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**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION POLICY FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATION NEEDS: A CASE STUDY OF FOUR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE
GRAHAMSTOWN DISTRICT**

BY
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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in the School of Further and Continuing Education, Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare

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DECLARATION

I hereby solemnly declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis entitled ~~%~~An assessment of the implementation of inclusion policy for learners with Special Education Needs: A case study of four primary schools in the Grahamstown 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 Where I have used information from the published or unpublished work of other scholars, I have acknowledged such sources both in the text and in the list of references.

GIRLIE SHADAYA

DECEMBER 2012

Signed.....

Date.....

ABSTRACT

Inclusion is successful when all stakeholders in the education system accept the challenge to work together and to do their fair share of educating all children. Although the teacher has been placed at the heart of the system as a key person in shaping inclusion, the district office (Department of Education), schools, teachers and parents must engage in collaborative team-driven decision making that is focused on interventions designed to enhance social outcomes for learners.

The aim of this study was to assess the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs. This study made use a mixed method research approach which engaged both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. A total of twenty primary school teachers filled a questionnaire that had three parts: (i) Teacher demographics, (ii) Instructional modifications and (iii) Teaching strategies. Interviews, documents and observations were also used to collect data. Data was analysed by statistical and non-statistical procedures. Results showed that the inclusion policy is being implemented in schools. However, there are challenges that are being faced. For one, teachers have not received adequate training with regards to inclusive education. Staff development workshops to try and address this challenge are minimal, there is not enough collaboration being demonstrated by the different stakeholders with regards to support and monitoring the implementation process.

The study recommends that all teachers and other personnel in the school receive adequate training. Also, the need for support must be met. Further studies could consider attitudes to inclusive education and the relationship between learner success and teacher preparedness in inclusive educational models.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, my father Lyne William Marayini (late) and my mother Nellie Jessie Nyama who unselfishly committed their life to my upbringing and well-being. Dad you always encouraged us to learn, so be **IT**.

ACRONYMS

SEN	: Special Education Needs
DoE	: Department of Education
DST	: District Support Team
ILST	: Institutional Level Support Team
EWP	: Education White Paper
NCESS	: National Commission on Education Support Services
NCSNET	: National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
LoLT	: Language of Learning and Teaching
HoD	: Head of Department
OECD	: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
NCS	: National Curriculum Statement
CAPS	: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation

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1 CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The world over, education has been a primary concern. Nations have taken strides to ensure all its people get an education. South Africa is one of the countries that have worried about the education of their people. Policies and legislation have been drawn, implemented and some have even undergone review. One such policy that has been drawn is the inclusion policy. Department of Education [DoE] (1997:11) points out that, it is the main objective of the education system in a democratic society to provide quality education for all learners. This is for the learners to be full participants and contributors in any society. Thus, the responsibility of the education system to develop and sustain such learning is premised on the recognition that education is a fundamental right which extends equally to all learners. Exercising this responsibility involves ensuring that the education system creates equal opportunities for effective learning by all learners. In the endeavour to create equal opportunities for effective learning by all learners, inclusive education has been seen to be the ideal solution.

Nonetheless, complaints and concerns have been raised by teachers, media and other sectors on the way education fails to meet its objectives, especially when it relates to learners with special education needs. Hence, this study seeks to assess how the inclusion policy is implemented in South Africa. It focuses specifically on Grahamstown District. This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, purpose and significance of the study and the delimitation of the study. Contextual definitions of terms will also be given. The chapter closes with a brief description of each of the chapters making the study.

1.2 International and national developments contributing to the development of inclusive education

Inclusive education was an agenda item in 1994 at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Salamanca Conference (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Statement on inclusive education is one of the most significant international documents in the area of special needs (UNESCO, 2004). It states that every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. Thus the education system should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of the characteristics and needs of children (UNESCO, 1994). The UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disability (1993) affirms the equal rights to education of all children, youth and adults with disability, and states that education should be provided in an integrated school setting and in the general school setting. Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) affirms the right of the children not to be discriminated against while article 23 of the same instrument states that:

Children with disabilities should have effective access to receive education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his/ her cultural and spiritual development (UNESCO, 2004:21).

At the World Education Forum Framework for Action, Dakar (2000) it was agreed that:

Education must take into account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV and AIDS, hunger and poor health and those with special education needs (UNESCO, 2000: 34).

1.2.1 What is inclusive education?

Will (1986) defines inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. UNESCO (1994) maintains that inclusive education is the removal of barriers to learning. In the South African context, inclusive education is described as a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to, and within the learning environment (Department of Education, 2001). Thus inclusive education is designed to facilitate learning access for all learners combating discriminatory attitudes. From the above, it can be noted that inclusion is not about being in a class physically only, but also getting quality education so that learners can flourish and contribute effectively to the regeneration of society today, the economy and the country (Sisonke Consortium, 2006).

A familiar statement for the rights basis for inclusion is the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). According to Lindsay (2003), paragraph 2 is the key statement of belief and comprises five clauses. The first states a view on children's rights:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.

The second point asserts each child's uniqueness:

- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.

The third states a belief about how the education system should operate, as a consequence of this premise:

- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.

The fourth clause develops this line, stating a requirement:

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

Finally, clause five provides a rationale for regular schools:

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

The Salamanca Statement, therefore, makes an explicit statement concerning children's rights and this refers to education and level of learning rather than a mechanism (Lindsay, 2003). In a country like South Africa where the education system is premised on the notion of a rights culture, it is mandatory that the system is able to not only prevent learning breakdown and exclusion, but that it is also able to promote equal opportunities for effective learning by all learners. In order for the system to do this, it is imperative that policy aimed at the creation of education and development for all learners recognises a range of different needs among the learner population. Most importantly, such policy needs to be based on an analysis of those factors which ensure that the education system remains inaccessible to a significant majority of learners and which continue to lead to high levels of learning breakdown.

1.2.2 The development of inclusive education in South Africa

The move towards inclusion in South Africa has been strongly influenced by international developments (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001) which include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Disabled Persons (United Nations, 1993) and the World Conference on Education for All by the year 2000 (Education for All, 2000).

South Africa's system of education has changed markedly over the years as human rights began to feature as a new cornerstone of the country's policy imperatives, extending it to include the right to education, free of discrimination and prejudice

(Walton, Nel, Hugo and Muller, 2006). While the world moved towards inclusive education, South Africa moved toward democracy. With this emerged a new Constitution of 1996 and a Bill of Rights outlining a right to access quality education, shifting (although not eradicating) previous discourses to welcome a rights discourse (Singh, 2004). This meant a change from a medical discourse, which considered the learner from a deficit perspective, to a rights discourse, according to which the learner's right to learn, is paramount. According to the rights model, focus should move away from the specialness of the learner and the special form of provision the learner is seen to need, towards the removal of stumbling blocks within society and the participation of all people, especially those with difficulties, in the everyday life of society.

Consequently, the corresponding South African Schools Act of 1996 states that all learners have the right to learn and receive quality education to meet their unique needs. In 1996, the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS) began a process of research into the field of special education and identified the need to integrate the separate systems of education to form a single comprehensive system to meet the needs of all learners (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001). Subsequently, White Paper 6 was published in 2001, which outlined a route for South African education to move into the international trend of inclusion (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001).

Government initiative to ensure inclusion in South Africa is contained in White Paper 6 of 2001 (DoE, 2001). It outlines the principles of inclusive education as follows (p16):

- It acknowledges that all children can learn and all children and youth need support.
- It acknowledges, accepts and respects differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV/status.
- It enables education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet all learners' needs.
- It changes attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners.

- It empowers learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.
- It maximizes participation and minimizes barriers.

Education White Paper 6 puts emphasis on the social model of disability, which states that society/schools should change to accommodate and enable the participation of all learners (Frederickson and Cline, 2002). The social model of disability enables us to see children in a context, to see what systems are causing barriers that are getting in the way of their development and learning, and to identify support that they might need to reach their full potential. The implication of the social model is that we need to change the ways in which support is provided, thus requiring us to make resources available to transform ordinary schools to cater for a more diverse pupils.

1.2.3 The learner with special education needs

White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (Department of Education, 2001) defined learners with special education needs as not only those with physical, mental or neurological impairments, but also those experiencing learning difficulties as a result of socio-economic deprivation (OECD, 2008). This implies that the child experiences barriers to learning and cannot perform averagely under normal circumstances. As a result the child needs support and the removal of barriers if he or she is to perform on average. Farrell (2003) and Frederickson and Cline (2002) note that a child has special educational needs if he/she has a learning difficulty which call for special educational provision to be made for him/her. Beveredge (1999), concurs with Education White Paper 6 of 2001 in that special education need arises from a complex interaction of personal and environmental factors, and may be viewed as a mismatch between emotional, social and learning demands that are made of a pupil and the resources that the pupil has to meet these demands. It follows, therefore, that the difficulties a pupil experiences cannot be understood in isolation from the context in which they occur. Farrell (2003: 27) goes further to describe a learning difficulty as %when a child has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his or her age+.

In some cases the child has a disability which either prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his or her age in schools.

It can be noted from the above that it is possible for a child to have a learning difficulty but not have a special education need. This is because the only learning difficulty that constitutes a special education need is one which calls for educational provision to be made for it (Farrell, 2003). Also, a child might have a disability, but it might not prevent or hinder him/her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of his age in schools. Frederickson and Cline (2002) note that a child is not regarded as having a learning difficulty when the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught: rather, this factor can be said to constitute a learning barrier.

1.2.4 Barriers to learning

Like UNESCO (1994), Education White Paper 6 of 2001 identifies barriers to learning which are intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic barriers are described as those within the learner, for example cognitive (e.g. problem solving, abstract thinking), intellectual differences (e.g. gifted, specific learning disabilities), neurological (e.g. perceptual problems), medical (e.g. epilepsy, HIV/AIDS, asthma) and sensory (e.g. blindness and deafness). Extrinsic barriers are described as those within the system such as attitudes and stereotyping of differences, an inflexible curriculum, socio-economic deprivation, inappropriate languages and communication, inadequate policies and legislation, cultural differences (beliefs, values and habits), inadequately and inappropriately trained support services, and lack of capacity among school staff (Department of Education, 2001:18).

Naidoo (1999) states that the barriers to learning and development can occur within all aspects of the system . the curriculum, the centre of learning, the educational system, and the broader social context. The report of the NCSNET and NCESS (Department of

Education, 1997) states that all learners may either permanently or temporarily encounter or experience barriers to learning and development. This study seeks to assess how teachers experience diversity in their classrooms, and how they are able to address the needs of all learners in the classroom. Diversity in this study refers to the intersection of race, class, language, gender, ability and disability, and other differences in the learner population. Increasing access to and being part of the transformation in education is not about trying to make 'others' fit into an existing system (Ainscow and Booth, 1998; Bhana, 1994). It is about transforming the education system so as to allow a greater and more diverse student population within the system. The report of the NCSNET and NCESS (1997) and Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001:21 and 32 paragraph 2.2.6.3) identify the following barriers to learning and development:

“ *Socio-economic barriers*: These arise from issues relating to poverty and under-development. Such factors might put learners at risk and lack access to basic services. Thus, according to the NCSET report, recognition must be made to the relationship between education provision and the socio-economic conditions in any society. This relationship impacts on the learning process of any child. In other words, effective learning is influenced by the availability of educational resources that meet the needs of any society. Therefore, to avoid such barriers, South Africa as a country should ensure its learners are well provided for educationally. The country must also look at its policies as these also affect society and learning.

“ *Attitudes*: When attitudes get in the way of the learning of a child, they give birth to learning barriers. These might be attitudes on the basis of race, class, gender, culture, disability, religion, ability, sexual preference and other characteristics. Attitudes tend to be discriminatory and discrimination results in inability to access education for some learners.

“ *Inflexible curriculum*: An inflexible curriculum is one which cannot be changed. Teachers cannot change this curriculum to suit the needs of their learners. When learners such as those with special education needs cannot access the curriculum, there is no learning taking place on the learners.

Curriculum is not just about pedagogy but it includes such as communication when teaching, policies and legislation that are not clear and hence they do not commit the government, human services who are not able to cope or deal with a situation (learners with special education needs) and a lack of capacity among school staff. For example, teachers might be using teaching styles which might not cater for all learners. Assessment strategies are also part of the curriculum. Often, they are designed to test particular kinds of knowledge rather than the understanding of the learners.

The seriousness of an inflexible curriculum can be seen in the number of learners repeating grades. Some learners end up dropping out as they see themselves as failures.

“ Language and communication: The medium of teaching and learning can also leave out some learners during the teaching and learning process. This is mostly evident when the language of teaching and learning is not the learner’s first language. The learner is placed at a disadvantage. Sometimes this leads to difficulties in the acquisition of the second language. Some educators are they themselves not conversant in the second language thereby making the situation worse especially for a learner with special education needs. In an English lesson and class, some teachers explain in the learner’s first language. This can be a problem when the learner masters one language and not the other which in fact is the recommended one.

“ Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services: Access to professional help is important. Barriers to learning can result when learners do not get professional help or it is inappropriate. They may get professional help and support services which may not be enough. An example is the (2012) text book issue in the Limpopo province and the shortage of teachers in the Eastern Cape. Such issues prevent the learners from accessing the curriculum, thereby giving rise to barriers to learning.

“ Lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy: Policy and legislation can have an impact on the teaching and learning process. Barriers to learning arise when policy or legislation fails to protect learners from issues such as socio-economic conditions, societal attitudes, an inflexible curriculum, language and communication, inappropriate and inadequate provision support services, lack of parental recognition and involvement and disability to mention a few. When this happens, policy or legislation has directly

contributed to the existence of or perpetuates already existing barriers to learning. For example, although there is a policy on inclusion, human and material provisions are inappropriate and inadequate.

“ *Lack of parental recognition and involvement*: Parents are primary care givers and that should be seriously taken note of. As primary care givers, parents are a central resource in the education system and the learning process of their child in particular. Therefore, in the education of their child they should be considered. If their importance is not recognised and they are excluded from the education of their child, effective learning of learners is threatened. Parental involvement in bodies such as the school governing body is one of the many ways of recognising and involving them.

“ *Disability*: Disability becomes a barrier to learning when the environment does not allow a learner with a particular kind of handicap to access education. This is to say, barriers to learning occur when the learners’ learning needs are not met by the environment (classroom, school). For example, a learner who is short sighted will have problems reading from the chalkboard while sitting at the back of the class. Eventually, this learner is not able to participate fully in class and in the process of learning gradually.

“ *Lack of human resource development strategies*: Skilled educators, service providers and other human resources is an asset to the education system. When government is not able to hold together its work-force, there is chaos in the system. This could contribute to barriers to learning. Teacher strikes such as those witnessed in the Eastern Cape are an example of teachers who are fragmented and unsustainable and this has a negative impact on access to education for all learners. The situation is even worse for a learner with special education needs. Teachers who trained twenty years ago and beyond have not trained in aspects such as inclusive education. It is the duty of the government to ensure all teachers receive training in this noble cause.

In view of the recent trend of inclusive education, there is a shift away from focusing on the characteristics of the learners and onto how schools can help learners overcome barriers to learning. The Report of the NCSNET and NCESS (Department of Education, 1997) stresses that the education system must prevent breakdown in learning and exclusion, and it must create equity in learning opportunities for all. According to Naidoo

(1999) the report argues further that it is when the education system fails to provide for and accommodate diversity that learning breakdown occurs, and learners are excluded. The report also stresses the need to focus on the nature of barriers experienced by learners.

1.2.5 Overcoming barriers to learning

Education White Paper 6 (2001) acknowledges that one of the most significant barriers to learning for learners in special and ordinary schools is the curriculum (p19). If the education system is to promote effective learning and prevent learning breakdown, it is imperative that mechanisms are structured into the system to break down existing barriers (DoE, 2001:20). Such mechanisms must develop the capability of the system to overcome barriers which may arise, prevent barriers from occurring, and promote the development of an effective learning and teaching environment.

Important in developing the capability of the education system with regards to overcoming barriers to learning is identifying and understanding the nature of the barriers which cause learners not to access education. Such needs commitment from government through learning from others and what has happened before in the education system (past experience).

Education White Paper 6 of 2001 proposes that an identification and analysis of barriers to learning in South Africa be made. Also, there is a need to look at mechanisms already in the system in case there is need to develop them. This, according to Education White Paper 6, will enable diversity to be accepted and provided for in the education system.

Such mechanisms will include: initiatives aimed at providing for learners who have been excluded from the system by both the state and non-governmental organisations; innovative practices for recognising and accommodating diversity; activities that advocate against discrimination and challenge attitudes; processes towards the involvement of learners, parents, educators and community members in the governance of centres of learning; training programmes which equip educators to deal with diverse needs;

curriculum restructuring; organisation and development of teaching and learning environments; as well as economic and political transformation supported by enabling and protective legislation and policy.

1.2.6 The structures of implementation

The structures of implementation have been identified as national department of education in collaboration with provincial education, district support teams (DST), special schools/ resource centres, full-service schools and ordinary schools. The ordinary school for example, ensures that all learners are included in the school. Another of its functions is that of early identification and intervention of learners who experience barriers to learning. Other than the class teacher, ordinary schools have institutional level support teams (ILST), who coordinate educator and learner services. The IST works in collaboration with DSTs which provide support to all educators, learners and the system as a whole. The DST also assists educators in creating greater flexibility in teaching methods and assessment of learning. If an Ordinary School has learners requiring high levels of intensive support, the school works in collaboration with the Special School. In this capacity the special school acts as a Resource Centre (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001). Related to this initiative, many of South Africa's higher education institutions have incorporated the theory and practice of inclusion into the curriculum for pre- and in-service training of teachers and other relevant professionals (Singh, 2004).

The implementation process has started (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001:314). Most schools in the primary school sector have established ILST (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007:56). Schools have the mandate to choose their own ILST. These are comprised of teachers in the school and preferably across phases of education (Foundation, Intermediate and Senior), and might have expertise and interest in addressing barriers to learning. Principals and heads of departments are also part of the team. District support teams have been established. There are examples of individual learners with disabilities, such as Down Syndrome and physical and sensory disabilities who have

been successfully included in ordinary classrooms and schools. More than 120 000 learners with disabilities have been enrolled in ordinary schools and classrooms while an estimated 400 000 are still out of school (Schoeman, 2007). Schoeman (2007) further points out that, special schools have increased from 375 to 423. A few independent schools, which have access to resources, are practicing inclusion and provide innovative learning support programmes in regular classes to learners with special education needs. There are numerous non-governmental organisations (NGO) that have projects to promote inclusion. For example there is the Primary Open Learning Pathway that has focused on curriculum adaptation for over-age learners to be integrated into age-appropriate classes (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001).

According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:314), the national and provincial education departments in partnership with foreign funding organisations conducted pilot projects for inclusive education in most disadvantaged provinces in the country. These projects developed an inclusive education system through capacity building at district level, as well as developed and monitored in-service training for educators including the development of relevant resource materials.

Although specific schools have been identified to implement inclusive education in pilot projects in different phases, it has been made clear by the Department of Education that all schools have to ensure that all learners access education (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007). In other words, all schools have to implement inclusive education and districts have to ensure that they provide adequate support.

1.2.7 Challenges of inclusion

However, teachers have raised a host of concerns informally on the inclusion of learners with special education needs (Singh, 2004; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007). These concerns include inadequate training, difficulties adapting to an individualized curriculum, lack of funding, lack of teacher aide support, lack of knowledge, lack of time, increased workloads and the severity of the disability (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000;

Singh, 2004; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007). Prinsloo (2001) puts the blame on government, citing the closure of teacher training colleges, and the curriculum at teacher training institutions which does not prepare General Education and Training teachers for inclusive classrooms.

Consequently there have been many issues raised in the media regarding inclusion particularly of learners with special education needs (Alston, 2009). They include large class sizes, the same assessment for all children in the class, regardless of their special needs, students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, developmental variations of students skills, social problems, and what teachers label as unacceptable behaviour. Classroom teachers are required to use the same criteria for assessment of all the learners in the classroom, regardless of their special needs. This is simply totally unfair and unjustifiable. In South African township schools there are classes with 40 or more learners, who include learners with special education needs and with no extra support for the teacher in the classroom. The harsh reality is that children with special education needs need greater teacher attention. Section 28 of the South Africa Constitution calls all stakeholders to do what is in the best interest of all children. In the UK, almost every class has teacher aides (Boyer and Gillespie, 2000). Alston (2009) also notes a high drop-out rate among learners with special education needs. High drop-out rates among learners with special education needs mean exclusion from accessing education and violation of their rights.

