching, and this causes teachers to be hesitant in making those changes (VanCleef, 2019).

Several studies have shown that mainstream teachers are severely underprepared to effectively implement Inclusive Education upon graduation, because coursework is heavily focused on disability definitions and relevant legislation, not inclusive practices specific to mainstream education content areas (VanCleef, 2019). The teacher training programmes and professional development opportunities are often criticized for not adequately preparing mainstream teachers for Inclusive Education (Kirby, 2017). This, therefore calls for more practicum experience in inclusive mainstream classrooms to provide mainstream teachers with tools, resources and support to effectively teach learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms.

In addition, disparities in the United States are also found within the mainstream schools where learners with learning difficulties from non-dominant groups (e.g. Native American and African American) are likely to be removed from the mainstream classrooms (De Bruin, 2019). These learners are also less likely to receive related and language services (Adler-Greene, 2019). They are less likely to enrol in higher education programs than their white peers (Bush et al., 2023). This implies that exclusion of learners with learning difficulties and discrimination still prevail in these mainstream schools.

2.3.1.3 Greece

In Greece, recent inclusive policy directives and advice offered to schools, strongly recommend cooperation between special and mainstream teachers in planning, preparing and diversifying instruction through sharing resources, solving problems, adapting learning materials and modifying curriculum content to facilitate the achievement of curriculum objectives for all learners. The special education teacher was seen as an important resource, thus meaningful cooperation between the mainstream and special education teacher was considered as a first step in implementing Inclusive Education (Paju et al., 2022). Therefore, there have been moves towards building closer links between mainstream and special schools or developing special schools into resource centres.

Special school teachers are also seen as the most experienced and qualified individuals to train mainstream teachers in classroom techniques that are appropriate for learners with learning difficulties. They provide support for the development and implementation of school-based inclusive practices. For example, collaboration between special school teachers and mainstream teachers has improved Inclusive Education implementation and is therefore recommended (Geleta, 2019). Special school teachers provided training to mainstream teachers. A reciprocal training and sharing approach was used, involving teachers from the special school visiting the mainstream schools, and teachers from the mainstream schools visiting the special school. During these training activities, teachers were invited into classrooms to observe and work with special school teachers and their learners. Mainstream teachers were able to witness special school teachers demonstrate strategies useful to support the learning of learners with learning difficulties. Special school teachers also provided training in the use of individual support plans to support learners with learning difficulties.

Mainstream teachers benefited a lot from this collaboration. As a result of the cooperative experiences, mainstream teachers were more inclined to create alternative lesson plans, such as converting a lesson into a learning game, or using other methods and strategies (e.g., songs). Working with a special teacher for a period of time, provided the mainstream teachers with the confidence to vary their practice rather than

continuing to use the same methods that they had been taught and previously used. A further benefit of the experience provided by working with the special school teachers was that the mainstream teachers learned that not only were the special school teaching techniques good for the learners with learning difficulties in the lesson, but that many of the techniques also improved learning for all classroom learners. Other countries could follow this approach when developing their training approaches or practices when implementing Inclusive Education for mainstream schools.

2.3.1.4 Georgia

In Georgia, all schools where learners with learning difficulties are registered have a special education teacher and a psychologist, but this is not sufficient, because learners are often not provided with the necessary help and services (Tchintcharauli & Javakhishvili, 2017). Learners with learning difficulties are solely the responsibility of a special school teacher. A special school teacher, who should facilitate the process of full inclusion, according to the law and the national curriculum, often appears to be the only teacher of a learner with learning difficulties in a specially equipped room at a mainstream school (Tchintcharauli & Javakhishvili, 2017). However, this does not correspond with full inclusion where learners with learning difficulties should be taught together with their peers. This implies that mainstream schools are not inclusive enough as a specially equipped room at a mainstream school promotes exclusion and discrimination of learners with learning difficulties. In addition, a special school teacher spending a few hours a day in classrooms leaves the mainstream teacher feeling overwhelmed and this has been a major barrier to effective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. Therefore, full-time employment of special education teachers is advocated to avoid overtaxing the mainstream teacher. When this is done, it may enable effective co-teaching between them.

2.3.2 National perspectives

As mentioned earlier by Van der Merwe et al. (2020), globally, the introduction of Inclusive Education in schools to accommodate learners with challenges has brought many reforms, both nationally and internationally. Inclusive Education aims to accommodate diverse learners in mainstream schools by ensuring that the gap of inequities existing in education systems, is not widened. From a national perspective, the section below presents how countries like Ghana, Swaziland, and Namibia have implemented Inclusive Education.

2.3.2.1 Ghana

The Government of Ghana, since independence, regards education as a fundamental human right for all its citizens and it has enshrined this right in the Legal Framework of Education (Ghana Education Service [GES], 2004). Negative cultural beliefs and societal attitudes toward persons with disabilities were major factors that contributed to the introduction of Inclusive Education (Mantey, 2017). As a result, three major legislations and a Special Education Policy Framework are significant to the Inclusive Education concept in Ghana. The broad objective of the Ghana Government's strategic plan was to provide equal educational opportunities for children and youth with special needs at pre-tertiary levels to promote access and participation, quality, and inclusion (National Strategic Plan [NSP], 2004). NSP (2004) mandates movement towards Inclusive Education and the provision of support to mainstream teachers and learners.

The Special Educational Needs Policy Framework (SENPF) is a special education policy regulatory framework that exclusively addresses the education of children with disabilities. This framework stipulates that education for children with disabilities should be free and compulsory. Learners with learning difficulties should be provided with an Individual Support Plan (ISP). The Education Act of 2008 addresses the general educational needs of the country with a special commitment to inclusive education. For the first time in Ghana's educational history, the Education Act of 2008 provided a working definition for not. This act defines Inclusive Education as the value system, that holds that all persons who attend an educational institution are entitled to equal access

to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education, and which transcends the idea of physical location, but incorporates the basic values that promote participation, friendship and interaction (Education Act of 2008).

In Ghana teachers have not been adequately informed and supported by the professionals with expertise to teach learners with learning difficulties in mainstream primary schools (Opoku et al., 2021). This adversely affected the implementation of Inclusive Education. Teachers overwhelmingly believe that Inclusive Education is impossible without addressing their needs for specialist resources and their overall belief is that without sufficient resources and support, Inclusive Education in Ghana is not possible and is doomed. Sub-Saharan Africa has a relatively low percentage of trained teachers in pre-primary, primary and secondary education (UN, 2017). As a result, teacher training institutions in Ghana have introduced courses in Inclusive Education to equip teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills to teach in diverse classrooms, and it has been argued that the services of special educators are essential when it comes to teaching learners with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms (Opoku, 2022). However, special educators expressed that they feel unprepared to work in mainstream schools, due to teacher resistance and inadequate teaching and learning materials (Opoku, 2022). Teacher resistance may be a result of not being trained in Inclusive Education implementation. In this sense, teachers in the study by Lopez-Gavira et al. (2021), highlighted that training would allow them to schedule the necessary curriculum adjustments in advance to meet the needs of their learners with learning difficulties. This suggests that universities in developing countries need to make a concerted effort to review their teacher preparation programs where they would revise existing pre-service programs to include more coursework and practicum, related to the education of learners with learning difficulties. Mainstream teachers, who are already teaching in schools, should be provided with adequate opportunities for professional development that will enable them to implement Inclusive Education.

2.3.2.2 Swaziland

At the time of independence from Britain in 1968, education in Swaziland was characterised by poor quality, uneven distribution of schools, high dropout and repeater rates, serious shortage of teachers, and inappropriate and highly academic curricula (Zulu, 2020). Like most developing countries, immediately after obtaining independence, Swaziland looked upon education as a main factor in nation-building and fulfilment of individual aspiration and needs. As a result, educational policies drawn in this country were based on social demands, rather than economic factors. The Government of Swaziland believed that education is an inalienable right of every child to receive, to the limit of his/her capabilities.

Because of the current trends in education, the Kingdom of Swaziland is now a signatory to policies on universal education that ensure high quality basic education for all. Education for all is a commitment to provide equal opportunities for all children and the youth as provided for in the Country's Constitution of 2005. The tone for the introduction of Inclusive Education in Swaziland was inevitably set by the new Constitution of 2005. Since then, several policies have been produced by the government, all aimed at providing equal education opportunities to all children in the country. These policies include the Swaziland National Children's Policy (2009), Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (2006) and Draft Inclusive Education Policy (2008). The Education for All (2010) is the policy that upon implementation became a stimulus for the introduction of Inclusive Education into mainstream schools; as a result, all teachers in the country's schools were expected to be competent enough to teach learners with learning difficulties. However, in-service teachers received inadequate staff development and training ahead of the implementation of Inclusive Education and most teachers were not professionally developed for Inclusive Education, as pre-service students at tertiary training level. As a result, mainstream teachers in Swaziland found the following major factors as barriers to the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools (Zwane & Malale, 2018). These include inadequate teacher training in Inclusive Education and in identifying learners with learning difficulties; teachers' lack

of competency to support learners with learning difficulties; lack of support for learners with learning difficulties; as well as lack of resources and non-inclusive curriculum.

Teachers need to be capacitated with inclusive pedagogical approaches that can help them to develop greater awareness and understanding of issues that affected learning by enabling them to develop multi-level instructions to deal with different learning difficulties. For example, a multi-sensory teaching approach in mainstream schools encouraged learners with dyslexia to determine their own learning strategies through using auditory, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic approaches aimed at visual, phonetic and physical skills development (Davis & Deponio, 2014). Also, the Universal Design for Learning approach, which refers to using a teaching strategy designed for all learners was found contributing towards self-efficacy of learners experiencing learning difficulties (Katz, 2015). However, mainstream teachers in Swaziland indicated that their training in Inclusive Education and in identifying learners with learning difficulties was inadequate (Zwane & Malale, 2018). Zwane and Malale (2018) found that out of 61 teachers in two schools where the study was conducted, only one teacher was holding a certificate in Inclusive Education and one was still studying towards attaining her Inclusive Education Bachelor's Degree. This implies that teachers in Swaziland lack understanding of Inclusive Education and this negatively impacted on its implementation.

In addition, it is very important to adapt and differentiate the curriculum. This is because when the difference is accommodated through a variety of teaching strategies, classroom activities, flexible curriculum and active participation of all learners, it enables them to achieve academically (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). This continues to motivate them to engage and apply themselves to their learning. However, learners with learning difficulties often get excluded from the education system (Mishra et al., 2018). As a result, many of these learners drop out from school early (Naicker, 2018). This can be attributed to the teachers' lack of competency to support learners with learning difficulties, lack of support for learners with learning difficulties and non-inclusive curriculum when it comes to Swaziland. However, it was felt not appropriate that the Ministry of Education and Training in Swaziland was mainstreaming Inclusive Education, but still using a curriculum that was not designed to be inclusive. The current

curriculum used in this country does not recognise the diversity of learners and their needs in the classroom (Zwane & Malale, 2018). This implies that a non-inclusive curriculum indeed hinders efforts towards Inclusive Education implementation and has a negative impact towards it. It is also important to acknowledge the expressed critique of differentiation that it is good on paper, but implementation is hard to achieve. As a result, research by de Jager (2017) and Onyishi & Sefotho (2020) affirms that a total of 97% of teachers never or seldom use a flexible curriculum and extra time to accommodate the diverse learning needs of learners.

Therefore, it is advisable for the National Curriculum Centre of Swaziland to redesign the country's curriculum to accommodate learning needs for learners with learning difficulties. This is because, while Swaziland has promulgated sound policies to allow for effective mainstreaming of inclusive education, the barriers have emerged as challenges. Also, the establishment of district-based support teams to liaise with schools in teacher training and Inclusive Education support matters in schools, could help eliminate barriers facing implementation of Inclusive Education in Swaziland (Zwane & Malale, 2018).

2.3.2.3 Namibia

Following the ratification of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, the Namibian Ministry of Education undertook a comprehensive education reform process that was aimed at access, equity, democracy and lifelong learning as the principal means of investing in human capital to promote socio-economic development (Chitiyo et al., 2016). The reform process would enable government to respond to challenges of the 21st century. It would also help in the development of a knowledge-based society, and therefore becoming a driving force of what is contained in the Vision 2030 National Document that emphasises education as a priority.

In 2009, the Deputy Minister of Education launched an education project called Edulink as a way of supporting the concept of the Inclusive Education Policy. The Minister of Education approved and continued to support a number of legislations in support of

Inclusive Education. This happened through the development of projects, such as Education for All (EFA), the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme, Education Sector Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children and the Draft National Policy on Inclusive Education. This was done to show government's commitment to an Inclusive Education Policy. Education Management Information System (EMIS) was also revised to include all data on various disabilities.

The National Policy on Inclusive Education emphasized the provision of education to all children, regardless of their individual differences, based on the fundamental principles of Inclusive Education in all spheres of life (Chitiyo et al., 2016). As a result, Namibia educates learners with learning difficulties along a continuum of service-provision, which includes special schools, mainstream schools, partial-inclusion, and full-inclusion (Chitiyo et al., 2016). This continuum of service-provision indicates that exclusion of learners with learning difficulties still prevails in Namibia. Learners with learning difficulties are not learning in one mainstream inclusive class, some are in special schools, while others are partially included.

Research indicates that Namibia encounters challenges in implementing Inclusive Education. These challenges include limited qualified teachers to support learners with learning difficulties, negative teacher attitudes and lack of resources (human and physical (Chitiyo et al., 2019).

The challenge of limited qualified teachers could be attributed to the fact that there are not enough Inclusive Education teacher training workshops (Chitiyo et al., 2015). This is an obstacle for Inclusive Education implementation. Broad support for Inclusive Education exists, as indicated by UNESCO documents and the Salamanca Statement, but there is less clarity on what Inclusive Education means in practice. As a result, Namibian teachers have been identified as having limited understanding of what Inclusive Education is all about (Alzahrani, 2020). They are unable to identify learners with learning difficulties. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that although the teachers faced many obstacles to the success of learners with learning difficulties, which could influence their commitment (Nilholm, 2021), they still wanted to grow and learn more. The teachers shared that they wanted to learn more to meet their learners' diverse

needs better. Teachers need training on how to teach learners with learning difficulties. They specifically need to be trained in organizing their teaching and in instructional methods, which suggests training to hone one's own skill as a teacher. Teachers recognized that all learners could benefit from the teachers' additional training in these topics, which allows the teachers to improve educational outcomes for both learners with and without learning difficulties in inclusive settings (Chitiyo et al., 2019). This implies that a training need was the ability to differentiate and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties.

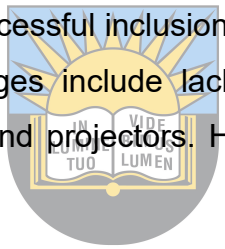
Therefore, Chitiyo et al. (2015) argue that all Namibian mainstream teachers require to take at least one Inclusive Education course as part of their pre-service training. However, due to the number of Inclusive Education special skills that teachers need to master, taking one course may not be adequate to prepare highly qualified teachers for learners with learning difficulties. This is because preparing teachers adequately in terms of Inclusive Education is necessary to improve educational outcomes for learners with learning difficulties. In addition to requiring all mainstream teachers to take special and Inclusive Education courses, as part of their pre-service training, Chitiyo et al. (2015) suggest that the Namibian Government could organize professional development in Inclusive Education and make it a requirement for all in-service teachers.

Furthermore, during training workshops, teachers should participate collectively and actively in the process and not just be passive recipients of knowledge. This is because teachers' active participation is an essential element for effective training workshops. Unfortunately, many training workshop planning efforts do not seem to involve the teachers for whom the training is designed (Archibald et al., 2011). More specifically, teachers in African countries are seldom involved in designing their own training workshops, and this is a situation that may compromise the efficacy of such efforts. This clearly shows that training workshop designers are failing to do a needs analysis before conducting workshops. This makes their workshops irrelevant to the needs of the teachers. Therefore, this calls for the need to include teachers in the process of designing their training workshops, and a need to specialize support to the targeted

needs of the schools. Furthermore, these training workshops should also not be a one-time event, but should be spread over time.

Attitudes towards disabilities, still tend to be negative in Namibia. Teachers are against Inclusive Education (Chitiyo et al., 2019). They pointed out that class sizes were already large, and it was difficult to accommodate learners with learning difficulties with such large classes (Chitiyo et al., 2019). Teachers also mentioned that learners with learning difficulties may be ostracized and become victims of bullying or discrimination. Negative teacher attitudes towards Inclusive Education in Namibia seem to be a hindrance towards the effective implementation of Inclusive Education.

Another challenge that Namibia is faced with, is a glaring lack of resources, both human and material, to facilitate the successful learning of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools (Chitiyo et al., 2019). Teachers identified classroom materials to support instruction as needs for successful inclusion of learners with learning difficulties. These classroom material challenges include lack of technological needs, such as computers, TVs, screens, tablets and projectors. Human resource was identified as a challenge.



The challenges prevented learners with learning difficulties to achieve their full potential and this contributed to their social exclusion (Barnamala, 2015). Thus, this may have a negative impact in the implementation of Inclusive Education. Having discussed Inclusive Education challenges and highlights of various countries when implementing Inclusive Education, the next section discusses these in the context of South Africa.

2.3.3 South African perspective

Prior to 1994, in South Africa, apartheid education produced a dual system of education, that is, mainstream and special education components characterized by racial disparity. Learners in South Africa were not only educated separately, according to race, but a separate special education system existed for learners with barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties (Spaull, 2015). This impacted to the exclusion of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools. The main

challenge encountered by post-liberation South Africa. is achieving the constitutional values of equality and civil rights. Fundamental is the right to equality in basic education for every learner, as well as for those who experience barriers to learning, specifically learning difficulties. Due to the prevailing situation of exclusion, education support services consequently needed to be strengthened so that different needs of all learners can be catered for. As a result, in 1996 the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed to investigate the situation of learners with special needs and support services (Swart & Pettipher, 2016).

The Commission and Committee pointed out that the strong emphasis on a medical model approach to special needs education, support services and learners with learning difficulties in the past, had failed to describe the nature of learning needs, which are regarded as special (DoE, 1997). Within the medical model, disability was seen as a departure from human normality with a resultant restriction in abilities to perform tasks. Professionals within education support services were focused on individualistic intervention (Naicker, 2018). No attempt was made to establish the deficiencies of the system of which the education system may itself be a barrier to learning (DoE, 2001). The major challenges on this were that many learners experiencing barriers to learning were dropped out and others were mainstreamed by default. This means that learners with learning difficulties were excluded from receiving professional learning support. This implies that this segregated and fragmented education system needs to be addressed to bring education practice in South Africa in line with international trends, which focus on inclusion of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream classes. Therefore, the DoE embarked on policy reviews and policy changes to ensure equal, non-discriminatory access to education for all (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). These changes resulted in the promulgation of the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 (RSA, 1996b). One of the key features of SASA is the affirmation of the right of equal access to basic and quality education for all learners, without discrimination whatsoever.

In response to the Salamanca Statement and framework on special needs education, the DoE introduced the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education. The

Education White Paper 6 addresses the building of a single and inclusive system of education. The White paper 6 focuses on social justice for all learners, human rights, a healthy environment, participation, social integration and redress, equal and equitable access to education, community responsiveness and cost effectiveness (DoE, 2001). Inclusive Education aimed to transform the practice of supporting learners, who experience barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties (DoE, 2001). School communities were therefore obliged by law to promote equity and redress in their education programmes (RSA, 1996a; 1996b).

The National Planning Commission, Republic of South Africa (2011) reaffirmed its vision for education to ensure that all learners can access and benefit from high quality education. It stated that flexible services ought to be available, accessible and responsive to the needs of learners, particularly those of the most vulnerable learners who live in poverty or with learning difficulties. The Ministry believes that for effective implementation of Inclusive Education, the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training, lies in a strengthened education support service. Then education support services in South Africa underwent drastic changes when the Inclusive Education system was introduced with the intent to alter the practice of supporting learners who experience barriers to learning. For this reason, schools in South Africa are categorised into three sections, that is, special schools as resource centres, full-service schools and mainstream schools. Following is a brief discussion of these school categories and the way they work in providing support to teachers.

2.3.3.1 Special schools

Special schools are schools equipped to deliver a specialised education programme to learners requiring access to high-intensive education and other support, either on a full-time or a part-time basis. Special schools are perceived as a source of expertise, where sharing of resources and ideas contribute to enriching the capacity of the teachers in the mainstream schools. The primary responsibilities of special schools, amongst other things, is to be integrated into mainstream schools so that they can provide specialised professional support and resources to mainstream school teachers with regard to early

identification, curriculum, assessment and instruction modifications. However, other districts from the Eastern Cape have no special schools (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). As a result, the enrolment of learners with learning difficulties for preparation purposes to special schools in other districts, or those far from their homes, complicates collaboration between mainstream teachers and the special school teachers. This is because the distances between mainstream schools and special schools limit accessibility for teachers from mainstream schools, because of travelling and financial obstacles. In addition, the distance between special schools and mainstream schools, disadvantage teachers from gaining more knowledge and skills from these schools in supporting learners who experience barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties and the sharing of resources is hindered (Tones et al., 2017).

It is envisaged that teachers at these schools could run a training workshop in their district for other teachers in the mainstream schools on how to provide additional support in the classroom. Hedegaard-Soerensen, Jensen and Tofteng, (2018) allude to an interdisciplinary collaboration and a few strategies that may be valuable in the support of teachers in mainstream schools by special school teachers. These include visits to special schools to observe and gain practical, hands-on experience; peer coaching; activities, such as co-planning, study groups, problem-solving and curriculum development, training workshops and conferences, giving guidance to institution level support teams.

There is evidence that special schools did not fulfil any of the functions they are meant to address, and this is because special school teachers complained about lack of support that makes it difficult for them to serve as resources to mainstream teachers (Hedegaard-Soerensen, Jensen & Tofteng, 2018). This implies that special schools do not have the capacity to meet the needs of all South Africa's learners with learning difficulties. Special school teachers also require strong, on-going leadership and support to enable them to fulfil their new roles and responsibilities. Therefore, special school teachers, as part of district-based support teams, impacted on the ineffectiveness of Inclusive Education implementation. As already discussed, another category of schools to be discussed is full-service schools.

2.3.3.2 Full-service schools

Full-service schools are the ordinary schools that are specially resourced and orientated to address a full range of barriers to learning in an Inclusive Education setting (DoE, 2014). According to the DoE (2001), learners that require moderate support, are placed in full-service schools. Full-service schools share their expertise and provide leadership in a cluster of schools on Inclusive Education matters. Full-service schools should provide support in the school to learners and teachers by means of competent and experienced support teachers (DoE, 2002). Full-service schools are also required to provide support to the neighbouring schools with knowledge, information, and assistive devices, regarding barriers to learning and work in close collaboration with the district-based support teams to coordinate support. However, teachers seem to be generally reluctant to take ownership of full-service schools (Mfuthwana, 2016). They have all kind of excuses as to why they are unable to do it. Some mention that including learners with barriers to learning in their classrooms, will lower the academic standard of the school. These teachers also seem to be overwhelmed with a lot of work and have negative attitudes towards Inclusive Education. Some claim that their classroom sizes make it almost impossible to be inclusive, let alone supporting teachers from mainstream schools. This means that full-service teachers perceive themselves as incompetent to provide support services to learners with learning difficulties and mainstream teachers. This could be attributed to the fact that they are not properly prepared and trained to teach in an inclusive classroom and support mainstream teachers at the same time.

The literature suggests that discriminatory practices still prevail in full-service schools. Learners with learning difficulties are still referred, and then placed in a separate classroom known as 'classroom for learners with special educational needs' (ELSEN) within the school and provided with an ELSEN number (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). This is despite the key principle that formed the foundation of full-service schools that the medical deficit approach was not to be applied anymore, since it promotes a discriminatory practice of stigmatisation and labelling (DBE, 2010; DoE, 2001). In fact,

the categorisation of schools in South Africa indicates that, despite this strongly stated position on the socially constructed nature of difference, White Paper 6 still depended on a deficit approach when support for diverse educational needs was proposed. It distinguished between learners with low-intensive support, who will receive support in mainstream schools, learners with moderate support requirements, who will be accommodated in full-service schools, and learners who require high-intensive educational support, who will continue to be accommodated in special schools as resource centres (DoE, 2001). This means that the constructs of full-service schools and special schools as resource centres, hampers the development of truly inclusive schools and that all schools should be inclusive and provide for all needs.

2.3.3.3 Mainstream schools

A mainstream school refers to a school educating learners with diverse learning needs in regular classes. Mainstreaming is the educational equivalent of the normalisation principle, which suggest that people with disabilities have a right to life experiences that are the same as, or like, those of others in society (DoE, 2001). The focus of this study is on mainstream schools, because it is where the mainstream teachers suffer a lot in dealing with learners, who are experiencing difficulties when learning. Since the adoption of White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), the DoE has introduced the Policy of Inclusion to mainstream schools in South Africa. This means that learners with barriers to learning now have a right to be included in the mainstream schools. This inclusion brings with it several changes in educational practice, which includes adaptation and curriculum differentiation. Curriculum adaptation is presented as a strategy for ensuring effective curriculum delivery to all learners, particularly learners with learning difficulties. Adaptation refers broadly to modification and/or adjustment of lessons, activities and materials, to make them suitable for different learner needs. Differentiation on the other hand, offers a variety of ways of dealing with learners who differ in abilities, knowledge and skills to access a shared curriculum. Differentiation is based on a set of beliefs that learners, who are of the same age, differ in their readiness to learn, their interests, their style of learning and their life circumstances. The differences in learners are significant

enough to make a major impact on what learners need to learn, the pace at which they need to learn, and the support they need from the teachers and others to learn it well. As per the DoE (2010), learners learn best when supportive adults push them slightly beyond where they can work without assistance.

Teachers in mainstream schools need to have special skills, like individualization, adaptation and differentiation of the curriculum, to effectively carry out the process of teaching and learning with the different learners that they have in their mainstream classrooms. They are now responsible for planning lessons in such a way that they range from the most basic level to the most complex level. They need to plan lessons and activities that are more accommodative to the different learners that they have in their mainstream classrooms. However, teachers' initial training never catered for learners with different learning needs. Teachers were trained to teach learners who do not experience learning difficulties. This curriculum adaptation and differentiation have become a challenge to the teachers, as they do not have enough knowledge and special skills to deal with such learners in their classes, due to their initial training (Tiwari et al., 2015). Consequently, teachers are unable to plan a multi-level instruction. Multi-level instruction is an approach that assumes the principles of individualization, flexibility and inclusion for all learners, regardless of their personal skill levels. For example, teachers being expected to plan for three learners; the best, average and poor performing learner, instead of one learner, that is, the average performing learner. There could be various reasons contributing to the challenges that teachers from mainstream schools experience when implementing Inclusive Education, for example, teachers not having received any training on Inclusive Education implementation, no monitoring mechanisms in place to offer support to teachers when the need arise, and the manner in which teachers got to know about National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SAIS).