Consequently, Longfield (2011) noted in his column that among many learners who did not perform well in international assessment tests were those with special education needs. The Paper provided examples of poor performance by South African learners in assessments done by Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) II in 2003, where South Africa was placed at the bottom in both reading and mathematics (Longfield, 2011; Singh, 2004). It also gave another example from the International Mathematics and Science Study of 1995 and 1999 where South Africa scored the lowest of 46 participating countries in mathematics with 264 compared to an international mean of 467 (Human Sciences Research Council, 2005; Reddy, 2006). It

attributed such poor performance particularly among learners with special education needs to problems associated with teachers' attitude and the way the curriculum is delivered (Longfield, 2011; Singh, 2004; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007). Hence, although the government has put in place policies that attempt to include learners with special education needs, it is not clear how the inclusion policy is implemented by teachers to ensure all learners access education. Given these concerns, this study seeks to find out how teachers are implementing inclusion policy for learners with special education needs in Grahamstown.

In Grahamstown district, 2 340 of the 3 000 grade 9 learners did not perform well at the end of 2009. According to records at the district office this figure increased by 3% from the previous year (Department of Education (DoE), 2009). Seventy eight percent underachieved in all learning areas and 91% did not pass mathematics. The district has qualified remedial and general education teachers whom it is assumed can handle all types of learners. Some pilot schools which have been identified to implement inclusive education are also found in the district. Hence the justification for conducting the study in Grahamstown district as there is a possibility of including educators as participants who are implementing inclusive education in ordinary and selected pilot schools. It is assumed these educators have an important role in planning and supporting learners. Furthermore, the selected schools have indicated that they are implementing inclusive education and are thus moving towards the removal of barriers to learning for all their learners.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Inclusive education is described as a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to and within the learning environment (DoE: 2001). In South Africa, the process of implementing inclusive education is explained in White Paper 6 of 2001 and structures for implementation have been put in place. Also a set of regulations and implementation guidelines exist which set out the monitoring and the respective roles of those involved in ensuring inclusion of all learners (DoE, 2001). The implementation process has started and is being done in phases (Lomofsky and

Lazarus, 2001). Although specific schools have been identified to implement inclusive education in pilot projects in different phases, it has been made clear by the Department of Education that all schools have to ensure that all learners access education (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007). In other words, all schools have to implement inclusive education and districts have to ensure that they provide adequate support. However, with the implementation in progress, one of the main challenges facing education today is that of providing the best, most effective inclusive education to all learners, particularly those with special education needs (Will, 1986; Singh, 2004; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007).

Teachers have raised concerns informally regarding issues which might affect inclusion. Consequently, media has raised concerns that many learners with special education needs are performing poorly. This is reflected in classrooms as well as in international assessment tests (Alston, 2009; Longfield, 2011; Human Sciences Research Council, 2005; Reddy, 2006). As a result many are excluded as they do not perform well and eventually drop out of school (Alston, 2009; Longfield, 2011). Exclusion has been attributed to school environmental issues, including teacher attitude and the way the curriculum is delivered (Longfield, 2011). From the reasons given above, it is not clear how inclusion policy is implemented in schools. It is against this background that the study assessed how teachers were implementing the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 Main research question

How are teachers implementing inclusion policy for learners with special education needs?

1.4.2 Sub-research questions

- (i) What skills do teachers possess to enable them to implement inclusion of learners with special education needs?
- (ii) What teaching strategies are actually adopted by teachers to ensure inclusion of learners with special education needs?
- (iii) How is the content (including assessment), and pedagogy adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners?
- (iv) What support (including training) and monitoring is provided to teachers by schools and the District Department of Education to enable them to cater for all learners?
- (v) What are the teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of learners with special education needs?

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to assess how teachers are implementing the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs.

1.6 Objectives

- To identify curriculum needs for learners with special education needs and how the content and pedagogy is adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners.
- To identify the skills teachers possess that enable them to implement inclusion of learners with special education needs.
- To identify the actual strategies (teaching methods, assessment and support) adopted by teachers to ensure inclusion of learners with special education needs.
- To identify the support including training and monitoring provided to teachers by schools and District Department of Education to enable them to implement inclusion well.

1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will benefit children, in that as teachers share their knowledge on the practice of inclusion, they improve their teaching strategies and skills which in turn benefit the learner who experiences a barrier or barriers to learning.

Teachers who read this thesis will also benefit from the findings of this study, in that they will be encouraged to go for in-service training programmes in inclusive education. With training on inclusive education, teachers are able to identify barriers to learning, their causes and the kind of support they may give to their learners.

The school and the school community will benefit, because teachers who are able to access this study will understand children with difficulties better, and work more closely with parents who know more about their children.

1.8 Assumptions of the study

The study assumes that learners with special education needs in particular are excluded from accessing quality education in Grahamstown District, South Africa. In view of this, the researcher assumed that:

- Teachers do not possess the necessary skills which make it possible for them to implement inclusive education for learners with special education needs.
- Teachers are not adopting good teaching strategies to ensure inclusion of learners with special education needs.
- Teachers are not adapting the curriculum to include learners with special education needs; this excludes learners with Special Education Needs from the curriculum delivery.
- Support (including training) and monitoring provided to teachers by schools and the Department of Education are not adequate, which affects how teachers cater for all learners.

1.9 Delimitations

This study was carried out in four primary schools in the Grahamstown District. Participants comprise post level-one educators, principals and district departmental officials. Besides questionnaires which were given to all the teachers in these schools,

in-depth interviews were conducted with four teachers. Documents such as class tests, assessment records and teachers' lesson plans and also documents from district office were assessed.

1.10 Definition of terms

1.10.1 Assessment: is about finding the worthiness of something (Lewis and Wray, 2000). In the research, it is the worthiness of teaching strategies adopted by teachers to ensure inclusion of learners with special education needs in schools.

1.10.2 Inclusion: the process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, cultures, curricula, communities of local centres for learning, and addressing barriers to learning and development experienced by all learners (DoE, 2001).

1.10.3 Learner with special education needs: a child is said to have special education needs if he/she experiences barriers to learning (DoE, 2001)

1.10.4 Access to education: a learner is said to have access to education when conditions of learning and teaching in all learning institutions are such that all learners can be fully accommodated and can flourish and contribute effectively to the regeneration of society today, the economy and the country (Sisonke Consortium, 2006).

1.11 Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1 has been about the introduction of the research project. The rationale for the study was looked at to develop a clear sense of the problem. The specific area that the study covers was demarcated and terms were defined. Chapter 2 presents the literature study. The study will discuss the theory behind the policy, present the theoretical framework that informs this study, review literature internationally, and about South Africa that engages with diversity in education. In chapter 3 the research strategy and research methodology to be used in this study will be outlined. Ethical considerations will be presented. The research design and data collection methods are described. In chapter 4 empirical data is analysed and interpreted. Chapter 5 will present a discussion of findings while chapter 6 presents a summary of the main key areas of the research

project, conclude the research, make recommendations and present areas that could be considered for future research.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the following important questions listed below by reference to the existing literature through, firstly, discussing the theory behind the policy; secondly, presenting the theoretical framework that informed this study, and finally, reviewing literature (what other people have written) internationally, and about South Africa that engages with debates on diversity in education.

- What skills do teachers possess to enable them to implement inclusion of learners with special education needs?
- What teaching strategies are actually adopted by teachers to ensure inclusion of learners with special education needs?
- How is the content (including assessment), and pedagogy adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners?
- What support (including training) and monitoring is provided to teachers by schools and the District Department of Education to enable them to cater for all learners?
- What are the teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of learners with special education needs?

2.2 The theory behind the policy

This research was based on the assessment of the implementation of inclusion policy to ensure access to education for learners with special education needs (SEN) in mainstream classrooms in the Grahamstown District. To be able to understand what is involved when an inclusive education approach is implemented, it is necessary to provide a brief background regarding theoretical framework. There are many theories of education which set out to explain how inclusive education developed. Below is a brief explanation of some of the theories that have been put forward to explain the development of inclusive education.

2.2.1 The medical model theory

The medical model or within-child model is ultimately a model of diagnosis and treatment. In terms of medicine, the field of its origins, it is highly focused on pathology, sickness, the nature and aetiology of the presenting problem and dealing with the specific pathology in a centred way (Landsberg, Kruger and Nel, 2005:5). From a medical point of view, the medical model is relevant in suggesting that where there is a problem; a cure has to be the ultimate goal. However, when looking at the other side of human existence, this model is not helpful. Some human problems cannot be explained medically as they are caused by outside forces (Nel, Nel and Hugo, 2012:9). By outside forces reference is being made to such as the environment for one.

In the field of education, the model singles out learners who are different to others in some way. Nel *et al* (2012:9) say that these learners are seen as not normal. A result of this is that, those who are in the care of these children want to find what is wrong with him or her and help the child. To achieve this, a thorough assessment of the child is conducted, results of which might say the child needs another placement (Landsberg *et al*, 2005:5). Similarly Nel *et al* (2012:9) point out that after assessment; learners were treated and consequently placed in a specialised environment which resulted in labelling.

According to the medical model, learning difficulties are caused by a brain that does not function well (Landsberg *et al*: 2005:5). The brain may have been damaged due to a head injury or the child may have inherited it. Learning differences therefore, are something inside of the particular learner. They are inborn to the learner. Criticism has not spared this model. The argument is that there are some children with brain damage problems who are learning well. Thus, it does not necessarily mean that because a child has a neurological problem, he or she is not able to learn (Nel *et al* 2012:9). Rather, it means that a way around the problem must be found to help the child to learn.

The medical model created a change in perception towards learners with differences, in that when parents and educators realised that the child was not simply being lazy+but had a problem, they were more likely to be sympathetic and helpful (Landsberg *et al*,

2005:4). The realisation that the child had a problem prompted research into the field of remediation causing educationists to look for more effective teaching methods to meet these learners' needs. The medical model has been criticised because it fails to explain learning difficulties that occur in the absence of neurological damage. Also, it seems discriminatory and labels people in terms of their disability. This is going against the principle of inclusive education which states that inclusive education acknowledges, accepts and respects differences in learners. Labelling and discrimination are some of the causes of barriers to education in that they encourage separation and distance from the learning process especially for a learner with special education needs.

Although the medical model is rejected as a single explanation, prominent authors such as Mittler (2000: 3) are of the opinion that it is still part of the general consciousness of almost everyone who works in education. Traces of the medical model are still evident in educational and psychological policy, practice and attitudes today.

2.2.2 The environmental theory

The environmental model or theory differs from the medical model in that it explains learning differences in terms of inadequate or inappropriate environmental experiences (Thomas, 2005:346). These experiences include poverty, inadequate schooling or difficulties within the family. Where the medical model focuses on nature (physical brain differences) as being the cause of learning differences, the environmental theory focuses on nurture (the upbringing or care of children).

Thomas (2005) further notes that the environmental theory is rooted in what is called behaviourism. Behaviourism is a method of understanding and changing behaviour that relates to extrinsic (outside) factors. From an environmental theory perspective, learning differences in children and teenagers are seen to be extrinsic to the learner. In other words, the problem causing the learning difficulty is a negative environmental influence rather than an internal or inborn cause. It is however criticised for taking into account

only factors from the environment and not considering factors within the person (Smith, Cowie and Blades, 2003).

2.2.3 The maturational (developmental) lag theory

Maturational lag theory is concerned with both cognitive development and social interaction (Thomas, 2005:344). It is largely based on the child developmental theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson and Maslow. Maturational lag theory does not align learning barriers to any illness or disorder within the learner. Rather, it explains learning differences as a result of learner maturation at a slower pace than other learners of the same age in terms of physical, cognitive or emotional development. Skinner (1948:97) in Thomas (2005: 135) notes, "Everyone knows that talents and abilities don't develop at the same rate in different children". Similarly Nel *et al* (2012:4) state that, all learners come to school with their own characteristics and identities. Emphasis here is on the fact of developmental differences.

Maturational lag theory has largely removed the issue of labelling (Thomas, 2005; Smith *et al*, 2003). According to this theory, children are not described as having a problem, but are simply described as being at a different stage of development from their peers. It has also encouraged educators to be aware of developmental differences in the learners in their classrooms and to accommodate learners who are slower than their peers. Critics have not spared this theory. The theory limits one's understanding with regards to its applicability to inclusive education. It focuses on factors that are inborn to the child to the exclusion of other factors that may be resulting in learning differences. Also from a physical point of view, it can be misleading because some learners who develop slowly do not necessarily experience learning difficulties.

2.2.4 The social model

Criticism of the medical model has led to more social theoretical models (Landsberg *et al*, 2005:6). The social model has tried to take into account all the positive aspects of the different theories above and combined them to create a theory that encompasses a

variety of possible reasons for learning differences. The theory is a holistic method of looking at a learner from many different angles and perspectives. According to Landsberg *et al* (2005:6), the model involves a refocusing away from the specialness of the learner and the special form of provision they were seen to need, towards the removal of stumbling blocks within society and the participation of all people, especially those with difficulties in the everyday life of society. This further suggests that the theory takes into account the way the learner interacts with his or her environment as well as the factors in the environment that may be affecting the learner. Environmental factors could be social, involving care givers, educators and peers. They could be political. They could be economic. The social model also looks at the learner as an individual. For example, it looks at the learner in terms of personality, emotions, motivation and cognition and tries to identify ways in which individual characteristics may impact on learning.

2.2.5 Bronfenbrenner's ecological model

The major challenge of the education system is to understand the complexity of the influences, interactions and interrelationships between the individual learner and multiple other systems that are connected to the learner (Landsberg *et al*, 2005:9). Bronfenbrenner's theory is important with regards to inclusion. The ecological systems theory as Bronfenbrenner's theory is sometimes referred to as, illuminates the complexity of the interaction and interdependence of multiple systems that impact on learners, their development and learning.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is one example of a multi-dimensional model of human development. Multi-dimensional suggests that there are layers or levels of interacting systems. The interaction between the systems results in change, in growth and in development. In other words, what happens in one layer or level affects and is affected by what happens in the other layer or level.

Describing the ecological systems theory, Landsberg *et al* (2005) maintain that, to understand the whole, the relationship between the different parts of the system need to be examined. Each system possesses critical, contributing factors. From this perspective while one works with individuals such as a parent, teacher or a learner, one never loses sight of the entire system in which the individual functions.

Although all the theories described above have relevance to the study in that one way or the other; they have a bearing on the implementation of the inclusion policy in schools in the Grahamstown district, the researcher finds more relevance in Bronfenbrenner's theory. They all describe the development of the learner for who the inclusion policy is meant to serve. For these learners facing barriers to learning, there is a need to identify the barrier and its cause and only then can educators effect changes in the way learners learn.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is found by the researcher to be more relevant. Relevance is found in its emphasis on the interaction between an individual's development and the systems within the social context. The ecological systems theory enables us to understand that origins, maintenance and solution to barriers cannot be understood in isolation to the broader social context and the systems within it, including the individual. Thus, the model is crucial in understanding interactions that take place in the classrooms, school and families by viewing these as systems in themselves.

2.3 Theoretical framework guiding the research

This research will be located in the ecological model. The ecological model is key to dismantling the traditional conception of impairment as a personal tragedy and the oppression that this creates (Singal, 2006: 240). This framework examines all the different systems that influence the ability of the learner to succeed in school, and for that matter, in everyday life. In the eyes of this framework, the way that the systems work together can either cause delays in development, or improve the quality of development and learning (Singal, 2006: 240). It therefore puts emphasis on the fact that barriers to learning are not only the result of individual, but also the result of

interactions between individuals and the environment that are not designed to enhance participation. So instead of blaming a child for not performing well, a teacher could try to find ways of changing his or her teaching to ensure the child can learn well. In this way the adults take responsibility for the learning and development of children. At the same time it preserves the child's dignity (Sisonke Consortium, 2006). Hence, while it acknowledges the reality of impairments, the ecological model demonstrates that the disabling effects of society are much more extensive than biological constraints will ever be. The study focuses on the implementation of the inclusion policy, of which the key areas are the government, the school and the classroom. In using the ecological model, the writer is going to explain how these systems influence the ability of the learner to succeed. The writer will also explain the contributions made by the teachers in terms of their knowledge on management of inclusive classrooms (teaching skills, strategies of assessment and their perceptions on the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in ordinary classrooms).

The classroom teacher has been placed at the heart of the system, as s/he is the key person in shaping inclusion (Landsberg *et al*, 2005). There are relationships and interactions that the teacher has in the classroom, and within the school, other microsystems are operative, such as students, colleagues and parents. These interactions have a notable influence on teaching practices adopted. The linkages and processes taking place between these systems might not directly involve the teacher, but still influence his/her teaching. Within this research these can be identified as the school policy, interactions between the school, community and NGOs (Singal, 2006:240). Even though there is no direct involvement of the teacher in these interactions and/or the decisions taken here, this does not make the impact any less potent for her/him. Finally, the government, politically, socially, economically and through cultural patterns, has a cascading influence throughout the interactions of all other layers. It is within this framework that the research findings and analysis are discussed.

2.4 Teacher capacity and skills

According to Aspin, Chapman and Wilkson (1994:40), the capacity of the nation to survive and prosper economically depends crucially on how well the country develops its human resources and schools are considered as one of the prime agencies within which this development can be brought about. In South Africa, teachers perform many different roles at school, the reality of which the majority of them were never trained for those roles. Angelbrecht and Green (2007:57) note that most teachers do not have enough capacity to address the diverse needs of learners, a result of the theoretical foundation received in pre-service training. Some of these teachers feel threatened by practices introduced in inclusive education. It is therefore a challenge to the department of education to equip teachers with skills to strengthen their belief in themselves.

Teachers are integral to the thinking that drives programme creation and implementation (Hanushek and Rivkin 2006). Both individual teacher characteristics and collective or collegial factors play roles in determining implementation. In essence, teachers should be individuals of high calibre, who are able to deliver content and make learning come for learners. Without well qualified, caring and committed teachers, learning becomes difficult for learners with special education needs because they need different levels of attention.

Kansanen (2003:89) says that the basic aim of every teacher education programme is to educate competent teachers and develop the necessary professional qualities to ensure lifelong teaching careers for teachers. This implies that pre-service teacher training is of great importance and any challenges appearing in the programme will have consequences that will be very difficult to correct in the future. The need for in-service teacher education is therefore inevitable, but the basis for professional competence is taught to student teachers in the period of pre-service teacher training.

The incompetence of teachers as the chief implementers of curriculum can be a barrier to effective learning. This is a view which Evans (1993:143) acknowledges, if there is lack of public confidence in teachers' professional knowledge, there will be a crisis of confidence in teachers' professional execution of duties. Therefore it is quite

appropriate that the norms and standards of educators should emphasize the aspect of teacher competence.

The post-Apartheid government of South Africa has put in place policies and programmes to enhance teacher quality, which in turn promote quality learning even for learners with special educational needs. According to Rice (2003), teacher quality is in fact the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. In support, Monk (1994) points out that deep content-area knowledge is also an attribute of teachers that seems to have a positive impact on learner achievement. Deep content-area knowledge implies that the educator knows his/her subject area well. Educators with less content knowledge have been found to produce smaller gains in their students compared with more seasoned teachers (Smith, 2007).

For learners with special educational needs, a teaching qualification with management of special educational needs learners as a component to a great extent ensures that, faced with this kind of learner, the educator can manage him/her well. This also means the educator is aware of identification procedures. Teaching experience also appears to have an influence on student achievement (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006; Rice, 2003).

Teacher training courses in South Africa concentrate on the role of the teacher in the classroom (Winkler *et al*, 2006). Teachers are taught about methodology, how to prepare lessons, and how to plan the work. As a result they know a lot about teaching, but many do not understand exactly how learning happens in the classrooms (Muthukrishna, 2001 in Angelbrecht and Green, 2001). To help learners with special educational needs, it is necessary to understand how they learn. After several surveys on literacy development in the UK (Lewis and Wray 2000), it was felt that massive in-service training needs to go on, to reinforce and to establish good practice across the whole teaching staff. This study aligns itself to the findings in the UK .It seems obvious, therefore, that effective teachers need to be learners as well as teachers . keeping up to date both in their subject and with new understandings about how pupils learn.

For educators to teach in an inclusive school and collaborate with one another, they need to acquire, through pre-service and in-service experiences, a common vision, conceptual framework and language, and a set of instructional and technical skills to work with the needs of diverse learners. Recent laws and policies have focused on teacher quality and ways to maximise the fullest potential of all students (Obiakor and Algozzine, 2010). For instance, the NCS and the CAPS policy documents have harped on increased accountability of not only learners, but also teachers. This accountability of teachers is not new. The underlying assumption is that for learners to be the best they can be, teachers must be the best they can be.

Whether the teacher is authoritarian, undisciplined, competent, incompetent, serious, irresponsible, involved, cold, angry, or bureaucratic, he/she will not pass through the classroom without leaving his/ her mark on the students (Williams, 2010). Thus it is clear that the role of the teacher is crucial in the learning experiences of the learner with special education needs.

According to Mdikana, Ntshangase and Mayekiso (2007), most teacher training programmes, especially in South Africa, do not prepare pre-service teachers for an inclusive teaching and learning environment, and the dearth of provision for special educational needs in South Africa is reflected in the absence of such modules in the general-teacher-training curriculum. This therefore makes it critical to conduct this research. In Zimbabwe for instance, the teacher education curriculum by the University of Zimbabwe and its affiliate colleges emphasizes pedagogy and child development, including the learning needs of exceptional children, broadly defined (Nkomo, 1995).

Ainscow (1999), a prominent researcher in inclusive education, contends that staff development impacts significantly on the thinking and practice of the teacher; as such it needs to be linked to school development and be school-based and context-focused. This means that staff development is more powerful in encouraging improved teaching practices when it is set within the school context and addresses day-to-day concerns of the teachers. The researcher finds that there is relevance to the study in Ainscow

(1999) writing. The researcher would like to know if there are any in-service programmes conducted in the schools under study and if there be any, what would be the content of these staff development meetings. Some schools in Grahamstown do not have teachers with a special education qualification. Therefore, consultations and collaboration with other teachers through programmes, such as staff development in their schools and neighbouring schools, could help enhance the way they implement inclusive education. Also, in the background to the study teachers raise concerns. This study sought to find out how teachers' concerns are addressed and the level at which they are addressed (school, district, province, etc.).

This study was also partly concerned with skills teachers possess as they implement inclusive education. The underlying assumption here is that teaching skills may well act to facilitate or constrain the implementation of inclusive education. Landsberg *et al* (2005:458-9) have identified organisation, lesson flow and communication as most important when teaching more especially if learners have special education needs. With regards to organisation, Landsberg *et al* (2005) point out that teachers should know the learning material well and be prepared to teach it well. The argument here is that, there are some teachers who know their learning materials well but cannot teach it well. Effectively using time is another aspect of organisation. This means beginning lessons on time, and keeping learners involved for the duration of the activity.

A teacher who can keep the lesson flowing has the skill of lesson flow. According to Landsberg *et al* (2005), this comes with experience. In other words, for a teacher who has just graduated, this skill might be difficult as it comes with a lot of practice. Learning what is going on in the classroom even when learners are occupied is a demonstration of the skill of keeping the lesson flowing. The way of expressing oneself to the learners is the skill of communication. This involves among other things tone of voice, body posture, and facial expression. Teacher personality is the most important factor in communication. As such, teachers need to create opportunities for success of all learners and also praise them individually.

Effective teachers tend to use praise and encouragement; they avoid harsh criticism, scolding, sarcasm or expressions of strong disapproval (Karlsson, 1996: 97). Educators' enthusiasm can be an important factor in developing learners' interest. Learners are believed to be motivated to learn when the educator focuses on their areas of greatest interest, matches materials to their levels of ability, display a high regard for and makes the students aware of their success (Mayberry and Lazarus, 2002:21). The motivation of learners with special education needs is viewed as being strongly influenced by the kind of experiences they have in the classroom and school. There is evidence that not all educators are skilled to teach learners with special education needs, thus promoting barriers to learning (Karlsson, 1996: 69). For example, to facilitate word learning, educators should employ a variety of strategies such as elaboration of students' responses, naming questions and labelling. To this effect, Karlsson (1996:109) advises that educators of students with reading problems should have a large repertoire of corrective reading programmes to select from and try with learners. Also, they must guard against using the same approach and same instructional techniques for all learners.

2.5 Teaching strategies adopted by teachers

Education White Paper 6 (2001) makes implicit the importance of a flexible curriculum in meeting the full range of learning needs (DoE, 2005:88). The policy states that:

Central to the accommodation of diversity in our schools, colleges, and adult and early childhood learning centres and higher education institutions, is a flexible curriculum and assessment policy that is accessible to all learners, irrespective of the nature of their needs.

In addressing learners' needs, it is important to understand the component of the curriculum; which according to the policy are:

- The content (what is taught)
- The language or medium of instruction
- How the classroom is organised and managed
- The methods and purpose in teaching
- The pace of teaching and the time available to complete the curriculum

- The learning materials and equipment that is used
- How learning is assessed

In making curriculum accessible to all learners, the above listed issues need to be given serious consideration.

In South Africa, recent policy documents such as the Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (2005) provide classroom strategies for educators to make this vision a reality. The policy document %Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (2005)+ states that, teaching strategies adopted by teachers should allow all learners to demonstrate a level of competence and to achieve an outcome in a way that suits their learning needs (p98).

According to Mitchell (2008:32), inclusive education challenges teachers to develop a wide range repertoire of teaching strategies. There are many teaching strategies teachers can use. With regards to a class where there are learners with special education needs, Mitchell (2008:32) identified cooperative group teaching (also referred to as cooperative learning), peer tutoring and classroom climate. Other teaching strategies include parental involvement and school culture (determines and reflects how its members behave towards each other).

Cooperative group teaching involves learners working together in small learning groups, helping each other carry out individual and group tasks (Mitchell, 2008:43). Cooperative learning recognises that when learners cooperate or collaborate, it has a synergistic effect. In other words, by working together learners can often achieve a result that is greater than the sum of their individual capabilities. Also, cooperative learning rests on the belief that, much of our knowledge is socially constructed. This is to say, we learn from others in our immediate environment. If the class is large (Mitchell, 2008:43), it can be a major strategy for helping learner learn.

Peer tutoring refers to situations in which one learner (the tutor) provides learning experiences for another learner (the tutee) (Mitchell, 2008:52). It is based on the idea that children learn a great deal from each other. With classroom climate, key is to create

a psychological environment that facilitates learning by creating an emotionally safe environment that learners can trust. It also involves helping learners set goal, conveying high but realistic expectations and establishing clear and essential rules and boundaries. Winkler *et al* (2006), note that children do not only learn from the teacher. They are always learning from each other. They teach each other games and songs. Many children copy their friends when they are not sure what to do in class. Thus many teachers involve their classes in group work. While the children work together in groups they are teaching each other. This study assesses the implementation of the inclusion policy in South Africa's Grahamstown district. It is therefore the writer's contention that teaching strategies adopted by teachers have a bearing on the inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

There are many ways of approaching the complex task of helping learners with special educational needs acquire new knowledge, skills, strategies, attitudes and values across the curriculum (Westwood, 2007). Ellis (2005) notes, there is no single instructional method that deserves sole claim to being 'best practice'. Thus a teacher's decision to select a particular approach for use at a particular time must depend upon the nature of the lesson content, learning objectives and the characteristics of the students in the group. Barriers to learning may be created or exacerbated for some learners if an inappropriate teaching approach is used. According to Farkota (2005) current evidence suggests that many problems associated with student learning can be directly traced to the method of instruction. Like all children, those with special educational needs require attainable targets to encourage their development and promote their self-esteem. The researcher agrees with Ellis (2005)'s suggestion that there is no single instructional method that deserves sole claim to being best practice because one particular method of teaching cannot possibly suit all types of learning or all ages and abilities of students, so methods must be selected according to their goodness of fit for achieving specific learning objectives with particular students.

Research confirms that student motivation is a key factor in the education of a child with special education needs. One of the major concerns of educators however, is

motivating students so that they work at the best of their abilities given the large class sizes (Sayed, 2003:64). According to Mitchell (2008:88), class size needs to be given very careful consideration. It is a complex matter. Although the researcher is not able to locate any research involving the impact of reducing very large classes, common sense would suggest that these make for difficulties in teaching and learning, especially in the case of learners with SEN.

On one side of a coin is curriculum; on the other is assessment. Assessment should provide the best possible account of what a learner knows, can do or has experienced. According to Mitchell (2008:31), an inclusive assessment:

- Should assist the teacher to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods, that is, where learners show none mastery of a particular task, an inclusive assessment should allow the teacher to diagnose why that occurred and then re-design learning opportunities.
- Should provide feedback to learners and parents
- Should be criterion-referenced in nature
- For learners with SEN, should take into account of the nature of particular disability
- Should result in Individual Education Plans

Ysseldyke (2001:301) identifies the following as some of the strategies in assessment:

- i) Norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced assessment (Questioning)
- ii) Early identification
- iii) Sources of information
- iv) Participants to involve

Norm-referenced tests compare an individual learner's performance with that of a norm group of the same age or grade level (Ysseldyke, 2001). Of importance to note is that these tests do not necessarily represent the essential criteria contributing to a particular level of skill or knowledge. The results may therefore actually prove unhelpful beyond confirming that the learner has/ does not have a problem in comparison with others of like age or grade, and may give virtually no direction to learning support.

Ysseldyke (2001) says, in criterion-referenced tests, particular outcomes are targeted in a level-appropriate way and the learner's competence is examined in more detail. A learner's score is not compared to a norming population; instead it is compared to a predetermined criterion. By assessing learner mastery of a specific goal, these tests tend to give more direction as to the learning support desired, grouping for instruction and assessing individual progress.

With regards to early identification, schools could liaise with the community to prevent barriers from developing or intensifying. Continuous assessment could also contribute significantly to the timely identification of learners in need of support. Using multiple sources of information during assessment is in line with the principles of the ecological systems theory, which also is the theoretical framework guiding the research, for example the learner's school work, assessment results, observations and interviews. Also, one needs to decide whom to involve in the assessment; for example the learner, teacher, district based support team, peers, parents, siblings and members of the extended family (Kleinert and Thurlow 2001: 13). Ysseldyke (2001: 306) recommends that, "we should work to have all assessment practices make a difference in students' lives rather than be a prediction about their lives."

Assessment should be ongoing throughout the learning to determine whether the learner has mastered the skills (Kleinert and Thurlow, 2001). Learned skills should also be applied in different contexts in the classroom and in daily living. For example, if learners who struggle with fractions master their calculation after a few learning sessions, examples of fractions in everyday life should be used to assess the learner's newly attained competencies. Kleinert and Thurlow (2001) further argue that curriculum-based tests could be applied after the outcomes set for the learning support have been met to ensure transfer of skills and knowledge to other contexts.

2.6 Curriculum needs for learners with special educational needs

In order to understand how the content and pedagogy are adapted in an effort to ensure they meet the needs of all learners, the writer addresses the curriculum needs of

learners with SEN. Because educational needs are relative to the learning contexts that pupils experience, and to the attitudes and expectations of other, teacher judgments about pupils are likely to be affected by the general levels of attainment in class. Beveridge (1999) argues that, curriculum for SEN usually emphasizes planned activities, which aim to enhance both feelings of personal worth and also confidence. This study aligns itself with Beveridge (1999)'s argument above. Curricular and organizational factors contribute to the extent to which children experience difficulties at school.

In South Africa, all learners are understood to possess unique individual characteristics. Instruction therefore requires inherently differentiated teaching based on the learning characteristics of the learning population (Mittler, 2000). It is therefore the researcher's concern that the way in which the curriculum is implemented is important. Westwood (2007) argues that most learning problems arise from a complex interaction among variables such as curriculum content, learners' prior knowledge and experience, learners' cognitive ability and task approach strategies, teachers' instructional methods, complexity of teachers' language, suitability of resource materials, learners' confidence and expectation of success, and the perceived relevance or value of the learning task.

There is a point of view that a child is not regarded as having a learning difficulty when the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she is taught (Frederickson and Cline, 2002). In South Africa, learners at the level of grade 8, for example, are expected to receive their instruction in English, which for most is not their home language. The researcher disputes this discussion by Frederickson and Cline (2002) and agrees with Westwood (2007) that rather than blaming the child, it is usually much more productive to examine factors outside the child such as quality and type of instruction, teacher expectations, relevance of the curriculum, classroom environment, interpersonal dynamics within the class social group, and rapport with the teacher. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2008:180) notes that the critical switch from home language to the target medium of instruction is not handled well, as teachers have little training in helping learners make

the transition. According to White Paper 6 (2001), poor language competence limits conceptual development. In view of the above, the writer wishes to find out if language is in any way a barrier to education for learners with special education needs in Grahamstown.

Until recently, curricula, teaching methods and materials were rarely investigated as possible causes of learning difficulties (Westwood, 2007). For the purpose of this study, these will be addressed. Westwood (2007) further suggests that effective teaching methods are those that provide students with the maximum opportunity to learn by increasing instructional time in which students are actively focused on their work. With regards to the teaching programme, the underlying assumption here is that the methods used in implementing curriculum in the classroom are not well suited to the current learning needs of the child. Beveridge (1999) argues that it is necessary to match work on curriculum more closely to the child's existing skills and knowledge. Thus the educator's task is to analyse learning tasks within the curriculum into a hierarchy of component skill elements. For learners with SEN the incremental steps can be made smaller or otherwise modified so that the challenge that is faced at each stage is less formidable. By checking frequently on a child's attainments within one of these sequences, teaching can be matched closely to the learning stage the child has reached.

Vygotsky (a theorist of learning) saw the difference between what children can achieve by themselves and the level they can reach with adult help as an operational definition of the zone of potential development (Thomas, 2005). In his theory, Vygotsky put forward that idea that there is real need of adult guidance in children learning. In this regard the educator has a role that of a guide.

Landsberg *et al* (2005:452) maintains that learning should commence on the level of the learner. If the learner finds it difficult to understand the content or master it, content from the lower level could be selected until the learner experiences success. The content should be contextualized for the learner to gain better understanding. For example,

when explaining the concepts of ~~big~~ bigger than and ~~small~~ smaller than one cannot compare an aeroplane with a motor car if a learner from the rural areas has not seen a big aeroplane on the ground.

When choosing teaching methods, the learner's learning style should be taken into consideration (Fielder, 2005). Learners who are visually orientated will be bored in a class where the teacher is doing all the talking. Learners who learn best when they are touching and manipulating objects will find it equally boring if they must simply sit and listen. Learners who want to listen and think about problems first will find it stressful if they must immediately try to solve a problem.

2.7 Support and monitoring provided to teachers

Support is defined as all activities in a school which increase its capacity to respond to diversity (DoE, 2008). Support is manifested in a number of ways. Providing support to individuals is only one way of making learning contexts and lessons accessible to all learners. Support also takes place when schools review their culture, policies and practices in terms of the extent to which they meet individual educator, parent and learner needs. Support takes place when educators plan lessons in such a way that they accommodate all learners. Support then, must focus on the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Though the major responsibility for coordinating support may rest with a limited number of people, all staff is involved in support services.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:17) quoting the Salamanca Framework for Action state that inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their learners. This recognition and response will be done through accommodating all learners, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. In all this, the role of the state is to offer a continuum of support services to support the development of inclusive schools. In South Africa, it is imperative to think about different ways to support teachers in coping with the challenges of an inclusive classroom. Based on the above, the actual teacher support for successful inclusion needs to be examined.

Monitoring has been defined by the Oxford Consortium for Education Achievement (OCEA) (1996:4) as the collection of information in order to answer the question *“Are we doing what we set out to do?”* Information can be collected in many ways. Monitoring can take a variety of timescales depending on its purpose, focus and method. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) allude to the point that curriculum implementation has to be monitored, that is, it has to be supervised by school heads and district officials. Also, it is not only the manner of teaching which needs to be monitored but also the content that is actually being addressed has to be supervised as well. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2004), the school heads and heads of department provide guidance and make sure that teachers have the necessary skills and use the correct teaching methods and strategies.

Evidence suggests that the lack of relevant facilities and materials is a major obstacle to the implementation of effective inclusive education (Eleweke and Rodda 2010:116). Anumonye (1991, in Eleweke and Rodda 2010), for instance, investigated the problems of inclusion in Nigeria. The data indicated that the required educational materials were not provided or were inadequate in regular schools where learners with special needs were being integrated.

In the words of Landsberg *et al* (2005:19), *“support is the cornerstone of successful inclusive education”*. In this regard, Swart and Pettipher (2005:85), discussing issues of support say that, *“One of the approaches for developing an inclusive school is the whole school development approach.”* This approach is based on organizational development and systems theory and is aimed at improving all aspects of the school as an organization in which there is an interactive and interdependent relationship between the various systems and subsystems of the school.

With reference to the question on support and provision given to teachers to ensure inclusion of all learners, the researcher finds the whole school development approach relevant to the study, in that support is not just about the school and district Department

of Education. There is collaboration even with the wider community. Collaboration is an important strategy of support for inclusive education and according to Sands, Kozleski and French (2000: 120), %s at the heart of the inclusive school community+. Friend and Cook (2003: 5) define collaboration as %a style of direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work towards a common goal+.

Teachers experienced with the inclusion of learners with SEN have identified time, collaboration, administrative support and on-going training as some of the resources for supporting and sustaining inclusive education in schools (Swart and Pettipher, 2005). Writing about South Africa, Muthukrishna (2001) notes that, accessing resources and support in their community is an essential activity of inclusive schools. Thus, as relationships are developed between the school and the wider community, a wide range of possible resources for teachers and learners can be identified. Schools can also draw on neighbouring schools and other education institutions, such as special schools and universities.

In South Africa, Education White Paper 6 of 2001 makes provision for support by means of a systems approach and collaboration between systems of support. The systems of support are: National Department of Education in collaboration with Provincial education, District Support Teams (DST), Special Schools/ Resource Centres, Full-service Schools and Ordinary Schools. At national level, the function of the national Department of Education is to formulate policy, which is done in collaboration with all the stakeholders who are involved in education. At provincial level, the role of the departments of education of the nine provinces is to implement policy accepted by the national Department of Education (DoE, 2001). It stands to reason that the provinces are not on the same level regarding the implementation of the policy of inclusion as resources and manpower differ from province to province.

The provinces are responsible for resource development (human and technical), building of schools, distribution of finances and resource material, employment of educators, and

admission of learners who experience barriers to learning. Each province is divided into several districts, each of which has a team which manages inclusive education in that district. This team is called the District Based Support Team %to provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialized settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions+(DoE, 2001:8).

In addition, each district is responsible for the schools in that district. Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2001: 10) clearly states that support would be rendered according to the level of needs of learners who experience barriers to learning and not according to the impairment of those learners. Learners who are in need of high intensity support would be educated in special schools as resource centres; those in need of medium intensity support would be educated in full-service schools and those in need of low intensity support in ordinary schools.

According to the draft guidelines (DoE 2002:25-33) the special schools as resource centres:

- Function as an integrated and co-ordinated part of the district-based support team.
- Provide specialized professional support in the curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbouring schools.

The draft guidelines (DoE 2002:44-46) further points out those full-service schools should:

- Provide support in the school to learners and teachers by means of competent and experienced support educators.
- Support neighbouring schools with knowledge, information and assistive devices regarding barriers to learning.
- Work in close collaboration with the district-based support team to coordinate support.

Ordinary schools cater for learners who are in need of low intensity support. Teachers are supported by the district-based support team which organizes support and draws its resources from other types of schools. Learners in need of more support can also be moved to any of the other schools for a short time to receive specialized education until

they are able to cope in the ordinary school, or support can be rendered in the school by experts from the district-based support team.

In the words of Engelbrecht and Green (2001:17), current and emerging education legislation and policy in South Africa reflect the commitment of South African government to address the diversity in the learner population and provide such a continuum of support. There is need therefore for management at school to create conditions of learning and teaching in their learning institutions so that all learners can be fully accommodated. Learners can in turn flourish and contribute to the regeneration of society, the economy and the country (Department of Education, 1999: 3). Among other things, management is about looking after the people in the school and this includes educators and learners with special educational needs. Engelbrecht and Green (2007) argue that the principal has been cited as the single most influential individual in creating favourable conditions in school.

Educators need on-going support or scaffolding as they learn new techniques such as those related to the new curriculum (Eleweke and Rodda, 2010). This study is concerned with the implementation of inclusive education. It is assumed that with necessary support, successful implementation could take place which in turn increases the number of those experiencing barriers to learning receiving educational and other services in South Africa and Grahamstown in particular.