SAIS was formed and launched to help teachers with the process of screening, identifying, assessing and supporting learners, experiencing barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms in South Africa in 2008. SAIS aimed to overhaul the process of identifying, assessing and providing programmes for all learners, requiring additional

support to enhance participation and Inclusive Education (DoE, 2008). This SAIS document consists of Support Needs Assessment (SNA) forms. The SNA forms outline protocols to be followed in identifying and addressing barriers to learning that affect individuals throughout their school careers. Due to the duration of the workshop teachers attended on SIAS, they are unable to screen, identify, assess and support learners. As a result, teachers are still left unsure and struggling to cope with the demands of implementing different inclusive policies. Teachers all argued for the importance of adequate training and for appropriate support systems to be put in place to alleviate the challenges of inclusive education implementation (Hess, 2020; Matolo & Rambuda, 2022).

To successfully implement Inclusive Education anywhere in the world, teachers must have adequate training, sufficient support and positive attitudes (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). This is because new inclusive policies are too demanding for teachers, as they challenge their existing schemas about best practices in the education of learners with learning difficulties. The presence of diverse learners with learning difficulties has portrayed the need for teachers to rethink relevant and research-based instructional strategies and practices that will enable them to meet the varying needs of the diverse learners (Suprayogi et al., 2017. This places an increased responsibility on the teacher who has to diversify instructional content, methods, materials and assessment strategies, through the use of differentiated instruction to accommodate all learners and help them maximize their potential. However, mainstream teachers are severely underprepared to effectively implement Inclusive Education (VanCleef, 2019). This resulted in the implementation of the Inclusive Education challenge. Therefore, the lack of training, skills and experience among mainstream teachers, seem to be the most important negative factor, affecting the implementation of Inclusive Education (Ntsholo, 2017).

In addition, mainstream teachers are the primary resource for achieving the goal of Inclusive Education. This implies that teachers need to refine their knowledge and skills or develop new ones. Teachers need specific competencies and skills to identify and teach learners with learning difficulties. To acquire these skills, teachers require

adequate support from all structures, including specialists in the form of staff development, in-service education and adequate training. Staff development, in-service education, and adequate training of teachers, will enhance the successful implementation of inclusive education. However, these teachers seem to be under the impression that they do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to affect the major changes and adaptations to classroom practice that are needed to fully accommodate all learners, regardless of their difficulties. As a result, İlik and Sarı (2017) found that teachers have shortcomings in almost every stage of the ISP development process and no comprehensive in-service training program was found that had been designed to eliminate these shortcomings. Hence, they experience challenges when implementing Inclusive Education.

Furthermore, according to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2000) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2011), learners who experience learning difficulties in mainstream schools, must be taught the same curriculum as their mainstream counterparts. To overcome this barrier of teaching the same curriculum to learners with and without learning difficulties, the curriculum must be differentiated, and the assessment standards modified to support learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools. However, how this must be done is not spelled out clearly in the Education White Paper 6 (2001) or the NCS (2000) or CAPS (2011). Teachers in mainstream schools have been left on their own to design support programmes for learners, who experience learning difficulties and to differentiate the curriculum (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). This is a challenge to mainstream teachers, as they are incapable of designing such support programmes. To advance the policy of Inclusive Education, which many African nations have embraced, African governments could require all mainstream teachers to take compulsory Inclusive Education courses as part of their pre-service teacher preparation (Siddik & Kawai, 2020). For teachers to be able to effectively implement Inclusive Education, support mechanisms need to be in place. Therefore, the next section discusses supporting teachers to implement Inclusive Education.

2.4 Support for implementing Inclusive Education

This section discusses the roles of district-based support teams in supporting teachers to feel more equipped and competent in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream classes. In 2001, White Paper 6, Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 2001), and in 2005, Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: District Based Support Teams (DBSTs) (DoE, 2005), provided guiding principles on how district-based support teams should function within an Inclusive Education system. The primary function of these district–based support teams is to deliver an integrated professional support service at district and school levels (DoE 2001; DoE, 2005). These roles, amongst others, include on-site support visits, which encompasses school-based training workshops, district-based training workshops (PCG, 2010) and the establishment of ILSTs.

2.4.1 On-site support visits

On-site support visits are an ongoing developmental process, which involves supporting teachers in a transparent manner at school and classroom level (PCG, 2007). For this study, an on-site support visit is an essential component to ensure that effective Inclusive Education is implemented at classroom level. During an on-site support visit, the teaching and learning process is supported through training. Teachers are trained in how to design, implement and evaluate the educational programs, based on the learners' assessed needs. All mainstream school teachers are empowered with a new and extended body of knowledge and the skills required to successfully implement Inclusive Education. On-site support visits are relevant to Inclusive Education, because for Inclusive Education to be implemented effectively, the teachers need to be supported at school level to ensure that they understand Inclusive Education and implement it according to the required standards.

The purpose of conducting on-site support visits is to provide support to teachers by visiting schools and classrooms, targeting certain activities for continuous growth and development. When conducting on-site support visits, members of district-based

support teams, visit the schools to do a needs analysis first. Thereafter, they visit the school again to render the support needed by the teachers as informed by the identified needs. Needs analysis helps the district-based support teams to know exactly the intervention strategies they can use to support teachers to effectively implement Inclusive Education. Literature suggests that the lack of needs analysis and on-going specialised support services need to be addressed within a comprehensive development plan (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). For example, in South Africa, the district-based support teams have been entrusted with this responsibility to ensure effective implementation of Inclusive Education. However, Abongdia et al. (2015), revealed that there is inadequate visitation of schools by the district-based support teams. Schools are visited less often. Some schools are visited once a year, though according to Provincial Curriculum Guidelines, schools are supposed to be visited regularly (PCG, 2007). Inadequate school visits were attributed to financial cost and lack of transport by the district personnel. These school visits are sometimes conducted only for administrative purposes and not necessarily in terms of rendering support to the teachers when mediating learning (Abongdia et al., 2015).This implies that there is a need for constant visits to schools by the district-based support teams so that they have full knowledge of what is taking place in schools and if there are identified challenges, they offer the necessary support. District-based support teams also need to identify successes and challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education and address teachers' needs in terms of planning and assessment (PCG, 2007).

In an inclusive classroom, planning and assessment should be accommodative of all learners in the class, hence multi-level instruction needs to be used. As mentioned earlier, multi-level instruction advocates for one lesson with varying methods of learning, teaching and assessment. Multi-level instruction in an inclusive classroom enables full participation of learners with learning difficulties. The lesson must include a variety of teacher techniques, aimed at reaching learners at all levels. When planning lesson presentations in an inclusive classroom, learners' different learning styles are considered. Another important element is to ensure that when teaching learners with diverse needs, teachers need to adjust their expectations to allow learners to choose

methods they prefer when learning. This might ensure that learners with learning difficulties are not excluded from learning (PCG, 2007).

The purpose of on-site support visits can be achieved by using a variety of intervention strategies (PCG, 2007), such as demonstration lessons; cooperative planning; team teaching; whole-school workshops; and lesson observation. When these intervention strategies are applied in an inclusive environment, teachers in mainstream schools would be able to adapt the curriculum to accommodate learners' diverse needs and this may have a positive impact on the implementation of Inclusive Education. When demonstrating lessons, a district-based support team member or a teacher delivers a lesson for teachers in the school to observe and thereafter the district-based support team engages with teachers in a mini-workshop or directed discussion about the lesson. With cooperative planning, opportunities are created for planning processes to be modelled and reinforced to build confidence in teachers. Teachers working cooperatively results in improved learning outcomes for learners, as their expertise is shared and this leads to effective and continuous professional development (Waitoller, 2020). Team-teaching works best when a process of co-operative planning has preceded the teaching of the lesson. In this way, it is possible to teach – reflect – revise, and then teach again. Tancredi et al. (2020) mentioned that teachers generally find co-teaching advantageous for learners with learning difficulties. Intervention strategies need to cater for the individual needs of the school and be part of the schools' wider plan for improvement (Nel et al., 2016). In addition, a slow, school-by-school approach is recommended as being effective to change teacher-classroom practices to improve learner outcomes (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002 in Nel et al., 2016). The whole-school workshop is recommended for a school that wishes to develop its own teaching and learning policies, as well as strategies where use of lesson differentiation in the classroom needs to be in place. This is because creating inclusive policies and developing inclusive practices, are crucial in the implementation of Inclusive Education (Ainscow, 2020). Lastly, lesson observation happens in instances where the district-based support team member observes a few lessons in the school. This helps to support the implementation of new skills or teaching methods, as well as observing the Inclusive Education being implemented.

During on-site support visits, on-site support training workshops at either individual school level or school cluster level on identified needs, are provided. On-site training workshops offer teachers new information on a particular aspect of their work. Identified specific needs by individual schools and specific aspects of teaching practice, such as instructional strategies are also addressed. Instructional strategies include adaptation, differentiation and individualisation.

On-site training workshops are those training activities engaged in by school teachers, school management teams and district-based support teams, following their initial professional certification. The aim of such workshops is to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to educate all learners more effectively. District-based support teams are the people who are responsible for continuously organising these on-site training workshops. Siddik and Kawai (2020) are of the view that for inclusive teaching to succeed, teachers need logical and intensive training either as part of initial training or as well-planned in-service training by competent and knowledgeable people. Forlin and Sin (2017) concur that, while a variety of existing practices ranging from on-site support to system-wide approaches are employed globally, identifying which to use must be grounded in the context and specific needs of individual teachers and schools. Also, a system approach is critical to effective training, whereby district-based support teams provide a realistic longitudinal plan to upskill mainstream school teachers in inclusive education implementation, using initially district-based training workshops, followed by on-site training workshops. Therefore, without a coherent plan for on-site training workshops, the attempts to include these learners with learning difficulties in the mainstream, will be difficult. This is because in an inclusive classroom, teachers are expected to change their existing schemas to fit in learners with learning difficulties in teaching and learning. Thus, for teachers to be able to implement Inclusive Education effectively, they need to know and understand the Inclusive Education Policy. Teachers need to be able to plan lessons that accommodate the diverse learning styles of all learners. This means during on-site training workshops, teachers need to be trained on how to adapt and differentiate the curriculum to be accommodative of the diverse needs of learners.

On-site training workshops have been identified as one avenue to provide teachers with additional knowledge and skills that promote teacher confidence and commitment to their positions (Siddik & Kawai, 2020). Teachers in all schools deal with learners with diverse needs in inclusive contexts. Hence, on-site training workshops, and continuing assessment of teachers' needs must take place at the school level (DoE, 2001). Literature suggests that on-site training workshops for teachers can influence the effective implementation of Inclusive Education (Siddik & Kawai, 2020). As the district-based support teams are the people to support any curriculum endeavours, they, therefore, need to ensure that they strengthen the on-site training that they provide to teachers in schools.

The Inclusive Education Policies, such as White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), conceptual and operational guidelines for District-Based Support Teams (DoE, 2005), envisaged that one of the key strategies to be employed in minimising barriers to learning would be through the ongoing assessment of teachers' needs, followed by structured programmes to meet those needs. This means on-site training workshops are those structured programmes that are informed by challenges teachers face when implementing Inclusive Education at a particular school. These challenges include understanding Inclusive Education and the inability to adapt and differentiate the curriculum. Therefore, district-based support teams need to find out the challenges that teachers encounter when implementing Inclusive Education, so that the support provided, meets the challenges that teachers identified. In addition, the district-based support teams are expected to follow up on all cases referred to them by the teachers, and to provide the appropriate feedback. This may prevent the provision of superfluous support to the teachers that challenge them when implementing Inclusive Education.

Teacher orientation and on-site training workshops are the responsibility of district-based support teams. District-based support teams need to ensure that teachers develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of policies, as well as through on-site training to effectively implement Inclusive Education. When teachers thoroughly know and understand the Inclusive Education Policy, they will feel more confident in implementing Inclusive Education. Learners with learning difficulties will fully participate

in mainstream education. However, most South African teachers have difficulties with creating a classroom atmosphere where they can effectively execute differentiated teaching activities (Walton et al., 2014). These teachers feel threatened by practices of Inclusive Education implementation. Furthermore, Nel et al. (2016) revealed that even if teachers had done an additional Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Learner Support, they were still not confident about their own level of professional knowledge and were not sure how they should support learners with learning difficulties effectively. They were only able to identify learners with learning difficulties. It is therefore a challenge for the DoE to equip teachers with skills to strengthen their belief in themselves.

There is enough evidence from the literature that suggest that when teachers are sufficiently equipped with knowledge, and supported by other professionals, their confidence levels to work with all learners in inclusive classrooms, improves (Onyishi, & Sefotho, 2020). Given that learners with learning difficulties are placed in mainstream education classrooms, mainstream school teachers now have federally mandated responsibilities to these learners. Mainstream school teachers are now increasingly required to design, implement and evaluate the educational programs based on the learners' assessed needs (Van der Merwe, Fourie & Yoro, 2020). This implies that new and an extended body of knowledge and skills are required for all mainstream school teachers to successfully implement Inclusive Education. Therefore, teachers need to be given opportunities for continuing professional development by the district-based support teams, throughout their employment. This usually occurs through training workshops at district level.

2.4.2 District-based training workshop

Training workshop plays a very important role in a teacher's development and education. However, national standards for teacher training workshops are often inadequate (Page et al., 2019; Sharma & Michael, 2017). Teacher training workshops for mainstream teachers rarely prepare teachers for working in diverse classrooms and do not equip them with the confidence, knowledge and skills to effectively support

learners with learning difficulties. This is a key reason why so many learners with learning difficulties remain out of school or excluded from the learning process within school (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). Literature revealed that there is a global shortage of teachers, particularly those who are sufficiently trained and motivated to include learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools (Zagona et al., 2017; Zulu, 2020). Yet, such inclusion is vital for achieving Education for All goals and bringing the millions of currently excluded learners into education. This indicates that teachers are not professionally trained to implement Inclusive Education. As a result, the quality of education for learners with learning difficulties attending mainstream schools, is unsatisfactory. For example, many learners with learning difficulties cannot read and write a single word even after several years in school. This is evident to Statistics South Africa's (2016) statement that learners are unable to perform academically, to such an extent that they find education useless and drop out from school. This implies that teachers lack the important skills and knowledge needed to support learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms and felt overwhelmed with the challenges. Hence, Monteiro et al. (2019) declare that teachers need to know how to provide instructional adaptations and modifications to support learners with learning difficulties. Therefore, teachers are in dire need of support to develop special skills, experience and confidence to be inclusive of all learners.

In most parts of the world, most training workshops are short, unrelated to the needs of teachers, and ineffective in teaching knowledge (Siddik & Kawai, 2020). When workshops are conducted, especially in many developing countries, they are often through the cascade approach. This approach has been chosen, because of its cost-effectiveness. With this approach, the first generation of teachers who have been trained, become trainers to minimise expenses (Revina et al., 2020). This entails training the trainer to ensure that knowledge is transferred from experts and specialists to the teachers. In addition, this approach is popular, as it manages to reach many participants in a short time. However, the cascade approach has been widely criticised as inadequate for delivering effective training (Moulakdi & Bouchamma, 2020). This is because when the intended message is transmitted to the next level, the chances of crucial information being misinterpreted, are high. In addition, these misinterpretations

could not be corrected without the training specialists being present (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). Moreover, Moulakdi and Bouchamma (2020) identified a once-off, two-day training workshop through the cascade approach as a constraint for teachers' readiness to accept the challenge of accommodating learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms. In supporting this, Ahsan et al. (2016) argue that 4.5 hours of training time on Inclusive Education is not enough to learn how to teach learners with learning difficulties in a mainstream school.

The cascade training workshops do not allow teachers to be actively involved in their development or reflect on their teaching experiences. These workshops did not adequately address the teachers' training needs and expectations. This is because this model of training is not suitable to improve teaching practices in the context (Moulakdi & Bouchamma, 2020). As a result, teachers have negative attitudes towards training workshops (Dreyer, 2017). This is because teachers feel that they do not acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, which would allow them to appropriately address diversity in their classrooms. It is for that reason that Bett (2016) argue that the traditional approach of conducting one-time workshops through the cascade approach, is ineffective. This implies that special education training for teachers in inclusive school settings should be done as whole school training so that all the school teachers know how to facilitate learning for learners with learning difficulties. All school teachers should be supportive of all learners with learning difficulties without preferential treatment.

As mentioned in the South African Education White paper 6, the district-based support teams are expected to support teachers to feel more equipped and be competent in their roles to address barriers to learning. District-based support teams conducted training workshops through the cascade approach. This could be attributed to the challenge of human resource shortage. Two teachers per school were taken for Inclusive Education training workshops by the district-based support teams. These workshops lasted for only two days and yet, teachers are expected to cascade the training workshops to other teachers in their respective schools and implement the Inclusive Education Policy. Consequently, teachers were found to have limited knowledge and skills to develop appropriate learning-teaching activities, and these were

barriers in getting them to embrace the idea of including all learners in their classrooms (Forlin & Sin, 2017). Literature also suggests that after the teachers returned to their classrooms from workshops and conferences, there are no significant changes in their practice (Luningo, 2015). It is difficult for teachers to implement what they have been trained for in their respective classrooms. This implies that even though district-based support teams are in place and perform their specific duties, as mentioned in White Paper 6, the provision of effective support to mainstream school teachers remains a challenge. Teachers were evidently not being fully supported (DoE, 2015). Hence, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) indicated a need to bridge the gap between teachers' current skill levels and those needed to implement effective Inclusive Education programs. Therefore, mainstream school teachers should be provided with adequate opportunities to develop themselves professionally through training workshops. This means that the one short workshop would not appear to be the answer. Rather, ongoing intensive training workshop opportunities should be made available to mainstream school teachers to capacitate them with the necessary skills for implementing Inclusive Education.

Therefore, despite the development of implementation guidelines since 2007, there are still challenges with complex contextual issues, such as irrelevance of EWP 6 to CAPS and inadequate training of teachers, which resulted in teachers not understanding the Inclusive Education Policy, unable to adapt and differentiate the curriculum.

Literature has indicated that teachers have benefited from training workshops, which form part of a long-term systemic staff development plan, rather than from single short-term programs (Forlin & Sin, 2017). In addition, there are cases that show that when workshops are accompanied by other types of professional development, such as university classes, online courses, special educator's weekly newsletters, to mention but a few, they can be successful. This is because support is a continuous process of growth and learning. Lack of adequate continuing training workshops is a source of stress, more especially in the context of diverse populations (de Jager, 2017). This means that teachers will only be able to implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream classrooms when they are effectively trained. This indicates that although

teachers had been prepared for Inclusive Education, they still need intensive ongoing training that would enable them to work confidently in inclusive educational settings (Luningo, 2015). This is because the predominant mode of training workshops for most teachers, is still once-off workshops that are often not focused on how to implement Inclusive Education. As a result, Ahsan et al. (2016) conclude that teacher training is insufficient, because trainings received by teachers are too short and sometimes are not customised according to the needs of the teachers. This puts teachers in a difficult position when implementing Inclusive Education practises in their schools (Luningo, 2015).

Furthermore, given the nature of existing training workshops for teachers that focuses on general education, the need for access to specialist training about Inclusive Education was reasoned critical (Sharma & Michael, 2017). This implies that teachers need training workshops that are related to teaching in inclusive classrooms, as well as on the underpinning philosophy of the policy. Learners' dropout rate and mainstreaming by default, consequently make teachers to perceive themselves as incompetent and lack skills to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. This could be the result of not being trained in Inclusive Education in their initial training and poor in-service training. Onyishi and Sefotho (2020) argue that if we are to reignite progress towards quality basic education for all, then mainstream teachers need to be prepared to meet the learning and participation needs of learners with learning difficulties. To do this, mainstream school teachers need to be given appropriate initial training, ongoing training and professional development, and ongoing access to adequate high-quality support and advice from specialist personnel.

The DoE committed itself to education for all and fostered the development of Inclusive Education where all learners would participate as equal members of society. However, little has been done to prepare the teachers in education to embrace the trajectory in education. The South African Government has made significant strides in developing Inclusive Education Policies as compared to other African countries, but it had not done enough to ensure that skills of teachers, who will be involved in Inclusive Education, are developed. Limited preparations have been done to ascertain that the required skills

that are necessary for adapting the curriculum, are in place. Schools are expected to run with Inclusive Education programmes without proper training of teachers. Allam and Martin (2021) maintain that many teachers in South Africa have not been trained to teach or manage learners that are experiencing barriers to learning. As a result, teachers are battling with the problem of adapting the curriculum to meet a range of learning needs that are diverse. This indicates that the DoE in South Africa brings several initiatives (such as Inclusive Education) that are meant to transform the education system, but at the same time neglecting the development of the personnel responsible for carrying out the mandate.

Even though numerous initiatives offering formal systemic support, aimed at promoting the policies on Inclusive Education are in place, research suggests that teachers still find it stressful to implement inclusive practices in their classrooms (de Jager, 2017). This is because 65% of mainstream primary school teachers have no formal qualification that would enable them to address learning barriers, and their perceived levels of competence to provide high quality support to learners in their classes are quite low (Dreyer, 2017). Teachers' ambivalence regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education increases as they become more concerned with teaching subject matter and completing curriculum requirements, rather than diversifying instruction and developing support strategies to meet a range of learner needs (Sharma et al., 2019). This means it is critical that policies are relevant to the context and, each policy should have a well-defined implementation plan.

In 2012, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), has recently been modified to absorb curriculum changes. Yet, despite the simplified or enabling policy specified above, the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa is slow in the sense of being behind schedule (Pather, 2019). This could be attributed to the over-reliance of South Africa on importing inclusive policies from Western countries that may have limited or no relevance to the local contexts. Phillips (2014) has criticised the idea of borrowing policies from other countries and implementing them in a new context. This implies that any policy that fails to pay close attention to the local context has limited

chances of being successful; therefore it is not the solution to the exclusion of leaners with learning difficulties from mainstream primary schools.

Furthermore, Inclusive Education has also been critiqued as constituting a neo-colonial project and an unwelcome imposition on developing countries. It can be seen as a form of coloniality, because the knowledge from Euro-American countries dominates the field. Furthermore, developing countries are expected to fund a model of inclusion that is developed in the resource-rich countries, and current schooling perpetuates colonial hierarchies (Walton, 2018). This implies that the South African Education System is forcing to implement an initiative (Inclusive Education) that is originated from well-developed countries where Inclusive Education has developed from a foundation of well-established special education systems. These countries have implemented Inclusive Education in contexts where quality basic education was widely available, and out-of-school populations were relatively small. Unlike in South Africa, nearly half a million learners with disabilities, including those with learning difficulties, aged between six and 17 years, remained out of school, and segregation and lack of Inclusive Education permeate all levels of South Africa's education system (Human Rights Watch, 2015; UNESCO, 2019).

Therefore, to minimise the challenges to implementing the Inclusive Education Policy into classroom level practices, the South African Education System needs to apply strategies, which are contextually useful. Such strategies are having school support and required resources. School support includes collaboration with special schools, modifying the Inclusive Education Policy to meet curriculum requirements (CAPS), and the availability of both human and instructional resources. This is because school support is a significant ingredient for inclusive teaching practices.

The lack of clarity, regarding the specific means through which schools should meet the stated goals of Inclusive Education and how an education policy should be enforced, has also led to inaction by the stakeholders involved (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Engelbrecht et al. (2016) state that there are complexities, dilemmas, constraints and possibilities that variously impact the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa. These include a tension between the contents of policies, systemic realities,

including funding constraints, and the personal interpretations of the people who work in inclusive schools.

Within an inclusive environment of learning, supporting the teachers is crucial. However, since the implementation of Inclusive Education began in South Africa, teachers' roles have intensified, and they have also had to adapt to pressures, expectations and control of what they do and how much they should be doing within the inclusive classrooms. This has brought to the fore further challenges faced by the teachers, such as inadequate training (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020), insufficient resources (Engelbrecht et al., 2015), and a lack of support from authorities (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). South African teachers believe that the South African Educational System does not have the resources needed to enable them to implement Inclusive Education, though they seem to favour Inclusive Education in principle. It should be noted that some of these challenges are the responsibility of district-based support teams through their mandate to support teachers. Studies affirmed that if the district-based support teams can adequately perform their duties, teachers will feel more effective in teaching within inclusive classrooms (Nel et al., 2014).

In addition, Makhalemele and Nel (2016), postulate that a formal support service is essential in an Inclusive Education environment where learners with learning difficulties are included. This formal education support service is vital in ensuring that all learners, including those with learning difficulties, have access to support, which enables them to achieve their full potential. International research has found that teachers report that adequate support services could have a positive impact on learners' overall academic progress (Datta 2015; Tones et al., 2017).

Furthermore, research suggested that studying Inclusive Education at the university level proved to be an "eye-opener" to the pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers were enlightened about various aspects of being a mainstream teacher. These aspects include curriculum differentiation, respect for learners' rights, learner diversity, different assessment strategies and inclusion of all learners. They also understand the fact that learners experiencing various barriers to learning, can be accommodated successfully in mainstream classrooms. Such aspects enriched their understanding of what it is to be

a mainstream teacher in a post-liberation South Africa, sensitive to the needs of others and equipped to be agents for democratic change (Mosito et al., 2020).

In addition, studying Inclusive Education allowed pre-service teachers to appreciate the scope, value and higher purpose of teaching (Mosito et al., 2020). This implies that awareness of Inclusive Education enriches the training of pre-service teachers in South African schools. This is because pre-service teachers learned that the inclusion of all learners should be accompanied by suitable support for learners. As a result, pre-service teachers gained a greater passion for teaching, understanding proper lesson preparation and planning with the use of learner-centered strategies.

2.4.3 Establishment of ILSTs

District-based support teams are also mandated to establish and support the maintenance of support structures in schools, such as the Institution Level Support Team (ILST). The role of the ILST, as envisaged by White Paper 6, is to ensure an enabling environment for teaching and learning and to provide support programmes for addressing barriers to learning. The key responsibilities of the ILST are to identify, assess and support learners, who experience barriers to learning, to coordinate individual support planning, as well as guide teachers to develop and implement Individual Support Plans (ISP) and effective curriculum differentiation. However, ILSTs indicated that they are unable to teach learners with learning difficulties, as they have not been trained to implement Inclusive Education. As a result, learners' educational needs and those of their colleagues have not been adequately addressed. ILSTs also indicated that they do not think they are adequately skilled enough to support other teachers when they experience difficulties in their classrooms (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014). This implies that having ILSTs, who do not feel they have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach learners with learning difficulties, create an inevitable barrier to the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The success of the Inclusive Education Policy rests on the capacity to implement it. Therefore, without the necessary skills and knowledge, ILSTs are likely to feel less confident about their ability to effectively include learners with learning difficulties in their

classes, let alone support other teachers. Hence, NCNET's and NCESS's report (1997) argue that if the capacity is lacking, then the teaching and learning will not be effective.