2.8 Teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of learners with special education needs

The classroom teacher has the most crucial role in determining the real nature of an educational innovation like inclusive education (Singal, 2006:47). In this section of the study, the research reviews literature on teacher perceptions on the inclusion of learners with SEN in regular classrooms.

The notion of inclusion is being met with some resistance from regular classroom teachers worried about the impact on their teaching and other students in the classroom

(Knight, 1999). It would appear from the literature (for example, Putnam, 1998, Singal, 2006) that some teachers perceive the movement toward inclusion as threatening and therefore it is to be expected that inclusion will meet with a great deal of covert resistance from teachers (especially with overt compliance). Florian (1998) indicates that teacher resistance will occur because educators have serious reservations about supporting the widespread placement of pupils with SEN in ordinary schools, because many questions about teaching and learning in inclusive schools remain unanswered. Teachers have raised concerns about large class sizes. Large classes pose difficulties when it comes to delivery of lessons in inclusive classrooms. Compounded to this, heads of department expect them to complete the syllabus on time. While teachers are rushing to complete the syllabus, they have to assist learners with SEN. This seems to have grown displeasure among teachers as some of these learners have slower working speed. A result of this is that teachers are seeing learners with SEN as an additional stressor. Given that large class sizes are the norm in most schools in Grahamstown, the writer finds worth in research along this dimension.

More recently, studies of teachers' attitudes towards inclusion have been reported. Early American studies on full inclusion reported results which were not supportive of full-placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. Another study by Mayberry and Lazarus (2002) examined mainstream and special teachers' perceptions of inclusion through the use of focus group interviews. The majority of these teachers who were not currently participating in inclusive programmes had strong negative feelings about inclusion and felt that decision-makers were out of touch with classroom realities. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, including class size, inadequate resources, the extent to which all students would benefit from inclusion and lack of adequate teacher preparation.

It would seem teachers with experience of inclusion do not have a problem with the inclusion of learners with SEN in the ordinary school (Wan, 2007:157). The most important thing is to ensure teachers have professional expertise needed to implement inclusive programmes. A three year study by LeRoy and Simpson (1996) produced

similar findings (Wan, 2007:157). It emerged from the results that as teachers' experiences with SEN increases so was their confidence to teach learners with SEN. These results seem to communicate that experience plays a pivotal role in teacher perceptions with regards to having learners with SEN in their classrooms.

2.9 Summary

In this chapter, the writer discussed key concepts of relevance to the study; present the theoretical framework that informed this study, and finally review current literature in South Africa and internationally that engages with debates on diversity in education. How the researcher assessed the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with special educational needs is epitomized in the discipline of research methodology, which is the subject of the next chapter.

3 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A methodology in research refers to the strategy or plan of action that links methods to outcomes and governs the choice and use of methods (Creswell, 2003). Dick and Swepson (1997) argue that good research is that which uses methodology which fits with the situation and the goals you are pursuing.

In this chapter the writer provides an explanation of how the assessment of the implementation of the inclusion policy was conducted. In doing so, the writer discusses the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, negotiating entry, data collection, issues of validity and reliability, data analysis and ethical considerations. Below is a brief description of each.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Maree (2007) defines a paradigm as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to particular world view. The author further points out that paradigms serve as the lens or organizing principles by which reality is interpreted. Thus paradigms are to do with knowledge claims. There are a number of paradigms or knowledge claims that have taken root in today's research, some of which are positivism, interpretivism, and post-positivism.

3.2.1 Positivism

The positivist paradigm of exploring social research has been largely influenced by the ideas of the philosopher August Comte. To understand human behaviour, August Comte commended that people use observation and reason as data collection tools. In essence, according to Gray (2004:18), positivism is of the belief that what reality consists of is what is available to the senses. That is to say, reality consists of what can be seen, smelt, touched, heard and tasted. The meaning of all this is that phenomena which cannot be observed either directly through experience and observation or indirectly with the aid of instruments have no place.

Within positivism, the knower and the known are independent (Tashakori and Teddlie, 2009:85). Ryan (2006) asserts that within positivism, the relationship between the self and the knowledge has been largely denied. Thus knowledge is regarded as separate from the person who constructs it. In all this, for a statement to be true, it has to be tested and proved otherwise. If the statement cannot be tested and proved then it is false.

Noteworthy from these views on positivism is the fact that, truth and meaning exist in some external world (Gray, 2004:17). Tashakori and Teddlie (2009:5) contend that social research should adopt a scientific method. This method is exemplified in the work of modern physicists and consists of the rigorous testing of the hypothesis. Data taking the form of quantitative is used.

However, this lens of viewing the world and the nature of its epistemologies is under heavy criticism for its insistence on divisions between objectivity and subjectivity, or public and private knowledge, or scientific and emotional knowledge (Ryan, 2006). Anti-positivists argue that knowledge cannot be divorced from being and personal experience. The researcher, in alignment with Bryman (1998), notes that this view is inadequate when it comes to learning about how people live, how they view the world, how they cope with it, how they change it and so on. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that positivistic methods strip contexts from meanings in the process of developing quantified measures of phenomena, and the quantitative measures often exclude members' meanings and interpretations from data which are collected. As a result, the researcher finds that the use of the positivist paradigm on its own may not be adequate in terms of guiding the study. Also, the methods adopted by positivists impose outsiders' meanings and interpretations on data. And these methods require statistical samples which often do not represent specific social groups and which do not allow generalization to or understanding of individual cases (Gephart, 1999).

Furthermore, Kim (2003:8) contends that blind faith in the positivist approach can potentially jeopardize the soundness of research in the social sciences because

influential contextual factors in organizations can be ignored by methods aiming to draw causal inferences through examining only phenomena that are readily observable. Although Kim (2003) talks about research in organisations, the researcher finds this relevant to the study in that teachers implement the inclusion policy in a school. A school is a learning organisation.

3.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism emphasizes that social reality is viewed and interpreted by the individual according to the ideological positions the individual possesses. Therefore, knowledge is personally experienced rather than acquired from or imposed from outside (Dash, 2005). The interpretivists believe that reality is multi-layered and complex (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000) and a single phenomenon has multiple interpretations. They emphasise that the verification of a phenomenon occurs when the level of understanding of a phenomenon is such that the concern is to probe into various unexplored dimensions of a phenomenon rather than establishing specific relationship among the components, as happens in case of positivism. Dash (2005) adds that interpretive researchers have often preferred meaning-oriented methods. They assume that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation; hence there is no objective knowledge which is independent of thinking or human reasoning.

While positivism stands for objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability and constructs laws and human behaviour, interpretivism essentially emphasises understanding and interpretation of phenomenon and making meaning out of this process. According to Dash (2005), interpretivism which stresses the subjectivist approach to studying social phenomena, attaches importance to a range of research techniques focusing on qualitative analysis, such as: personal interviews, participant observations, account of individuals, personal contracts and others. Gephart (1999) writes that in the interpretivist approach, data collection and representation have been accomplished with informant interviewing, ethnography, or the thick description of cultures based on intimate knowledge and participation, and even ethnographically

linked textual analyses which use transcripts or verbal protocols of meetings as data. Such verbal or conversational data are collected to represent interactions in important, naturally occurring social settings.

Interpretivism has its greatest strength in the richness and depth of explorations and descriptions it yields through the qualitative approach to research, however it is criticized for its subjectivity and failure of the approach to generalize its findings beyond the situation being studied (Maree, 2007). As such, the researcher feels it may not be adequate enough in terms of guiding this study which seeks to eventually generalize the findings.

3.2.3 Post-Positivism

Post-positivism is a shift away from positivism. According to Tashakori and Teddlie (2009:5), post-positivism is the intellectual heir to positivism, which came about as a reaction to the widely discredited axioms of positivism. Trochim (2006) refers to it as a wholesale rejection of the central tenets of positivism. In the same way, Creswell (2003) calls it the thinking after positivism. Thus post-positivism is a knowledge claim that challenges the absolute truth and recognizes that we cannot be positive about claims of knowledge when studying the behaviours and actions of humans because we are all biased and all of our observations are affected (Ryan, 2006). Erikson and Kovalainen (2008) argue that in post-positivism, the knower and the known cannot be separated as is the case in positivism; and that although human beings cannot perfectly understand reality, researchers can approach it with rigorous data collection and analysis. Hence the post-positivist approach to research opens the door to multiple methods and different worldviews as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis so as to provide and justify that rigour in the process of carrying out the research. Thus, post-positivist emphasize the importance of using both quantitative and qualitative means of data collection in the same study.

Critics of post-positivism direct their criticism towards the interactive and participatory nature of qualitative and quantitative methods used in research. They argue that post-positivists use methods that are merely an assembly of anecdotes and personal impressions which are highly suspicious in terms of research subjectivity and research bias (Maree, 2007). However, it is the researcher's view that the bias is compensated for by the use of multiple methods in the data collection process.

In conclusion, each of the schools of thought discussed above have their own strengths and weaknesses. Many of the criticisms made of one knowledge claim could equally be applied to the other. For practical research purposes no technique is preferable to another. The choice depends in part on the purpose of the study and the research question.

3.3 Paradigm that guided the study

The study is located within the post-positivism paradigm. The nature of the problem being investigated influenced the choice of paradigm. The main objective of the study was to assess how teachers are implementing inclusion policy for learners with special education needs. Post-positivism paradigm was preferred in this study because the researcher in this study wished to maintain an interest in some aspects of quantification (positivism) yet at the same time wanted to incorporate interpretive concerns around subjectivity and meaning (Maree, 2007) to understand the phenomenon of best interest. Post-positivism is a paradigm that blends the advantages of both positivism as well as interpretivism ideas, thus the researcher considered it appropriate to guide the study.

The post-positivism paradigm fitted well with the study because the paradigm opens the doors to multiple methods and different worldviews as well as to different forms of data collection and analysis, dimensions which were key to this study.

This study focused on an assessment of the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs in classrooms in the Grahamstown District. To understand these issues in greater depth, one needed to use different approaches.

3.4 Research Approach

Leedy (1993, in De Vos1998) states that all research methodology rests upon an established general truth. Thus the nature of the data and the problem for research dictate the research methodology. A research approach can be qualitative, quantitative or a mixed method approach depending on the questions the researcher wants to answer. Creswell (2003: 5) has suggested the following questions as determinants of a research approach:

- What knowledge claims (positivism, interpretivism, post-positivism, etc.) are being made by the researcher . including a theoretical perspective?
- What strategies of enquiry (experiments, surveys in the case of quantitative studies; ethnographies, case studies or phenomenological research in the case of qualitative studies) will inform the procedures?
- What methods of data collection (instruments used) and analysis will be used?

In the next session is a discussion on each of the three research approaches to a study.

3.4.1 Qualitative research approach

Taylor and Bogdan (2004) describe qualitative research as an approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied. Qualitative research is based on the knowledge that there is no objective reality (Krauss, 2005). Rather, there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest. This approach is naturalist and draws on multiple methods of inquiry conducted in naturalistic settings rather than controlled ones (Rossmann and Rallis, 2003:6). It involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials, case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observations that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:140). Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping to get a fix on the subject matter at hand (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 3).

Ryan (2006: 21) gives the following characteristics of qualitative research:

It seeks to provide an in-depth picture; it generally deals with smaller numbers than quantitative research; it tries to interpret historically or culturally significant phenomena; it can be used to flesh out quantitative data; it tries to isolate and define categories during the process of research; it is appropriate when the questions asked by the researcher are difficult for a respondent to answer precisely; it tries to illuminate people's everyday lives; it values participants' perspectives on their words; and it often relies on people's words as its primary data.

Creswell (2003) points out that, qualitative research uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenology, ethnographies, grounded theory studies or case studies. In this type of research, the researcher collects open ended emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data. However, findings from a qualitative research are often not generalizable because of the small numbers and narrow range of participants used in the data collection process, thereby making this approach unsuitable to stand on its own in addressing the issues of this research.

The researcher finds this approach useful to this study, because one of the major focuses will be on the in-depth inquiry on the teachers' practices of including learners with special education needs in an ordinary class, which is easily addressed through the use of this approach. In addition, I will not be looking for absolute truth, but rather a detailed understanding of the teachers' world of teaching and their practices of including learners with special education needs.

3.4.2 Quantitative research approach

Maree (2007) describes quantitative research as a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup (sample) to generalize the findings to the population that is being studied. From this definition, three important elements of quantitative research seem to emerge and these are: objectivity, numerical data and generalizability. In quantitative research, researchers tend to remain

objectively separated from the subject matter (Maree, 2007). This is because quantitative research is objective in approach and it only seeks precise measurements and analysis of target concepts to answer the inquiry.

Ryan (2006) looks at quantitative research as research that: tries to link variables (features which vary from person to person); tries to test theories or hypotheses; tries to predict; and tries to isolate and define categories before research starts and then to determine the relationships between them. The quantitative data collected through this type of research can reveal generalizable information for a large group of people. However, quantitative research is criticized for its inability to look at individual cases in any detail. Also due to its highly structured nature, it prevents the researcher from following up unexpected outcomes or information (Ryan, 2006). In addition, quantitative data often fail to provide specific answers, reasons, explanations or examples. One of the aims of this study is to interpret and give meaning to the data on the practices of teachers, and data collected quantitatively might not be able to do this. In addition, aspects such as people's perceptions might not be measured accurately using numerical data.

3.4.3 Mixed methods research approach

Mixed method is defined as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines qualitative and quantitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003:11). In the words of Johnson and Turner (2003), mixed methods research builds on both qualitative and quantitative approaches and uses them both in a single study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have strengths and weaknesses, so when used together, these methods can be complementary and allow for a more complete analysis of the research situation (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003:11). This means the data collection process in the mixed method research approach involves gathering both numeric and text information so that the final database represents both qualitative and quantitative information.

Collection of data in a mixed method approach can either be sequential or concurrent (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Sequential procedures imply that the researcher collects both the qualitative and quantitative data in phases, while a concurrent procedure means that the research will collect both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time. When the data is collected in phases, either the qualitative or quantitative data can come first depending on the initial intent of the researcher (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Concurrent procedures are less time-consuming than sequential procedures (Johnson and Turner, 2003). Integration of the two types of data can occur at several stages in the process of research, for example in data collection where open-ended questions in a survey are combined with closed-ended questions. It can also occur during data analysis and interpretation. During data interpretation and analysis qualitative themes or codes are transformed into numbers and compared to quantitative results.

For this research, the researcher employed a mixed method research approach involving concurrently generating and integrating both qualitative and quantitative data (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). There are several purposes for conducting mixed methods research of which triangulation (that is, seeking the corroboration of results from different designs looking at the same phenomena) and expansion (that is, seeking to expand understanding by using different methods for different inquiry components) (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989 cited in Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), are applicable to this study.

The particular method was chosen for, ~~its~~ techniques attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both qualitative and quantitative data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:141). It also enabled the researcher to simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions, and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study.

3.5 Research Design: Triangulation

Trochim (2006) defines research design as the structure of research, that is, the glue that holds all of the elements in a research project together. This study will employ a triangulation design. The strategy that will be used is concurrent triangulation, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection concurrently in a single study in order to best understand the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2003 in Maree, 2007) and information is integrated in the interpretation of the overall results.

In triangulation, the researcher uses two or more different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate findings within a single study (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:206), the essence of triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection to test hypothesis and measure variables. The researcher used interviews, questionnaires, observations and document analysis in the study to collect data. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to generate a large amount of data within a short time, hence enabling the study to be conducted within the time limits of the programme. Also, the questionnaire guaranteed less time for data analysis as statistical software could be used. Data collected through the questionnaire will be used to triangulate the data collected through interviews, observations and document analysis; hence the data complement each other to give a good picture of how inclusion is implemented in Grahamstown.

The concurrent triangulation design fitted well with this study as the main objective of the study was to get a deeper understanding of how inclusion is implemented in Grahamstown and it seemed to the researcher that no one method could provide deeper insights. The mixing of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the data collection process, as well as the use of multiple sources of information, enabled the researcher to solicit views from different data sources that gave insights into the issues of implementation of the inclusion policy. Further, concurrent triangulation design ensured that bias that might be inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the bias of other methods (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). The

concurrent triangulation design also reduces the time for data collection (Creswell, 2003) thus enabling the researcher to complete the study in the given period of time.

It is noteworthy that researchers interested in use of triangulation designs are cautioned to be mindful that the approach calls for extensive data collection; that it is time intensive in terms of analysing both text and numerical data; and that the researcher needs to be familiar with both qualitative and quantitative forms of research (Creswell, 2003).

3.6 Population

Population is defined as ~~the~~ the entire set of relevant units of analysis or data+ (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996: 179).total quantity of things or cases of the type that are subject to one study (Walliman, 2006). In the study the population of the research comprised all post-level one educators in four primary schools (n= 67 post-level one teachers), principals from each school (n= 4 principals) and district officials responsible for special education (n= 4). In the city of Grahamstown there are 34 primary and secondary schools, whilst in the whole district (Grahamstown), there are 101 primary and secondary schools.

3.7 Sample and sampling

When the data are partial and used to characterize the whole, the subset is called a sample (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996:179). Sampling procedures in the social and behavioural sciences are often divided into two groups, namely probability and non-probability (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003:277). Probability sampling techniques are primarily used in quantitatively oriented studies and involve ~~selecting~~ selecting a relatively large number of units from a population, or from specific subgroups (strata) of a population, in a random manner where the probability of inclusion for every member of the population is determinable (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003:277). Probability samples aim to achieve representativeness, which is the degree to which the sample accurately represents the entire population. Probability sampling techniques include random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and sampling using multiple probability techniques (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Non-probability sampling techniques are primarily used in qualitatively oriented studies. According to Selltitz, Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook (1999:514), in non-probability sampling, there is no way of estimating the probability that each element has of being included in the sample. Also, there is no assurance that every element has a chance of being included. The authors note that the major advantages of non-probability sampling techniques are convenience and economy. The major forms of non-probability sampling techniques (Selltitz *et al*, 1999:15) are purposive sampling, quota sampling and accidental sampling. Gomm (2008) further identifies snowball sampling. Below is a brief description of probability sampling techniques as given by Teddlie and Yu (2007:79).

3.7.1 Probability sampling techniques

3.7.1.1 Random Sampling

Random sampling is perhaps the most well-known of all sampling strategies. A simple random sample is one in which each unit (e.g., persons, cases) in the accessible population has an equal chance of being included in the sample, and the probability of a unit being selected is not affected by the selection of other units from the accessible population (i.e., the selections are made independently) (Nachimias and Nachimias, 1996:186). Simple random sample selection may be accomplished in several ways including drawing names or numbers out of a box or using a computer program to generate a sample using random numbers that start with a ~~seeded~~ seeded number based on the program's start time.

3.7.1.2 Stratified Sampling

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:188), stratified sampling is used to ensure that different groups of a population are adequately represented in the sample so as to increase their level of accuracy when estimating parameters. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:188) further note that the researcher uses the available information on the population to divide it into groups such that the elements within each group are more alike than are the elements in the population as a whole.

If a researcher is interested in drawing a random sample, then she or he typically wants the sample to be representative of the population on some characteristic of interest (e.g., achievement scores). The situation becomes more complicated when the researcher wants various subgroups in the sample to also be representative. In such cases, the researcher uses stratified random sampling, which combines stratified sampling with random sampling. For example, assume that a researcher wanted a stratified random sample of males and females in a college freshman class. The researcher would first separate the entire population of the college class into two groups (or strata): one all male and one all-female. The researcher would then independently select a random sample from each stratum (one random sample of males, one random sample of females).

3.7.1.3 Cluster Sampling

The third type of probability sampling, cluster sampling, occurs when the researcher wants to generate a more efficient probability sample in terms of monetary and/or time resources. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:190) note that it is the least expensive sample design and it involves 1st selecting larger groupings, *called clusters*, and then selecting sampling units from the clusters. Instead of sampling individual units, which might be geographically spread over great distances, the researcher samples groups (clusters) that occur naturally in the population, such as neighbourhoods or schools or hospitals.

3.7.1.4 Sampling Using Multiple Probability Techniques

Researchers often use the three basic probability sampling techniques in conjunction with one another to generate more complex samples. For example, multiple cluster sampling is a technique that involves (a) a first stage of sampling in which the clusters are randomly selected and (b) a second stage of sampling in which the units of interest are sampled within the clusters. A common example of this from educational research

occurs when schools (the clusters) are randomly selected and then teachers (the units of interest) in those schools are randomly sampled.

3.7.2 Non-probability Sampling Techniques

3.7.2.1 Purposive sampling (judgemental sampling)

Purposive sampling techniques (or judgemental sampling) are primarily used in qualitative studies and may be defined as selecting units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions), based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:166). Maxwell (1997) in Teddlie and Yu (2007:77) defines purposive sampling as a type of sampling in which, particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices. Purposive sampling techniques involve selecting certain units or cases that will provide the most information for the questions under study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003:279). There are three broad categories of purposive sampling techniques (Teddlie and Yu, 2007:80) (plus a category involving multiple purposive techniques), each of which encompass several specific types of strategies:

- “ Sampling to achieve representativeness or comparability. these techniques are used when the researcher wants to (a) select a purposive sample that represents a broader group of cases as closely as possible or (b) set up comparisons among different types of cases.
- “ Sampling special or unique cases. employed when the individual case itself, or a specific group of cases, is a major focus of the investigation (rather than an issue).
- “ Sequential sampling. uses the gradual selection principle of sampling when (a) the goal of the research project is the generation of theory (or broadly defined themes) or (b) the sample evolves of its own accord as data are being collected. Gradual selection may be defined as the sequential selection of units or cases based on their relevance to the research questions, not their representativeness (e.g., Flick, 1998).

- “ Sampling using multiple purposive techniques involves the use of multiple qualitative techniques in the same study.

3.7.2.2 Quota sampling

Like probability sampling, quota sampling addresses the issues of representativeness (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:167; Selltiz et al, 1999:516). The difference is in the way they approach the issue of sampling. Thus, quota sampling has to start from a sound knowledge of the population to be sampled. According to Gomm (2008), quotas are lists specifying the respondents who need to be recruited in order to build a sample which is a small scale model of the population.

With quota sampling, one begins with a matrix describing the characteristics of the target population (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:167). In the case of this study, one would want to know what proportion of the schools in Grahamstown district implement inclusive education (pilot schools) or what proportion of the educators in the Grahamstown district have a special education qualification and how many do not. Once such matrix has been created and a relative proportion assigned to each cell in the matrix, the researcher collects data from persons having all the characteristics of a given cell. All the persons in a given cell are assigned a weight appropriate to their portion of the total population. When all the sample elements are weighted, the overall data should provide a reasonable representation of the total population. According to Selltiz *et al* (1999), an advantage of quota sampling is that it requires smaller samples and less initial preparation. In addition, it is quicker and cheaper.

Quota sampling has several inherent problems. Babbie and Mouton, (2001: 167) note the following as inherent problems:

- The quota frame (that is, the proportions that different cells represent) must be accurate, and it is often difficult to get up-to-date information for this purpose.
- Bias may exist in the selection of the sample elements within a given cell . even though its proportion of the population is accurately estimated.

3.7.2.3 Snowball sampling

This type of sampling is mostly used where nothing like a sampling frame exists and respondents are a group who are difficult to find (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:167).

3.7.2.4 Convenience/ Accidental samples/ Reliance on available subjects

Accidental samples comprise simply of people who happened to be around when a sample was needed (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:166). Selltiz *et al* (1999:516) describe this sample as when one simply reaches out and take the cases at hand, continuing the process until the sample reaches a designated size.

3.8 Sample and sampling that guided the study

Grahamstown District was conveniently chosen because, although there are trained remedial educators in the district, there are schools struggling to address the learning needs of their respective learners. Also, the district has received some substantial attention in terms of being considered for full service schools because of its proximity to special schools such as Kuyasa School for the mentally handicapped and Amasango Career School for extrinsically disabled learners. Also, one of its schools was participating in the original pilot programme with regards to the implementation of inclusive education. Further, the researcher for this study is based in Grahamstown, and as such it was convenient for her in terms of money and time constraints. Since the research uses mixed methods, both random and purposive sampling was used in choosing the sample. To obtain quantitative data, the researcher used random sampling, while to generate qualitative data, purposive sampling was used.

Twenty educators in four schools (one special school and three primary schools surrounding the special school) were randomly selected for the purposes of completing the questionnaire, while six educators were purposively selected to take part in interviews. The 20 teachers selected were those from participating schools. The criteria that determined the interview sample was that they were educators who had the most number of learners with learning problems in their classes and/ or they had a remedial

qualification. In addition, if Grahamstown teachers are implementing inclusive education at all, it would be most apparent in these schools. Principals and the district official were also purposively selected, based on the criterion that they were important when it came to issues of support as outlined in the Education White Paper 6 (2001). Teachers, principals and district officials are key people as far as implementation of inclusion in the district is concerned.

The study purposively selected four schools to be included in the sample. The sample of four schools was a representative sample of the population of Ministry (District)-selected schools. One of the schools was selected on the basis of its being a special school and forms part of the implementation structures. This school has the greatest opportunity and most experience in implementing the inclusion policy. The Special Education Unit staff at the district had expressed interest in whether geographical factors influenced implementation; therefore the other three schools are closer the special schools in the district. In addition, the purposive selection of the schools is justified in this study because there was also a set of criteria that was followed in the selection, which is:

- The schools have no less than four teachers.
- The schools have some educators who have a Special Education qualification.
- There are learners facing barriers in learning at the school.
- The schools can be reached without difficulty.

3.9 Negotiating entry

Waters-Adams (2006:195) writes that for research to be conducted at an institution such as a school, approval for conducting the research should be obtained before any data is collected. I forwarded the letter that I was given by my supervisor to the District Director of Education (Grahamstown District) requesting permission to conduct interviews at the chosen research sites. I also forwarded the same letter that I had been given to me by my supervisor having been signed by the district director to the Education Officer for Special Needs Education, and school principals. I negotiated with them the dates and time to conduct interviews and observations.

3.10 Data collection

Data collection can be derived using a number of methods, which include interviews, focus groups, surveys, telephone interviews, field notes, taped social interaction or questionnaires (Heaton, 2004). Data collection is an essential component to conducting research. Heaton (2004) further points out that, data collection is a complicated and hard task. Similarly, O'Leary (2004: 150) remarks, "Collecting credible data is a tough task, and it is worth remembering that one method of data collection is not inherently better than another." Therefore, which data collection method to use would depend upon the research goals and the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Johnson and Turner (2003) describe data collection as simply a technique that is used to collect empirical research data. In other words, it is how researchers get their information. According to Koshy (2005), data collection methods are also referred to as methods of instrumentation. The author notes that there are many ways of gathering data. One has to choose the most suitable method for the task at hand. Data can be collected from a number of sources including questionnaires, workplaces, internet, interviews, focus group, tests, observation and documentary evidence(including written documents and records) (Johnson and Turner, 2003; Koshy, 2005).

Due to the fact that the study used a mixed approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher found the use of interviews, questionnaires, observations and document analysis (evidence) as ideal data collection methods for the study. Below is a brief description of the research instruments that were used.

3.10.1 Interviews

Interviewing is a research technique and is normally considered as one of a range of methods in qualitative research (Bell, 2005). An interview is a one-on-one verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee with the aim of gathering information (Willis, 2007:146). According to O'Leary (2010:194), interviewing is an "Art of asking" and the "Art of listening." Further, interviews can range from "normal to informal, structured to unstructured; and can be one-on-one or involve a group" (p195).

Gray (2004:213) regarded an interview as a conversation. In the conversation are two people, one of which takes the role of the interviewer. The researcher or the interviewer often uses open questions. Open questions are the kind of questions where the interviewee is not restricted in answering. The interviewee can say as much as he or she wants. Data is collected from the interviewee. According to Maree (2007) and Cohen and Manion (1984), an interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of participants. Kvale (1996) regarded interviews as an interchange of views between two people or more on a topic of mutual interest.

Basically interviews aim at collecting rich descriptive data that helps the researcher to understand the participants' construction of knowledge and social reality. According to Gray (2004:213), in an interview, the most important skill is listening, not only to verbal responses but also noting elements such as body language of the interviewee. In an interview, it is the role of the researcher to ask questions. The questions ought to elicit valid response from respondents (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Gray (2004:213) contends that, a well conducted interview is a powerful tool for eliciting rich data on people's views, attitudes and the meanings that underpin their lives and behaviours.

There are many reasons to use interviews for collecting data and using it as research instrument. Gray (2004: 214) has given the following reasons:

- There is a need to attain high personalized data.
- There are opportunities required for probing
- A good return rate is important
- Respondents are having difficulties with written language.

There are several types of interview. The choice of the interview technique will be guided in large part by the aims and objectives of the research (Gray, 2004:215).

According to Gray (2004), interviews may be divided into five categories:

- Structured interviews
- Semi-structured interviews
- Informal conversational interviews

- Non-directive interviews
- Focused interviews

Maree (2007), De Vos, (1998) and Bell, (2005), categorize interviews into three groups, that is; open-ended interview (unstructured interview), semi-structured interview and structured interview. Below, this study discusses the aforementioned interviews.

3.10.1.1 *Structured interviews*

A structured interview is sometimes called a standardized interview (Gray, 2004:215) is an interview used to collect data for quantitative analysis. It is referred to as a standardised interview because the same questions are asked of all respondents. Gray (2004) further notes that, it would be ideal if questions can be asked in the same tone of voice so that the respondents would not be influenced by the tone of the interviewer. Bryman (2001) explains structured interview as entailing the administration of an interview schedule by an interviewer. The aim is for all the interviewees to be given exactly the same context of questioning. This means that each respondent receives exactly the same interview stimulus as any other. The goal of this type of interview is to ensure that interviewees' replies can be aggregated (Gray, 2004). In structured interviews, the questions are detailed and developed in advance just like in a survey research (Maree, 2007). This kind of interview is frequently used in case studies or when dealing with large sample groups to ensure consistency.

Maree (2007) asserts that there is not much probing in structured interviews since the questions are overly structured.

The strengths of structured interviews (Bryman, 2001) are that the researcher has control over the topics and the format of the interview. This is because a detailed interview guide is used. Consequently, there is a common format, which makes it easier to analyse, code and compare data. Probing can be achieved when the questions ask the respondents to explain themselves further (Maree, 2007). Furthermore, non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions can be recorded.

One of the disadvantages of structured interviews are they adhere too closely to the interview guide and may be the cause of not probing for relevant information (Gray, 2004:215). Another disadvantage is that people read and interpret information differently. Further, verbal comments and non-verbal cues elicited by the researcher can cause bias and influence the respondents answers.

3.10.1.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

On the other hand, semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative analysis. The researcher has a list of key themes, issues and questions to be asked. Gray (2004:215) notes that, although the researcher has a list of issues and questions he or she wishes to cover, they may not all be dealt with in each interview. This is so because the probability of changing the order of issues or questions is high. This is usually determined by the direction of the interview. Also, additional questions may be asked, some of which were not anticipated at the start of the interview.

In semi-structured interviews, the participant is required to answer a set of predetermined questions that define the line of inquiry (Maree, 2007). The semi-structured interview allows for probing of views and opinions (Gray, 2004:216). This happens when there is a desire for respondents to expand on their answers. Probing is a way for the interview to explore new paths which were not initially considered (Gray, 2004). In this type of interview it is important for the researcher to not only listen to what the respondent says verbally but also look at body language. This enables the researcher to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are directly related to the phenomenon being studied.

The strengths of semi-structured interviews are that it allows for probing of views and opinions (Gray, 2004). In addition, there is room to explain or rephrase the questions if respondents are ambiguous. The semi-structured interview has its shortfalls. One of the shortfalls is that inexperienced interviewers may not be able to ask prompt questions.

The greatest possibility is that when this happens, some relevant information may not be gathered.

3.10.1.3 Focused interviews

This type of interview is based upon the respondent's subjective responses to a known situation (Gray, 2004:217). In focused interviews, the interviewer has prior knowledge of this situation. Also, the researcher has the ability to re-focus respondents if and when they drift away from the theme.

3.10.1.4 Non-directive interviews

The structured and semi-structured interviews are somewhat controlled by the researcher who has set the issues and questions. In non-directive interviews questions are not generally pre-planned (Gray, 2004:217). The format of the interview is such that respondents can talk freely around the subject matter. Data collected through this type of interview is usually for qualitative analysis.

3.10.1.5 Informal conversational interviews

This type of interview relies on the spontaneous generation of questions as the interview progresses (Gray, 2004:217). It is a form of an open-ended interview technique.

According to Gray (2004), non-directive, focused and informal conversational interviews are all what would describe as unstructured interviews. This study employed the unstructured interview. The researcher chose this technique as a way of getting in-depth answers to the research questions. The unstructured interview method was chosen for its ability to provide access to what is inside a person's head (Maree, 2007). Further, it makes it possible to measure what a person knows, what a person likes or dislikes and thinks. Six post level one teachers were interviewed. The unstructured interview was preferred in this study as it offered a platform for conversation with the intention that the researcher explored with the participant her or his views, ideas, beliefs and attitudes concerning implementation of the inclusion policy. In so doing, the

researcher saw the world, in this case the implementation of the inclusion policy, through the eyes of the participants (Maree, 2007). Bell (2005), describes this kind of interview as having %adaptability+. In the research adaptability means that the researcher can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do.

The researcher was aware of the limitations of not getting comprehensive answers to the questions. When that was the case, the researcher tried to probe more into the responses and made sure that the questioning technique guided the interviewees to give comprehensive answers. The researcher was careful in the choice of respondents where possible. These had to be conversant with the topic at hand. The researcher used this method to source for information relating to teaching practices where learners facing barriers to learning were concerned. The researcher also intended to find out if there was any support given to teachers by the school or the Department of Education to enable them to teach well. The researcher hoped to establish teachers' feelings with regards to having learners with barriers to learning in their classes. However, one major problem was that unstructured interviews were time-consuming.

3.10.2 Questionnaire

One of the most popular data gathering tools is a questionnaire. According to Gray (2004:187), a questionnaire is a research tool whereby people are asked to respond to the same set of questions in an order that is decided already. Data collected using questionnaires is for both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Also, questions are standardised. Gray (2004) further points out that, questionnaires reflect the designer's view of the world, no matter how objective the researcher tries to be. A questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic (Walonick, 1993) that can be completed in one of two basic ways. Firstly, respondents could be asked to complete the questionnaire with the researcher not present. Secondly, respondents could be asked to complete the questionnaire by verbally responding to questions in the presence of the researcher.

The main body of the questionnaire comprises either closed or open questions (Gray, 2004: 194). Closed-ended or closed questions are questions to which a respondent is offered a set of pre-designed replies such as Yes/No (Gray, 2004:195). Open questions have no definite response and contain answers that are recorded in full. Open questions often begin with How, Why, What The advantage of open questions is the potential for richness of responses, some of which may not have been anticipated by researchers. While closed questions mainly produce quantitative data, open questions produce mainly qualitative data. Maree (2007) has identified the following four methods as mostly used methods of collecting data from respondents through questionnaires: group administration of questionnaires, postal survey, telephone survey and face-to-face survey.

3.10.3 Group administration

In group administration, the researcher waits while a whole group of respondents completes questionnaires. This has the advantage of having many respondents complete the questionnaire within a short time and also the researcher can clarify issues which are unclear to the respondents. Another advantage is that the response rate tends to be very high. This method has the disadvantage of getting different responses for this particular study, as the researcher will be required to use different administrators to administer the questionnaires.

3.10.4 Postal surveys

In postal surveys, questionnaires are mailed to the respondents who have to read instructions and answer the questions. Gray (2004:208) suggests that a postal questionnaire be accompanied by a letter. The letter explains issues such as the aim of the research, benefits to the respondent, and an assurance of confidentiality and maybe how long it may take to complete the questionnaire. One of its advantages is that the respondents fill the questionnaire in a more relaxed atmosphere as there is no interviewer to influence their responses. Good as it may sound, it is limited in that the

response rate may be low and the conditions for completing the questionnaires are not controlled (Maree, 2007).

3.10.5 Telephone questionnaire

In telephone surveys, respondents are telephoned by interviewers who ask the questions and record the answers. According to Gray (2004:210), it is important that respondents know when they are to be interviewed. This means that they have to be contacted one way or the other, and given clear details of dates and times (including length of interview). With phone calls, the survey can be relatively quick and the response rate usually is high; however the cost is relatively high (which renders this method unusable by this researcher). Also when using telephone questionnaires, the questionnaire has to be short (Maree, 2007). Interviewer bias is very high in telephone surveys as the interviewer may influence responses during the telephone conversation (Morse and Niehaus, 2009).

3.10.6 Face-to-face questionnaires

As for face-to-face survey, well trained interviewers visit the respondents, ask questions and record the answers. Of importance is arranging with the respondent and improving the chances of a respondent turn up for the interview (Gray, 2004:210). This implies that respondents need to be contacted in advance of the meeting and advised of dates, time and location. This method has the highest response rate like the group administration. The interviewer can assist with clarifying issues that are not clear to the respondent. As one of its disadvantages, this data collection technique is costly and the interviewer has to be well trained (which makes this method not usable for this research) (Maree, 2007). The following advantages and disadvantages of open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires are given by Morse and Niehaus, (2009: 273)

Advantages of a questionnaire

- The researcher is able to contact large numbers of people quickly, easily and efficiently (if using a postal questionnaire since all one has to do is identify the group that will be targeted and post them the list of questions).

- It is relatively quick and easy to create, code and interpret (especially if closed questions are used as will be done in this study).
- A questionnaire is easy to standardize. For example, every respondent is asked the same question in the same way. The researcher, therefore, can be sure that everyone in the sample answers exactly the same questions, which makes this a very reliable method of researcher.
- Questionnaires can be used to explore potentially embarrassing areas more easily than other methods in that a questionnaire can be both anonymous and be completed in privacy. This increases the chance of people answering questions honestly because they are not intimidated by the presence of the researcher.

Disadvantages of the questionnaire

- The format of the questionnaire design makes it difficult for the researcher to examine complex issues and opinions. Even when open-ended questions are used, the depth of answers that the respondent can provide tend to be more limited than with almost any other method of research. This makes it difficult for the researcher to gather information that is rich in depth and detail.
- With a postal questionnaire, the researcher can never be certain the person to whom the questionnaire is sent actually fills it in.
- Where the researcher is not present, it is always difficult to know whether or not the respondent has understood a question properly.
- The researcher has to hope the questions asked mean the same to all respondents as they do to the researcher.
- The response rate (that is, the number of questionnaires returned to the researcher) tends to be very low for postal questionnaires.

In order to obtain information on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in schools and learn more about the experiences of teachers in ordinary school classrooms, the researcher developed a three-part postal questionnaire. Twenty questionnaires were handed out to participants and all were returned. This questionnaire consisted mainly of closed questions since I was also conducting in-depth interviews. I chose this method as it made it possible to reach out to quite a number of people. The questionnaires for each school were hand delivered by the researcher to a

head teacher, who was responsible for collecting the completed questionnaires. The researcher collected completed questionnaires from the head teacher. This made generalization of results justifiable. In this way, the researcher had the advantage of rich quantitative data.

This postal questionnaire was based on a conceptual framework presented by Banks (1996) in Morse and Niehaus, (2009, referred to it as "teacher's" positionality, and is defined as the goals, knowledge, beliefs, strategies, and other normative frames of reference of a teacher which significantly impact the learning experiences of learners with special education needs in ordinary classrooms. Key features in "teacher's" positionality assessed in this study included teachers' personal interest in special education, level of and desire for more knowledge about special education, adaptations in teaching strategies, and beliefs about the effectiveness of strategies in meeting the needs of learners with special education needs.

Part 1 of the instrument included demographic questions about the participating teachers, including gender, racial group, years taught, subjects currently being taught, the school, teachers' desire to learn (more) about special education needs (additional training), whether or not teacher found working with special education needs learners impacting on one's ability to meet classroom goals, one's beliefs about his/ her knowledge ability about the learning needs of one's students and language spoken. Part 2 consisted of a 20-item checklist designed to identify classroom practices that teachers have had to alter in order to achieve their goals when teaching diverse students. In part 3, respondents were asked to assess the effectiveness of a variety of teaching strategies based on their teaching experience.

Noteworthy is the fact that the questionnaire was pilot tested before the full scale use in schools. This ensured that the language used was understandable and the categories used were not confusing to the respondents. The feedbacks from the pilot study lead to some adjustments to the questionnaire.