In addition, ILSTs' understanding of Inclusive Education is unsatisfactory, as they have not shifted from the medical model or explanations of special education (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). The schools have ILSTs (consisting of teachers), however, their role is the assessment, referral (to health professionals and the district-based support team) and placement of learners with learning difficulties into separate classrooms for Learners with Special Education Needs, called ELSEN classes (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). ILSTs felt that they do not have adequate knowledge about when and how referrals should be done to the district-based support team (Rulwa-Mnatwana, 2014). As a result, ILSTs only use district-based support teams to acquire an ELSEN number for a learner who has been identified by the school as experiencing learning difficulties to be placed into the ELSEN class (Engelbrecht et al., 2016). This implies that teachers are not aware of the full supportive role that the district-based support team should play. This means that Inclusive Education implementation still has challenges, as exclusion and segregation still prevails. Therefore, ILSTs do not have the capacity to perform the stipulated functions. Amongst other functions, ILSTs has a role of conducting onsite training workshop. They are supposed to train class teachers on how to adapt and differentiate the curriculum so as to be accommodative to all learners. Therefore, the district-based support team must support, train and mentor the ILST and teachers at schools, as well as supply adapted learning support material and assistive devices, where necessary (DBE 2010; DoE, 2005). The successful implementation of Inclusive Education in schools will not only require the acceptance of learners with different learning needs, but the appropriate support rendered to the diverse learners is also necessary.

The absence of appropriate support for learners with learning difficulties may still subject them to substantial educational inequalities. Therefore, teachers guided by the policy should increasingly aim to bridge acceptance and participation gaps and produce more equitable school environments to ensure that all learners are accommodated in mainstream schools. However, teachers are unable to perform this duty as they might not have been trained on Inclusive Education implementation. (Engelbrecht et al.,

2016). This indicates that the principles of Inclusive Education in policy documents with specific reference to increased access to mainstream classrooms, the enhancement of the acceptance of learners with learning difficulties, and maximizing the participation of every learner in all activities in mainstream schools, have not been achieved yet. There is still a gap between the Inclusive Education in South African policy documents and its implementation. ILST still needs intensive and critical training on inclusive practices to provide support services and to address barriers to learning (Motitswe, 2014).

Though support structures are in place and perform their specific roles, as mentioned in Inclusive Education policies, research has indicated that in South African schools the provision of effective formal support services from the district-based support teams remains a challenge (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). This implies that the practice of Inclusive Education could remain an ideal, since support for all learners, including learners who experience learning difficulties, is a key factor in the successful implementation of Inclusive Education.

Teachers need to be monitored in implementing Inclusive Education. Monitoring is important to ensure effective implementation of Inclusive Education and is discussed in the next section.

2.5 Monitoring the implementation of Inclusive Education

For each programme that is implemented, to ensure that the implementers are doing it correct, according to the set standards, monitoring is necessary. Monitoring is an internal management process of continuous control of inputs, processes and outputs (PCG, 2007). Monitoring is meant to identify strengths and weaknesses, formulate practical proposals for action to be taken, and take the necessary steps to reach the expected results. According to Education, Inclusive Early Childhood (2015) a monitoring system assesses the efforts that schools make to ensure that their learners reach the attainment targets and developmental goals. Effective monitoring needs to focus on early intervention, not on failure.

Through monitoring, teachers are supported to increase their capacity to meet the needs of all learners, particularly those with learning difficulties. Therefore, monitoring ensures that the teachers, who are the implementers, do what they are supposed to do, according to the expected standards. Inclusive Education implementation must be monitored where school management teams and district-based support teams must supervise and provide support to the implementers. Employment of Teachers Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998, mandates the school management teams to provide professional management in the schools as part of their management functions. This means when monitoring, the support rendered by the school management team is a foundational component of school wide transformation toward Inclusive Education implementation (McCart et al., 2014). When monitoring, the focus should not just be on the manner of teaching, but the content being addressed must be supervised too. This will ensure that teachers have the necessary skills and use the correct teaching methods and strategies. However, Bantwini and Letseka (2016) revealed that teachers are not monitored in the implementation of Inclusive Education, either by the school management team or the district-based support teams. No efforts are in place by schools to equip teachers in implementing Inclusive Education. Teachers did not receive any assistance from the school management teams in terms of content; neither did the school management teams pay them any class visits, nor monitor learners' progress by examining their exercise books (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016). The failure to execute the duties and roles of school management teams could be blamed on a lack of training in Inclusive Education on the part of the school management team. Thus, school management teams cannot offer support to teachers and learners without being trained. This could have a negative impact on the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy for learners with learning difficulties, as school management teams will not know what exactly how learners learn and what their content is like. Absence of support from the school management team aggravates the challenges that teachers face in implementing Inclusive Education and leads to the feeling of hopelessness (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016).

According to DeMatthews et al. (2020), school management teams have an important role in advancing school reform efforts aimed at improving Inclusive Education for

learners with learning difficulties. Furthermore, the support rendered by school management teams is a foundational component of school wide transformation toward Inclusive Education implementation (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). However, school management teams still battle with the problem of adapting the curricula to meet the diverse learning needs (Kanjere & Mafumo, 2017). They often find themselves in a difficult position, as they are also expected to provide support and guidance to teachers who are also not skilled in implementing Inclusive Education. School management teams often lack the specific pedagogical knowledge needed to provide feedback to teachers who teach special populations, such as learners with learning difficulties (Robberts et al., 2018). This indicates that lack of training on the side of the management in the schools negatively affects the implementation of an Inclusive Education policy. School improvement initiatives that have a desirable impact on learner performance of learners with learning difficulties are those that are supported by the district-based support teams through the necessary training workshops of teachers and school management teams. These initiatives require regular follow-ups through classroom and school support visits and systematic monitoring of the implementation of planned programs. District-based support teams carry out this role of monitoring the implementation of Inclusive Education in schools through supervisory duties. Their supervisory activities include a formative evaluation component, since they organize in-service trainings that update and extend the knowledge and skills of school management teams and teachers. It is therefore important that schools and districts' commitment to improving Inclusive Education for learners with learning difficulties continue to engage in ongoing professional development efforts for school management teams, teachers and staff. This can help to improve specific pedagogical content knowledge related to teaching learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive setting (Roberts et al., 2018).

Some schools have not even commenced with implementation. Therefore, all the efforts made to ensure that there is effective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools are in vain, challenges still prevail, and they are discussed next.

2.6 Challenges of implementing Inclusive Education

When Inclusive Education was introduced, some efforts were made to prepare, monitor and support teachers in implementing it in their mainstream classes. However, in South Africa and other developing countries, challenges remained and this affected the provision of quality and effective formal support services (Mpu & Adu, 2021).

For instance, in Ghana, Deku and Vanderpuye (2017) stressed that is not a reality, because learners with learning difficulties participate in the same curriculum as learners without learning difficulties and are all expected to write the Basic Education Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examination Council. This situation implied that differentiation and adaptations to the curriculum were not suitable for the learners with learning difficulties in mainstream schools. The inflexible curriculum in Ghana hinders the effective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools.

More than a decade later, the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy seems to be still ineffective in ensuring an operational support service to teachers, learners and more specifically, learners with learning difficulties (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). This is because education support services continue to struggle to function within an Inclusive Education environment, due to various challenges experienced by teachers in implementing Inclusive Education (Du Toit et al., 2014; Nel et al., 2014). This resulted in the slow progress of implementing Inclusive Education, especially in mainstream schools.

Capacity to support innovation construct in Rogan and Grayson's (2003) theory, which guides this study, attempts to understand and elaborate on the factors that can support, or hinder, the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. Therefore, this construct is relevant as this section seeks to investigate challenges that are experienced by primary mainstream school teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Literature showed that the teachers experienced a variety of challenges in effectively executing their functions. These functions include planning instructional and assessment techniques that are well suited to an inclusive classroom, for example, multi-level instruction (Lindner et al., 2019), planning individual support plans, and

curriculum adaptation, which refers broadly to the modification and/or adjustment of lessons, activities and materials to make them suitable for different learner needs. Curriculum differentiation offers a variety of ways to deal with learners who differ in abilities, knowledge and skills to access a shared curriculum (CAPS, 2011; DoE, 2001). Teachers must use teaching strategies that benefit all learners in inclusive classrooms, while acknowledging that certain learners will still need planned and specific interventions to address the barriers to learning that they experience (Lindner et al., 2019).

Local and international researchers have identified some challenges that continue to hamper progress worldwide in implementing Inclusive Education. These challenges are experienced by teachers, and they include (i) poor availability of resources, (inadequate human and physical resources) (DoE, 2010; Sharma et al., 2016) (ii) inadequate training of teachers (Page et al., 2019; Sharma & Michael, 2017); (iii) non-involvement of parents (Al-Dababneh, 2016). The provision of adequate resources enriches the implementation of the policy (Mitchell & Sutherland, 2020). Thus, the unavailability of resources is discussed in the next section.

2.6.1 Unavailability of resources

Educational frameworks mandate schools to adopt, design and implement strategies that support Inclusive Education. However, the schools' strategies were not anchored in overcoming physical barriers that hindered the implementation of Inclusive Education (Ireri et al., 2020). This implies that ineffective school strategies contributed to a lack of overcoming physical barriers and this negatively impacted the implementation of Inclusive Education in schools. The availability of adequate resources, such as physical and human resources, enables the implementation of Inclusive Education. The provision of inadequate resources in mainstream schools is concerning and negatively affects the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy (Thabede, 2017). It results in schools failing to have the policy implemented. This implies that implementing an Inclusive Education policy requires adequate and appropriate resources. Therefore, all

education departments must ensure adequate provision of resources to all education institutions (DoE, 1997).

For this study, resources are basic facilities or services, such as human resources and physical resources needed for teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. The challenge of resources involves a lack of physical resources like policy documents, instructional materials, and comprehensive practical handbooks, a shortage of human resources, such as teachers, teacher aids, and remedial/learning support facilitators, and a lack of technical assistive devices, that is, IT equipment like telephones and computers. The unavailability of the resources might hinder the implementation of Inclusive Education. Learners with learning difficulties will not get the support they deserve. They will continue to perform below the expected outcome and remain excluded from quality education. For this reason, learners with learning difficulties must adjust to get the needed education or drop out of school.

The shortage of resources in mainstream schools seems to be a major challenge for many countries and this is seen as one of the reasons that compromise the effective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. For example, in Nigeria, the required educational materials were not provided or were inadequate in mainstream schools where learners with learning difficulties were being integrated (Tones et al., 2017). Ghana, Bangladesh and Fiji had challenges with the availability of resources and posed barriers that prevent inclusion for all learners with learning difficulties (Tones et al., 2017). Lack of resources is very often considered as a barrier to including learners with barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties in mainstream schools (Mpu & Adu, 2021).

South Africa is still growing in the field of Inclusive Education, and it appears that while the nation has accepted the ideology of Inclusive Education, the reality is that South Africa, is not equipped with the resources required to meet the needs of Inclusive Education. The legacy of apartheid and the unequal distribution of resources, which is still perpetuated by the differences between rich and poor in South Africa, resulted in many schools lacking resources to support all learners, especially learners with learning difficulties (Hodgson, 2018). Many mainstream teachers felt that their schools did not

have adequate resources to manage and attend to learners with learning difficulties (Ireri et al., 2020). For example, a comprehensive practical handbook or guide for inclusive learning and teaching activities is not available at their schools. There is limited IT equipment like telephones and computers. This hinders the communication between teachers, parents and district-based support teams, and reduces the progress of implementing Inclusive Education. There is also a challenge of the policy documents' shortage, which resulted in most teachers relying on district-based support teams for information, regarding the new reforms in terms of Inclusive Education implementation (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). This hampers the progress of learners (DoE, 2010).

As stated in DoE (2005), teachers and their institutions need to constantly learn and grow, hence, ongoing support is found to be the only alternative to achieve this. In addition, specialised support services and resources have been noted as essential for the progress of learners with learning difficulties. However, there is evidence that human resources in education support services at the school and district level are deemed to be insufficient (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). For this study, human resource means all the human personnel (such as special education teachers, mainstream teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, remedial/learning support facilitators, learner agents and teacher aids, to mention but few) at school and district level who can support the effective implementation of Inclusive Education. There is evidence that describes the shortage of human personnel and having large caseloads as an additional challenge in the implementation of Inclusive Education (Zagona et al., 2017). Human resources are identified as a challenge that delays the service delivery in the implementation of Inclusive Education. Dreyer (2017) confirms that many mainstream teachers still believe they are incapable of teaching learners who face barriers to learning and that this should be done by specialists. This situation is further aggravated by the lack of both human and financial resources. This is because the lack of human resources have negative impacts on the expected results, especially in the implementation of the ongoing curriculum reforms in South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2018). This in turn negatively impacts teachers' capacity to provide effective support to their learners.

Inclusive Education would be more practical if classroom teachers were provided with teacher aides in their mainstream classrooms. For example, teachers would be able to provide individual support, as well as practical help and support, for example, emphasize keywords, use songs, provide study buddies, and carry out alternative assessments for these learners. Forlin and Sin (2017) concur that the role of the teacher aide is to assist the teacher by working with those learners with learning difficulties in an inclusive classroom. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to the training needs of teacher aids who work in inclusive classrooms. This has a positive impact in the effective implementation of Inclusive Education. This implies that it is necessary to have teacher aides in the classroom where learners with learning difficulties are included. However, Walton et al. (2014) affirm that due to a shortage of classroom teacher aides and site-based personnel at the school to provide support, the teachers on their arrival from a two-day workshop could not envisage themselves implementing the content of the workshop. In supporting this, Bantwini and Diko (2011) revealed that the district officials noted that during workshops teachers would claim to understand the vision of the policy, however, when they are faced with challenges in their classroom practice, it was said nobody was there to assist them. This was a challenge that retarded progress among teachers. This indicates that teachers could benefit from remedial/learning support facilitators if they are permanently based at schools. Remedial/learning support facilitators could be used by mainstream teachers as their sources of knowledge when they get stuck in supporting learners with learning difficulties. It is also an advantageous to have practitioners at schools (such as occupational therapists and educational psychologists) to meet learners' needs and whose costs form part of the school fee structure (Zungu, 2014). This relieves the pressure on parents who need to transport learners to and from therapy in the afternoons when many parents are at work. Limited resources made it difficult for teachers to deal with learners experiencing learning difficulties (Dreyer, 2017). Due to the aforementioned aspects, the provision of equitable quality education and support to all learners, seem at present to be beyond reach (Dreyer, 2017). When implementing Inclusive Education, the provision of well-trained teachers is fundamental to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties, as the inadequate training of teachers may be a challenge in implementing inclusive education.

2.6.2 Inadequate training of teachers

District-based support teams have the responsibility to ensure that teachers develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of Inclusive Education policies. This is because teachers play a significant role in establishing welcoming inclusive learning environments. Moreover, teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education, their attitudes towards it, as well as their pedagogical knowledge and skills impact largely on their practices (Dreyer, 2017). However, mainstream teachers had not been trained in Inclusive Education whilst undergoing their initial teacher training, which explains their lack of clear and precise knowledge and understanding of what Inclusive Education is (Islam et al., 2016; Siddik & Kawai, 2020). Their initial training inadequately prepared them to teach diverse learners. Teacher initial training refers to the pre-teacher preparation that one goes through at the college of education or university after matric to become a teacher. Teacher preparation in developing countries, including South Africa especially in the universities, was focused on methodologies and assessment practices that were not tailored to the needs of learners with learning difficulties in inclusive schools (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020). The methodologies at the initial training programmes were directed towards the practice of mainstream schools and not inclusive schools.

The teacher educators at colleges and universities lack sufficient understanding of Inclusive Education and its purposes, knowledge about inclusive pedagogical practices, and experience in inclusive settings (Nketsia et al., 2016). In supporting this, Forlin and Sin (2017) assert that the course content in the colleges of education in most regions, including Ghana, were not adequate to prepare teachers for the task of Inclusive Education. Therefore, mainstream teachers would not be able to implement Inclusive Education in mainstream classes without being trained. The limited understanding of Inclusive Education by many mainstream teachers was seen as overwhelming and this made it difficult for teachers to deal with learners with learning difficulties (Dreyer, 2017). Limited knowledge of Inclusive Education policy and skills was also found to be a contributing cause for the teachers to resist implementing the policy. As a result, many

teachers will say that they require more professional learning opportunities about Inclusive Education than they currently receive (Forlin & Sin, 2017). Thus, district-based support teams sometimes contribute to the non-implementation of Inclusive Education by the teachers, especially when they do not fully comprehend what an Inclusive Education policy entails (Mabaso, 2019). Inclusive Education requires a high quality of service, well-trained teachers and support personnel. Siddik and Kawai, (2020) suggest that countries with a long-term goal of implementing Inclusive Education should ideally have it as a compulsory subject for all teacher candidates and an integral part of the teacher training curriculum. Echoing the sentiments of Islam, Salahuddin and Mahmud (2016) said teachers must first know what Inclusive Education is before they start to implement it.

In addition, mainstream teachers were not trained to address barriers to learning, but the transition towards Inclusive Education has obliged them to accept the full spectrum of learners in their mainstream classes. Studies indicate that since the launch of Inclusive Education, teachers continue to face implementation challenges and have struggled with implementation issues in their respective contexts (Forlin & Sin, 2017; Rogan & Grayson, 2003; Siddik & Kawai, 2020). This includes issues resulting from teaching learners from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including those with learning difficulties for which many teachers were never trained. This challenge adds to low teacher morale (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016).

In South Africa, Inclusive Education has been organized and written down in the form of White Papers that emphasize the need for well-qualified and professionally prepared teachers of learners with learning difficulties. However, the mere regulations do not cause any implementation of necessary reforms (Wiazowski, 2012). This is because the real challenge that mainstream primary school teachers in South Africa face, is that of translating the Inclusive Education policy into practice so that the quality of education for all learners can be improved (Dewa, 2023). Training is regarded as essential for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education, with teachers needing not only knowledge and understanding of barriers to learning, but also practical training in teaching strategies that facilitate Inclusive Education implementation. This is because

placing learners with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms does not mean teachers can automatically teach these learners without training (Lindner et al., 2019). Teachers have difficulty in guiding learners to understand the subject matter, because they do not have sufficient training (Allam & Martin, 2021). Training programmes offered to accommodate all teachers are often not enough, and the schools do not have sufficient funds to have all their teachers trained. Furthermore, literature revealed that many schools in South Africa do not have plans and definite policies to empower teachers regarding Inclusive Education (Kanjere & Mafumo, 2017).

Support systems at schools for training purposes are scanty and the training responsibilities are left solely to the DoE. District-based support teams are mandated by Education White Paper 6 to support teachers in terms of training them to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in mainstream classes. However, district-based support teams raised concerns about the execution of their functions. They are struggling to get to schools due to a lack of transport (Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). Since traveling to schools is a key part of the ability of district-based support teams to deliver effective support services, like teacher training at the school level, great distances to schools result in district-based support team members having to travel long hours. This limits their time to provide in-depth support to schools. This means that they cannot visit the schools regularly or attend to all the reported problems adequately and in time. Therefore, this could negatively impact the implementation of Inclusive Education. Consequently, many learners with learning difficulties, who are not coping at mainstream schools drop out of the education system and stay at home. Dropout rates of learners in general are a serious concern in South Africa. Some of these dropout rates have been attributed to learners who experience barriers to learning and not staying in schools, particularly those with learning difficulties. This implies that although the district-based support team has made this effort to develop teachers, it was not enough. Hence, South African studies confirm the need for teacher training for Inclusive Education in this country.

The Education for All Policy (2010) is the policy that upon implementation became a stimulus for the introduction of Inclusive Education into mainstream schools. The policy

required all teachers to be competent in teaching learners with a wide range of educational needs. However, in-service teachers received inadequate staff development and training ahead of the implementation of Inclusive Education, and most teachers were not professionally developed for Inclusive Education (Motala et al., 2015; Zwane & Malale, 2018). Siddik and Kawai (2020) concur that teachers were not skilled and have not received enough skills, knowledge and training about teaching in inclusive classes. Hence, teachers perceived their training as not adequate for teaching in an inclusive school (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017). This could be related to the fact that district-based support teams reported the training offered by the DoE at the national level, as inadequate.

Although district-based support teams proclaimed that they are well-trained to deal with learners who experience barriers to learning, they also believe that they were inadequately trained to support teachers to be able to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms (Mabaso 2019; Makhalemele & Nel, 2016). Hence, district-based support teams felt that they still needed more training on the implementation of inclusive policies. This means that district-based support teams generally fail to provide the much-needed support to schools and teachers to implement Inclusive Education. Being adequately trained is an elemental prerequisite for district-based support teams to be able to provide effective support for a diversity of learning needs in an Inclusive Education environment (Forlin et al., 2015; Van Staden-Payne & Nel, 2023). Moreover, given the important function of district-based support teams in ensuring that schools are prepared and guided towards the effective implementation of Inclusive Education, the structuring, staffing and capacitating thereof, should be prioritised. This implies that, the National DoE should take responsibility in providing more training to strengthen the district-based support teams' capacity to support the teachers who teach learners with learning difficulties. If this were to happen, all learners, including learners experiencing barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties, would have access to high-quality support, which could then enable them better to achieve their full learning potential.

It becomes obvious that even if support is available from district-based support teams, it is often fragmented and uncoordinated (DoE, 2005). One example of this fragmentation DoE (2005) is the way trainings are provided now. These training programmes are often not developed in an integrated way so that teachers and others, who are targets of these programmes, are overwhelmed and overloaded, by having to attend many workshops. The main problem is that these trainings do not provide teachers with an understanding of how the different areas of training connect with the core purpose of education, which is teaching and learning in an inclusive classroom. The main challenge is to unite support from the district-based support teams into a cohesive practice which works, as different support providers do not often work as a team for common issues. This can also be seen on the contradictions of EWP6 and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The EWP6 emphasises the need to adapt and differentiate school programmes to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners. However, teachers struggle to comprehend the relevance of the EWP6 in the context of CAPS that they are expected to implement in schools (Wahl, 2017).

CAPS provides guidelines to schools in terms of curriculum content and assessment requirements, and they are structured in such a way that they do not support the requirements of the EWP6, which promotes curriculum and assessment differentiation. Wahl (2017) concurs that CAPS do not cater entirely for the inclusive classroom as teachers often struggle to complete the curriculum requirements for the whole class, while also accommodating the slower work rate of learners who experience learning difficulties. Teachers felt that they were able, to some extent, to offer support to learners on a one-to-one basis; however, they were prevented from doing so by the demands of the CAPS (Nel et al., 2016). CAPS has pace setters that demand the curriculum to be completed at a certain time. This clearly indicates that the training provided to teachers did not enable them to integrate the contents of EWP6 with those of CAPS and was deemed inadequate. Therefore, there is a need for the DoE to craft an inclusive curriculum in line with the inclusive policy to cater for the diverse educational needs of all learners in mainstream schools.

The current CAPS thus undermines the implementation of Inclusive Education. The reason for this perceived contradiction between the EWP6 and the CAPS can be attributed to the fact that these policies were generated by two separate directorates and were seemingly not properly aligned. As long as the perceived discrepancies between EWP6 and the CAPS continue to exist, teachers will remain confused on how to manage inclusive classes in mainstream schools, and, as a result, the implementation of Inclusive Education will remain a challenge. This situation was exacerbated by curriculum advisers who reportedly do not understand the concept of Inclusive Education (Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018). Teachers, therefore, need to be trained on how to integrate CAPS with EWP6. This can only happen when all DoE role players (such as other curriculum specialists at district offices, special education teachers, remedial/learning support facilitators, and subject advisers) work collaboratively to establish sustainable partnerships when supporting learners who experience barriers to learning, especially those with learning difficulties. This will enhance interactions and networks across systemic boundaries to find what works best in the supporting process in terms of training. This implies that the current implementation of national policies requires intervention from the National and Provincial Departments of Education to ensure that all learners, irrespective of their abilities, receive quality and equitable education. For example, all current education policies should be integrated and aligned with EWP6 to eradicate any confusion and the perception that Inclusive Education is an alternative form of education.

Furthermore, Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018) proclaim that teachers still need continuous, contextually responsive support, despite the in-service training they have received from district-based support teams. This means that teachers need classroom-based support, where contextual constraints, such as large classes, inadequate material, and human resources, little or no support from the district-based support team and ILST, inadequate training and the teachers' limited range of pedagogical strategies, are considered. Therefore, after training, district-based support teams should provide ongoing, hands-on support in class and follow up on implementation as practical demonstration is crucial in an inclusive classroom. This is consistent with the call for contextually responsive support to teachers, which arose from their fear that they did

not have sufficient training and lack the skills to provide “specialised” support to those learners with barriers to learning (Dreyer, 2017). This indicates that there is still a gap between training and implementation.

Inclusive Education is not a reality, because to date, teachers are still not well prepared to teach in inclusive classes and to implement the contents of Education White Paper 6 (Forlin & Sin, 2017; Suprayogi et al., 2017). Lack of training in Inclusive Education implementation results in the teachers’ lack of confidence in their ability to teach learners with learning difficulties and this is the main influencing factor of teachers’ negative perceptions about Inclusive Education (Sharma et al., 2019). The reason for this perceived inadequate training can be attributed to the fact that district-based support teams experienced a challenge of inadequate infrastructural and human resources. The deficit of human capacity hinders and incapacitates the few district-based support teams from effectively servicing schools and the teachers (Mabaso, 2019). This lack of human capital has negative impacts on the expected results, especially in the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa. This situation led the district-based support teams to use a cascade approach when training teachers. As mentioned earlier, a cascade approach is inadequate for delivering effective training of teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education. This is because, when the intended message is transmitted to the next level, the chances of crucial information being misinterpreted, are high (Moulakdi & Bouchamma, 2020). Thus, quality in-service and pre-service teacher training is critical for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

In ensuring that the district-based support teams function effectively in the implementation of Inclusive Education, the important aspects like not being overburdened with tasks and being well-equipped, need to be taken into consideration (Nel et al., 2014). However, district-based support teams complained about their organogram (management structure) as propelling their challenges as it causes a handicap in support, as they were offering teachers in terms of training (Bantwini & Diko, 2011).

It is already known that working with learners with learning difficulties require a great deal of effort, and it seems that all the hard work invested until now in spreading the knowledge of Inclusive Education, is not enough (Soponaru et al., 2016). This implies that teachers lack understanding of Inclusive Education, and it is very difficult for them to implement it. Teachers mentioned that the lack of support from the district-based support team members caused teachers not only to become demotivated, but also induced a propensity to resign from teaching (Makhalemele & Payne-van Staden, 2018). At times, teachers have trouble with getting parents involved in the education of their children and this often challenges teachers' endeavours of including all learners in the mainstream classroom, regardless of their learning difficulties.

2.6.3 Non-involvement of parents

The literature highlights that successful implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools requires collaboration between school teachers and family members, as it could help learners with learning difficulties to reach their educational objectives (Forlin & Sin, 2017). Since 1980, legislative changes and amendments have been undertaken in many countries, including South Africa, focusing on the essential role of parents in the education process. Consequently, parents are now considered equal partners with school teachers. Parents have a role in designing, presenting and evaluating support services in the implementation of Inclusive Education (West, 2020). Thus, parents should be involved in all school activities, including volunteering in the classroom. Parents should provide technical assistance on the effective implementation of Inclusive Education at home. They should participate in assessments. Parents also need to create an Inclusive Education implementation programme for their learners with learning difficulties and implement it either in school and/or the home. Parents should attend their learner's support plan (ISP) meetings for effective learning and development, which includes the learner's academic achievement, pre-literacy skills and cognitive skills (West, 2020). However, parents of learners with learning difficulties are typically less involved in cooperation with an Individual Support Plan (ISP) (Schmidt & Cagran, 2014). This could be attributed to negative experiences of parents when

sharing in developing the learner's ISP and this may limit further parental participation (Al-Dababneh, 2016).