3.10.7 Document analysis

In document analysis as a data gathering instrument, the researcher focused on all types of written communications that could shed light on the phenomenon under investigation (Maree, 2007). This included the published and unpublished documents such as lesson plans, assessment instruments and assessment records, school records and education department records (archives) on support provision. The researcher was cautious of the authenticity and accuracy of using them. Nevertheless documents reveal what people do or did. Koshy (2005) argues that documentary evidence can often provide a useful background and context for the study and can also be illuminating, especially when you are comparing what is claimed and what has happened in practice. One of the research sub-questions was, 'How is the content (including assessment), and pedagogy adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners?' In reading these documents, the writer wished to compare what educators say they do (in writing) with what was actually happening as revealed through observation. Koshy (2005) further suggests the analysis of photographs when she asserts that photographs capturing critical moments and products are also useful as evidence. The following advantages and disadvantages of document analysis have been given by Johnson and Turner (2003):

Advantages of document analysis

- Documents can provide insight into what people think and what they do.
- Documentary information is grounded in local settings.
- Information is unobtrusive, making reactive and investigator effects very unlikely.
- Information is obtained in an inexpensive way.

Disadvantages of document analysis

- Information recorded maybe incomplete because of selective recording.
- Access to some types of information might possibly be difficult.
- Interpretive validity is possibly low.

3.10.8 Observations

Different situations require different roles for the researcher (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Unfortunately, there are no clear guidelines for making this choice. One must rely on one's understanding of the situation and one's own good judgment.

Observation is a qualitative data gathering technique where the researcher uses senses to gather bits of data (Maree, 2007). Other than being one of the most pervasive activities of daily life, observation is a primary tool of scientific enquiry (Selltiz et al, 1999). Gorman and Clayton (2005) allude to the same when they define observation studies as those that involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behaviour in a natural setting. According to Gomm (2008), observation is a complex research method because often it requires the researcher to play a number of roles and use a number of techniques to collect data. Sharing the same sentiments, McMillan and Schumacher (1997:268) point out that, this method involves a range of skills of the researcher such as listening, seeing, pursuing, questioning, communicating and also recording things that are happening.

As a data gathering technique, observation is embodied with advantages and disadvantages. The greatest asset of observational techniques is that they make it possible to record behaviour as it occurs (Selltiz et al, 1999). In addition, where the social scientist has reason to believe that such factors as detachment or distortions in recall may significantly affect his data, he/ she will always prefer observational methods. Baker (2006:173) writes that the value of observation is that it permits researchers to study people in their natural environment in order to understand issues from their perspective. A study such as this demands that what teachers actually do and say be compared with their account of what they did and said (as evidenced in teacher documents) and observation is the best method of inquiry for this.

On the other hand, observation has its specific limitations. In observation, the researcher must always remember his/her primary role as a researcher and remain detached enough to collect and analyse data relevant to the problem under

investigation. Earlier, the researcher wrote that one of the advantages of observation is the possibility of recording events simultaneously with their spontaneous occurrence (Selltiz et al, 1999). Thus, people's actions are probably more telling than their verbal accounts and observing these is valuable. The other side of the coin is that it is often impossible to predict the spontaneous occurrence of an event precisely enough to enable us to be present to observe. Furthermore, the practical possibility of applying observational techniques is limited by the duration of events. Bryman (2001) cautioned that some occurrences that people report are rarely, if ever, accessible to direct observation.

Maree (2007) writes that generally there are four types of observation methods that are used in qualitative research, that is, complete observer; observer as participant; participant as observer; and complete participant. Below is a brief description of each type including advantages and disadvantages/limitations.

3.10.8.1 Complete observer

When a researcher is a complete observer, he or she observes without becoming a part in any way (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). In other words, the researcher is a non-participant looking at the situation from a distance. Gorman and Clayton (2005) describe the complete observer approach as when the researcher is present on the scene, but does not participate or interact with the insiders to any great extent.

Baker (2006:174) suggests that one advantage of being a complete observer is that the researcher can remain completely detached from the group. Detachment, however, is also a major disadvantage because observations may be more sketchy and transitory (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Further, it could prevent the researcher from hearing the entire conversations or grasping the full significance of any information exchange (Baker, 2006:177). She/ he cannot ask insiders any questions to qualify what they have said, or to answer other questions his/ her observations of them have brought to mind.

3.10.8.2 *Observer as participant*

In the observer as participant approach, one identifies oneself as a researcher and interacts with the participants in the social process, but makes no pretence of actually being a participant (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Maree (2007) notes that according to this approach the researcher goes into the situation but focuses mainly on his or her role as observer in the situation. It can be noted that in this kind of approach, there is more observation than participation. While still mostly involved in observing, the researcher may conduct short interviews (Taylor and Bogdan, 2004).

Gomm (2008) cautioned that the brief encounters with insiders limits opportunities for gaining knowledge of total situations. In addition, the brief interviews can contribute to misunderstandings or misconceptions of which the researcher may not be aware of until it is too late to correct or address them. Patton (1990) described two advantages to this role. First, insiders might be more willing to talk to strangers than they would be to people with whom they are more familiar. Second, there is less temptation both for the observer to pretend to be oneself and not an imposter and for the people being studied to try to include him/ her permanently into their lives.

3.10.8.3 *Participant as observer*

In participant as observer approach, the researcher participates fully with the group under study, but will make it clear that he/ she is also undertaking research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:293). During this time of observation, the researcher may develop relationships with the insiders such that they become friends (Baker, 2006:177). Patton (1990) saw this relationship as beneficial because, as friends, the insiders can instruct the researcher in the intricacies of their personal and social worlds. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:293), one is faced with the difficulty of simultaneously being one member of the group, and also observing everyone else from the researcher's point of view. Again, people being studied may shift much of their attention to the research project rather than focus on the natural social process, and the process being observed might no longer be typical.

3.10.8.4 Complete participant

In a complete participant approach, the researcher becomes completely immersed in the setting to the extent that those being observed do not know that they are the subjects of the observation. Babbie and Mouton (2001:296) describe this approach as when you let people being observed see you only as a participant not a researcher. Although this is unethical, in the sense that as a researcher you deceive the people you are studying, the hope is that they will confide in you as they will not confide in an identified researcher. An advantage to this method of observation is that the data will be more valid and reliable; also, the subjects will be more natural and honest if they do not know the researcher is doing a research project (Bryman, 1998). If the people being studied know they are being studied, they might modify their behaviour in a variety of ways. A disadvantage to this approach could be that as a complete participant, you might affect what you are studying. Chances are you will get engrossed and forget or miss out on recording important details. Also, if people see you constantly take notes, they become suspicious and start isolating you or being cautious of what they say and do during your presence.

This study adopted the observer as participant approach. As mentioned earlier, this approach entails the sustained immersion of the researcher among those whom he or she seeks to study with a view to generating a rounded, in-depth account of the group, organization, or whatever (Bryman, 2001:135). With this approach, the observations enabled the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed, which in this case is how teachers implement the inclusion policy for learners with special educational needs. In this study, the researcher conducted some classroom observations to have a feel of how teachers implement the inclusion policy and the challenges they face as they try implementing the policy. In particular, the researcher looked at the issues of the classroom setting, teaching strategies, teacher skills, and support and provisioning in the classroom.

3.11 Data analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data that was collected in the study was raw and therefore had to be processed or prepared for analysis. Analysis is a reasoning strategy with the objective of taking a complex whole and resolving it into parts (De Vos, 1998). Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining evidence to draw empirically based conclusions (Yin, 2009). The data was analysed in the language in which the interviews were conducted.

For this research, a mixed method of data analysis was used. Aspects of qualitative and quantitative data analysis were used. This included putting information into different themes, and placing the evidence in tables.

3.12 Validity and reliability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:122) validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration. There are many ways in which one can check if a measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under study. Some of them are face validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity and content validity. Reliability has to do with the consistency or repeatability of a measure or instrument and high reliability is obtained when the measure or instrument gives the same results if the research is repeated on the same sample (Maree, 2007).

Testing of validity and reliability of the instrument before its administration was carried out. Face and content validity of the data collection instruments was ascertained by the supervisor of the research and colleagues (students in the masters and PhD programme). Face validity is based on visual images, which is, how one sees something and create a mental image while content validity refers to how much a measure covers the range of meanings included within the concept. This research is credible because it clearly represent the views of the participants who were given an opportunity to read the draft scripts before the research paper was finally submitted (member checking). Triangulation of the different forms of data collected also added to the reliability and validity of the research process and the findings. Clear directions and

an explanation of the purpose of the survey were presented at the beginning of the instrument (questionnaire), and to increase the instrument's reliability, items were written in a straight-forward manner using phrasing and language familiar to teachers. In order to enhance validity, the questionnaire was pilot tested with three junior secondary school teachers who had indicated how well they understand the subject of learners with special education needs. A useful method for checking a questionnaire and making sure it is accurately capturing the intended information is to pre-test among a smaller subset of the target respondents (Walonick 1993). Modifications of the instrument were made based on the feedback and critical comments of this group of teachers. Finally, three PhD students (University of Fort Hare) scrutinized the instrument for added reliability and validity in measuring the dimensions under study (Leedy and Ormond, 2005). This enabled the researcher to change questions that were sensitive or ambiguous.

Questionnaires used in this research were filed so that future researchers can use these data sheets and this would ensure that the reliability of the findings can be verified and the authenticity established (Walonick, 1993). If a later researcher followed the same procedure and conducted the same study, then the outcomes of the research should be similar (Yin, 2009).

3.13 Ethical considerations

Ethics refers to principles or rules of behaviour that act to dictate what is actually acceptable or allowed (O'Leary, 2005:72). Ethical issues were important since the study would involve human subjects. Walter- Adams (2006) writes that any research which involves other people in some way has ethical implications. Taking this into consideration, it was only proper that this study abided by ethical considerations as contained in the university's Faculty of Education Handbook of Post- graduate Qualification Policies and procedures so as to ensure that individual rights were not infringed upon and also to promote fairness in the interpretation of data.

Principles such as obtaining informed consent, respecting the right to privacy and participation, anonymity, confidentiality, avoiding harm to participants, other principles as highlighted by Cohen *et al* (2000) and O'Leary (2005:73) were adhered to during the collection process, data analysis and interpretation.

❖ **Informed consent**

One of the most important principles in the codes of ethics is informed consent. Participants in research need to be told what they are letting themselves in for before they make a decision to co-operate. Thus, ideally, informed consent is part of a contracting process with a written agreement between the researcher and each subject, laying out the terms and conditions of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:170). For informed consent the researcher:

- Explained as fully as possible, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research was about;
- Explained who was undertaking it and financing it;
- Explained why it was being undertaken;
- Explained how it was to be disseminated not as a once-and-for-all event, but as a process, subject to re-negotiation over time.

❖ **Right to privacy and participation**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:102), before conducting a study, the researcher must make sure that participants voluntarily agree to take part in research and can withdraw at any time in the research process when necessary. Participants took part because they were willing to do so. This was demonstrated by their signing the consent form. O'Leary (2005:73) points out that, participants have a right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at any time. This research was conducted keeping the essential ethical criteria in mind.

With regards to privacy and participation, the researcher ensured that participants were not forced to participate in the study through:

- Meeting with them in person, briefing them on the purpose of the study, reasons and benefits for their participation and the right to participate or not. Leedy and Ormond (2005:102) contend that researchers must respect anyone who decides not to participate in the study.

- Giving the participants an opportunity to indicate their willingness to participate in the study by signing a consent form.

❖ **Right to confidentiality and anonymity**

The major safeguard against invasion of privacy is the assurance of confidentiality (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:175). Confidentiality means protecting the identity of respondents while ~~anonymity~~ refers to protection against identification even from the researcher (O'Leary, 2005:73). Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:88) contend that a participant is considered anonymous when the researcher or other persons cannot identify particular information with a particular participant. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:102) in any research, the right to confidentiality and the right to anonymity puts the respondent at ease to give information which might otherwise be regarded as sensitive.

Because of the sensitivity of the issues involved in the subject of curriculum implementation, the researcher ensured that the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants was maintained at all times. This was based on the fact that whilst researchers had the right to collect data through, for instance, interviewing people, the researcher realized that this should not be done at the expense of the interviewees' right to confidentiality and anonymity (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996:88-89). Even though I wrote down their names, a code was used to identify them. For the schools, pseudonyms were used. Respondents were given assurance that all the information gathered would be kept confidential and treated with respect.

❖ **Avoiding harm or damage to participants**

O'Leary (2005:73) writes that respondents should not be harmed or damaged in any way by the research. In any study, possibilities are 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 by talking to outsiders or writing about them and using their actual names in a publication. The researcher considered the ways the data collection methods and presentation might put the respondents at risk in terms of stress, legal liabilities, ostracism or political repercussion. Adherence to the issues of confidentiality as discussed above was also done.

3.14 Reflection on the methods used in this study

Mixed method researchers recognise and acknowledge challenges inherent in their studies, such as subjectivity and its complexities in qualitative research, when observing people's expressions in the interpretative paradigm. The research used documentation, interviews and literature from other findings, but this is not to say these methods do not have weakness. Using documentation can bring problems of accessibility and reporting bias. This is because many organisations prefer to maintain confidentiality. This the researcher experienced from the Department of Education (DST), where the officials could not provide written information on their actual visits in schools and the contents of their workshops, but instead insisted that I write this information in my notebook as they were telling me. The method has its weaknesses, though, in that:

- Speed of writing when people are talking, some important facts may be missed out
- Offers limited information. (Gray, 2004: 135)

The researcher conducted interviews (face to face) with the DST and teachers who were selected per school visited. There are two types of sampling selection criterion that I could use: purposeful sampling or purposive sampling. In purposive sampling, subjects are selected by the researcher to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the group (Patton, 1990). So the researcher chooses the interviewees according to the number of people who would be representative of the group at the site. The inherent dangers of interviews are noted. The likelihood of responses to interviews being biased due to poorly constructed questions; response bias; inaccuracies due to poor recall and reflexivity, here the interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear (the responses may not reflect the real situation) is an area of concern that needs to be taken in account by the researcher.

Reflection of the researcher

Constraints

At the start of the study, financial and time constraints informed the researcher's decision to restrict the study to four primary schools located within Grahamstown. The researcher experienced problems with the DST and teachers who had been selected, as most of them apparently assumed that the research was designed to cast them and their practices in a negative light, also the research was carried out towards the end of the year when teachers were busy working on CASS marks, moderation and end of year exams. The researcher does acknowledge the sensitivity of the study, but it was not intended to expose anyone.

This sequence of events affected the population and sample size of the research and pointed to some of the challenges of conducting what is construed as sensitive research. Apart from affecting the researcher's population and sample size, this also affected the time that I ended up allocating to each interview and the number of times interviews could be conducted. It also affected the nature of quantitative data collected. Under these circumstances, sampling size became a critical issue in turn affecting my research methodology design which had to be adjusted to suit more of qualitative than both quantitative and qualitative at par based on data collected.

My use of an interpreter to help with the translation from IsiXhosa to English, limited my ability to understand the nuances of what my respondents were telling me. The time of the year as mentioned earlier, meant that the teachers were busy preparing for end of year exams, so most people were busier than usual and thus not able to give me as much time during interviews as I would have liked.

3.15 Summary

The chapter identified and briefly described the method directing the research and the instruments used. This chapter identified and described types of paradigms in research, the research approaches, design, population and sample, and instruments used to gather data for this study. The emphasis was placed on describing the advantages and

disadvantages of each. Issues of data analysis, negotiating entry, ethical considerations, reliability and validity were also addressed. It is anticipated that, even though the sample size is modest, the findings from this study highlight key areas and issues that might well be applicable to other schools in the district. This chapter also highlighted the population and sample for the study. The following chapter presents data analysis and discusses the findings.

4 CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis. The study sought to respond to the main research question, which is: ~~How~~ **How** are teachers implementing the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs?+The sub-questions are:

- “ What skills do teachers possess to enable them implement inclusion of learners with SEN?
- “ What teaching strategies are actually adopted by teachers to ensure inclusion of learners with SEN?
- “ How is the content (including assessment), and pedagogy adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners?
- “ What support (including training) and monitoring is provided to teachers by schools and the District Department of Education to enable them to cater for all learners?
- “ What are the teachersqperceptions of the inclusion of learners with SEN?

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, observations and document analysis, as indicated in chapter 3. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were subjected to statistical methods using frequency distribution tables, and percentages. Quantitative data was obtained from 20 respondents who are all teachers.

Qualitative data was solicited from respondents through open-ended questions, and semi-structured interviews. The data was collected in both note form and the tape recorder. The recorded information was then transcribed into written text. The interviewed respondents were 6 teachers (4 from public schools and 2 from a special school), 4 principals or Institutional Level Support Team members (1 from a special school and 3 from public schools). Interviews were held with teachers across all age groups. Four members of the District Support Team were also interviewed as a group. The presentation of data was triangulated. The issues arising from the questionnaires,

the interviews, the observations and the document reviews were then put together as findings of the study.

The interviewed respondents are identified as follows:

DST 1-4 = District Support Team

P/ILST1= Principal/ Institutional Level Support Team member in Special School

P/ILST2 = Principal/ Institutional Level Support Team member in Public Combined School

P/ILST3= Principal/ Institutional Level Support Team member in Public School 1

P/ILST4= Principal/ Institutional Level Support Team member in Public School 2

Tps1 . 4= Teachers interviewed from public schools

Tps5-6 = Teachers interviewed from special school

The first section of this chapter presents the location and type of school. This is important as one has to understand the school's background. The second section presents the data on teacher capacity, which incorporates issues like academic and professional qualifications of teachers, as well as their experience in teaching. The methods and strategies used in curriculum delivery (including assessment), teachers' perception on the inclusion of learners with special education needs, as well as content adaptation are presented in this section.

Finally, data on monitoring and support systems is presented. The various forms of support (human and material) given to learners and teachers for effective teaching and learning are presented in this section.

4.2 Information on schools

South African education is governed by a system of cooperative governance, with power shared by the national and provincial governments. The National Department of Education establishes an effective management, policy, planning and monitoring capacity in the department of education, under senior departmental leadership to guide and support the development of the inclusive education and training system (DoE, 2001: 46). The provincial departments play a key role in building institutional capacity.

With the help of the national government, the provincial education department develop management systems and capacity in respect of strategic planning, management information systems, financial management and curriculum development and assessment (DoE, 2001: 46). The governance of schools is not confined to the national and provincial levels. Power is further devolved to elected school governing bodies (SGB), which have a significant say in the running of their schools. Among other things they:

- Decide on an admissions policy for the school.
- Adopt a code of conduct for learners which set out disciplinary procedures.
- Adopt a school mission statement setting out the values and beliefs of the school.
- Decide the times of the school day.
- Administer the school's property, buildings and grounds.
- Make recommendations regarding the appointment of educators at the school (DoE, 2000).

Parents also contribute towards the education of their children through being activists / advocates (parents need to lobby on behalf of their children for better facilities and services and for the rights of their children to be protected); setting up networks (parents can set up or affiliate to support groups and link to local structures and professionals striving towards inclusive education); supporting educators (as the primary care givers families know the learner very well) and raising awareness (being positive about their own children and raising public awareness about inclusive education by talking to family, friends and professionals). In addition, government is supposed to pay teachers' salaries.

Implementation of inclusive education can be affected by ineffectiveness at any of the levels of implementation . national and provincial education, district and school in collaboration with the SGBs (the functions of the SGB), thereby limiting the performance of even the best of teachers and undermine learners' efforts to focus on learning.

It was established that all the schools in which the research was carried out are government schools and recipients of government subsidies in the Grahamstown district

of education. Thus the government is playing its role in the implementation process by ensuring funds are available for the smooth running of the schools. Public schools are classified under two sections in terms of funding, Section 20 and Section 21. Section 21 schools have their subsidy monies deposited into their bank accounts half-yearly, from April to July and October to January of each year. These funds must be used for the following purposes: purchase of 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 Department of Education are held by the district office and all expenditure has to be requested through the district office. Hence the District office manages the subsidy monies on their behalf. The allocated amounts are known to the School Governing Body (SGB) for budget purposes and this amount must be spent on the same budget items as set out for Section 21 schools (DoE Manual for School Management, 2000). As mentioned before, ineffective governance can limit the performance of even the best of teachers and undermine learners' efforts to focus on learning.