Negative experiences might include, amongst other things, controlling attitudes of teachers. Parents are forced to be intermediaries between other actors, but often do not have enough information and are not respected by teachers as experts on their children (Štech & Smetáčková, 2023). Adding to this, İlik and Sarı (2017) discovered that there is no supportive communication between parents and teachers. Non-involvement of parents in the development of learners that experience barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties, has been raised as one of the challenges that teachers experience in their endeavours to provide support to such learners (Nel et al., 2016). Parents are confronted with many challenges that lead to non-involvement in their learners' education. A lack of parental awareness of the importance of their role in the learner's education programme was identified as the most serious barrier that led to non-involvement of parents (Al-Dababneh, 2018). This could be due to the lack of awareness training provision for parents about the learner's status and their role in the learner's education process. Little or no efforts are made to raise the awareness of parents, regarding the rights of their learners with learning difficulties or to encourage teachers to facilitate their participation in the educational process (Abd Rauf et al., 2018). Teachers had the opinion that if parents were made more aware, other learners would receive more attention from their homes, regarding their homework. Teachers who hold this opinion believe that it is necessary to educate parents in order for them to participate more effectively in the process of Inclusive Education implementation, especially in the development of ISPs of their learners with learning difficulties. This implies that there is a need to promote parents' awareness and to provide a support system in dealing with learners with learning difficulties.

Furthermore, a lack of cooperation between teachers, which could affect parents' feelings of inadequacy concerning education issues and getting involved, is also considered a barrier leading to the non-involvement of parents in Inclusive Education. For instance, Al-dabeneh (2018) identified mainstream school teachers and teamwork as a major barrier to parental involvement. Parents of learners with learning difficulties

may feel that teachers see them as lacking knowledge concerning the different aspects of the education process for their learners with learning difficulties. In addition, parents may believe that teachers seek a superficial relationship and are only concerned with mentioning problems rather than working on how to solve them. Previous studies revealed that most parents of learners with learning difficulties reported that teachers appreciated their suggestions, but mostly did not consider them seriously (Al-Dababneh, 2016). Rice (2018) concurs that parents did not have the sense that the teachers wanted to discuss any issues their learners might be having. This implies that parents feel that teachers see them as not meeting their responsibilities, not interested, or not really caring about their learners' education process. This means that communication was viewed as one-sided or non-existent.

In addition, parents with a low level of belief in their ability to help their learners, and who consider that 'teachers know best', usually have difficulty in communicating effectively with schools and avoid participating in school programmes (Forlin & Sin, 2017). This means teachers need the skills to work with parents and need to possess excellent communication skills. Many parents of learners with learning difficulties are not actively involved in the learning of their children, due to functionally illiterate or low education levels (Thabede, 2017). As a result, parents are not supporting the schools when learners are given homework (Thabede, 2017). They may not necessarily be uninterested in educational matters, but do not understand what they are supposed to do with the learners' homework. This is one of the challenges that teachers experience in their endeavours to provide support to learners who have barriers to learning (Nel et al., 2016). Therefore, families need to receive informative education about the importance of their input to their learners' learning (Thabede, 2017).

Barriers related to the administrative process were regarded as being problematic. This could be because school management teams place little value on parental involvement in school programmes. This may be attributed to school management teams' cultural misconceptions of the role parents of learners with learning difficulties can play in their education. Such school management teams, who often lack a theoretical background in the field of learning difficulties, may not be aware of the essential role parents of

learners with learning difficulties can play in school life. Lessard (2015) found that most parents of learners with learning difficulties were frustrated by communication with school management teams. This may lead to the conclusion that there are misunderstandings between parents and teachers. Non-involvement of parents poses a negative impact on the implementation of Inclusive Education. Engaging learner diversity to enhance learning, remains a challenging task for teachers in mainstream schools and makes the dilemma of inclusion, display its most difficult side.

2.7 Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework and the implementation theory (Rogan & Grayson, 2003) that informed this study. The theory has three major constructs, namely, (i) profile of implementation, (ii) capacity to support innovation and (iii) support by outside agencies. How Inclusive Education is implemented in other countries like India, the United States, Greece, George, Ghana, Swaziland and Namibia, to mention but a few, had been reviewed. Current literature on the issues of support provision to the teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education, such as on-site support visits, which encompass on-site training workshops, training workshops at the district level, establishment of ILST monitoring and the identified challenges concerning how Inclusive Education is implemented had been presented. This literature review has identified that although inclusion is desirable in principle, it is challenging in practice. The following chapter focuses on the research methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section presents methods used to collect and analyse data, that is, the research paradigm, research approach and research design that was employed to elucidate the research questions. This is followed by an outline of the research context and the method of sampling used to select the research participants. An explanation of how access was gained from the research site to collect data and the participants, is given. The chapter also discusses the instruments employed for data collection and the procedures used for data analysis. There is a detailed discussion of the measures that were employed to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study, as well as how the ethical considerations were adhered to. This chapter also explains the logic behind using the selected methods and techniques for the study. This section commences with the discussion of the research paradigm.

3.2 Research paradigm

Research has some underlying assumptions about what constitutes valid research and which research methods are appropriate. This underlying assumption is the paradigm, and it is the researcher's epistemology. Epistemology is about the assumptions that the researcher has about knowledge and how it can be obtained (Myers, 2019). This means in any research, the paradigm serves as the lens or organizing principles by which reality is interpreted. This is also supported by Tracy (2019), namely that paradigm is a preferred way of understanding reality, building knowledge, and gathering information about the world. The paradigm uses a fundamental triad of concepts from the philosophy of knowledge, namely: ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Ontology specifies the multiple realities that reflect the different experiences and beliefs of different people or sources (Tracy, 2019). In this research, the researcher is interested in assessing the meanings, perceptions, experiences, beliefs, ideas and

feelings given in the support provided, when implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. Thus, the researcher believes that this study has multiple realities (ontology), because each participant's different perceptions are important and valid. For example, one participant's interpretation of the support received when implementing Inclusive Education, may be different from that of another. Hence, Tracy (2019) believes that epistemology specifies that everyone possesses a unique perspective on reality and that is his or her conception of truth. In this research, the researcher believes that reality is mutually and socially constructed, and a variety of unique interpretations can be made. Hence, each DBST, teacher, and SMT member is considered as a knower. The knowledge on how teachers are supported to implement Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools can be shared by each member describing his or her views, meanings, perceptions and actions. How teachers perceive the on-site support rendered by DBSTs in implementing Inclusive Education can be described.

The methodology is the scientific approach that is adopted for conducting research (Mishra & Alok, 2022). Methodology specifies how the researcher may go about practically learning the experiences and beliefs of others, and how they provide interpretations of the data in the form of theories. Ontology, epistemology and methodology are relevant to the study, because this research assumes that individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work to develop their meaning and their experiences. The researcher assumes that knowledge is constructed and when the interpretation of facts is contextualized, they become relevant. Thus, participants' experiences, perceptions and beliefs were studied in mainstream primary schools and the circuit management centre office where they work. The researcher also believed that the participants would answer the questions at hand, because they are the implementers of inclusive education. There are several knowledge claims that have taken root in today's research, some of which are positivism, interpretivism and post-positivism. For the study, an interpretive paradigm was chosen and is discussed next.

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

The interpretive paradigm holds that reality is constructed through subjective perceptions and interpretations. Researchers in the interpretive paradigm, study the social construction of meaning through the analysis of individualized purposes, goals and intentions in communication (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2018). Therefore, the interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the meaning that participants make of a situation or phenomenon. Interpretivism emphasizes that social reality is viewed and interpreted by the individual, according to the ideological positions an individual possesses. This implies that knowledge is personally experienced, rather than acquired or imposed from outside. In this study, the researcher believes that research can never be objectively observed from the outside; rather it should be observed from the inside through the direct experience of people. Participants' personal experiences and perceptions of the support they receive from DBSTs and the challenges they encounter when implementing Inclusive Education, are key for this study. The interpretivists believe that reality is multi-layered and complex, and a single phenomenon has multiple interpretations (Savin-Baden & Major, 2023). The interpretive approach provides the participants with the opportunity to raise their voices, concerns and practices to be heard, while it enables the researcher to get insight and in-depth information about the studied phenomenon (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

An interpretive researcher believes that reality is socially constructed by humans through their actions and interactions and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed (Savin-Baden & Major, 2023). This implies that humans construct meanings through their social settings, practices and experiences. Interpretivism has its greatest strength in the richness and depth of explorations and descriptions it yields, through the qualitative approach to research. It essentially emphasises understanding and interpretation of phenomena and making meaning out of this process. However, it is criticized for its subjectivity and failure of the approach to generalize its findings beyond the situation being studied (Pham, 2018). Despite the criticism, the researcher felt that an interpretive paradigm is relevant for this study, as there were no intentions of generalizing the findings. As the study is in an interpretive paradigm, the researcher

wanted to get a more holistic picture of how the teachers are supported in implementing Inclusive Education.

Moreover, the paradigm is suitable for this study, because the researcher attempts to understand reality, based on participants' perceptions and experiences and the research questions of this study are interpretative in nature. In addition, the researcher's intention was to make sense of the perceptions that participants have about implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. The rationale for this was that the researcher believed that participants would be able to provide rich data on their experiences, perception and challenges in the implementation of implementation. The research approach used in this study and the reasons for the choice of approach are discussed in the next section.

3.3 Research approach

There are various approaches that researchers can use when conducting research, for example, mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative approaches. For this study, qualitative approach was chosen. Qualitative research is defined as an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions, resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied (Aspers & Corte, 2019). A qualitative approach is an inquiry process of understanding that explores a social human problem where the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting. In a qualitative approach, the researcher also attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to her. In addition, a qualitative approach builds a complex holistic picture by analysing the words and giving a detailed, rich description of the views of informants (Creswell, 2016).

Qualitative researchers attempt to interpret phenomena based on meanings people bring to them (Creswell, 2016). A qualitative approach is based on the knowledge that there is no objective reality (Pham, 2018), rather, there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest. This makes a qualitative approach appropriate for this study, because the researcher believed that the research participants possess various perceptions and experiences when implementing Inclusive

Education in their respective mainstream primary schools. The qualitative approach is fundamentally interpretive, and this implies that the researcher develops a description of an individual, analyses data using themes and finally draws conclusions about its meaning (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative approaches are soft, descriptive research, specifically designed to deal with complex social issues, and concerned with how and why things happen as they do (Walliman, 2021). The researcher here was concerned about how Inclusive Education is implemented in mainstream primary schools and why learners with learning difficulties were still excluded from quality education.

In qualitative research the procedures are not as strictly formalised as in quantitative research and the scope of research is more likely to be undefined. In conducting a qualitative study, researchers are concerned with identifying how people describe their own experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Qualitative research denotes the type of inquiry in which the qualities, characteristics, or properties of a phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation. This is the reason why the qualitative approach was chosen for this study. On-site support visits, monitoring and support rendered to teachers by DBSTs, as well as challenges experienced by teachers in implementing Inclusive Education, are examined for a better understanding and explanation of how Inclusive Education is implemented in mainstream primary schools. Qualitative studies also represent the complexity of a situation, a complexity that often mirrors that of real life (Creswell, 2016). However, it is criticized for the inevitable presence of the researcher in the process of data gathering that can influence the response of participants. Despite the criticism, the researcher felt that qualitative approach was relevant to the study as the researcher believed that immersing herself in the interviews would help her to make sense of the situations with participants. In addition, through such immersion, exploration of the circumstances can take place, and only then can interpretation of events generate meaning for conclusions to be drawn in the form of thick descriptions.

The researcher found this approach useful to this study, because the major focus was on investigating the DBSTs' role in monitoring and supporting teachers to implement

Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. The qualitative method enabled the researcher to understand the perceptions of participants, concerning the phenomenon under study. This method further allowed the researcher to understand the participants' personal experiences on the challenges and on-site support rendered by DBSTs in implementing Inclusive Education. Research design is discussed in the next section.

3.4 Research design

Research design is a plan of how you intend to conduct the research (Asenahabi, 2019). There are several research designs, some of which are narratives, phenomenology, ethnographies, grounded theory studies and case studies. Thus, for this study, a case study design was used.

3.4.1 Case study design

The case study is a unit of human activity embedded in the real world, which can only be studied in context (Alam, 2021). Case study research is a form of qualitative research that is focused on providing a detailed account and analysis of one or few cases within natural settings (Jonson & Christensen, 2008). This makes the case study design relevant to this study, because the researcher studied the implementation of Inclusive Education and how teachers are supported by SMTs and DBSTs to effectively implement Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. A case study method allows researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as individual life cycles and organizational and managerial processes (Yin, 2018).

The researcher used a case study of three mainstream primary schools and a circuit management centre office to carry out the investigation.

When conducting qualitative research, Alam, (2021) argues that a case study could explore the answers of "what" questions along with the "why" and "how" more broadly, descriptively and extensively about a phenomenon. For this study, the main research

question is how the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools is? This made the case study design to be relevant to this study.

Yin (2018) highlighted that a case study generates an understanding of and insight into an instance by providing a thick, rich description of the case and illuminating its relations to its broader contexts. Again, the case study can be used to explore a general problem within a limited and focused setting. This concurs with Schoch (2020), who believes that case studies provide descriptive data, address problems of meaning, examine the records of past events, and relate them to the present activity. In this study, challenges experienced by teachers when implementing Inclusive Education, were explored. Teachers' initial training and training workshops for curriculum implementation (i.e. Curriculum 2005, NCS, RNCS, and CAPS), were examined and related them to the teacher training workshops for Inclusive Education implementation. Furthermore, Bell and Waters (2018) state that a case study allows for a detailed investigation of a setting from which valuable insights can be gained. It enables the building of relationships with the stakeholders and the cultivation of good rapport that may enrich the study. For these reasons, a case study was chosen amongst others, because the purpose of this study was to examine the implementation Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools.

3.5 Site of the study

The study was conducted in the Eastern Cape Province. The Eastern Cape Province is the second largest province after KwaZulu Natal Province in terms of the number of schools. The data from the South African DBE's Education Management Information System (EMIS) indicates that the Eastern Cape Province has 12 Education Districts divided into two clusters (cluster A and B) with 5684 schools, constituting 21% of South African schools (DBE, 2017). The Eastern Cape Province is the poorest province when compared to other provinces to the extent that there are mud schools that pose danger to learners. Recently, there have been reports about mud schools and progress that the Province has made in minimizing the number of collapsing mud schools. For example, the Province is said to be "the worst-affected province in terms of the number of schools built, using inappropriate material, and there are still 436 mud schools in the Province.

The infrastructure issues have led to schools being overcrowded, which contravenes the relevant national legislation. Minister Angie Motshekga has been reported to have admitted that the Province of the EC has been lagging where providing a suitable infrastructure is concerned. Therefore, the Province vowed that by 2022 the challenges of having mud schools will be eradicated (Ndayi, 2020). Of the 12 districts, one district was chosen for the study. The chosen district, the Chris Hani West District, is in cluster B. This District has 408 schools of which 231 are mainstream primary schools. Chris Hani West District is divided into three Circuit Management Centres (CMCs), namely Komani, Cacadu and Cradock CMC. Komani CMC has 174 schools of which 106 are primary schools. For this study, Komani CMC was chosen and three mainstream primary schools were selected to be included in this study.

The three schools chosen were no-fee-paying and were classified as Quintile 3 schools. According to the South African Schools Act 1996 and Norms and Standards for School funding, Quintile 1 schools are the poorest schools and Quintile 5 the richest. Quintile 5 schools are often former Model C schools and are situated in expensive geographical areas. Most schools in the Eastern Cape Province are Quintile 3 and non-fee-paying schools.

The enrolment targets for all schools were different; School A had 647 learners, with 18 teachers. The school's ratio was 47:1. From School B, there were 197 learners and six teachers with a school ratio of 27:1. While with School C there were 385 learners, with 12 teachers and a school ratio of 35:1. All teachers in all schools taught more than one subject in more than one grade from Grade 4 to Grade 7, including SMTs.

All three school buildings are well-maintained with no ramps. There are computer laboratories in School A and School C. However, most teachers were computer illiterate from both schools. Schools A and B were both situated in the villages. The learners attending these schools are from the same villages where the schools are located. The learners in all schools have meals at school. Learners have their meals in the kitchen where they are prepared by food servers. Teachers commute to schools daily. School C is in a very small town. Learners attending this school are from the nearby township. Learners in all schools are diverse. Even though there are no white learners, there are

coloured learners and some learners from other African countries. There are no libraries in any of the schools. Sample and sampling techniques are discussed next.

3.6 Population, sampling techniques and Sample size

3.6.1. Population

Population means, the entire mass of observations, which is the parent group from which a sample is to be formed. But in Research Methodology population means characteristics of a specific group (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). Therefore, in this study, the population is a group of mainstream primary school teachers, school management teams who are the implementers of inclusive education and have personal teaching experiences in inclusive education settings, as well as district-based support teams who are the supporters of inclusive education implementation.

3.6.2. Sampling techniques

Sampling is the process of drawing a sample from a population. Sampling techniques in social and behavioural sciences are often divided into probability and non-probability techniques (Mishra & Alok, 2022).

Probability sampling techniques are often used in quantitatively oriented studies and involve selecting a relatively large number of units from a population. The purpose of probability sampling is to generate data that can be generalised to the population. Non-probability sampling techniques are primarily used in qualitatively oriented studies. The advantages of non-probability sampling techniques are convenience and economy, and the major forms of non-probability sampling are purposive sampling, quota sampling and accidental sampling (Mishra & Alok, 2022).

Purposive sampling was chosen to guide the study. Purposive sampling is a type of sampling in which settings, persons or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be acquired from other choices (Mishra & Alok, 2022). Purposive sampling was relevant to this study, because the aim was not to generalise, but to collect data, develop an analysis, and draw up conclusions based on the personal participants' experiences on the implementation of Inclusive Education. In addition, purposive sampling allows researchers to choose people who are more

knowledgeable about what is being studied (Silverman, 2021). For this reason, DBSTs, teachers and SMTs were found to be the relevant people to shed light about the studied phenomenon, because they are the implementers of Inclusive Education.

3.6.3. Sample size

The study was conducted in Komani CMC under Chris Hani West Education District and three mainstream primary schools were selected. This CMC office and schools were purposively selected because purposive sampling allowed for convenience when considering traveling and time-saving aspects for the research. Thus, this CMC office and schools were easily accessible to the researcher. The researcher reached the CMC office and schools with no difficulty. The three mainstream primary schools were selected, because learners facing barriers to learning, particularly learning difficulties, were enrolled in those schools. This means that these three mainstream primary schools advocate for Inclusive Education, which is the core subject of interest in this study. In addition, these mainstream primary schools were chosen, because the researcher as a teacher, was teaching at the intermediate and senior phases under this CMC. However, the researcher's school was not chosen to avoid bias. The researcher has experienced that teachers are dealing with high levels of dilemma and tensions in their classrooms, as they attempt to deliver the curriculum in ways that are relevant and meaningful to the diverse needs of their learners. The practicalities of differentiating and adapting curriculum to be accommodative for the diverse needs of learners have fallen mostly on their shoulders.

Since the purpose of this study was to get an understanding of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools, it was deemed necessary to interview teachers, SMTs and DBSTs. Furthermore, Mishra and Alok (2022) emphasized that some characteristics that participants need to possess must be acknowledged. Indeed, in this study, the characteristics that teachers, school management teams and district-based support teams possess, were acknowledged to recruit them. Teachers and SMTs were chosen to be teachers in a mainstream primary school where learners with learning difficulties were included. District-based support team characteristics were a remedial/learning support facilitator involved in education

support services and serving in the directorates of Inclusive Education or curriculum at the district level. The researcher assumed that the chosen participants would provide accurate information as they were all involved in the subject of interest, which is Inclusive Education implementation.

From the identified CMC, the researcher had to identify the sources relevant to the phenomenon being studied and sought individuals who are willing to describe their experiences related to the studied phenomenon. Thus, the study sample comprised of three DBSTs, six teachers (two from each school), and three SMTs (one from each school), working in the three mainstream primary participating schools. Two teachers per school were sampled, based on their experience in terms of the educational transitions that took place in South Africa. Furthermore, in purposive sampling, subjects are selected by the researcher with the hope that they would provide accurate information on the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools.

3.7 Data collection procedures

Data collection can be derived using several methods, which include interviews, focus groups, surveys, documentary analysis, telephone interviews, observation, field notes and questionnaires (Harding, 2018). Data collection is an essential component of research, because it provides an opportunity for participants to exchange knowledge and experiences about the studied phenomenon. In addition, the data collected deepened the researchers' understanding of the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. Therefore, the choice of data collection tools would depend upon the research objectives. As the study used a qualitative approach, the researcher chose interviews as a data collection tool from the selected study participants.

3.7.1 Interviews

Interviewing is a research technique that is based on a one-on-one verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee to gather information. Interviews are the data-gathering tools normally considered by most researchers when conducting

qualitative research (Turner III & Hagstrom-Schmidt, 2022). Interviews provide in-depth information about participants' experiences and viewpoints on a particular topic. In-depth interviews are primarily used when seeking to capture people's voices (Hennink et al., 2020). Interviews do not provide an objective view of the social world that the participant inhabits, but demonstrate the meanings that they attribute to this world and their experience of it. Interviews aim at collecting rich descriptive data that helps the researcher to understand the participant's construction of knowledge and social reality. According to Heath et al. (2018), in an interview, the most important skill is listening, not only to verbal responses, but also to noting elements, such as body language of the interviewee. Interviews were chosen to be the method of collecting data in this study, because of their flexibility and adaptability (Alamri, 2019).

There are several types of interviews, for example: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, informal conversational interviews, non-directive interviews and focused interviews (Alamri, 2019). For this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen.

3.7.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative analysis. In semi-structured interviews, the participant is required to answer a set of predetermined questions that define the line of inquiry (Alamri, 2019). The semi-structured interview allows for probing of views and opinions (Harding, 2018). This happens when there is a desire for participants to expand on their answers. This enables the researcher to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied. In addition, there is room to explain or rephrase the questions if they are ambiguous.

Utilizing semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe further, and engage in an in-depth discussion with the participants, to understand their experiences, perceptions, practices, and challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education. The main disadvantage expressed by Alamri (2019) and Heath et al. (2018), is that interviews are time-consuming, but the researcher saw this method as enabling to get

enough information required to answer the critical questions of this study. Therefore, the participant's point of view was respected, and the time spent with each participant allowed the building of rapport and trust to be able to uncover the meanings attached to their experiences in the implementation of inclusive education. Alamri (2019) highlights that a researcher gathers responses that are more in-depth and informative via interviews.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with DBSTs, SMTs and teachers, to collect data on their experiences, based on the implementation of Inclusive Education, with a tape recorder being used to capture the information. Field notes were also taken by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews were an appropriate method in this study to obtain specific information about the experiences of teachers and practices of DBSTs in implementing Inclusive Education. Semi-structured interviews use open-response questions to obtain data, based on the participants' meanings, which is how individuals conceive their world and how they explain or make sense of main events. The interview schedule for this study consisted of semi-structured open-ended questions, designed to encourage giving a full, meaningful answer, using the subject's own experience, knowledge and/or feelings. The procedure in which semi-structured interviews were conducted, is discussed in the following section.

After getting permission from the district office to conduct research, the researcher asked the permission from school principals at the chosen schools. Thereafter, the researcher obtained written consent from teachers to participate in the study. The researcher interviewed participants in their natural settings, that is, in their schools as an environment that they are most familiar with.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with three DBSTs, three SMTs and six teachers, based on the implementation of Inclusive Education. Two full-day visits were carried out at each school. The first day was for the explanation of the purpose of the study to the participants and the filling in of consent forms. The second day was for the interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 35 to 55 minutes, conducted amicably. Interviews were conducted during school hours. As this study was based on the multiple case study design, it was mentioned earlier that participants who

may have personal issues against the researcher may purposely delay or hinder the study. With DBST, the researcher experienced some challenges. One of the DBST members refused to participate in the study. However, the researcher managed to get the other one at short notice. One half-day visits were carried out at each DBST office. The researcher carried out a total of 12 interviews. This means one interview per participant was conducted. The researcher listened to participants and allowed them to share their perceptions, experiences and challenges in implementing Inclusive Education. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder for capturing data during interviews. In addition to voice recording the interviews, the researcher took notes during each interview. On completion, the researcher listened to the recorded interviews and reviewed written notes to identify if there were gaps that needed to be addressed in follow-up interviews. Interviews were then transcribed for data analysis of the text. After the researcher had finished interviewing teachers, the researcher went to the CMC office to get written consent from DBSTs to participate in the study. Thereafter, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the DBSTs in their offices. In this study, the researcher cultivated an atmosphere that encouraged and accommodated all the research participants to feel comfortable enough to discuss their experiences without fear of being judged.

3.8 Data analysis

After completing the process of collecting data, analysis of data follows. Data analysis is a process of making sense of the collected data to identify the common trends that emerged from the participant's responses. Qualitative data analysis is a non-numeric assessment of observation made through participant observation, content analysis, in-depth interviews, and other qualitative research techniques (Babbie, 2020). Qualitative data analysis typically involves the analysis of text from interviews or field notes transcripts. The process of data analysis involves transcribing data, reading, and rereading transcripts, segmenting and coding the data, counting words and coded categories, searching for relationships and themes in the data and helping in interpreting the data. Qualitative research is a diverse field that employs a variety of

analytic techniques to produce an understanding of rich datasets. Among the more common techniques used by qualitative researchers, thematic analysis involves the identification of recurring patterns that are presented by researchers as overarching statements or themes. The theme is defined as a unifying or dominant idea (Lochmiller, 2021).

While thematic analysis is useful, it does have important limitations. Firstly, it is very dependent on well-formulated research questions. Therefore, when conducting a thematic analysis, a researcher's questions must give opportunities to refer to specific patterns in the data. This means developing "what" or "how" research questions as the researcher did in this study. This is because such questions prompt description and/or elaboration of underlying patterns and thus draw upon thematic analysis' 'strengths. Secondly, making explicit connections to a theoretical framework can be difficult in a thematic analysis. Hence, the researcher prefers to use a priori coding scheme when the research involves a theoretical framework, because this approach allows her to consider how theoretical ideas might "speak" to patterns identified in the data. In sum, while thematic analysis has some important limitations, it remains a very straight forward method for identifying patterns in qualitative data and producing themes that describe them. For that reason, the researcher, as a novice, chose thematic analysis as it serves as an important foundation and the first step toward learning and understanding, using more sophisticated analytic methods (Lester et al., 2020).

For this study, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns, or themes within data (Sanders & Scharp, 2019). A theme captures something important about data from the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within a data set. Thematic analysis was suitable for this study because it organizes and describes the data in rich detail and interprets various aspects of the research topic. Thematic analysis also allows the researcher to reduce, condense, and group the content. Therefore, in this study, information was categorized, interpreted in terms of common themes and synthesized into an overall portrait of the cases. The following is a detailed discussion of the procedure of data analysis used in the study.

Firstly, the semi-structured interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants and transcriptions were done. All the transcriptions were read to attain an overview of the data. During the first step the researcher read all the data, and the data was then broken down into smaller meaningful units in the form of sentences. The researcher perused the data many times to make sense of what it contained, and during the procedure, the researcher wrote down possible categories. Possible themes and sub-themes were then identified. The data was classified accordingly. At that time the researcher tried to make sense of what the data meant. In the final step, the researcher integrated and summarised the data generated. The researcher then tried to gain a deeper understanding of the topic and continually refined the interpretations throughout the analysis process. The next section presents trustworthiness and credibility.

3.6 Trustworthiness and credibility

Trustworthiness is a method of ensuring rigor in qualitative research without sacrificing relevance. Trustworthiness is the extent to which the data obtained in the study is plausible, credible and trustworthy (Kyngäs et al., 2020). The researcher ensured that the trustworthiness throughout the research was adhered to by following strategies or procedures outlined for qualitative research in education and social science (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Strategies, such as prolonged and persistent fieldwork, triangulation, participant verbatim language accounts, mechanically recorded data and member-checking are the important elements considered when the researcher employs qualitative research to ensure its trustworthiness. According to Schoch (2020), the validity of qualitative research can be improved by increasing the sources of validation. This process is referred to as triangulation. They further state that to ensure triangulation, different sources of information or methods should be used. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from teachers, SMTs and DBSTs to ensure triangulation of the data.

To ensure that the research is worthwhile and is an adequate representation of the social representations that have been studied, the researcher used the four criteria as articulated by Kyngäs et al. (2020). These criteria form part of trustworthiness and they are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In the next sections, the

four criteria used to ensure trustworthiness and their relevance in the study, are discussed.

3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility can be defined as confidence in the truth of the findings (Kyngäs et al., 2020). Credibility is an alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to determine that the inquiry is conducted in such a manner as to ensure that participants are accurately identified and described. In qualitative research, credibility refers to the correlation between the ways the participants make sense of social constructs and how the researcher portrays their viewpoints (Mertens, 2023). As the interviews were the researcher's sole source of data for the study, these transcripts needed to be accurate representations of the researcher's participants' opinions. Thus, the audio recordings made of each interview enabled the researcher to make maximum use of the participants' words to preserve the integrity of their voices. Since the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant's eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. Therefore, the only reliable source of information to describe and understand the phenomenon, is the person who experienced the phenomenon. Therefore, to ensure the credibility of the findings in this study, the researcher used several techniques. For instance, to gauge accuracy in this study, the researcher used triangulation and member-checking.

The researcher used the triangulation method of different participants. In this case, the main participants were DBSTs, school management teams and the teachers. By so doing, the researcher ensured that the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy was viewed from the perspectives of DBSTs and from that of the teachers. These different participants have the responsibility of implementing the Inclusive Education policy in mainstream primary classrooms and were the focus of the study. They had experienced the implementation of Inclusive Education in their respective mainstream primary schools.

The second technique used to enhance the credibility of the findings was member-checking. Member-checking is primarily used in a qualitative inquiry methodology. It is defined as a quality control process or a powerful validity tool by which a researcher seeks to improve the accuracy, credibility and validity of what has been recorded during a research interview (Motulsky, 2021). It requires thoughtful and considered integration within the research project. However, member-checking has a long and argumentative history in qualitative inquiry with critical approaches, warning of epistemological challenges and a variety of pitfalls, both practical and philosophical. These complex and controversial discussions seem lost in the uncritical assumption that member-checking is necessary for credible qualitative research. Rather than being one among many validity checks, it is sometimes regarded as the gold standard of quality in qualitative research (Motulsky, 2021). Considering member-checking in this study, after the data were organized, a summary of the themes from the interviews was sent to each participant to further establish the credibility of the findings. Each participant had the opportunity to remove, add or rewrite portions of the transcript that they believed were not accurate or did not accurately portray their opinions on the role of DBSTs in implementing inclusive education.

3.6.2 Transferability

Kyngäs et al. (2020) explain that transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other participants. It is hoped that some experiences of the teachers on the support received from DBSTs in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream schools, can be transferred to a wider population of teachers who implement Inclusive Education. The researcher enhanced transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research context. The key points illustrated by verbatim quotes are crucial to estimating the plausibility and transferability of a case study (Kyngäs et al., 2020). Therefore, in the current study, to give the study even more credibility, the participants' words are quoted verbatim in the presentation of the data.

3.6.3 Dependability

Kyngäs et al. (2020) indicate that the findings are consistent and could be replicated. Therefore, dependability is used to test the relevance of data that has been generated and analyzed to the actual situation under investigation. These scholars further emphasize that dependability is concerned with precision and accuracy. To address the dependability issue more directly, processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work and not necessarily to gain the same results. Cohen et al. (2017) concur that for research to be reliable or dependable, it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out in a similar context, then similar results would be found. In this study, all processes of study were given in detail to ensure dependability for readers to get more understanding of what steps were taken to reach the findings.

3.6.4 Conformability

The concept of confirmability is the qualitative researchers' comparable concern to objectivity. Conformability describes the degree of neutrality or, in other words, the extent to which the findings of a study reflect the participants' opinions and experiences, rather than the researchers' biases, and motivations (Kyngäs et al., 2020). Therefore, confirmability is the degree to which the findings are a product of the focus of inquiry and not biases of the researcher. In confirmability, steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Kyngäs et al., 2020). The key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her predispositions. In this study, data interpretation was not influenced by the researcher's judgment. The researcher tried to find the views, perceptions and experiences of participants about the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration is defined as a way of being sensitive to and considering the rights, duties and responsibilities of individuals, who are participating in a research study in terms of their status, religion, race, ability and age (Cohen et al., 2017). Ethics are a set of accepted moral principles that offer principles and behavioural expectations towards experimental subjects during the research process. Therefore, ethics are viewed as an integral element of research praxis (Ciuk & Latusek, 2018). Ethical issues were important since the study involved human subjects. Therefore, any research that involves other people in some way has ethical implications. Taking this into consideration, the study adhered to ethical considerations as contained in the University's Faculty of Education Handbook of Post-Graduate Qualification Policies and procedures to ensure that individual rights were not infringed. Principles, such as obtaining informed consent, respecting the right to privacy and participation, anonymity, confidentiality and avoiding harm to participants, are important when conducting any research to ensure that individual rights are not violated (Woods & Lakeman, 2016). These principles are discussed in the next section.

3.7.1 Informed consent

This is one of the most important principles in the codes of ethics. Before conducting a study, the researcher must make sure that participants voluntarily agree to take part in the research and can withdraw at any time in the research process when necessary (Woods & Lakeman, 2016). Thus, ideally, informed consent is part of a contracting process with a written agreement between the researcher and each subject, stating the terms and conditions of the research. For informed consent, the researcher obtained written permission from participants to participate in this study. Participants were also asked to give written consent to be interviewed and consulted, regarding the correctness of the interviews. In obtaining consent, participants were informed about the nature of the study, and the researcher explained as fully as possible and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research was about. Once they had agreed to participate and understood the research, the researcher gave them forms in which they

declared that they understood the nature and purpose of the study and that they were participating voluntarily. Concerning privacy and participation, the researcher ensured that participants were not forced to participate in the study. Participants were informed of their rights. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary. Therefore, the principle of voluntary participation was promoted, and participants were guaranteed this right. Moreover, the participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without having to specify any reasons for doing so. They also declared that they knew that they had the right to withdraw from it at any stage. They also agreed to have the audio of the interview recorded. Participants' identities need to be protected, thus confidentiality and anonymity are discussed in the next subsection.

3.7.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality means protecting the identity of participants, while 'anonymity' refers to protection against identification, even from the researcher. According to Woods and Lakeman (2016), confidentiality and anonymity put the participant at ease to give information that might otherwise be regarded as sensitive. In the current study, participants were given assurance to keep all the information gathered confidential and treated with respect. The participants were informed that the information they gave would remain confidential. Anonymity was guaranteed in that no individual responses were linked to a specific participant in any way. The participants were given codes that were known to the researcher and were not revealed to any third parties. Even for the participating schools, a code was used to identify them. Information about participants should not be exposed in any way by the researcher. When conducting any research, it is ethical for the researcher to protect the research participants against any harm.

3.7.3 Protection from harm

Participants should not be harmed or damaged in any way by the research (Woods & Lakeman, 2016). In any study, the potential is there that if the researcher is not careful,

it is possible to harm participants in the study. This could come about through exposing information about the individual participants to outsiders writing about them and using their actual names. The study posed no foreseeable risk of physical, psychological or emotional harm to the participants. The participants did not have to pay to take part in the study. The researcher explained that participation in the study would benefit the participants in that they would bring to the surface the challenges they encounter, which would be anonymously communicated by the researcher to the school's management systems, and the district support team when necessary. Assurance was given that the audiotapes and transcriptions of the interviews would be locked away until research is completed and after that, they shall be destroyed.

3.8 Summary

The chapter identified and briefly described the method of directing the research. The researcher indicated that this is a qualitative study located within the interpretive paradigm. The case study, as a chosen design, was aimed at describing the phenomenon of support in Inclusive Education implementation. The chapter also described the sample and sampling procedures and how the sample was purposively drawn. The method of data collection was discussed at length where semi-structured interviews were found to be the appropriate tools. The data analysis was discussed where thematic analysis was found suitable for this study, as it organizes and describes the data in rich detail and interprets various aspects of the research topic. The chapter also explained the measures that the researcher employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study through credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Lastly, the chapter focused on ethical issues where informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and protection from harm, were discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data and discusses the findings from data collected, concerning the research questions as posed in Chapter 1. The study sought to explore the implementation of Inclusive Education policy in selected mainstream primary schools. This chapter reports on the implementation of Inclusive Education, and the role of DBSTs in supporting and monitoring the implementation of Inclusive Education. Furthermore, the chapter also reports on the challenges encountered when implementing Inclusive Education. When the researcher collected data, the following research questions were used to guide the process:

- How are teachers supported by district-based support teams in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools?
- How are teachers monitored in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools?
- What challenges do teachers experience when implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, data was collected through face-to-face interviews with the selected research participants, namely: three members of the District Based Support Team (DBST), three school principals or SMT members, and six teachers from the three selected mainstream primary schools. The participants in the study were selected through a purposive sampling technique from the three primary schools. From this section, the brief discussion of participants' biographical data is important to understand the participants selected, for the study to gain insight into the studied phenomenon.

4.2 Basic information about the participants

This section presents the basic information about the participants as the biographic data acts as a mirror of the status of research participants in understanding the studied phenomenon. This section also presents the location and the type of schools chosen for the study.

4.2.1 Profile of the schools

The three primary schools that were selected for this study are situated in the Chris Hani West Education District that is in the Eastern Cape Province. The Eastern Cape Province has 12 education districts, but for the study, the Chris Hani West Education District was chosen as the focus of this study. The Chris Hani West Education District has 231 mainstream primary schools and for this research, the study was conducted in three mainstream primary schools from this District.

The selected schools for the study are junior and senior primary schools. All the selected schools are mainstream, government schools that are the recipients of government subsidies. Thus, the government is playing its role in the implementation process of Inclusive Education by ensuring funds are available for the smooth running of the schools. Mainstream schools are classified under two sections in terms of funding, Section 20 and Section 21. When Section 21 schools are subsidized, their money is deposited into their bank accounts from April to July and October to January of each year. These allocated funds are to be used to purchase learning and teaching support materials, payment of municipality services, and day-to-day maintenance of the school buildings. Funds allocated to Section 20 schools by the DoE are held by the district office and all expenditures must be requested through the district office. In other words, for Section 20 schools, the district office manages the subsidy allocated to the schools. The selected schools are Section 21 schools.

White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (2001) defined learners with barriers to learning as not only those with physical, mental or neurological impairments, but also those experiencing learning difficulties as a result of socio-economic deprivation.

Therefore, when schools were allocated to sections, these selected schools were put in Section 21. Section 21 schools are those schools that are situated in poverty-stricken areas and hence, because these schools are situated in such areas, learners with barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties, are enrolled in these schools. Though these schools are supported with money from the government, it is not enough in terms of supporting all the needs of learners, particularly those with learning difficulties. These funds are only available for the smooth running of the schools. They are used for the following purposes: purchase of learning and teaching support materials, which is not enough as the focus is only on textbooks, payment of municipality services, and day-to-day maintenance of the school buildings. Socio-economic factors, like severe poverty, domestic violence, abuse, and so on, which resulted in learners experiencing learning difficulties, are not covered by these funds.

Therefore, this area was chosen, because of its socio-economic factors which resulted in learners experiencing learning difficulties. It is a very disadvantaged area, due to the unemployment of the learners' parents and the child-headed homes. The three schools chosen were Section 21, no-fee-paying schools and were classified as Quintile 3 schools. Quintile 3 schools are no-fee schools.

The enrolment targets for all schools were different; School A had 385 learners, with 12 teachers. The school's ratio was 35:1. There were 197 learners and 6 teachers at School B. The school ratio was 27:1. School C had 647 learners, with 18 teachers. The school's ratio was 47:1. All teachers in all schools taught more than one subject in more than one grade from Grade 4 to Grade 7, including SMTs. Schools A and B were both situated in the villages. The learners attending these schools are from the same villages where the schools are located. School C is in a very small town. Learners attending this school are from the nearby township. All three selected schools are not so far from the district office with an estimated distance of 40 to 50 km. The next section presents the profile of the research participants.

4.2.2 Participant's Profile

The researcher described the participants using a table. The tables below show the participants' information in terms of their gender, age group, educational qualifications, and work experience in all three selected mainstream primary schools and district offices. As the research participants chosen are teachers, SMT members/principals, and DBST's from the Chris Hani West District, their coding will be as follows:

School 1 Teacher 1 =S1T1

School 1 Teacher 2 =S1T2

School 2 Teacher 1 =S2T1

School 2 Teacher 1 =S2T2

School 3 Teacher 1 =S3T1

School 3 Teacher 1 =S3T2

School 1 School Management Team 1 =S1SMT1

School 2 School Management Team 1 =S2SMT1

School 3 School Management Team 1 =S3SMT1

District-Based Support Team 1 = DBST1

District-Based Support Team 2 = DBST2

District-Based Support Team 3 = DBST3

Table 4.1: Age of the participants

Participants	Age group
DBST 1	41 – 50 years
DBST 2	41 – 50 years
DBST 3	30 – 40 years
S1SMT1	51 – 60 years
S2SMT1	41 – 50 years
S3SMT1	51 – 60 years

S1T1	41 – 50 years
S1T2	41 – 50 years
S2T1	51 – 60 years
S2T2	41 – 50 years
S3T1	41 – 50 years
S3T2	41 – 50 years

Teaching as a profession, requires mature minds to comprehend and discern what is involved in the teaching process, including issues of learner diversity. Age is one such indicator of readiness for the teaching profession. In the case of one becoming a school teacher, one used to undergo a minimum of two years of training as a teacher at a Teacher Training College (TTC). For a while now, the requirement has been at least three years. Hence, when added up, the minimum age at which a person could qualify as a primary school teacher in South Africa, is 22 years. It is assumed that older teachers are more mature and more experienced.

Most of the participants were above the age of 40 years and few were above 50 years, and one is less than 40 years. This suggests that most of the participants in the study were mature enough to comprehend the issues around the implementation of Inclusive Education. However, this would depend on whether they embrace the change and whether they have been trained in Inclusive Education before its dispensation.

Table 4.2: Gender of the participants

Participants	**Gender**
DBST 1	Female
DBST 2	Female
DBST 3	Female
S1SMT1	Male
S2SMT1	Male
S3SMT1	Female
S1T1	Female

S1T2	Female
S2T1	Female
S2T2	Female
S3T1	Male
S3T2	Female

Gender has a bearing on how events are interpreted. Kågesten et al. (2016) argue that people's attitudes, opinions, and values are also influenced by their gender. The involvement of both male and female participants in this study ensured that different opinions across genders were represented. By using gender, the researcher was trying to find out if gender is considered at schools, both by teacher and SMT component. Again, it is of interest not to hear only the views of one gender, but both, as men and women do not think alike. Out of 12 participants used in all three schools and district offices, there were fewer male participants as compared to the total number of female participants. The fact that there are both men and women in this group implies that different perspectives will be gathered, as generally men and women perceive things differently. Two SMTs were males, and one was a female. As for the DBST participants, all members were females. Only one teacher was a male. All-in-all, female participants outnumbered male participants.

Table 4.3: Educational qualifications

Participants	**Qualification**
DBST 1	B.Ed.
DBST 2	B.Ed.
DBST 3	M.Ed.
S1SMT1	BA
S2SMT1	BA
S3SMT1	ACE in Management
S1T1	ACE in Life Orientation
S1T2	ACE in Life Orientation

S2T1	DIP
S2T2	B.Ed.
S3T1	B.Ed.
S3T2	ACE in Learner Support

KEYS:

DIP – Diploma

ACE – Advanced Certificate in Education

BA – Bachelor of Arts

B.Ed. – Bachelor of Education Honours

M.Ed. – Master of Education

Most of the participants' qualifications were Bachelor of Arts or ACE, few participants were holding B.Ed. Honors and one participant had a diploma. One participant had a master's degree. It is assumed that they understand elements that affect the implementation of Inclusive Education. Also, they may have high analytical skills in explaining issues about the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Table 4.4: Work experience

Participants	**0-10 years**	**10-20 years**	**21+ years**
DBST 1		✓	
DBST 2		✓	
DBST 3	✓		
S1SMT1			✓
S2SMT1			✓
S3SMT1			✓
S1T1		✓	
S1T2		✓	
S2T1			✓
S2T2			✓
S3T1			✓
S3T2			✓

The experience of teachers was sought, because it had a direct bearing on the implementation of the Inclusive Education and the teaching and learning of learners with learning difficulties. Experienced teachers are conversant with the syllabus. They understand problems faced by learners in their different subjects and topics. They know which topics require more time from the learners, and those topics which usually cause problems to learners.

Generally, teachers in the schools under study were highly experienced and mature people. Most experienced teachers had more than 21 years' teaching experience. Two had between ten and 20 years and no one had between zero and ten years of teaching experience. Two DBSTs had experience of more than 10 years in education support services and serving in the directorates of Inclusive Education, while the other had an experience that is below ten years. So, what the Table 4.4 above means is that most of the teachers in the study had experience in the teaching profession. From the Table 4.4 the fact that most teachers have more than 21 years teaching experience could mean that they are aware of issues related to learning barriers, particularly learning difficulties. Teachers with more years of experience were considered for this research. The assumption is that when giving detailed narrations of events, experience plays a very important role.

As for the DBSTs, most of them have between 10-20 years working experience and this indicates that DBSTs are also aware of the issues related to the implementation of inclusive education. The overall indication of this Table 4.4 is that most of the participants in this study are experienced. As the information about the research participants is presented in the above section, when analysing the data, the following keys are used for ease of reference.

For district-based support teams:

DBST1 - District Based Support Teams

DBST2 - District Based Support Teams

DBST3 - District Based Support Teams

For the three selected schools:

S1 – School 1

S2 – School 2

S3 – School 3

For the principals or School Management Team (SMT), the following keys are used. The researcher chose to maintain the use of SMT as a key when analyzing data as shown below:

S1SMT1 - School 1 School Management Team 1

S2SMT1 - School 2 School Management Team 1

S3SMT1 - School 3 School Management Team 1

As six teachers are chosen as research participants, the keys are:

S1T1 - School 1 Teacher 1

S1T2 - School 1 Teacher 2

S2T1 - School 2 Teacher 1

S2T2 - School 2 Teacher 2

S3T1 - School 3 Teacher 1

S3T2 - School 3 Teacher 2

As this is a qualitative study, the researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews as informed by pre-determined themes emanating from research questions. The findings of the study to be analysed, are support for implementing Inclusive Education; monitoring and challenges of implementing Inclusive Education. The next section discusses the participants' understanding of Inclusive Education Policy.

4.3 Understanding Inclusive Education Policy

DBSTs have the responsibility to ensure that teachers develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of policies, through training to effectively implement Inclusive

Education. Teachers need to be trained on the following aspects: what Inclusive Education entails, how to deliver the curriculum in ways that are relevant and meaningful to the diverse needs of their learners, and the practicalities of differentiating and adapting curriculum to be accommodative of diverse needs of learners. Training in using policy documents and curriculum support materials, is needed. However, information solicited from almost all participants revealed that teachers do not understand Education White Paper 6. When asked about the understanding of an Inclusive Education Policy, teachers indicated that they are not clear about an Inclusive Education Policy. S1T1 reported:

> *I do not understand Inclusive Education Policy. I only heard about White Paper 6 when you were explaining your topic and the purpose of your study. I am not clear about what is EWP6 about. This is because I have never been trained in Inclusive Education at all.*

Just like S1T1, S1T2 emphasized that:

> *I know nothing with regard to the Policy of Inclusive Education. I have not received any support about Inclusive Education from the DBST. So, this Inclusive Education is new to me.*

S3T2 indicated:

> *No, I understand nothing about EWP6. I have not been trained, but have asked people what inclusive means and they have explained the meaning of it. They said, "Inclusive Education involves bringing together pupils of different physical differences in one class".*

It is clear from these excerpts that these teachers know nothing about EWP6. This means that they have never been introduced nor trained on Inclusive Education Policies by the DBST. Unlike other teachers mentioned above, S3T2 only understands that Inclusive Education involves bringing together learners of different physical challenges in one class. This indicates that she is not aware that Inclusive Education also involves adapting and differentiating the curriculum to cater to the needs of all learners.

This implies that these teachers lack a clear and precise knowledge and understanding of what Inclusive Education entails. Some teachers, on the other hand, reported that they do understand the policy, though they are not clear about it. They are also unable to implement it.

S2T1 asserted:

> *Not clearly. I only know that all learners are equal, and they should be included in mainstream schools.*

S3T1 indicated:

> *I hardly know what Inclusive Education is. I have never been workshopped on Inclusive Education Policy, we just hear about it even in that course, if you remember that Bed Hons and ACE, they did not get into details, we only know what Inclusive Education is, there are no details about what EWP6 is.*

When probing further into what Inclusive Education is, S3T1 explained:

> *Inclusive Education is a system of accommodating all learners in one environment, not discriminated against and are all treated equally and given human respect and dignity.*

S3T1 described Inclusive Education as a system that accommodates all learners in mainstream schools. According to him these learners must be treated equally and be given human respect and dignity. This indicates that S3T1 is not aware of the fact that although these learners are accommodated in mainstream schools, they need support to learn.

S2T2 noted:

> *Yes, I do understand EWP6 that we must not discriminate against these learners. It says we should cater to all learners irrespective of the barriers. We should use different teaching styles. Although I do understand the policy, I am unable to implement it. If only the DBST could assist us in content adaptation; this practice of Inclusive Education would not be such a daunting task. Imagine, it is challenging for me, yet I have a qualification in Special Education, what about my counterparts who qualified with a general teaching qualification?*

The statements above affirm that teachers hardly know Inclusive Education. S2T2's views are congruent with the EWP6's position that Inclusive Education is essentially about including and supporting all learners irrespective of their barriers. She also acknowledged that learners learn differently and therefore a variety of teaching methods must be used to cater for their learning needs. S3T1 and S2T2 had done Bed Hons and ACE in learner support, but they still maintained that they hardly knew about EWP6.

They were only able to identify learners with learning difficulties. This means that they were not able to implement it, and this hinders the effective implementation of Inclusive Education. Even the SMTs are not clear about this policy.

When asked about the availability and understanding of an Inclusive Education Policy in their schools, S1SMT1 reported:

> *We are still having problems interpreting the policy, because the workshops we have attended as principals, are not enough. They are very short. Teachers do not have a copy of the Inclusive Education Policy yet.*

With regards to the duration of the workshop, as already mentioned by S1SMT1, S3SMT1 added:

> *We have only one copy of EWP6. I do not even understand this EWP6. In that single workshop I have attended they showed us this policy and told us what it says, but I cannot tell you what it says, let alone implementing it. I do not understand how one can be expected to understand a book and how to implement it in one or two days. It is not possible.*

S2SMT1 said:

> *We do understand the policy, but we need training that is related to the situations in our schools. We need real strategies, pictures and videos of ideal classes with lots of resources, not just theoretical information.*

Even school management teams are not clear about the Policy of Inclusive Education. They grumbled about the inadequacy of the workshop they had attended. They complained that the Inclusive Education introduction workshop was too short and too theoretical. They maintain that they still need training workshops that are related to their school contexts. DBST 1 expressed concerns that teachers and SMTs are not clear with the Inclusive Education Policy.

When asked whether the teachers understand the Inclusive Education Policy, she said:

> *Not even the principals and SMTs do understand that policy. They do not understand that policy at all. They understand that all the learners should be at school, irrespective of the barriers, how to do that, and how part, they do not know the how part of it and they*

think it is not their baby to understand that policy. It is not clear to the people that policy. There is a lot that needs to be done for them to understand the policy.

When probing further to DBST1 as the person to capacitate teachers and SMTs about why teachers do not understand it, she answered:

The teachers firstly are to be supported by the structure they are having in their schools, called ILST. That structure must ensure that each teacher knows the policies. ILSTs also need to know the areas of difficulty that are experienced by teachers in the schools. Then from there if the teachers are experiencing some gaps from the support given by ILST then they will be supported by district office. We make it a point that every school has got ILST. The ILST was trained and expected to support the teachers in return at their schools, where there is a gap, then they will refer.

DBST 1 also acknowledged that the inadequate training workshops rendered to teachers may hinder them to make sure that teachers know, understand, interpret and implement Inclusive Education Policy (EWP6), effectively. As a result, DBST 1 added:

Teachers could understand the policy, only through the provision of on-site training workshops. Teachers need to be trained on their schools, but we have a challenge of human capacity and transport when it comes to that. We are very few and we do not have enough transport to attend schools. National Department of Education is forcing the implementation of White Paper 6, but does not show support in terms of providing enough resources for us to support teachers in Inclusive Education implementation.

DBST 3 asserted:

You know sometimes it is easier to understand theory, but when you are expected to implement is different. We can teach teachers and import the information and they can say, "Yes I understand of cause why should we send the child five hours away from the family to a special school when we can make some changes around here and put a computer in front of them, because they have cerebral palsy and they cannot write, but they can push the button and then they can work, so why should we send them four to five hours away" and they understand that, the problem is implementing it. The other problem I see is that members from other sub-directorates (such as management and governance, subject advisors, etc.) do not understand Inclusive Education clearly. I recommend that if it can be well advocated in DoE for different sections then to schools.