According to data solicited from the DST, schools under study are implementing inclusive education. All the schools under study were headed by women. Table 4.1 shows the location of schools. The table also shows the number of teachers in the schools by gender. Gender has a bearing on how events are interpreted. Sayed (2003) argues that people's attitudes, opinions and values are also influenced by their gender. Involvement of both male and female respondents in this study ensured that different opinions across gender are represented.

Table 4-1: Location of school and staffing

Name of school	Location	Teachers		
		Male	Female	Total
A	Special school	4	5	9
B	Combined school	7	16	23
C	Public school	6	15	21
D	Public school	5	9	14
Total	4	22	45	67

Table 4.1 indicates that in the four schools under study, there are 67 teachers altogether. Of these, 20 teachers, of whom 9 were male while 11 were female, completed the questionnaire. The researcher also considered gender representation with interviewed teachers in the 4 selected primary schools. Of the 6 teachers who participated in the interview, 4 teachers representing 67 % of the teachers were female. It emerged from the data that the majority of teachers in these schools were female (45 out of 67). These results suggest that there are more female teachers teaching in the schools under study. This could be attributed to the fact that women are more favoured to teach at lower grades because of their nurturing and caring attitude in dealing with young children (Brodin, 1997:139).

In support of the above observations, during interviews one of the male teachers revealed that female teachers are better at teaching these lower classes. A male teacher respondent commented,

“We men do not have that caring, loving and patient nature women have. Although we demonstrate these in our own way, women are the best.+”

The researcher established from the school records that in the classes that were identified as inclusive in the public schools under study, most were taught by female teachers. Schools need both male and female teachers to run affairs in an inclusive setting, as ideal homes need to have both parents to help each other in the upbringing of the child.

According to the policy on inclusive education, while special schools provide critical education services to learners who require intense levels of support, another of their roles is to provide particular expertise and support, especially professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction, as part of the DST to neighbourhood schools. It emerged that the policy on inclusive education, as presented in Education White Paper 6-Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001), is being flouted. Special schools are not undertaking their role. In other words, as a structure within the implementation group, the special school was not living up to its expectations.

Through informal interviews it became clear that none of the public schools worked hand-in-hand with the special school close to them. A respondent from one of the public schools, Tps4, commented,

"We are working with Rhodes University, so for much of what we need to know about the management of special education needs learners we contact the University. Much as the special school is close by, I believe the teachers there are also busy and they do not have time to come out and assist us."

Often learners are faced with challenges in the learning process which are of a broad range of experiences in the classroom, at school, at home, in the community, and / or as a result of disability (DoE, 2008: 8). It is in part the responsibility of the schools to establish barriers affecting the learners' participation in the learning process, decide on the level of support needed, and the support package to address these barriers, and to track progress and impact of implementation of the support package. In light of the above, the researcher sought to find out how the learners were identified as having special education needs. Thus schools fulfil one of their roles in the implementation process, which is learner identification.

4.2.1 Learner identification as having special education needs

Identification of learners as having special education needs is an important factor in the implementation of the inclusive education policy, because learners with the correct aptitude and ability should be selected. According to the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (2008), there is a process of identifying, assessing and providing programmes for all students requiring additional support so as to enhance participation and inclusion. If this process is not followed, an inappropriate intervention programme could be given to learners and this could hinder the successful implementation of the inclusive education policy. The study sought to establish how learners were identified and selected as having special education needs. This information was considered to be vital, as it enables implementers of the policy to assess the level and extent of support needed to maximize learners' participation in the learning process.

The researcher investigated how learners were identified as having special education needs in the four public schools. This was important as the researcher wanted to find out whether schools adhered to policy-strategies. The responses are shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4-2: Learners' identification as having special education needs in public schools

How do you identify learners as having special education needs?	Public Schools	
	Frequency	%
Consider class performance	4	100
Child's social behaviour in the school	4	100
Child's home background	3	75
Consult parents	2	50

Four teachers from the public schools participated in the interview question that required them to talk about learner identification. Table 4.2 shows that teachers use four methods to identify learners as having special education needs. Teachers use class performance, the child's social behaviour in the school, the child's home background and consulting with parents. All the participants 4 (100%) indicated that they consider class performance and the child's social behaviour. Three (75%) have indicated that they also consider the child's background. Two teachers (50%) have included parents in the identification process.

The use of school performance in the identification process was confirmed by all the teacher respondents in the public schools in an interview. Tps4 remarked:

"There is selection of learners using class tests and grade examination results and this is done by us as the managers of these classes, and mostly those who do not perform at the expected level are preliminarily identified as having special education needs."

Tps3 remarked:

"The other selection considers the child's ability to copy from the board, reading and comprehension. Those who are viewed as lacking in these aspects are identified as having special education needs."

The views of the teacher respondents, Tps1-4, confirmed what the researcher found during document analysis in the public schools under study when they stated that:

"Students are screened using class tests and grade examination results."

Although the teachers have indicated that they use the above four methods to identify learners, there was no written evidence to that effect; rather, the researcher was shown academic performance record sheets. Those learners who were performing below average were automatically listed as having special education needs.

Table 4.2 also shows that in public schools, only 50% of the teachers consult with parents in order to get down to the root of the problem and for making informed initial

assessment, whilst the other 50% do not. The table also shows that 75% of the interviewed public school teachers have a belief that home background has a bearing on the barriers learners face in school, thus they also find out about the children's home background.

Responses from the special school teachers reveal a different situation. It was established that students in the special school were referral cases. In the words of Tsp 2:

The learners we have at this institution are referral cases. They are learners who came from ordinary schools through the provincial department of education. As you may have seen, not only are we a complement of teachers, but we also have speech and physiotherapists. We have a wide range of learning barriers manifesting on these learners and as such we work collaboratively with various government departments and non-governmental organisations.+

4.3 Teaching skills

4.3.1 Age range of teachers

The ages of teachers were also asked, as it is assumed that young teachers are not yet experienced in dealing with problem children as much as older teachers. It is also assumed that older teachers are more mature and more experienced. 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. The South African education system demands that entry age for primary schooling be 6 years. This is followed by seven years of primary schooling and then five years of secondary schooling. In the case of one becoming a school teacher, one used to undergo a minimum 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 20 years. Table 4.3 illustrates the age categories of the respondents to the questionnaire.

Table 4-3: Age range of teachers (n=20)

Age range	Number	Percentage
21-40years	4	20%
41 years and above	16	80%
Total	20	100%

As can be seen from Table 4.4, the distribution of the respondents by age range revealed that the majority of teachers 16 (80%) are at least 40 years old. This is followed by 4 teachers (20%) being 21- 40 years old. There are no teachers below 21. This suggests that the majority of the primary school teachers in the study were mature enough for the teaching profession and indeed mature enough to comprehend the issues around the implementation of the inclusive education policy.

4.3.2 Teacher capacity

Teacher capacity involves knowledge and dispositions that teachers need to teach (Grant and Agosto, 2008). To be more specific, we can define these knowledge and skills as the command of subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge. Teacher capacity, however, is contingent upon a number of factors such as technology, policy and changing demographics; hence, this study considered it as a major variable in the implementation of inclusive education.

Capacity of teachers includes variables such as one's academic qualification, specialization and experience in the job or position as well as teaching strategies used by that individual (Aspin, Chapman and Wilkson, 1994:40). Experience enables one to execute duties well. In implementation of inclusive education, an educator is able to use his/her experience to maximize learners' participation in the learning process as well as groom the young and upcoming leaders. Above all, the experience is an obligation for both teachers and administrators as they are to build the capacity of their learners. One

has to use a variety of strategies and teaching methods and techniques as an instructional leader. Hence, there was a need to solicit information on professional qualifications of teachers.

4.3.2.1 Qualification of teachers

It is recognized that one of the key factors influencing quality curriculum implementation in schools is the qualifications of teachers in their specialized areas. In chapter 1, an assumption was stated that there is a lack of teaching skills/ methods and learning conditions conducive for addressing the challenges of inclusion for learners with special educational needs. It is for this reason that the qualifications and experience of teachers are investigated to find how they implement the inclusion policy in order to cater for learners with special educational needs.

According to the requirements of the South African Council of Educators (SACE), as well as the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000), to be considered a professionally qualified teacher in South Africa, one should either possess an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) or a Diploma in Education (Dip. Ed). As from January 2011, a Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed) has been identified as the minimum entry requirement for someone who qualifies as a teacher. This professional qualification is attained after three (full time) to four years (part time) of training. The professional qualifications of teachers were investigated to establish whether teachers were professionally and adequately qualified to implement the inclusive education policy.

The researcher wanted to establish the professional qualification of teachers, as it has an effect on the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Table 4.4 shows the professional qualification of teachers.

Table 4-4: Professional qualification of teachers

Qualification	Number	Percentage
A.C.E	9	45%
Diploma in Education	7	35%
B.Ed	4	20%
M.Ed	0	0

The assessment of the highest professional qualification of teachers revealed that the majority of teachers - 14 (70%) - had a teaching diploma and lower while the minority - 6 (30%) - had a B.Ed and higher. Engelbrecht and Green (2007) point out that the diploma is the basic qualification for all South Africa grade R-12 teachers. It is also offered as an in-service programme for unqualified or under qualified teachers in basic education and seeks to strike a balance between professional insight, skills and subject knowledge. The teacher training programme is based on the democratic and learner-centred pedagogy that promotes active learning through understanding. According to the table, all the teachers under study have a basic qualification in teaching. Thus they can teach a variety of facts and skills to learners. They can manage learners in a general way to ensure that the school day runs smoothly and all students receive a quality education. In addition to finding out about teacher qualification, the study also questioned their specialisation.

4.3.2.2 Teachers' specialisation

The assessment of the teacher specialization in special educational needs revealed that none of the teachers in government schools has had training in the area. Thus they are not formally qualified enough to handle learners with special educational needs. This could be one of the reasons why there is this high level of under-achievement for learners with special educational needs in government schools. In support of the above

analysis, the teacher documents assessed concurred with the interview that there was no special educational needs component in their training. Educational courses prepared them to teach in the mainstream class without considering learners with special educational needs. Teacher specialisation statistics at the Grahamstown district education offices revealed that the district had insufficient number of teachers who had training in special education.

The study sought to establish the specialization areas of teachers, since it had a direct bearing on the implementation of the inclusion policy. The way one conducts lessons is dependent on the knowledge one possesses in that field. It becomes easier for an individual to teach a subject where one is an expert, not where one lacks knowledge and the skills. The teacher may lack confidence in a subject where he/she lacks knowledge. It has to be noted that quite a number of teacher respondents had trained in general education and with regards to the implementation of inclusive education, they might be considered as temporary or unqualified teachers with regards to the management of learners with special education needs and implementation of the policy on inclusive education, as they had no professional qualifications.

Hence the researcher sought to establish whether the 20 teachers in the studied area had specialised in special education. Table 4.5 presents the specialisation of teachers with respect to special need education.

Table 4-5: Teacher specialization (n= 20)

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
B.Ed (SNE)	1	5
ACE (SNE)	1	5
None	18	90
Total	20	100

Table 4.7 indicates that a B.Ed in Special Education was the highest qualification obtained for 5% (1). One teacher held an ACE in SNE. The majority of teachers who participated in the study do not hold a specialization in SNE. In an interview P1 reiterated:

Nothing beats a proper qualification and passion when it comes to the teaching of challenged learners.

All the teachers in the public schools had a professional qualification. They either have an ACE, a Diploma in Education or a Bachelor's degree in education. They have not received training in special education and this makes them professionally unqualified to manage learners with special education needs. These teachers had the subject content but some of them lacked the pedagogic skills, as they were not professionally qualified. The management of learners with special education needs is meant to be done by any teacher regardless of length of service in the profession. Hence under normal circumstances, it is expected that the more the years of experience in the service, the more one is well informed about inclusive education implementation issues.

4.3.2.3 Experience of teachers

The experience of teachers was sought, because it had a direct bearing on the implementation of the inclusive education policy and the teaching and learning of learners with learning barriers. Experienced teachers are conversant with the syllabus. They understand problems faced by students in their different subjects and topics. They know which topics require more time from the learners, and those topics which usually cause problems to students. Table 4.6 presents teaching experience of school teachers.

Table 4-6: Teaching experience (n = 20)

Experience	Number	Percentage
0-5 yrs	2	10%
6-10 yrs	3	15%
11-15 yrs	4	20%
16+ yrs	11	55%
Total	20	100%

Information revealed that the most experienced teachers had more than sixteen years of teaching experience. This is shown in table 4.6, which indicates that 55% (11) had sixteen and more years of teaching experience and 20% (4) had between eleven and fifteen years. Only 15% (3) had between six and ten years of teaching experience. However, it was established that there were only two teachers (10%) with less than five years of teaching experience. Information also reveals that there are young teachers in schools who have qualified in the past 5 years. The current teacher training programme includes aspects of inclusive education. It is hoped that these teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience can be used as resources as much as possible even though they are less experienced.

It was established that the special school had more experienced teachers who had been teaching for more than twenty years and they are more mature. There was also one teacher with more than twenty years of experience and was in the age range of fifty to fifty-nine. Generally, teachers in the schools under study were highly experienced and mature people. It emerged from the schools under study that public and special schools have a small number of young teachers as compared to the old and experienced ones.

So what the table in the previous page means is that most of the teachers in the study had experience in the teaching profession to articulate issues of inclusive education implementation. From the table the fact that the majority of teachers have more than 16years teaching experience could mean that they are aware of issues related to learning barriers and how to manage these.

This research is a mixed method research. The researcher also considered the teaching experience of the interviewed teachers in the 4 selected primary schools. This was done in order to obtain qualitative data. Thus, 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. The views of these teachers with regards to the implementation of inclusive education are given in the sections; delivery of lessons and teacher perceptions.

4.3.2.4 Perceived lack of skills and competence

Teachers indicated a lack of skills and competence to accommodate diversity in inclusive classrooms as one of their main challenges and, therefore, an area in which teacher support can be crucial. They indicated that they did not have the necessary skills and competencies to handle students experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms. They all believed that they were failing to meet the needs of all students, due to their limited skills. Tps3 said:

%do not feel I have the practical skills such as modifying or differentiating the curriculum, providing appropriate instruction or using suitable assessment strategies.+

Tps 2 confirmed:

%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, because my pre-service training did not focus on assisting students with diverse needs.+

Tps 1 concurred when he said:

%learners who have difficulty 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?"

Tps 4 said:

"I once had a learner who was identified as having special education needs. For a week, I could not get him to do anything in the classroom. He had major anger issues and would not complete assignments. When I prodded and encouraged, he merely responded that he was dumb and could not do the work. After talking with his mother and previous grade teacher, I learned that math was one of his favourite subjects, although he was performing poorly in that class as well. It was as though he had given up. My inability to meet his needs frustrated me as well, so was the realisation that it means I am not doing well whatever it is that I am doing and hence I have to change my teaching methods."

This finding was also confirmed by the researcher's observation during class visits for document analysis. The researcher observed that though teachers today have a number of support resources available in their schools and districts (such as the parents, school SMT, ILST, Special School, Special Education trained colleagues and the DST), unfortunately, many teachers simply fail to utilize those resources. In public school 1 for example, there is an Institutional Level Support Team, which has materials that teachers could use in their classes with learners. Any teacher in the school can visit the office of the ILST leader, but this does not happen often enough. On asking Tps 3 about the functions of the ILST at their school, she responded thus:

%% we have learners whom we feel they need help, we refer these cases to the head of the ILST.+

Tps 3's comment indicates that at this school, the structures of implementation at school level are in place. Also, the school is close to the special school. Meetings with specialist trained teachers can be arranged for passing on of expertise. It emerged from the interviews that teachers do not have staff development meetings with colleagues at the special school.

The researcher also observed that, when teaching a particular unit, teachers rely only on their textbook, they do not see if the ILST or other teachers in the school have any ideas to help their special needs learners better understand and process the information presented. The lesson plans for teachers 1-3 in the public schools do not have provisions for learners facing barriers in learning. The case is different for teachers in the special school. They have teacher-aides. This gives them ample time to meet with learners on a one-on-one basis.

In many cases, schools do not have the resources required to make sure that special education learners are always taught by those with relevant expertise (Rosner, 2003). As a result, it is important to make sure that regular teachers receive training that can help them work with these types of learners. Rosner (2003) argues that with the right combination of training, experience and support, a teacher with no previous specialized education in the area should be able to provide a supportive and positive learning environment for special needs learners within the confines of the general classroom.

One of the interview questions dealt with the teachers' training, that is, what they had learnt about the teaching of learners with special education needs and inclusion. Most teachers mentioned that they had not received any formal training on addressing students' needs in an inclusive classroom. Three of the four educators interviewed pointed out that the training they had received during initial teacher training had little or no bearing to the inclusion of learners with special needs. Tps 1 said:

"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."

Tps 3 remarked:

"During our training, this special education and inclusive education was not there. It's new, we are learning about it now. Initially, my understanding of special education needs was learners with disabilities. I am getting to understand that these learners we have been referring to as dull or incompetent are some of the learners with special educational needs."

These sentiments were echoed by P4 who said:

%We are fortunate – at this school the deputy principal has attended workshops on Inclusive education and has an ACE in Special Education. This makes implementation of inclusive education at this school a bit achievable.”

The researcher had the opportunity to talk to the deputy principal who said:

%My training in Special Education was an own initiative before I even knew the government would introduce inclusive education in ordinary schools. I have a child who used to struggle with his school work. I could see my child has reached a point of giving up. With help from psychologists I learnt that my child was a slow developer and nothing else. I was made to give an account of how my child grew from birth to his school going age. It is then that I learnt about much about child development and the interest for helping struggling learners grew, but I needed proper training in education.”

Tps 2, who happened to have four years of teaching experience, had a different view to Tps 1 and Tps 3. Although she is new to the teaching profession, she indicated that she had been taught during teacher training about inclusive education and special education needs when she said that:

%In all honesty, I have been taught about inclusive education and the types of learners classified as having special educational needs. The problem is, when you are being taught, it mostly theory work and little of practical work. Sometimes what you have is a mental image of these learners and you can handle them. The situation becomes different when you get faced with these learners on a one-on-one basis.”

On asking about their teaching experience, the majority of these teachers have trained sixteen ago or more. The teachers indicated that the in-service training they received in preparation for inclusive education was too brief, and mainly conducted in the afternoon after a long school day. Tps 4 said:

%How is it that in one hour you are expected to grasp some information that you are going to use over life? The most frustrating part is the training was conducted after school – at quarter-past two with no provision for refreshments. At such a time, I for one am like a learner and my listening and concentration stray a little,

so much so that an incentive in the form of food is most welcome to keep me in the group.”

The in-service training of teachers should be regarded as continuing education and it is an essential component of basic education. All the interviewed educators from public schools indicated that no in-service training workshops are conducted in schools with regard to learners facing barriers in learning. They all agreed that although it is a requirement that they meet the needs of all learners, they are not given assistance to kick-start such an initiative. Tps 1 pointed out that:

“I am not against the education of these learners, neither am I against the training workshops we receive. Rather, their timing is poor and also the people they send are not subject competent to a level that it feels as a time-wasting activity. After such kind of a training workshop, I would expect that participants are given maybe worksheets that we can use in our classrooms with learners with special education needs, but none of that is given to us. Instead we are encouraged to go to our various schools and start putting what we have learnt into practice.”

School record books such as the minute book confirmed that teachers have reported lack of specificity in the trainings and workshops they have attended. In school 2 and in the minute book was a comment:

“When there is training, teachers complain later that the training did not address the issue of learners with learning difficulties.”

In an interview with participating public school teachers, a concern was raised that the Ministry of Basic Education had ignored special education by not upgrading their knowledge and skills on the subject matter, but rather has focused on Mathematics and Science. Tps 1 said:

“On the media all you hear are government’s concerns with regards to the numbers of learners taking mathematics and science going down. Money is being pumped out to carryout research on how best the subjects can be taught. You know, it is so unfair that the plight of these learners who need be uplifted is just not recognized anymore. The only time you hear the concern being given to learners facing barriers to learning is in the month of September when Annual

National Assessment on literacy and numeracy are conducted. After the tests are written all is quiet again. I might appear as though I am talkative, but I am angry at what is going on.”

The purpose of this section was to find out whether teachers are receiving in-service training in special educational needs. The results are very clear as to what is happening with regards to workshops and other trainings in special educational needs. As revealed in the earlier section, teachers in this study did not have the necessary qualifications and experience to implement curriculum for learners with special educational needs in the primary schools that were covered by the study in the Grahamstown District. This requires that drastic steps be taken to make sure teachers are given the opportunity to upgrade themselves in the most needed skill and knowledge. In summary, it is quite clear that there is a need for in-service training from relevant authorities and policy makers to address the specific challenges that are faced by teachers of learners with special educational needs.