It is clear from this excerpt that during these one to two days' workshops, teachers claim that they understand what has been said, but the problem arises when they come back to schools to implement what they have been taught. DBST3 also acknowledged that other sub-directorates are not clear about Inclusive Education and its implementation. Lack of Inclusive Education knowledge by other sub-directorates could mean that learners with learning difficulties might not be receiving appropriate educational services. This means that the special needs sector is the only sub-directorate that deals with Inclusive Education. This was a challenge that retarded progress among teachers. As a result, DBST 2 explained:

> *When the programme started (Inclusive Education), we had induction workshops with the principals. The duration varied, running for one day to two days. Also, as much as we need to visit school and meet with teachers, financial support is another drawback.*
>
> *Our first workshop with the principals was on unpacking the Inclusive Education Policy. We went through the policy document with them and discussed the structures of implementation. This workshop lasted a day. The second workshop invited coordinators of the ILST from all schools in the district. The attendance was satisfactory. On this workshop teachers were taken through what learning barriers are and how learners get to be said to have learning difficulties. We also went on through filling in of Support Needs Assessment (SNA) forms.*

Profile of implementation construct attempts to look at whether the principles of Inclusive Education are being implemented in the mainstream classroom with the help of district-based support teams (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). When Inclusive Education was introduced, teachers needed to be oriented and be prepared to effectively implement it through the support from district-based support team members. This is because, when the teachers are aware of Inclusive Education and understand what it entails, and properly prepared through training workshops, this is when they can be able to implement Inclusive Education as envisaged by EWP6. They can also be able to apply implementation strategies, like curriculum adaptation and differentiation, whilst they consider the context of their relative schools. However, participants from this study revealed that teachers are not clear about the policy of Inclusive Education. The teachers' limited understanding could have serious implications for the way Inclusive

Education is implemented in these schools. This correlates with the findings by Dreyer (2017), who revealed that the limited understanding of Inclusive Education by many mainstream teachers was seen as overwhelming and this made it difficult for teachers to deal with learners with learning difficulties. Inclusive Education requires a high quality of service, well-trained teachers, and support personnel responsible for its implementation.

After the researcher sought the participants' understanding of the Inclusive Education policy, the participants were asked about their views in relation to the available support when implementing Inclusive Education.

4.4 Support for implementing Inclusive Education

Support implies any activity that assists teachers in implementing Inclusive Education optimally. These activities include on-site support visits by DBSTs, support from SMTs, and training workshops at the district level. DBST's are the people who are responsible for continuously supporting teachers in Inclusive Education implementation.

4.4.1 Support from DBST

DBSTs have the responsibility to visit the schools, do needs analysis and then come back to schools and provide support to teachers in the form of on-site training workshops as per the needs of the teachers. However, when the data was collected about whether there is any on-site support that the research participants received when implementing Inclusive Education in their mainstream classrooms, the research participants indicated that there is inadequate school support visits and a lack of on-site training workshops by the members of DBST. For example, S1T1 said:

> *I have not received any training in Inclusive Education. As a teacher I have never seen the DBST member, I only heard that she was here at school. If what she was doing, I do not know. Two teachers from school have been taken to Queenstown last year to be trained for remedial course. The teacher is from foundation phase and the ILST coordinator.*

With regards to the lack of support from the members of DBST, as already mentioned by S1T1, S1T2 added:

> *I have not received any support with regards to Inclusive Education from the DBST.*
>
> *Last year, two teachers were invited to attend Inclusive Education workshop at Queenstown. I was unfortunately not among those teachers. The circular from the district requested one teacher from school and ILST coordinator to attend the workshop. There were no specific criteria to choose who to attend. Then one teacher from the foundation phase volunteered herself to attend.*

In addition, S3T2 reported:

> *I can say I have not received any training in Inclusive Education. We sometimes have district staff visiting us at school, but we see it not enough as we do not know their purpose of visitation. We only see them entering and leaving the principal's office. To have them working with us as schools will make the implementation of Inclusive Education a success.*

S3T1 reported:

> *Not that I remember. I have never been trained on Inclusive Education. Here at school, we do Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) every year. Every teacher fills in his or her Personal Growth Plan (PGP) and indicate all the challenges he or she encounters on teaching and learning. This is where we mention the challenges we experience when implementing Inclusive Education, like barriers to learning (e.g. learners experiencing learning difficulties) and submit them to the district. The district received our challenges, but there is no follow up from them to come to schools to say we are here now to help you with the challenges you have submitted. All I am saying ma'am is that DBSTs never come to school to train us on Inclusive Education, though they know our challenges as we have submitted them.*

It can be seen from these excerpts that four teachers (S1T1, S1T2, S3T1 and S3T2), which is the majority, have never been trained in Inclusive Education, neither at school nor at cluster/district level. These teachers indicated that they were unfortunately not among the teachers who were invited to attend Inclusive Education workshops at district level. The researcher noticed that the DBSTs strategy of inviting two teachers per school to attend workshops is, depriving most of the school teachers from being trained.

This means that most of the teachers lack the important skills and knowledge needed to support learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. While these teachers lamented on lack of support in terms of on-site training workshops, two interviewed teachers from school 2 (S2T1 and S2T2) indicated that they have been supported in implementing Inclusive Education, through training workshops, though they were not held at school. S2T1 reported that:

> *We have just been invited to a two-day workshop at the district. They have not come to school and show/help us with Inclusive Education.*

S2T2 affirmed:

> *I have been trained on Inclusive Education, but it was not held here at school, it was held at the circuit, so we had to go there for the workshop.*

With regards to inadequate school support visits by members of DBST, most interviewed teachers indicated that DBSTs do visit the schools, however, there were no training workshops conducted in preparation for the implementation of Inclusive Education at school level. Teachers' sentiments on inadequate school support visits and lack of on-site training workshops, were echoed by all SMT members, who were interviewed in this study. SMTs indicated that DBSTs do visit the schools, but not for on-site training purposes in terms of implementing Inclusive Education. S1SMT1 remarked:

> *One member only comes when she needs something urgently like number of learners who are needy. Most of the time they come at the beginning of the year to check whether we are ready for teaching and learning. None of the DBST members has ever conducted any training workshops in this school.*

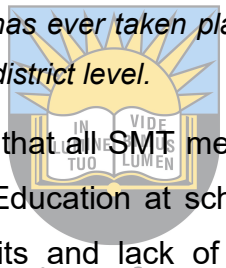
Just as S1SMT1 has indicated, this has also been mentioned by S3SMT1 that:

> *The district sends a special official from Special Needs Sector to check for learners with problems here at school. This certain lady who does visit the school once a term does not visit for support purposes, but to check whether we have problems or not. However, if we refer these learners with problems, they do not do further steps. For example, one official once came to assess these learners and he found out that some of them have severe problems and are not supposed to be here. But as I'm speaking to you now, those*

children are still here. We really need support from DBST, because the support we are offering these learners is so limited.

S2SMT1 declared:

Let me be frank, currently, there is no such expected support. The support is so minimal in the sense that DBSTs only invite two teachers to attend workshops at the district. Secondly, the support is minimal in that whenever the district visits us, we know they are coming to monitor curriculum implementation without observing challenges teachers and most learners have. Their concern is about results at the end of the year. They are not concerned about anything else. The support that is expected is not forth coming as we expected. DBSTs are supposed to bring strategies to teachers on how to assist these learners with impairments in terms of their academic performance. Thirdly, they are supposed to find time at least to stay in school, get into classes and observe as teachers are teaching to see whether the strategies that they have brought are assisting the teachers. No training workshop has ever taken place here at school, except the two-day workshop they have attended at district level.



It can be seen from these excerpts that all SMT members see that teachers receive no support in implementing Inclusive Education at school level. While teachers lamented on inadequate on-site support visits and lack of on-site training workshops, DBST members made it clear that when they visit, they mainly focus on administrative work when asked what exactly they do when they visit the schools. DBST 2 said:

When we visit schools as the department, we mainly focus on administrative work where we check or monitor the Institution Level Support Team (ILST) minute book. We do verification on capturing of Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) on SA-School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMMS). We also check the functionality of ILST.

Just as DBST 2 has indicated, this has also been mentioned by DBST1 that:

We check whether the Institution Level Support Team (ILST) structure conducts workshop for teachers on how to fill in Support Needs Assessment (SNA) forms. We also do adjudication of cases of learners with barriers to learning for further assessments and intervention.

DBST3 confirmed:

> *We check that teachers are given the support they need by ILSTs so that they can support the learners in their classes. We also monitor curriculum implementation.*

The purpose of this section was to find out whether the teachers are being supported by DBSTs in Inclusive Education implementation at school level. The results are very clear as to what is happening with regards to training workshops in Inclusive Education implementation at school level. There were no on-site training workshops that have taken place in the schools where the study was conducted. This means that teachers had not been supported on Inclusive Education implementation at school level and this may negatively impact the effective implementation of Inclusive Education as the support received by learners from the teachers, is limited. This is evident from the participants' quotations.

The researcher noticed that the DBST's school visits are administrative, not technical. This means that DBSTs' school visits had a different role than what the teachers expected. Teachers were expecting the DBSTs to come to their classes and train them in how to teach learners with learning difficulties. However, the DBSTs only visited the office and checked the school's readiness for normal teaching and learning. Their visits have nothing to do with Inclusive Education implementation. This finding supports that of Abongdia et al. (2015), who revealed that DBSTs school visits are sometimes only for administrative purposes. This indicates that teachers are in dire need of support at the school level, and this requires drastic steps to be taken to make sure that teachers are allowed to upgrade themselves in the most needed skills and knowledge.

The construct support by outside agencies focuses, amongst other things, on professional development in the form of on-site training workshops and on-site support visits provided, when Inclusive Education is implemented. The support from outside agencies describes the actions undertaken by DBSTs to implement Inclusive Education (Rogan & Grayson, 2003), as well as how they manifest their intentions. This section intends to assess the support teachers receive for implementing Inclusive Education. It emerged from the data that there is inadequate visitation of schools and an absence of on-site training workshops by the DBST. From these excerpts, schools are visited less

often, and this visit is not for support purposes. It was established that some schools have been visited once, while for others no visit had been made. These findings support those of Abongdia et al. (2015), who revealed that there is inadequate visitation of schools by the district-based support teams. Despite the support from the DBST, it emerged from the data that as teachers struggle with the implementation of Inclusive Education, there is no support that they get from the school.

4.4.2 Support from SMT

The role of the SMT of a school is that of getting things done effectively, through supporting class teachers. School management teams must, in terms of the provisions of the Constitution and the Employment of Educators Act, play a leading role by supporting teachers in the implementation of an Inclusive Education Policy. According to their job description, they are supposed to manage Inclusive Education implementation and give support to teachers in addition to conducting some class visits (DoE, 2005). The SMT must observe the instructional delivery by the teacher, check both learners and teacher records during class visits, as well as give feedback. Mini workshops are expected to be conducted thereafter. Change must be realistically planned and monitored. Hence, the researcher saw the importance of finding out the capacity of the SMTs regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education. The teachers will work well if they see that the administration takes note of their work and constantly reinforces them according to their performance. Also, the teachers will work well if they are properly briefed on what is expected of them, as well as on changes taking place. However, the findings of this study revealed that SMT members are unable to support teachers in implementing Inclusive Education. When asking teachers whether they have been supported in terms of training by SMTs in the implementation of Inclusive Education, S1T1 reported:

From my experience as a teacher, I have never received any support from SMT.

S1T2 affirmed:

> *What I have noticed is that some of them seemingly are not trained yet on this inclusivity, so most of the time we are faced with the same problem. They cannot intervene. The only intervention that they do is to tell the DBST our challenges.*

S2T1 asserted:

> *There is no support from SMT, our principal must be well-versed on Inclusive Education, because it is unrealistic for our Department of Education and policymakers to expect teachers and SMTS to be able to meet individual needs of learners with learning difficulties, if they have not received the appropriate training, let alone the ability to support teachers by the SMTs.*

S2T2 declared:

> *There is no assistance given by the SMT in terms of Inclusive Education implementation through workshops. The school management team is not supportive when it comes to the education of learners with learning difficulties. Class visits conducted are only for IQMS purposes. When you need support in your class concerning problems of learners with learning difficulties, you do not get that.*

S3T1 complained:

> *The SMT in my school is not supportive in terms of Inclusive Education implementation. The only observations done are when we complete IQMS forms. These observations are not beneficial, as they do not assist us on our areas of weakness, such as handling learners with learning difficulties so that we can be able to support them.*

This is an indication that teachers did not receive any assistance from the school management teams in terms of Inclusive Education implementation; neither did the school management teams pay them any class visits, nor monitor learners' progress by examining their exercise books.

S3T2 stated:

> *I have never received any support from the school in terms of training on Inclusive Education implementation. I have noticed that even the SMT needs support on Inclusive Education as much as we do.*

The above excerpts indicated that teachers saw no support from SMTs in the implementation of Inclusive Education. This means that for the SMTs to be able to support teachers in implementing Inclusive Education in their classes, they also need constant support from the DBST. When asking SMTs whether they are able to support teachers in the implementation of inclusive education, S2SMT1 said:

> *I am a principal who is also a teacher. I am facing the same challenges of teaching children that have learning difficulties in terms of their academic performance. The challenges that teachers are facing are the challenges that I am also exposed to and faced with. So, we do all that we can, knowing very well that learners with learning difficulties will always be lacking behind. We are facing that challenge. The support is needed by all of us including me.*

S1SMT1 *said:*

> *We just help each other with filling in SNA forms and identification of learners with learning difficulties. We discuss the barriers experienced by learners when we have a meeting.*

Just as S1SMT1 has indicated, this has also been mentioned by S3SMT1:

> *We just talk with teachers in the form of a meeting, giving them some advice like do that, do this. For example, if the learner cannot read, let him/her speak. If s/he cannot write, let him/her draw.*

It is clear from these excerpts that the support from the school management team is not enough, as it only occurred in the form of a meeting. This is an indication that school management teams are unable to train teachers on Inclusive Education implementation. This means that there is a need to retrain school management teams about how best to support the implementation of Inclusive Education. If the school management teams, who are supposed to lead the way and provide guidance to the teachers, are not sure how best the learners with learning difficulties can be supported and accommodated, this is problematic. It implies that the implementation of Inclusive Education is negatively impacted.

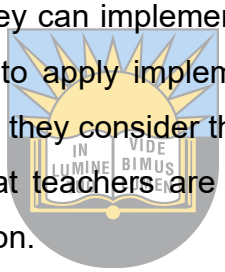
Knowledge about Inclusive Education and a vision of how Inclusive Education could improve the lives of learners with learning difficulties and the country, were important attributes for school management teams to possess. However, findings from this study

reveals that school management teams still battle with the problem of adapting the curricula to meet the diverse needs of leaners with learning difficulties. They often find themselves in a difficult position, as they are also expected to provide support and guidance to teachers who are also not skilled in implementing Inclusive Education. This finding links to that of Robberts et al. (2018), who found that school management teams often lack the specific pedagogical knowledge needed to provide feedback to teachers who teach learners with learning difficulties. This indicates that lack of training on the side of the management in the schools negatively affects the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy.

School management teams are mandated by Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998, to provide professional management in the schools as part of their management functions. This is an important role in advancing school reform efforts aimed at improving Inclusive Education for learners with learning difficulties. Furthermore, the support rendered by a school management team is a foundational component of schoolwide transformation toward Inclusive Education implementation (McCart et al., 2014; Rogan & Grayson, 2003). However, findings from this study indicate that school management teams are unable to support teachers in terms of teaching learners with learning difficulties.

The failure to execute the duties and roles of school management teams could be blamed on a lack of training in Inclusive Education on the part of the school management team. Thus, school management teams cannot offer support to teachers and learners without being trained. This could jeopardize the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy for learners with learning difficulties, as school management teams will not know exactly how learners learn and what their content is like. Supporting these findings are Bantwini and Letseka (2016), who revealed that teachers are not supported in the implementation of Inclusive Education, either by the principal or the district-based support teams. This is an indication that the absence of support from the school management team aggravates the challenges that teachers face in implementing Inclusive Education and leads to feelings of hopelessness (Bantwini & Letseka, 2016).

According to the implementation theory that guided this study (Rogan & Grayson, 2003), schools in South Africa are more dependent on the quality of leadership. The school ecology and management factors are key in the implementation of Inclusive Education, as they talk about the quality of leadership. Quality leadership creates a safe and supportive environment for all the learners in school. Furthermore, if the school is in disarray and not functioning well, this often challenges the implementation of Inclusive Education. This means that school management teams need to be well-versed in Inclusive Education because it is unrealistic for them to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties without being properly trained, let alone equipping teachers. Teachers need to be oriented and prepared to implement Inclusive Education through support from school management teams. This is because, when the teachers are aware of Inclusive Education and understand what it entails, and are properly prepared through workshops, that is when they can implement Inclusive Education as envisaged by EWP6. They can also be able to apply implementation strategies, like curriculum adaptation and differentiation, whilst they consider the context of their relative schools. It is clear from the data collected that teachers are faced with many challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education.



Furthermore, Inclusive Education requires a high quality of service, well-trained teachers, and support personnel. Nel et al. (2016) in their study, reveal that the teachers reflect that the DBST, as a support system, does have its advantages, since it assists teachers by providing them with advice about how to identify learners with barriers to learning, monitor the ILSTs and assist with learner referrals to other institutions. It was found here that teachers have no problem with the identification of learners with learning difficulties. The challenge lies in how to assist the identified learners as they have never been trained on remedial work. Nevertheless, these findings are the opposite of what Zwane and Malale (2018) found. These researchers found that lack of support services in the governments' schools and teachers' incompetence in identifying learners facing learning difficulties in their classrooms are some barriers to Inclusive Education. This implies that there are teachers who are unable to even identify learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. Therefore, despite DBST efforts, teachers

need practical solutions/strategies to support learners who experience learning difficulties.

4.5 Monitoring the implementation of Inclusive Education

When the research participants were asked about training, few teachers also mentioned that Inclusive Education implementation is not monitored by the DBST. Monitoring is the continuous process of ensuring that the plan is implemented smoothly. There is a need for constant visits to schools by the DBST so that they understand what is taking place in schools with regards to implementing Inclusive Education. DBSTs have a role to monitor how Inclusive Education is being implemented in schools and render other relevant services for teacher growth. Such relevant services include lesson demonstration; cooperative planning; team-teaching; whole-school workshops and lesson observation (PCG, 2007). When the research participants were asked about whether they are monitored when implementing Inclusive Education by members of the DBST, the focus was on classroom-based and follow-up support. The data collected showed that teachers reported a lack of classroom-based monitoring and follow-up support.

Teachers voiced their concerns about the classroom-based monitoring and follow-up support in implementing Inclusive Education. Most participants expected DBST to monitor the implementation of Inclusive Education in schools by going to classes and demonstrate how to teach learners with learning difficulties. The workshops conducted lack proper and scheduled follow-up visits. During the data collection process, S1T1 indicated:

> *I have never been trained on Inclusive Education, but I think DBST should come and show me how to do it in class, not just ask me to implement the policy. They must train us and constantly remind us.*

S1T2 confirmed:

> *The district-based support team must come to our classes and show us. Their visits must not be once per year as it happens now. They should not also visit the office only and*

expect us to deal with learners with learning difficulties though they never trained us on how to teach them.

S2T1 said:

I still need more training. I have attended a two-day workshop on Inclusive Education, but it was not enough, due to lack of monitoring in terms of classroom-based and follow-up. Even if it had been a week, I still believe it would not have been enough without monitoring. I want to believe that when one is introduced to something for the first time, there is need for a follow up in the form of retraining. Therefore, if they can do this workshop again, oh! It will be better. This once-off workshop without follow up is not helping.

S2T2 *stated*:

After the once-off training held by the department, no follow-up was done. We suffer in silence, and this frustrates us. The DBST never visited us to see the implementation of what they were talking about in the workshops being conducted (filling in SNA forms).

Just like S2T2, S3T1 emphasized that:

We do not see DBST coming to school for follow-up. In addition, even in the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) we mentioned these challenges, however, no follow-up from the district.

S3T2 mentioned that:

When learners with challenges are referred, nothing is done. They must come more often and go to the classes to show us how to do intervention in a class of more than 40 learners.

All teachers in this study articulated a desperate need for monitoring in the classroom, as they are unable to support learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. Trained teachers further expressed that after training, the DBST should come to the school and show them practically how to teach learners with learning difficulties. They insisted that the DBST should not just give a workshop and make no follow-up visits. This implies that teachers expect the DBST to provide hands-on in-class support. Even the SMTs were worried about this lack of classroom-based monitoring and follow-up support from the DBST. S3SMT1 said:

Even if we refer these learners with problems, there are no further steps. One official once came to assess these learners and he found out that some of them have severe problems and are not supposed to be here. But as I am speaking to you now, those children are still here.

It is clear from this excerpt that S3SMT1 is very concerned about not receiving feedback from the DBST, even though they have seen that there is a serious problem. S2SMT1 overwhelmingly stressed that there is no classroom-based and follow-up support that is rendered to teachers at all, as he proclaimed:

The way they should be doing is to visit schools, going to classes, sitting there, and observing teachers teaching these learners. While observing, they are expected to write a report on the areas or shortfalls they have picked up, that would need monitoring so that they then prepare a package that they can give to teachers. This is because on that workshop that teachers had attended, what the DBSTs do is not a practical assistance is theoretical, let me be frank, is to advise that teachers should fill in this form, teachers should do this, teachers should do that, submit forms, so that those learners that they have been identified as having challenges would be referred to that DBST. After those workshops, for the period I have been here, there is no follow-up. I have never seen any DBST going to classes to monitor teachers on how to implement inclusive education.

S1SMT1 reported:

You know, after the workshop there are no follow-ups. Even when they visit, they do not go to classes. They do not visit us often, sometimes they visit once per year. For example, we have not been visited this year and teachers have not been invited to any workshop this year.

Furthermore, teachers did not see any kind of classroom-based follow-up coming from the DBSTs. As a result, teachers in this study felt unanimous that for them to be able to teach learners with learning difficulties, in-depth support (in terms of providing observation and practical workshops in classes) from the DBST, was essential. This means that the teachers were not skilled enough to fully support learners with learning difficulties. These teachers articulated that the DBST should give them backup in terms of hands-on classroom-based and follow-up support. These findings support those of Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018), who proclaim that teachers still need continuous,

contextually responsive monitoring processes, despite the in-service training they have received from district-based support teams. This means that teachers need classroom-based support, where contextual constraints, such as large classes, inadequate material, and human resources, little or no support from the district-based support team and ILST, inadequate training, and the teachers' limited range of pedagogical strategies, are considered. Therefore, after training, district-based support teams should provide ongoing, hands-on support in class and follow up on implementation, as practical demonstration is crucial in an inclusive classroom.

4.6 Challenges of implementing Inclusive Education

The construct capacity to support innovation in Rogan and Grayson's (2003) implementation theory attempts to understand and elaborate on the factors that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas in a school system; in this case, the implementation of Inclusive Education by teachers. Indicators of this construct, like teacher and learner factors, have been mentioned by the participants in this study as factors that hinder teachers from effectively implementing Inclusive Education in their mainstream schools. This implies that inadequate training of teachers in terms of qualification was one of the challenges that teachers faced when implementing Inclusive Education.

4.6.1 Inadequate training of teachers

When asking teachers about their major challenges in the implementation of Inclusive Education, they all mentioned their qualifications as one of their major challenges.

S1T1 said:

> *This thing of learners with learning difficulties is new. My training at the college did not include anything about teaching learners with learning difficulties. We only dealt with a normal child. I did not receive any formal training on addressing learners' needs in an inclusive classroom. I just obtained an ordinary (mainstream) ACE, thus I feel unprepared*

to help the learners, as my pre-service training did not focus on assisting learners with learning difficulties.

S1T2 stated:

During my training, I do not remember anything on Inclusive Education. What I know is that if you wanted to train for special education you would enrol with universities, such as Stellenbosch University.

S2T1 confirmed:

I have never been trained on Inclusive Education in my initial training, even now the training is one day only. It would be better if it was included in my initial training. Also, only if in-service training that would take two weeks or a month has been done, maybe it would be better, not this one-day workshop.

S2T2 asserted that:

My initial training was a challenge, but I did Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) on special needs, but I am unable to implement it because of support from DBST. I think they should advise me on how to help them all. I can identify them, and I think I can help them only if they are alone in the class, i.e. if they are not included with those without learning difficulties. Gifted learners become bored. Also, time is a challenge as we need to finish the syllabus in time. So, we end up going with those who go. I don't have a problem identifying them, but the problem is that I cannot help them.

S3T1 reported that:

At the college, we only focused on teaching learners without learning difficulties. Though I did Bed Hons, I do not feel I have the practical skills, such as modifying or differentiating the curriculum, providing appropriate instruction, or using suitable assessment strategies as we never go deep on Inclusive Education. Learners who have difficulties in learning always present a challenge to me. I ask myself questions such as, what can I do to help this child reach his or her potential? How can I help this learner succeed in school?

S3T2 complained when she said:

My qualification as a teacher is a challenge when it comes to inclusion, because I think I should have been trained in dealing with these children by the time I was at the training college.

Teachers in this study described themselves as not qualified because they were initially trained to work in general classrooms and not trained to include learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. Most teachers mentioned that they had not received any formal training in terms of pre-service training on how to deal with learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms. Their qualification only focused on teaching normal learners. Even those teachers who have furthered their studies and did ACE and Bed Hons did not feel competent and confident enough to teach learners with learning difficulties. SMT members also confirmed that teachers are not qualified to teach learners with learning difficulties, including themselves.

S1SMT1 asserted:

> *We are not qualified to do the job. We are causing more damage than good because we are not qualified to do this.*

S2SMT1 declared:

> *We are expected to teach learners with learning difficulties although we never received any training on Inclusive Education. Inclusive Education is a specialization on its own. So, we were never trained on that even at the college and that is the problem.*

S3SMT1 said:

> *The scary part of it is that teachers are being pushed into doing something they are not qualified for. My teachers are well qualified. All of them meet the minimum requirement level by the Department of Education, which is Matric plus three-year training (M+3). This Diploma did not include anything about the Inclusive Education policy. They do not know how to treat learners with learning difficulties. I, as a principal, also do not have enough information, because my initial training is the same as that of the teachers.*

It can be seen from this excerpt that the teacher's qualification did not include any of the special skills like curriculum adaptation and differentiation to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their instructions. This means that teachers lack the important skills and knowledge needed to support learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms.

In addition, from the data that was collected about learners' inability to read, write and solve Math problems, it was evident that teachers and SMT members seem to have similar views. For example, S1T1 indicated that:

> *I have identified learners with learning difficulties. Learners are unable to read, write and calculate. They are unable to copy information from the hard copy or chalkboard.*

S1T2 also shared the same sentiments with S1T1, and she confirmed that:

> *Learners are unable to read and write. I must read the questions for them and translate them to IsiXhosa. They cannot even read IsiXhosa.*

S2T1 affirmed:

> *We are not qualified to deal with all these problems adequately, let alone successfully, as a result you will find a Grade 4 learner being unable to read and write. As a Grade 4 teacher you are not supposed to teach matching/building of the words. You are expected to teach at least sentence construction. They even struggle to solve Math problems. Only if our qualification had included Inclusive Education, I think we would not be facing this problem of reading, writing and calculating, especially in the foundation phase.*

S2T2 said:

> *Learners with learning difficulties are unable to read and write and they know that. As a result, they are shy. They do not want even to try to read. This problem resulted in them being disruptive in class. They do not pay attention at all. They are noisy. When you turn your back to the chalkboard, you will find them playing and making others laugh and this does not help us at all. Another challenge is that of creating a lesson and assessment for all. I am unable to do that.*

S3T1 reported:

> *These learners cannot read and write, and they do not participate, you'll find that even if you try to do individual attention, try to differentiate from others, and give him/her support you find that you do not pass.*

S3T2 asserted:

> *During our training, this Inclusive Education was not there. It is new. Initially, my understanding of special education needs was learners with physical disabilities. As we sometimes talk about it in our meetings, I am getting to understand that these learners we*

have been referring to as dull or incompetent like those who cannot read and write, are some of the learners with learning difficulties.

Teachers indicated a lack of skills and competence to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their classes, as one of their main challenges. They all believe that they were failing to meet the needs of all learners in their classrooms, due to their limited skills. SMTs also acknowledged the challenge of learners' inability to read and write.

S1SMT1 said:

Teachers are willing to accommodate all the learners who experience barriers to learning; the challenge is we do not know how. The system is failing our learners. Learners in the intermediate phase are supposed to be able to read and write, but that is not the case here. These learners cannot read and write. Those who are trying to write, their tempo is very slow.

S2SMT1 declared:

Well, as we never trained on Inclusive Education in our pre-service courses, the district must give us intensive workshops, and train the teachers on how to handle the barriers to learning. Secondly, they must train the teachers on how to do intervention strategies and lastly, they must enroll teachers to do remedial education, perhaps in one of the recognized institutions so that they can be able to assist learners with reading and writing problems this is our major challenge.

S3SMT1 remarked:

You see there is a public outcry about the learners who cannot read and write. We are also experiencing that problem. We need to be equipped with the necessary skills how help learners with reading and writing difficulties.

Teachers in this study argued that they had never been trained in Inclusive Education in their initial training. They believe that if their initial training had included a portion of Inclusive Education, this would never be a problem. This indicates that they must be exposed to Inclusive Education through formal training, that is, during their initial and in-service teacher training. This means that their pre-service training and inadequate training influence their inability to assist learners with reading, writing and solving Math

problems. Teachers do not feel confident enough or sufficiently qualified to offer the kind of specialist support they believe is needed by some of the learners in their classes. Hence, they indicated the need for the DBSTs to give teachers in-depth training, which includes necessary skills, like planning multi-level instruction and individual support plans to handle learners experiencing learning difficulties in their classrooms. These findings affirm the findings of the study by Islam et al. (2016) and Siddik and Kawai (2020); and who revealed that teachers had not been trained in Inclusive Education whilst undergoing their initial teacher training, which explains their incompetency and lack of skills to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. This implies that teachers' pre-service training and inadequate training might have a negative impact in the implementation of Inclusive Education. Even if teachers had done an additional Advanced Certificate in Education in Learner Support, they were still not confident about their own level of professional knowledge and were not sure how they should support learners with learning difficulties effectively (Nel et al., 2016).

Teachers further reported that the training rendered was too much theoretical and lacked hands-on experiences on how to deal with learners with learning difficulties in the classrooms. S2T1 said:

> *The support was not adequate, because they just told us what Inclusive Education is, they did not do it practical. We have just been invited for a two-day workshop and told that 'you see now, we are on Inclusive Education, so you need to plan for all these learners as the way they are'. We have just been told like that. We have not been told on how to plan for all these learners. They are supposed to take learners and do it to them while we are observing.*

It can be seen from this excerpt that S2T1 did not see any practical training in the workshops that they have attended. They have just been given an information about the change or on what is happening further. She further stressed that though they have been trained on how to fill in SNA forms, they are unclear on what else to do. Therefore, it is very clear that even the training on that area had also not equipped them. S2T1 further declared that:

The support did not equip me. As a result, I have identified learners with learning difficulties, but I am stuck in the process of filling in the SNA forms, because during training we were just perusing and reading some sections in that SIAS policy document. We never did even one example of filling in that form. I am doing something I do not understand. I am just doing it because I must do it. I am really wondering how we must help these learners if we are not fully equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Echoing the sentiments, S2T2 said:

The support was not adequate, because we are not receiving enough training from the DBST. The DBST must come to my class and sit here. They must observe me the half of the period and next half they can show me how to do it. If they can be hands on, I will be happy, and they must come visit us once per week. Now I am doing Inclusive Education for its sake. I did not get enough information from the workshop that I attended, but I must help these learners. Another thing is that the forms that they asked us to fill in are for referral purposes. They are not helping us on how to teach these learners.

S2T2 further stressed that the training has not equipped them. She proclaimed:

Training has not equipped me. We do attend training, but we need more training on Inclusive Education Policy so that we can implement it correctly. Workshops do not go deep. You will come back and try to do what you were told, but you struggle.

The excerpts from S2T1 and S2T2 clearly indicated that the training that was conducted on Inclusive Education was mainly on informing the teachers about the introduction of the Inclusive Education Policy and the filling in of referral forms. These two teachers indicated a critical need for mainstream school teachers' practical training workshops on how to implement Inclusive Education. This means that more practicum experience in inclusive mainstream classrooms is necessary to provide mainstream teachers with tools, resources, and experience to effectively teach learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms. The provision of practical training workshops could equip mainstream teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge, such as curriculum differentiation needed to implement Inclusive Education. In addition, teachers complained that they had never received continuous training workshops. When asked how often they attend the workshops. Teachers mentioned only having been trained once on Inclusive Education.

S2T1 complained:

> *Mhm! Not that much, we have only attended a two-day workshop last year.*

S2T2 affirmed:

> *Nothing this year. We do not attend workshops regularly. We received one workshop regarding Inclusive Education and that was not enough.*

This is an indication that teachers are not trained in Inclusive Education implementation regularly. This implies that these one-day training workshops are not enough. As a result, even after these workshops teachers still struggle in how to implement Inclusive Education in their schools. The SMT members that were interviewed concurred with the above teachers because when asked how DBSTs are supporting teachers in implementing Inclusive Education and whether the support rendered to the teachers was good enough in supporting them to implement inclusive education, S1SMT1 mentioned that:

> *Teachers, including ILST coordinators, are taken to a two-day workshop. DBSTs do give them information on what Inclusive Education is, but when it comes to implementation that is the problem. These teachers need more support or continuous support from the DBST to work with learners with learning difficulties. In most cases, our ILST works with social problems. Even then they just refer the case as it is to the social worker as they are not clear with the steps to follow in this SIAS policy. The real problem that teachers are facing is how to teach these learners. If the DBST can just take a few learners with learning difficulties and work with them for the whole term for the teachers to see, that would be good enough. Support in the form of hands-on will be sufficient. The support they received was not enough.*

After what S1SMT1 mentioned, S3SMT1 shared similar sentiments when mentioning that:

> *You know it is difficult to say how, because for the training they just invite one teacher and the ILST coordinator to a common place and train them on how to fill in SNA forms from Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy document. But you will find that the workshop they are giving these teachers is too small in such a way that even the coordinator is not clear about what is this SIAS saying. This is how they support teachers; they make them complete these SNA forms of which this is not enough.*

If they can be hands-on, I will be happy. What they tell teachers in these trainings, is not practical. When the teachers get to their classrooms, they struggle alone.

S2SMT1 reported:

Teachers and ILTS are trained on SIAS policy, and you will find out that the very same teachers who had been trained do not refer some cases, due to the difficulty in dealing with the paperwork. They sometimes do not meet to discuss the cases, because they get stuck with this paperwork. If they do meet the case is referred straight to the district. The DBST must strengthen the teachers by coming to sit in their meetings and discuss the cases referred to the team and show them how to fill in these forms.

S2SMT1 further stressed that teachers need to be shown practically how to teach learners with learning difficulties. He expected teachers to be provided with some teaching material like worksheets to use in an inclusive classroom. He said:

Again, whenever there is training, teachers complain later that the training did not address the issue of learners with learning difficulties. I am not against the education of these learners, and neither am I against the training workshops teachers receive. After such kind of a training workshop, I would expect that teachers are given maybe worksheets that they can use in their classrooms for learners with learning difficulties, but none of that is given to them. Instead, they are encouraged to go to their various schools and start putting what they have learned into practice. How can they do that when they have not shown practically how to do it?

When probing further about how they would describe the support rendered to teachers and whether the support had equipped them to be able to implement Inclusive Education, S3SMT1 said:

DBSTs do not equip teachers in these workshops. Sometimes they just find that it is a waste of time.

S1SMT1 asserted:

The bottom line is training that is needed. The Department has not equipped teachers and given them guidance in what they want to be implemented. This brought a lot of confusion and frustration to the teachers.

S2SMT1 reported:

> *If the teachers can be well equipped through training, I think they can play a huge role in implementing this Inclusive Education.*

SMTs have also seen that workshops are not organised regularly. This is evident in the words of S1SMT1 when he said:

> *Workshops organized by the Department are for a day or two, which is not enough for teachers who have never been trained at all in Inclusive Education Policy and for those who need to be revived timeously if there are any.*

S2SMT1 declared:

> *They only attended one workshop last year. You cannot expect teachers to automatically teach learners who have barriers to learning. WP 6 does not address the problem. How can you implement the policy if you are not sure? You experience some problems.*

S3SMT1 confirmed:

> *If many workshops were organised strictly for Inclusive Education Policy implementation as is done in other subjects, then, there was going to be an understanding of the Policy and the implementation was going to be a success. Teachers are invited to a two-day workshop once a year. The Department must provide in-service training on how to implement Inclusive Education. Teachers need to be trained again on the policy of Inclusive Education.*

The statements above affirm that teachers do not have the appropriate skills and knowledge to teach learners with learning difficulties in their mainstream schools, due to insufficient support in terms of training workshops. There is a desperate need for more intensive training so that teachers can be confident in supporting learners with learning difficulties in their classes. In addition, an analysis of the above statements reveals that the support for teachers in this District is not meeting their expectations. Teachers expected DBSTs to show them practically how to teach learners with learning difficulties and how to fill in SNA forms. They also expected to be given resources like worksheets to deal with learners with learning difficulties.

They believed it would be much better if the DBSTs had shown them practically how to teach learners with learning difficulties. They were also not happy with the fact that they

had just been told that they should include learners with barriers to learning, particularly those with learning difficulties in their planning. This implies that the training that was rendered to the teachers did not prepare them to teach in an inclusive setting. This means that comprehensive training should be given to all teachers in mainstream schools. This clearly indicates that despite the in-service training provided by the DBST to few teachers in this District, teachers still need continuous, contextually responsive support. DBSTs are supposed to visit the schools, go to classes or invite all teachers to the training and show them practically how to teach in an inclusive classroom.

In addition, teachers mentioned inadequate support for Inclusive Education implementation, due to theoretical information they had received and insufficient time. According to Rogan and Grayson (2003), the first purpose or focus of the training concentrates mainly on providing information about expected changes emanating from the Policy and about what teachers are expected to do as a result in their classrooms. The excerpts from the interviews clearly indicated that the training that was conducted on Inclusive Education was mainly on telling the teachers about the introduction of the Inclusive Education Policy and filling in of SNA forms. Teachers were also told that they were expected to plan for all learners. This means they were told to differentiate and adapt the curriculum. However, this was not enough, because Rogan and Grayson (2003) further stipulate that moving forward from just providing information about innovation, there is an increasing emphasis on training, which is focused on implementation of change rather than just providing information, and a greater sense of teacher ownership of the process. This means that after the teachers have been informed about what Inclusive Education is in their training, they were supposed to be shown how to implement Inclusive Education. This could have been done by training them on how to adapt, differentiate and individualise the curriculum to be accommodative to all learners. Conversely, the above comments indicated that information about Inclusive Education was only what teachers got from their training in this district. This means that they have not been equipped enough with the implementation skills (like curriculum differentiation and adaptation) that are needed to implement the Policy. This is where the problem lies, because teachers were supposed to be shown practically on how to differentiate and adapt the curriculum. This is why

teachers perceive themselves as incompetent and lack the skills to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms (Dreyer, 2017). Consequently, this hurts the implementation of Inclusive Education. Teachers are unable to teach learners with learning difficulties, due to inadequacy or insufficient support.

The second purpose of training is the extent and duration of the support (Rogan & Grayson, 2003), where continuous, school-based development guarantees adequate support that can enable teachers to help learners with learning difficulties better than a one-shot workshop. However, the findings revealed that teachers never received continuous training workshops. They attended a two-day workshop. Supporting these findings is Luningo (2015), who reported that the duration of the workshops does not prepare teachers enough to effectively implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream classrooms. This indicates that training workshops were almost non-existent and even when available, the areas covered were inadequate, leaving teachers not fully equipped in teaching learners with learning difficulties in inclusive classrooms. For this reason, teachers do not see themselves as adequately prepared for the implementation of Inclusive Education (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017). The content of teacher training workshops for Inclusive Education must include locally proven workable approaches and practices (Forlin & Sin, 2017). This is because teachers do not have enough knowledge about the development and implementation of instructional strategies, like an individual support plan (Ahsan & Sharma, 2018).

This means that the content of training workshops that the teachers in mainstream schools are in dire need of, is the demonstration of how to differentiate and adapt the curriculum. The way individual support plans are constructed and implemented also needs to be presented in the content of these training workshops. Another challenge that teachers identified is the non-involvement of parents.

4.6.2 Non-involvement of parents

The learner factor relates to the background of the learners and the kind of strengths and constraints that they might bring to the learning situation (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). Learners might, for example, come from a home environment where there is no place

for them to do homework and no one to support and help them with their studies. Therefore, collaboration between the home and the school is crucial for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education. However, most of the participants think that parents are not involved in their children's learning. S3T1 stated that:

> *Some parents are involved in their children's learning, but there are those individuals who said, I have given you a child so work with him. Parents feel that it is the teacher's job to teach the learner, and this has nothing to do with them. These parents do not even come to school when they are called, although they do not know the reason for calling. Others are secretive, they do not give us information.*

S1T2 asserted:

> *Parents do not support their children. If a child is given work to do at home, the parent thinks that the child does not want to learn or the fault is with me as a teacher, who does not understand my work and I send the work to her as a parent, without the parent understand the child's problem. The same parent is invited to come to school, but she does not come. I think this is because these parents came from an era where their education was characterized by less structure. It now rests upon us as teachers to teach children what parents are failing to do. Parents do not understand that inclusion is very difficult for the teachers and part of the problem is, that they have shifted their responsibility of looking after their children onto teachers, whereas it should be a joint responsibility or partnership of teacher and parent.*

It can be seen from these excerpts that parents of learners with learning difficulties are not involved in their children's learning. This means that inadequate parental involvement and lack of responsibility negatively affect the progress of learners with learning difficulties. Other teachers reported that other parents deny that their children have learning difficulties. S1T1 said:

> *Some parents believe that teachers hate their children. They see no problem with their learners. If the teacher continues to explain the problem she has with the learners in their learning, parents even mentioned that they would rather take their children to another school.*

This denial was supported by S2T2 when she said:

> *The learner will migrate to the other school if he/she is identified as having a problem and parents would take them out of the school where they were identified, because parents do not want to accept that they had a problem. Some learners even drop out of the school.*

Some teachers associated inadequate parental involvement with illiteracy.

S2T1 said:

> *Parents who lack education often do not realize the amount of damage they do to their children, because of their non-cooperation in their studies. They do not realize the extent of the curriculum, the amount that their children must learn and what should be achieved, as they themselves have not experienced school as their children are experiencing it in the present day.*

S3T2 commented:

> *Parents do not have enough knowledge of these learning difficulties. Sometimes I send a note to the parent explaining the difficulty of the child and asking for their help with homework. However, the parents decide to ignore that and take care of their normal day-to-day business; the educational problems of the child are left to the teacher, because he/she is paid for that.*

The excerpts above indicated that these participants recognized the parental involvement as inadequate. This, according to the participants, made it impossible to effectively provide support to learners, who experience barriers to learning as expected by the Education White Paper 6. This means that the inadequate involvement of parents in the education of learners with learning difficulties, could impact negatively on the implementation of Inclusive Education. SMTs also noted the non-involvement of parents of learners with learning difficulties, when asked what challenges teachers experience in implementing Inclusive Education in their classes.

S1SMT1 commented:

> *Parents have denial on the problems faced by their children. They say their children are right. So, they do not come to the school when invited. Others are supportive. I think this is a major challenge, because when you identify a barrier from a learner, you need support from a parent*.

S2SMT1 reported:

> *Some of the challenges that teachers are facing are that some learners do not have any other support except from the teachers. Learners that we are teaching are children from families or communities who are mostly rural and those who are set to be literate are leaving the villages to go and find employment. Most of these children are living with grannies and granny fathers. Assistance from other role players, like the parent component or home component, is not coming that is the challenge.*

S3SMT1 said:

> *I have heard teachers bring reports to me on the non-involvement of parents on their children's education. Children are given homework and they come the next day with the work not done. Most children stay with their grandmothers, because their mothers are working in far places. Grandmothers are illiterate, which makes them unable to assist learners with schoolwork. They go to school without pens to write and this results in them stealing other learners' pens. Most of these learners are always bullied.*

School teachers need to work together with parents to help learners with learning difficulties reach their educational objectives. Nevertheless, teachers in this study complained that parents of learners with learning difficulties were not actively involved in their children's learning. Learners do not get support from home. This poses a challenge to the learners, especially with learners, who have learning difficulties. This non-involvement of parents could impede the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. This finding falls under the capacity to support innovation in the implementation theory. This construct attempts to understand and elaborate on the factors that can support or hinder the implementation of new ideas in a school system (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). The non-involvement of parents in their learner's learning hinders the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. In addition, the fact that some parents are functionally illiterate had also been raised in this study as one of the challenges that teachers experience in their endeavours to provide support to learners who have learning difficulties. Teachers believe that this lack of education or illiteracy was the reason underlying the non-involvement of parents in their children's learning. These findings confirm previous findings that parents of learners with learning difficulties are typically less involved in

cooperation with Individual Support Plans (ISP) (Schmidt & Cagran, 2014). Likewise, non-involvement of parents and the fact that some parents are functionally illiterate had been raised in Nel et al.'s (2016) study as one of the challenges that teachers experience in their endeavours to provide support to learners who have barriers to learning. The scarcity of resources was another challenge identified in the data collected from the research participants.

4.6.3 Scarcity of resources

Resources have been found as a major factor that impends the implementation of Inclusive Education in this District. For this study, resources are defined as those basic facilities and services needed for DBSTs to support teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools, such as human and physical resources. Human resources mean special education teachers, mainstream teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, remedial/learning support facilitators, learner agents and teacher assistants. Physical resources refer to transport in this section. These important resources enable the effective implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. It appeared from this study that the DBSTs are encumbered by inadequate human and physical resources. This is evident from the participants' words. When asked how often the teachers should be visited for support purposes and whether the support rendered is adequate (in terms of content of support and frequency of visit) for them to be able to implement inclusive education, DBST 3 cited:

> *Teachers are supposed to be visited regularly because learner outcomes are not making us smile, but only if human resources were available, as well as other supporting resources, like transport so that teachers are visited regularly.*

DBST 3 also raised the concern of not rendering feedback to schools, as she complained:

> *For myself, I would like to attend to every case, but I am going to tell you that as it is I would go to issue of those schools and I will sit with my report for maybe over a month because we do not have any transport to go back to the schools to give feedback and that*

is the big issue and it frustrates me, I cannot even explain to you how it frustrates me. We do not visit the schools often enough.

Just like with DBST 3, DBST 2 proclaimed:

No. Firstly, the issues of human resource are always a challenge. Because of the lack of personnel, the frequency of visiting the schools is minimal and this says the number of schools are missing. Again, much as we want to be in schools as much as possible, our hindrance is transport. The state of the EC Department of Education's financial position cannot be over-emphasised. There is no more money for this Inclusive Education. We could not make visitations to the schools.

After what DBST 2 mentioned, DBST 1 shared similar sentiments when mentioning that:

Human resources are inadequate, because you may find that in one district there may be two social workers, two psychologists, and few learning support facilitators. Therefore, it becomes difficult for us to reach all teachers from different schools. I believe that the DoE must maximise human resources in order to accommodate all learners. Therefore, I will not say the support is adequate, because the first challenge is that there is a shortage of human resource. There are even circuits that do not have any official to visit, because people who were allocated those circuits have retired. So, we need to adopt those circuits though we have our own circuits. Secondly, Department of Education is forcing the implementation of Inclusive Education, but it does not show support. Now this implementation seems to be the baby of DBSTs that is expected to perform its role without resources. As much as we need to visit school and meet with teachers, lack of transport is another drawback. As a result, we have not conducted workshops in a while, because of shortage of transport.

The statements above affirm that there is a lack of human and physical resources at district level. DBSTs complained about the shortage of their own staff and transport to visit the schools. This means that members of DBST could not frequently visit all schools for support purposes.

In the same view of the shortage of human personnel, are SMT members.

S2SMT1 affirmed that:

The challenge that we are having is that continuously at the district level the DBST continuously claim that people who are supposed to come and support at school level, are

few. Inclusive Education Policy has not been resourced enough with human personnel to assist schools and basically schools and teachers in classes as they implement Inclusive Education. The shortage of teachers at this school is also a challenge. Teachers are overloaded.

S2SMT1 further blamed the DoE for not having enough budget to accommodate all the expectations of an Inclusive Education Policy like individualization. He further indicated that:

As human personnel is a challenge, we are suspicious that the budget of the very department does not have the muscle enough to accommodate all, and is unable to fulfill the expectations of WP6, which include Inclusive Education. Because Inclusive Education in its very nature needs resources, resources starting from the human personnel, able people, that have gone through the issue of understanding how best you want to be able to teach children with various challenges, because Inclusive Education speaks to challenges of children cutting across from mild to high, you know.

S1SMT1 declared:

We have trouble when coming to the provision of human resources. It starts with teachers. We do not have enough teachers at school. Each teacher must teach more than three classes with lots of subjects. This leads to overloading, and it is difficult for a teacher to implement an Inclusive Education policy in that situation.

Just like with S1SMT1, S3SMT1 complained:

The number of teachers at school is not enough. The learner-to-teacher ratio by the DoE is said to be 1:40, but in our school is not like that. We have more than 45 learners in each class and that makes it difficult to individualise learners.

Provision of adequate resources was found useful to promote the successful implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (Mitchell, & Sutherland, (2020). The value of having adequate and appropriate resources to promote learning cannot be overestimated in the implementation of the Policy. However, from the excerpts above there is a shortage of human personnel at the district and school level. This means that DBSTs will not be able to visit all the schools for support purposes. This implies that teachers are not visited in schools, due to the shortage of DBSTs, thus, not getting the support they are expected to get, which is, frequent visitation and training, follow-ups

and feedback. On the other hand, teachers themselves are not enough at schools. This implies that teachers could not perform their duties as expected. They cannot apply the necessary interventions like individualisation to learners with learning difficulties. Lack of mainstream teachers seems to be the most important negative factor affecting the implementation of Inclusive Education (Ntsholo, 2017). This is an indication that this introduction of Inclusive Education is just an idealistic issue, it has not been resourced enough with human personnel to provide support services to teachers and learners. This deficit of human capacity hinders and incapacitates the few DBST members from effectively supporting schools and teachers and this negatively impact the implementation of Inclusive Education. Considering the total number of schools in Komani CMC, which is, 174 schools, and the number of DBSTs, specifically a few remedial/learning support facilitators (Eastern Cape DoE Chris Hani West Operational Plan, 2017/18), it would be unrealistic to expect a profound amount of change in the current implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools in Chris Hani West District.

Furthermore, physical resources also present a challenge to the DBSTs to perform their duties. There was not enough transport available for DBST members to visit schools. Since traveling to schools is a key part of the ability of DBSTs to deliver effective support services, great distances to schools result in DBST members having to travel long hours, which limits their time to provide in-depth support, like on-site training to schools. It also means that DBSTs cannot visit the schools regularly or attend to all the reported problems adequately and on time. This indicates that inadequate resources for the provision of educational support services in this District is therefore concerning and may be one important contributor to the ineffective implementation of Inclusive Education. This means that if the DoE wants to make inclusion a reality, it needs to provide districts with the appropriate resources to realize this policy. The findings of this study support those of Makhalemele and Nel (2016), who revealed that resources in education support services at the district level, were deemed insufficient. The lack of resources has negative impacts on the expected results, especially in the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa. Limited resources made it difficult for teachers to deal with learners experiencing learning difficulties (Dreyer, 2017). Due

to these aspects, the provision of equitable quality education and support to all learners seems at present to be beyond reach.

4.7 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of collected data from the qualitative research study. The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. The implementation of Inclusive Education seems to have many challenges. The data gathered revealed that there were inadequate school support visits by the members of DBST and a lack of on-site training workshops. It was noticeable that DBST's school visits were administrative and not related to curriculum matters. It was also revealed that the support received from the district level was not adequate in terms of dealing with learners with learning difficulties in inclusive classrooms. These inadequate training workshops were attended by few teachers, as the DBSTs only invited two teachers per school. This resulted in most of the teachers in this District not being supported in Inclusive Education implementation. In these once-off training workshops, teachers were just told about the introduction of Inclusive Education and how to fill in SNA forms. The focus of the training never emphasized on how to implement being. Consequently, teachers are unable to differentiate and adapt the curriculum. It was established that teachers also lack a clear and precise knowledge and understanding of what Inclusive Education is. The workshops conducted were inadequate, due to absence of proper and scheduled follow-up visits. Teachers expected the DBST to provide hands-on in-class support. It was also acknowledged that Inclusive Education implementation was not monitored by DBSTs and SMTS, as SMTs were unable to train teachers on how to deal with learners with learning difficulties.

In addition, numerous implementation challenges emerged from data, for example, inadequate training of teachers in terms of teacher qualification, non-involvement of parents and inadequate resources, including human and physical resources. The data gathered revealed that although teachers are professionally qualified, they are not qualified enough to teach in inclusive classes. In other words, they were not trained in

preparation for the implementation of Inclusive Education. Thus, teachers lack the important skills and knowledge needed to support learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms, which include individualization, curriculum adaptation and differentiation. This can negatively impact the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. The identified challenges contributed to the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. From this study, it is evident that the DBST's support to teachers in implementing Inclusive Education is inadequate and this may be due to inadequate physical and human resources at the departmental level. DBSTs were unable to attend to the reported cases in schools, due to the lack of transportation and fewer remedial/learning support teachers. Non-involvement of parents was also deemed as a challenge. In the next chapter, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

As the previous chapter analyzed, presented, and discussed the findings, this chapter provides a summary of the study findings as transpired from the data that was collected concerning the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools. Subsequently, the chapter provides the concluding remarks and the recommendations that the researcher is making, based on the findings.

5.2 Discussion of findings

This section discusses the key findings of the study and identifies the key aspects that emanated from data and how best those may be addressed in responding to the area being investigated. Since Rogan and Grayson's (2003) implementation theory was chosen as the theory that underpins this study, it is appropriate to situate the findings and their implications within this theory. The themes that were identified from the findings of the study are: (i) understanding of the Inclusive Education Policy, (ii) support for implementing Inclusive Education; (iii) monitoring the implementation of Inclusive Education, and (iv) challenges of implementing Inclusive Education. The next section provides a discussion on each of the four identified thematic areas.

5.2.1 Understanding of Inclusive Education Policy

When Inclusive Education was introduced, teachers needed to be oriented, prepared, and trained to have a deeper understanding of what Inclusive Education entails, how to deliver the curriculum in ways that are relevant and meaningful to the diverse needs of their learners, and how to accommodate the learners with diverse needs when teaching in mainstream contexts. When teachers understand Inclusive Education, they can be

able to implement it as envisaged by EWP6. This may also enable teachers to adopt implementation strategies that promote curriculum adaptation and differentiation to ensure that no learners are left out. However, from the data collected, almost all participants revealed that teachers do not understand the Education White Paper 6 and are not clear about what it entails. Even those who had done B.Ed. Hons and ACE in learner support, still maintained that they hardly knew about EWP6. They were only able to identify learners with learning difficulties, but not implement it. They were unable to interpret it, let alone implement it. The teachers' limited understanding could have serious implications for the way Inclusive Education is implemented in these schools. This correlates with the findings by Dreyer (2017), who revealed that the limited understanding of Inclusive Education by many mainstream teachers was seen as overwhelming and this made it difficult for teachers to deal with learners with learning difficulties. Inclusive Education requires a high quality of service, well-trained teachers, and support personnel responsible for its implementation.

It was also revealed that other sub-directors, like subject advisors, curriculum specialists, etc. are not clear about Inclusive Education and its implementation. Lack of Inclusive Education knowledge by other sub-directorates could mean that learners with learning difficulties might not be receiving appropriate educational services. This means that the special needs sector is the only sub-directorate that deals with Inclusive Education. This was a challenge that affected progress among teachers.

5.2.2 Support for Implementing Inclusive Education

Education White Paper 6 (2001) has mapped the way for the implementation of Inclusive Education and associated support structures. These support structures comprise district-based support teams and school management teams. Both structures have a responsibility to support teachers in implementing Inclusive Education. The primary function of district–based support teams is to deliver integrated professional support services at district and school levels (DoE 2005; 2001).

5.2.2.1 Support from DBST

For this study, the construct support by outside agencies focuses, amongst other things, on professional development in the form of on-site support visits and on-site training workshops provided for teachers in the implementation of Inclusive Education. This is because it describes the actions undertaken by DBSTs to support the implementation of Inclusive Education (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). District-based support teams are supposed to support teachers in terms of training them to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in mainstream classes. Hence, their role is to organize and conduct on-site support visits that encompass school-based support training workshops at either individual school level or school cluster level on identified needs (DoE, 2005).

When conducting school support visits, the aim is to support teachers for continuous growth and development. Contrary to what was indicated in DoE (2005), it was found from this study that some schools were visited once for administrative routines, while some have not been visited at all. Teachers reflected that there is inadequate visitation of schools and an absence of school-based training workshops by the DBST. This compromised the implementation of Inclusive Education, as teachers seem not to have received training as anticipated. Hence, they experience challenges with adapting and differentiating the curriculum to accommodate learners with diverse needs in their mainstream classrooms. This implies that DBSTs did not execute this duty as indicated in DoE (2005) and the EWP6 (2001). Therefore, this study established that for Inclusive Education implementation to be successful, on-site support visits and school-based training workshops are essential.

Another duty of the DBST is to coordinate the orientation and training of teachers to promote professional development (PCG, 2010). It was found that some of the teachers had been supported in Inclusive Education through training workshops. These workshops were organised by the DBST where a central place was identified for teachers to attend, based on their clusters. However, the support workshops were reported as inadequate by the teachers as they seemed to be too generic as teachers were given information about Inclusive Education. Hence, the support workshops were perceived to be inadequate as they did not equip teachers on how to implement

Inclusive Education. These findings are congruent with the results of the investigation conducted by Motala et al. (2015) where it was indicated that teachers were not sufficiently trained on Inclusive Education implementation. Despite the support from the DBST, it emerged from the data that as teachers struggle with the implementation of Inclusive Education, there is no support that they get from the school.

5.2.2.2 Support from SMT

School management team support is a foundational component of schoolwide transformation toward Inclusive Education implementation (McCart et al., 2014; Rogan & Grayson, 2003). School management teams play a key role in advancing school reform efforts, aimed at improving Inclusive Education for learners with learning difficulties (DeMatthews et al., 2020). When SMTs value Inclusive Education and have the power to influence change, they can support their teachers in developing inclusive instructional experiences that challenge their learners academically. Teachers believe that the support of the school management team is critical for them to implement inclusive practices. However, the findings from this study suggest that the support from SMTs was not enough and that is concerning. This is because they only supported each other in the form of a meeting where they shared their challenges and gave each other some suggestions.

SMTs must support teachers through staff development programmes. Despite that, data collected, revealed that no staff development initiatives were conducted by SMTs in supporting teachers to implement Inclusive Education. As a result, teachers found it difficult to adapt and differentiate the curriculum to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners, specifically those with learning difficulties. This was contrary to Rogan and Grayson's theory of implementation, which states that teachers need support from their supervisors. SMTs themselves were in dire need of support as they had never been trained in Inclusive Education. This implies that SMTs failed to execute their duties of supporting teachers and learners in their respective schools, and this could hurt the implementation of Inclusive Education for learners with learning difficulties.

In addition, knowledge about Inclusive Education and a vision of how Inclusive Education could improve the lives of learners with learning difficulties and the country were important attributes for school management teams to possess. However, findings from this study reveal that school management teams still experience challenges with curriculum differentiation strategies to meet the diverse needs of learners with learning difficulties. They often find themselves in a difficult position, as they are also expected to provide support and guidance to teachers, who are also not skilled in implementing Inclusive Education. This finding links to that of Robberts et al. (2018) that school management teams often lack the specific pedagogical knowledge needed to provide feedback to teachers, who teach learners with learning difficulties. This indicates that lack of training on the side of the management in the schools negatively affects the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy.

5.2.3 Monitoring the implementation of Inclusive Education

This theme lies within the profile of the implementation construct as mentioned by Rogan and Grayson (2003). It examines the role of DBSTs to support teachers in implementing Inclusive Education. In as much as the provision of support is fundamental for teacher development, without proper monitoring the support exercise may be futile. This is because monitoring is the continuous process of ensuring that the plan is implemented smoothly. Therefore, there is a need for constant visits to schools that focus on classroom-based monitoring and follow-up support by the DBST so that they understand what is taking place in schools about implementing Inclusive Education. DBSTs need to monitor how Inclusive Education is being implemented in schools and render other relevant services for teacher growth. Such relevant services include lesson demonstration; cooperative planning; team teaching; whole-school workshops; and lesson observation (PCG, 2007). Most participants expected DBST to monitor the implementation of Inclusive Education in schools by visiting classes and demonstrating how to teach learners with learning difficulties. However, teachers from this study indicated that no classroom-based monitoring and follow-up support was received from DBSTs, and this may affect the support of learners with learning

difficulties in their classrooms. These findings support those of Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018) that teachers still need continuous, contextually responsive monitoring processes, despite the in-service training they have received from district-based support teams. This means that teachers need classroom-based monitoring support, where contextual constraints, such as large classes, inadequate material, and human resources, little or no support from the district-based support team and ILST, inadequate training, and the teachers' limited range of pedagogical strategies, are considered. Therefore, after training is rendered by the district-based support teams, they should provide ongoing, hands-on support in class and follow-up on implementation, as practical demonstration is crucial in an inclusive classroom for teachers to better understand what is expected from them when it comes to the implementation of Inclusive Education.

It was also found that when teachers referred some cases to the DBSTs, regarding the challenges encountered when implementing Inclusive Education, they did not get feedback. This implies that teachers were not provided with the support they deserved and Inclusive Education implementation was not monitored. Thus, teachers were not supported to increase their capacity to meet the needs of all learners, particularly those with learning difficulties. This implies that the workshops conducted, lack proper and scheduled follow-up visits. As a result, teachers lack the important skills and competence to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their classes and this is concerning. Therefore, this study intended to encourage the district-based support teams to support teachers through structured training with follow-up sessions meant to monitor how teachers implement Inclusive Education.

5.2.4 Challenges of implementing Inclusive Education

This theme established the factors that impede teachers from effectively implementing Inclusive Education, namely, inadequate training of teachers in terms of qualification, non-involvement of parents and scarcity of resources.

5.2.4.1 Inadequate training of teachers

Teachers in this study described themselves as not qualified, because they were initially trained to work in general classrooms and not trained to include learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. These teachers' qualifications did not include any of the special skills, like individualization, curriculum adaptation and differentiation to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their instructions. These findings affirm the findings of the study by Islam et al. (2016) and Siddik and Kawai, (2020); that teacher had not been trained in Inclusive Education whilst undergoing their initial teacher training, which explains their incompetency and lack of skills to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. As a result, these teachers perceive themselves as incompetent and lack the skills to accommodate learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. Mainstream teachers do not feel confident enough or sufficiently qualified to offer the kind of specialist support for some learners in their classes, who may require special attention (Dreyer, 2017).

It was also established that even those teachers, who in their ACE and B.Ed Hons, specialized in learner support did not feel competent and confident enough to teach learners with learning difficulties. As mentioned by Nel et al. (2016), even if teachers have specialized in learner support, they still lack confidence in their level of professional knowledge and are not sure how they should support learners with learning difficulties effectively in their classrooms. Teachers were only able to identify learners who experience learning difficulties, but not teach them. These findings are the opposite of what Zwane and Malale (2018) found. These researchers found that teachers' incompetence in identifying learners facing learning challenges in their classrooms, is a barrier to inclusivity. This implies that there are teachers who are unable to even identify learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. This means that teachers lack the important skills and knowledge needed to support learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms.

Furthermore, Rogan and Grayson (2003) stipulate that providing information about innovation is not enough, the focus should be more on the implementation of change, rather than just providing information and a greater sense of teacher ownership of the

process. This means that after teachers have been informed about what Inclusive Education is in their training, training them on how to implement it should be done by providing them with training on curriculum differentiation that is accommodative of all the learners. However, teachers from this study reported that the training that was conducted on Inclusive Education was theoretical, as it lacked hands-on experiences on how to deal with learners with learning difficulties in the classrooms. Consequently, this may negatively impact the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The second purpose of training is the extent and duration of the support, as mentioned by Rogan and Grayson (2003), where continuous, school-based development guarantees adequate support that can enable teachers to help learners with learning difficulties, rather than once-off workshops. However, the findings revealed that teachers had never received continuous training workshops that adequately empowered them for Inclusive Education implementation; they only attended a two-day workshop. This relates to Luningo (2015), that the duration of the workshops does not prepare teachers enough to effectively implement Inclusive Education in their mainstream classrooms. This indicates that training workshops were almost non-existent and even when available, areas covered were inadequate, leaving teachers not fully equipped to teach learners with learning difficulties in inclusive classrooms. For this reason, teachers do not see themselves as adequately prepared for the implementation of Inclusive Education (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2017). The content of teacher training workshops for Inclusive Education must include locally proven workable approaches and practices (Forlin & Sin, 2017). This means that the content of training workshops that the teachers in mainstream schools are in dire need of, is the demonstration of how to differentiate and adapt the curriculum. How individual support plans are constructed and implemented also needs to be presented in the content of this training workshop. Another challenge that teachers identified, is the non-involvement of parents.

5.2.4.2 Non-involvement of parents

Collaboration between the home and the school is crucial for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education. However, teachers in this study think that

parents are not involved in their children's learning and this creates problems when teachers require some additional support from the parents, regarding their children's educational needs. These findings confirm previous findings that parents of learners with learning difficulties are typically less involved in cooperation with Individual Support Plans (ISP) (Schmidt & Cagran, 2014). This could be blamed on the fact that some parents are illiterate, and this relates to Nel et al. (2016) that teachers experience challenges in their endeavours to provide support to learners who have barriers to learning when parents are uninvolved. This means families need to receive informative education about the importance of their input to their learners' learning. Other teachers reported that other parents deny that their children have learning difficulties Therefore, the non-involvement of parents in their learner's learning hinders the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools.

5.2.4.3 Scarcity of resources

In this study, resources are defined as those basic facilities and services needed for the functioning of the DBSTs, such as human and physical resources, like transport, etc. After the findings of the NCSNET and NCESS investigation (DoE, 1997), it was concluded that education support services were not adequate. Therefore, it was envisaged by White Paper 6 (2001) to be strengthened. This included more posts for the DBSTs. Yet, in this study it has been established that human resources seem to be limited, hindering and incapacitating the few DBSTs from effectively visiting schools and supporting all teachers is unsatisfactory. During the interviews, all DBSTs mentioned that they do not have enough capacity to support teachers in all the schools in the implementation of Inclusive Education. This finding confirms previous findings that human resources are identified as a challenge that delays the service delivery in the implementation of Inclusive Education (Zagona et al., 2017).

In addition, physical resources have been noted as essential for the progress of learners with learning difficulties. For this study, physical resources refer to the availability of instructional materials (e.g. worksheets, models) and comprehensive practical handbooks, transport, technical assistive devices, that is, IT equipment, like

telephones and computers, as well as human resources. However, findings in this study reveal that physical resources are not adequate in terms of helping DBSTs to perform their duties. DBSTs were very concerned about the inadequacy of transport to visit the schools.

On the other hand, teachers themselves are not enough at schools. This implies that teachers could not perform their duties as expected. They cannot apply the necessary interventions like individualization to learners with learning difficulties. Large classes and pace setters prevent them from doing that. This in turn negatively impacts teachers' capacity to provide effective support to their learners. This finding supports that of Ntsholo (2017), who revealed that inadequacy of mainstream teachers seems to be the most important negative factor affecting the implementation of Inclusive Education. Teachers in mainstream primary schools are not enough, as a result, teachers teach more than four to six subjects in different classes. Others are doing multi-grades, which is, having two grades in one class e.g. Grade 2 and Grade 3. Therefore, the lack of human resources has negative impacts on the implementation of Inclusive Education.

The provision of adequate resources was found useful in promoting the successful implementation of the Inclusive Education policy (Mitchell, & Sutherland, 2020). Nevertheless, resources have been found as a major factor that impedes the implementation of Inclusive Education in this District. The findings of this study, support those of Makhalemele and Nel (2016), who revealed that resources in education support services at the district level were deemed insufficient. This is an indication that the introduction of Inclusive Education has not been resourced enough with human and physical resources to provide support services to teachers and learners. This means that if the DoE wants to make inclusion a reality, they need to provide districts with the appropriate resources to realize this policy.

5.3 Conclusions

This study aimed to examine the implementation of an Inclusive Education Policy in mainstream primary schools. The use of semi-structured interviews served as a research tool in the study. The six teachers, three SMT members, and three DBSTs,

participated voluntarily. The implementation theory by Rogan and Grayson (2003) was used to guide this study. This theory takes into consideration current realities that exist in different institutions of learning. It builds on the strengths of different educational components present in the education system, such as teachers, learners and the district-based support teams, in the implementation of the curriculum. The theory has three major constructs, namely, the profile of implementation, capacity to support innovation and support by outside agencies, in which all the identified themes in this study are situated. The analysis of the raw data saw recurring themes emerge.

Data showed that teachers do not understand the Education White Paper 6 and are not clear about what it entails. Even those who had done B.Ed. Hons and ACE in learner support, still maintained that they hardly knew about EWP6. They were only able to identify learners with learning difficulties, but did not have adequate knowledge for them to implement Inclusive Education. This implies that teachers' limited understanding of Inclusive Education could have serious implications for the way it is implemented in these schools.

Regarding on-site support visits and school-based training workshops, it was acknowledged that the DBSTs visited some schools for administrative purposes, while some have not been visited at all. This indicates that teachers were not supported through training workshops on how to implement Inclusive Education in their respective schools. Therefore, as there is inadequate visitation of schools and absence of school-based training workshops by the DBST in this District, this may have affected the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools.

From the participants' responses, some teachers had been trained on Inclusive Education through training workshops that were organized at a common place by the DBSTs. However, these training workshops were inadequate in terms of the content and the duration of the workshop. The training workshops did not fully capacitate teachers to adjust and adapt the curriculum to accommodate learners with learning difficulties. Therefore, the support did not equip them to implement Inclusive Education. It was also established that no staff development in Inclusive Education was conducted by SMTs, as they were also not trained on Inclusive Education in terms of differentiating

the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of learners with learning difficulties. They often find themselves in a difficult position, as they are also expected to provide support and guidance to teachers who are also not skilled in implementing Inclusive Education.

In analyzing how DBSTs provide monitoring in terms of classroom-based support and follow-up visits, it is evident that no classroom-based monitoring and follow-up support were received by teachers and this may affect the support of learners with learning difficulties in their classrooms. It was also established that even for the cases that teachers have referred to the DBSTs, there was no feedback received. Therefore, the workshops conducted did not have scheduled follow-up visits and resulted in Inclusive Education implementation not being monitored and this affected the implementation of Inclusive Education.

There are numerous challenges about Inclusive Education implementation, for example, inadequate training of teachers, non-involvement of parents and scarcity of resources, which includes human and physical resources. Other areas of concern includes lack of support from the SMTs.

In addition, for Inclusive Education to work in South Africa and for schools to change, necessary resources and support are needed. As mentioned by Onyishi and Sefotho (2020), teachers need to be equipped with knowledge, skills and instructional strategies, to adapt the curriculum for an inclusive classroom to be managed by them. This means when teachers are fully equipped with the skills, that is when they will start to embrace and own the implementation of Inclusive Education. They can make their own adaptations in the curriculum as they feel more competent and confident to do so.

Until challenges are addressed, teachers may continue to experience barriers of fear and frustration in the implementation of Inclusive Education process. The identified challenges contributed to the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. From this study, it is evident that the DBST's support to teachers in implementing Inclusive Education is inadequate and this may be due to inadequate resources at departmental level.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is apparent that there is a gap between the Policy and the implementation. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers be re-orientated and thoroughly be trained in Inclusive Education implementation at school level. The DBST should not only train the ILST members and one teacher per school, but also organise in-service training for all teachers, regarding Inclusive Education and addressing barriers to learning. After the training, the DBSTs need follow-up sessions with schools to ensure that teachers implement Inclusive Education in class. There should be a drastic increase in the number of district-based support teams, with the necessary skills to support teachers at all levels and there should also be a provision of adequate physical resources for DBSTs and the teachers to perform their various tasks. It is also suggested that human and physical resources be provided to the school where the child with learning difficulties is already enrolled. If the DoE wants to make inclusion a reality, schools, and teachers need appropriate support to realize this policy. Training and education should be an ongoing process for teachers throughout their careers, as continuing education can keep teachers up-to-date about the current trends and evidence-based practices that are occurring within their field. This study also recommends strengthened collaboration for all stakeholders to support each other in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream classrooms.

This is because despite the role that the district-based support teams must play in supporting teachers for all curriculum-related endeavours, the implementation of Inclusive Education in mainstream schools is still a challenge (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). Sometimes this may be because of fragmented and uncoordinated support provided to teachers in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream schools. Therefore, district-based support teams need to make sure that teachers know, understand, interpret and implement the Inclusive Education Policy effectively. The support rendered should be conducting on-site training workshops for teachers to effectively accommodate the diverse needs of learners in their mainstream classes. District-based support teams need to determine the teachers' needs in planning, for example, an Individual Support Plan (ISP), teaching and an assessment methodology. Before providing the support, the

district-based support teams first need to conduct schools' needs analysis to find the challenges that teachers encounter when implementing Inclusive Education. After the needs analysis, district-based support teams should develop activities to support teachers as informed by the identified needs. District-based support teams need to ensure that there are supporting structures in schools, such as Institutional Level Support Teams (ILSTs) to identify and address the teachers' professional needs (PCG, 2007).

5.5. Recommendations for further research

The following points justify further research

- Possibility of applying individualism in overcrowded inclusive education classes.
- The discrepancy between inclusive education policy and implementation.
- Implementation of borrowed Western educational policies in different South African contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number:	TYI021SZIN01
Project title:	**Assessing the support role of District Based Support Teams (DBSTs) to teachers in implementing of inclusive education: A case study of DBST office and three primary schools in Queenstown Education District.**
Nature of Project:	Masters
Principal Researcher: Sub-Investigator:	Neliswa Ester Zini
Supervisor: Co-supervisor:	Ms P.N Tyilo

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
  - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
  - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
  - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
  - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

10 March 2016

APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO THE DISTRICT

Faculty of Education

School of Further and Continuing Education

Stewart Hall, Alice Phone: Alice: 040602412

| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za|

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

17 May 2016

District Director

Queenstown District

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to Collect Data: Mrs N. Zini (Student Number 201501234)

This is to confirm that Mrs Zini is pursuing MEd degree at the University of Fort Hare. Her research title is **"Assessing the support role of District Based Support Teams to teachers in implementing in inclusive education: A case of 3 intermediate phase classes in Queenstown Education District".** She is supposed to collect data from your district. Kindly grant her permission. I would also be grateful if you could kindly provide her with documents that may assist with information regarding the area of her study.

I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and no name of a person will be disclosed. The student will ensure that she does not disrupt ongoing activities during the period she will be collecting data.

Sincerely

Prof. S. Rembe

Coordinator of MEd and PhD Programmes,

Faculty of Education, Alice Campus

University of Fort Hare

APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Faculty of Education

School of Further and Continuing Education

Stewart Hall, Alice Phone: Alice: 040602412

| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za|

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

17 May 2016

Principal

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to Collect Data: Mrs N. Zini (Student Number 201406857)

This is to confirm that Mrs Zini is pursuing MEd degree at the University of Fort Hare. Her research title is **"Assessing the support role of District Based Support Teams to teachers in implementing in inclusive education: A case of 3 intermediate phase classes in Queenstown Education District".** She is supposed to collect data from your school. Kindly grant her permission. I would also be grateful if you could kindly provide her with documents that may assist with information regarding the area of her study.

I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and no name of a person will be disclosed. The student will ensure that she does not disrupt ongoing activities during the period she will be collecting data.

Sincerely

Prof. S. Rembe

Coordinator of MEd and PhD Programmes,

Faculty of Education, Alice Campus

University of Fort Hare

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT LETTER

CONSENT LETTER FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

Dear Colleague

I am Neliswa Ester Zini, a Masters candidate at the University of Fort Hare. My topic of research is the Assessment of the support role of District Based Support Team to teachers in implementing Inclusive Education in mainstream primary schools in Queenstown education district. The research is qualitative in nature, therefore, as part of the process, I would appreciate it if you could avail yourself to be interviewed for the purpose of gathering data for my study.

There are no risks in this study and participation is on voluntarily basis. If at any time during the study you wish to withdraw the participation, you are free to do so without prejudice. I guarantee you that all information gathered will be used for the purpose of the study and will be strictly kept confidential. Names of the schools and persons involved will be held confidential and will not be disclosed in the study.

Thanking you in anticipation for your willingness to be interviewed for the purpose of completing my research project.

Yours sincerely

Neliswa Ester Zini

AUTHORISATION

I ---------- hereby acknowledge that I have read the above and understand the nature of this study, therefore, I give the consent to participating in the study. I also accept that the topic and the purpose of the research interview has been explained to me. I understand that I can stop participating in this study and my decision to do so will not affect me negatively.

Participant's signature: ---------- Date: ----------

Researcher's signature: ---------- Date: ----------

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Main research question

What is the support role of District Based Support Teams to teachers in implementing inclusive education?

Sub-research questions

How do teachers experience the on-site support rendered by district-based support teams in implementing inclusive education?

How do the district-based support teams provide monitoring support to teachers in implementing inclusive education?

What are the challenges concerning the monitoring and support visits in the implementation of inclusive education?

- How have you been supported by the district-based support teams in implementing inclusive education? How often (time factor)
    - What was the nature of the support?
    - Did you find that support adequate in terms of implementing inclusive education in your class?
    - How would you describe it in your school? How has it equipped you to teach learners with learning difficulties?
- What are your major challenges with regard to the implementation of inclusive education?
    - Are your challenges related to the support from the district-based support teams?
    - Understanding inclusive education policy
    - Support from school management team and colleagues?
    - The professional qualification?
    - Parental involvement?
    - Your attitude towards inclusive education? Learners' attitudes?

THE END

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DISTRICT OFFICIAL

Main research question

What is the support role of District Based Support Teams to teachers in implementing inclusive education?

Sub-research questions

How do teachers experience the on-site support rendered by district-based support teams in implementing inclusive education?

How do the district-based support teams provide monitoring and support to teachers in implementing inclusive education?

What are the challenges concerning the monitoring and support visits in the implementation of inclusive education?

- What is your specific role in terms of supporting teachers to implement inclusive education in their classes?
- In principle, how are teachers supposed to be supported in implementing inclusive education?
- How often should the teachers be visited for support purposes?
    - How often do you visit them?
    - What support is rendered to teachers in enabling them to implement inclusive education?
    - Is that adequate (in terms of content of support, and frequency of visits) for them to be able to implement inclusive education?
    - How do you ensure that school support visits meet the needs of teachers/schools?
- What challenges do you experience when visiting and monitoring teachers in implementing inclusive education?
    - Understanding of inclusive education policy
    - Teacher willingness/attitudes to help the learners in their mainstream classes
- What are your suggestions on the improvement of monitoring and on-site support visit to schools?

THE END

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Main research question

What is the support role of district-based support team to teachers in implementing inclusive education?

Sub-research questions

How do teachers experience the on-site support rendered by district-based support teams in implementing inclusive education?

How do the district-based support teams provide monitoring support to teachers in implementing inclusive education?

What are the challenges concerning the monitoring and support visits in the implementation of inclusive education?

- How are district-based support teams supporting teachers in implementing inclusive education?
    - How often do they visit for support?
    - What kind of support do district-based support teams render to teachers in implementing inclusive education?
    - How would you describe the support visit in your school? Do you find it good enough in supporting teachers to implementing inclusive education?
- What challenges do teachers experience in implementing inclusive education in their classes?
- Are you able to support teachers in the implementation of inclusive education?
    - What support mechanism do you have for improving teacher performance regarding the learners with learning difficulties?
    - Availability and understanding of inclusive education policy

THE END

APPENDIX 8: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

Michelle Woolley

WRITER EDITOR PROOFREADER TRANSLATOR

Bachelor of Library and Information Science: B.Bibl.
Reference & Research Librarian
Bachelor of Arts **Honours** in **Translation Studies and Editing**

Associate Member of Professional EDITORS' Guild (PEG)

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This letter certifies that I have edited the Dissertation detailed below.

Title:

IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY IN SELECTED MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF CHRIS HANI WEST EDUCATION DISTRICT

Author:

Neliswa Ester Zini
Student Number: 201406857

Regards
Michelle Woolley

Date: 29/04/2024

michellewoolley12@gmail.com
083 298 2077

Professional EDITORS' Guild