In addition, basic needs for effective teaching are not met. Tps 3 remarked,

“The lack of teaching resources and the irregular in-service training we receive from the District impacts negatively on effective teaching and learning of all learners, including those with special education needs in our schools.”

4.3.2.5 In-service and training programmes in schools

In-service Education and Training (INSET) is a term widely used to refer to planned activities practised both within and outside schools primarily to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance of professional staff in schools (Oldroyd and Hall, 1988).

In-service and training programmes are important aspects of any school development programme as they are meant to build capacity of the organization's personnel. They are mainly meant to increase the level of competence for teachers in syllabus interpretation, instructional delivery and classroom presentation. Failure of proper provision in this regard can negatively impact on the implementation of inclusive

education, especially where teachers do not have teacher training background on special educational needs learners and their management.

These programmes can either be conducted internally or externally, that is, by the school, or outside school agencies. In schools, they are conducted by the SMT in conjunction with the Institutional Level Support Team and outside agencies are district education officers and other interested stakeholders such as NGOs. They are meant to improve teachers' instructional competence. In South Africa, INSET is mainly the responsibility of the deputy principal and is responsible for maintaining and improving academics, strategic planning for all aspects of curriculum delivery, skills development and in-service training for teachers, and implementation of inclusive education at the school. The external INSET programmes fall under the jurisdiction of the District Support Team. This study sought to establish which INSET programmes are in place in schools to build teacher capacity and for professional development.

It was enquired of the principals and ILST whether they conducted in-service training within their institutions. Information solicited from principals and ILST revealed that generally all schools have in-service training programmes within their institutions. All four management respondents said their schools had INSET programmes for teacher development. They all indicated that they conducted staff development to improve teachers' instructional skills. Management respondents indicated that they used phases (Foundation, Intermediate and Senior) during staff development and class supervision was done by HODs.

P4 said:

"As school management we do not conduct witch hunts. The HoD meets with the teacher before supervision. This is so that the teacher is aware of the visit. During this meeting, things such as date of observation, time of lesson and the expectations of the supervisor (which are policy guided) are discussed and an agreement is entered into in writing."

This was supported by ILST 2 member in an interview with the researcher. She commented:

“These teachers are given supervision, although in my view they lack frequency and consistent. We plan together as a department (phases-foundation, intermediate and senior). We also have staff development workshops twice a term where we assist each other as teachers in our department.”

P1 said:

“In my school, professional development programmes are based on curricular and instructional strategies that have a high probability of affecting student learning and, just as important, students’ ability to learn. In other words they (professional development programmes) are needs based and although we do have a school calendar which has some of these training sessions written down, some are not written down. When an urgent need arises we do not normally wait for the planned meeting. For example, we have had issues of lack of discipline among learners from a number of teachers. As the head of the institution in consultation with the school management committee, we felt there was a need for all teachers to meet and discuss over this issue before it gets out of hand. Thus a meeting was held where we brainstormed on how best this issue could be addressed.”

According to P3, besides the general school meetings, phase heads of department meet with respective teachers in the department and they agree on what they want to staff develop each other on. In public school 3, the HoD for the foundation phase had this to say:

“In our department we have a steering committee comprised of the chairperson (I), a secretary and everyone is a curriculum specialist. We identify an area of concern and staff-develop each other. We hold our meetings twice a term. At the beginning of each term, we discuss on results for the previous term and how we can improve them. Issues of learner background have been raised from time to time and once or twice I have personally driven to a child’s home because parents do not respond when you invite them to school.”

The researcher had an interest in finding out the most common type of INSET programmes in the schools. It was established from interviews with teachers from public and special schools that staff meetings were the most common forms of teacher

development programmes conducted in the schools, while staff development workshops, and supervisions were conducted infrequently or when need arose. These were mainly conducted by heads of departments and departmental committees. In the departmental committee is the HoD, a senior teacher in that phase and the deputy principal is the overseer. This was also confirmed by one teacher (Tps 3), who said:

"We sometimes have staff development workshops where we assist each other as a department on issues such as planning and teaching if one of us needs help in the teaching of a particular topic."

The issue of staff meetings was even evident in the various schools' minute books. At public school 2, each teacher has an own notebook where they record minutes from meetings held and also they write down any announcements that may be given on a day-to-day basis. Teachers were asked about the regularity of staff development workshops within their schools. Teachers revealed that most staff development programmes in schools are conducted as need arises. It was also revealed that staff meetings were sometimes conducted at the beginning of the term and at the end of each term. Tps 1 said:

"Sometimes we also have beginning of term and end of term staff meetings to discuss school issues and how we can improve students' performance."

Tps 6 gave a different view with regards to what happens in the special school when she said:

"We hold meetings regularly. At least I can say we meet every month. Our meetings look at different things. Apart from the curriculum issues, as you might be aware, we run a school nutrition programme; we also have learners who require the services of specialists such as the physiotherapist, the nurse and a speech therapist. So these are some of the issues we discuss on more often than not. We have to make a follow up of learners' progress in these fields."

Tps 5, who happens to be a teacher aide at the special school, confirmed that meetings and workshops are held at the school regularly:

"I'm trained as a general education teacher, but the love I have for challenged learners has driven me to be at this school. I consider myself fortunate working

here. I am gaining more than I would have during teacher training. We hold staff development workshops based on the needs of our learners. I have attended a woodwork workshop organized by the school and I can tell you that given the opportunity, I can assist in teaching the subject both practical and theory.+

The researcher had the opportunity to see the school's minute book. There is evidence that meetings are held on a regular basis. These meetings last between one hour and two hours. The researcher also noticed that the staff took turns to lead the meeting although the chairperson is always the school principal. In the staffroom at public school 2, the researcher saw a poster written and pinned to the notice board. It was headed with the acronym REACT. It read thus, "Learning with understanding involves five processes known collectively as the REACT strategies.

~ Relating

Learning in the context of life experience. The process of relating abstract concepts to familiar ideas and situations utilizes the potential of the dynamic (as opposed to static) memory systems of our brains.

~ Experiencing

Learning in the context of exploration, discovery, and invention. Through experience students find meaning in learning abstract concepts. Recognition of the need to know encourages the brain to function at higher cognitive levels.

~ Applying

Applying concepts and information in useful contexts. Real-world applications encountered through mentorships, apprenticeships, or other work-based experiences provide contexts in which the usefulness of abstract concepts becomes evident.

~ Cooperating

Learning in the context of sharing, responding, and communicating with other learners. The brain is social. Learning occurs at much higher cognitive levels when learners interact.

~ Transferring

Learning in the context of existing knowledge. That is, using and building upon prior learning and experience. Learners are able to process new information when they can transfer what they already know to unfamiliar situations and problems.+

P2, who has a qualification in Special Education, commented:

"The REACT strategies are not just about how students learn; they are about teachers as well. For example, when professional development provides opportunities for participants to interact or serve as peer resources, what the participants learn in the professional development transfers to behaviours that are observable in the classroom. This is one of our goals."

Regarding assistance that teachers get from their ILST to develop and enable them to work with learners with barriers, a limited number of ways of assistance was mentioned. Most teachers cited moral support, and encouragement from the school management to go for further training in the field.

However, Tps1 said:

"I have never received any support from the school and district in terms of skills and training. Maybe it is because I am new at this school and such training could have been provided before I joined the school."

Tps2 aired the same sentiments as Tps1 when he said:

"There is no assistance given by the school in terms of skills development and workshops. Sometimes the school administration is not supportive when it comes to the education of learners with special education needs."

P4 said:

"We are encountering counter-productive tendencies sometimes as a result of the involvement of teacher unions. The department calls for meetings and unions discourage members from attending. So, in my view I cannot really say support from the employer is lacking. We are not doing and injustice to the employer in any way, but this non-cooperation impact negatively on service delivery and our learners get caught up in the cross-fire. It is even worse for this learner with special educational needs."

Information from public and special schools reveals that the DST conducts very few workshops to improve teachers' capacity. All respondents concurred with this. Tps1 remarked:

"The district or province education personnel do not give us assistance at all."

This view was shared by one ILST member who said:

"We do not have adequate support with regards to learners with barriers from the DST. This year we have had only one workshop that was as a follow-up to our concerns with some learners. It was only there for an hour at most. I was somnolent with boredom as the 'facilitator' droned on monotonously, reading from a textbook. This part of the workshop was designed to enable us teach learners with reading problems."

However, when this workshop was held, some teachers found it beneficial as they said it sharpened their various skills and made them better at executing their duties. Tps2, who attended the same workshop, stated:

"I learnt something during the reading presentation. Every now and again, when the room was too hot, when attention was flagging, we would divert to a game or energiser or simple rhymes, dance, song, to arouse the group, to have a laugh, and then to get cracking on with the work. I suppose that what the facilitator wanted us to learn was to respond to the needs of the class, to make a connection, to 'read' the needs of the diverse learners. The aim was certainly not to 'play', but to use play to revitalise the learners, overcome tiredness and achieve the necessary tasks.+"

Tps 1 reiterated that the workshop was good.

"The workshop on inclusive education was a good idea and better options were presented in order to implement inclusive education well. Initially I had received mixed messages. Some people said learners with disabilities will learn in the same class as those without and each class operates as a resource centre. Some said in addition to teaching our learners in the normal classes we should also provide support as the child's needs call for. Surely you cannot do everything. However after this workshop, I am clear."

Tps 3 reported that she was more confused now as she did not know what really a learning barrier is because the DST said some of the learners they had identified had no problems. She said:

What I can tell you is that to me, the explanations on special education needs are extremely confusing and complicated. I just complied with the instructions from the principal to attend the workshop. I must say that I was and still confused of this inclusive education and I don't pay any attention what is being said anymore. We are overloaded already. I am sorry if you find my response disappointing but I think it is important to be honest."

Lack of out-of-school INSET programmes at district level was confirmed by DST1 in an interview:

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."

DST 2 added:

Our first workshop with the principals was on unpacking the inclusive education policy. We went through the policy document with them and also discussed the structures of implementation. This workshop lasted a day. The second workshop invited leaders 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 special educational needs. We showed video clips of different case studies with regards to special educational needs. In groups teachers were asked to create an own situation that depicts a learner with special educational needs. This was not so bad.+

DST3 remarked:

These workshops were conducted three years ago. Since then we are making follow up visits to see how schools and teachers in particular are implementing inclusive education. This we do in most cases where schools invite us and once in a while the visits are our own initiative.+

Although there is an effort by the DST to render support in the form of skills training, the majority of principals and ILST members indicated that the support they got from DSTs was inadequate. DST2 aired the same sentiments when he commented:

“We have not conducted workshops in a while because of shortage of resources. However, schools organize their own staff development programmes within their schools. They have their internal mechanism.”

4.4 Delivery of the curriculum

4.4.1 Teaching strategies

The training and qualification of a teacher may determine his/her instructional delivery strategies or teaching methods. These can also be determined by the calibre of students one has as well as the discipline one is teaching. However, in some situations the choice of methods may also depend on the experience of the teacher and on what he/she wants to achieve.

It is the task of the teacher to identify the particular technique which he/she considers as appropriate to the instructional situation and which will best contribute to the attainment of educational goals. Hence, the researcher sought to establish teachers’ strategies and teaching methods, since they are an important component of the implementation of inclusive education. It is these methods which determine students’ successful interaction with the taught curriculum. Table 4.7 shows teaching strategies used by teachers in conducting their lessons in inclusive classes.

Table 4-7: Strategies regularly used by teachers in the classrooms

Strategies	Number of Teachers
Visuals	20
Peer tutoring	11
Co-operative learning	10
Role playing	4
Guest speakers	0
Field trips	15
Inviting parents to visit and participate in classroom activities	13

A major purpose of this study was to identify and assess the effectiveness of strategies being employed by primary school teachers to meet the needs of their diverse learners. The use of visuals, such as pictures and teaching aids, was identified as the most effective strategy by the participants in this study. Peer tutoring (which pairs two students of differing abilities and backgrounds together) and co-operative learning (where students are put in heterogeneous groups of five or six to complete an assigned task) were also rated as moderately effective by teachers in this study.

The use of role playing was identified as a strategy rarely used by the participants in their diverse classrooms. This strategy, in addition to the use of guest speakers which participants reported as an ineffective strategy, is an example of simulated experiences and can help students find solutions to real life problems. It is observed that one of the basic goals of teaching is to promote learning through the use of good teaching strategies and methods. In this respect, teaching strategies or methods and the classroom activities involved are chosen for their capacity to bring about learning gains. However, these can be affected by class size.

Before interviews, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the actual teaching by the teachers.

Observations revealed that; teaching skills, strategies used and the adaptation of content varies with different teachers. The researcher observed that teachers in the government ordinary schools did not provide enough explicit instruction to build background and/ or tap prior knowledge. Although lessons provided an opportunity for active learning, there was not much variety for learner engagement. There were instances when variety in the use of teaching strategies was applied. The researcher particularly observed that; where learners appeared to be lost, the teacher would try another teaching strategy to try and reach out to the learners. It was very difficult to establish if there was ongoing assessment. Tps 3 said to the learners:

“Remember how we worked yesterday’s sums. Can we continue practising that method with the five sums I have put on the board.”

Learners were not given a recall session to establish whether or not they had understood yesterday’s method. Although the 6 (100%) teachers demonstrated mastery of content and pedagogy, 1 (16.6%) teacher showed that she could deliver it explicitly to the learners. The researcher also observed that the work given to the learners did not consider the various levels of operation where learners were. The work was the same for everyone and so was the level of difficulty. Also, learners were given more writing than individual thinking and group discussion time.

All the teachers 100% (6) were seen to move from group to group as learners were working. All the visited classrooms have an appearance which promotes learning. The researcher observed that most of the work on display is one which had been covered. Also, not only do teachers display teaching and learning material such as charts, they also display learners’ work. Learners are made to seat in homogeneous groups and every group member is a leader in their own area. For example one learner would be responsible for a particular subject while there is someone who sees about the tidiness of the group. Teachers were trying to accommodate every learner they could at a given time. The researcher would say the classroom climate was not so bad. One school principal (P1) from a special school confirmed that she was satisfied with the teaching conducted at her school.

4.4.2 Large classes

According to the Ministry’s requirement, the average class size for primary school education should be forty students as cited by DST2. However, the researcher observed that in public schools under study, classes had over-enrolled; with about fifty-five to sixty students in the foundation phase, while there are fifty students on average at intermediate and senior phase levels. In the special school there were fewer than fifteen students in a class. Documents from the district show that the teacher-pupil ratio

in special school is determined by the nature of barrier students have, hence the small number of students in a class.

Class size is an important factor in the implementation of inclusive education as it determines the sharing of equipment and it has an effect on the teacher's management skills and teaching methods. The class size can have a bearing on the strategies used by teachers on instructional delivery as well as on teacher effectiveness. A big class can sometimes be difficult for the young and inexperienced teachers to manage. All the interviewed teachers indicated that the class size had an effect on instructional delivery. Accordingly, this was a disadvantage as too many learners are difficult to manage and resources become inadequate. Tps2 said:

%n my assessment for learning, to be honest I cannot do a thorough job. It is tiresome to manage the volume of marking. I have fifty-one learners in my class. Rarely do I get one-on-one contact with my learners. Providing them with the necessary assistance is not normally achieved. I have noticed that some learners do not read the comments you give in their books. Thank God I have an effective HoD. She is very thorough during moderation, so in the event that an error in marking has been committed due to high stress levels, it is identified and I can rectify.+

Tps3 remarked:

“It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that teaching a large class is a very different set of challenges than we typically face in our other classes. During the first three weeks I had difficulty in learning names, taking attendance, getting learners to participate in class, and getting learners to do given tasks in a timely manner. I teach grades 7 and 8 in mathematics, natural science and social sciences. Each of the classes has an average of 49 learners comprised of learners with different education needs on a daily basis.”

Tps1 had a different view when she commented:

At another level, large classes make interesting assignment like debates and simulations more challenging.”

It emerged that all government schools had big class sizes. They had about fifty to sixty students in the classes. The special school had small class sizes. In some cases the ratio was 1:7 or 1:12. These classes were manageable and learners were able to share the meagre resources.

To me, a smaller class size does not necessarily equate with better learning. It is all about the type of learners you have and their educational needs. In my class, I have a learner who bullies others. I have tried to make him the class representative but it looks as if I have given him more powers to bully others when in actual fact I thought a post of responsibility would calm him. The boy is disruptive.” (Tps 5)

The teachers in government schools mentioned that a large number of learners in the classroom made it difficult for them to adequately teach in inclusive classrooms. Evidence from questionnaires indicates that of the 20 teachers who participated in the study, 9 teachers have said they have 6-10 learners experiencing barriers in learning in their classes, while 8 teachers indicated that they had 0-5 learners experiencing barriers in learning. Only 3 teachers indicated that they had 3+ learners experiencing barriers in learning. They indicated that their department heads expected them to complete a specified a volume of work within a given time period while simultaneously assisting students who are experiencing barriers to learning. As a result, they would experience difficulties when they want to give attention to learners whom they considered slow in learning while managing their classrooms.

Tps 1 had this to say:

Every learner has a unique profile of abilities, strengths, learning styles, and previous experience. Learner abilities and learning styles drive content, process, and product, forcing me to change my teaching style and the way I manage my classroom. As a result, I am challenged to align curriculum content and activities

to meet the individual needs of a variety of diverse learners in my classroom. I have difficulties in varying activities, in doing group work, in enhancing critical thinking and writing skills.”

In the words of Tps 4:

%dhave 54 learners in this class. It is a grade 4 class, where transition is at its rife. Four of these learners have learning difficulties, one has serious behaviour issues, thirteen are repeating the grade from last year, seven are below grade level, two arrive late to class on a regular basis, and one is not attending class at all due to instability in his home life. In all honesty, how does one manage to meet every learner’s needs on a daily basis? This large class limits the amount of feedback I can provide to learners. It is not surprising that quite a number of learners get left behind and cannot be promoted to the next grade at the end of the year. Actively engaging learners in this class is not easy.+

4.4.3 Assessment methods used by teachers

Assessment for learning is the process of gauging learnersq understanding of key learning knowledge outcomes in order to modify teaching strategies, content and teaching aids. This also involves determining where learners need to go and how best to get there. Assessment for Learning is a significant element in successful teaching and learning of teaching with all pupils, including those with SEN.

Information was solicited from teachers on the assessment methods they used with learners who have barriers. Student assessment is an important factor in the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Table 4.8 presents a summary of assessment methods used by teachers.

Table 4-8: Assessment methods used with SEN learners

Assessment method	Number of teachers	Percentage
Observation	20	100
Questioning	20	100
Portfolios	13	65
Diaries	7	35
Dialogue	20	100
Self-reflection	0	0

It emerged that teachers carried out some assessment with learners with SEN in their classes. Table 4.10 shows that all the teacher respondents 100% used observation, questioning and dialogue; 65% (13) of the teacher respondents use portfolios in addition to the three methods identified above, while 35% (7) of the teacher respondents used diaries as well and none of the teacher respondents used self-reflection with learners. The ILST and DST reiterated during interviews that ongoing assessment during the teaching and learning process is important.

The view of DST2 confirmed the importance of assessment for learning when she stated that:

“All children have needs, some children have special needs. What is good for SEN is good work for all pupils. The better the quality of education, the more pupils with SEN can be included.”

They all (DST) added that methods and tools of assessment for other learners who do not have barriers can be used with pupils with SEN, providing that they are modified and adjusted to meet the needs of the individual pupil:

“The tools are the same but they must be adjusted to the cognitive level, social abilities (more or less concrete, little steps) of the pupils.”

All four members of the DST agreed that active approaches such as problem solving, that is, actively engaging pupils in teaching and learning processes, were considered as crucial strategies to be used in conjunction with assessment for learning:

“Such pedagogy is very important; we need to encourage this with our pupils with SEN. They can or have had decisions taken away/made for them with regard to individual progress/assessment. Where possible and appropriate, pupils should be involved.”

It was established from all 6 interviewed teacher respondents that students are assessed continuously during the teaching and learning process. Tps1 said :

“Observation is essential as very often it is the only way to establish pupils’ responses. It is very important for SEN pupils where written work and speech aren’t always possible and responses to different stimuli – a person, sound, smell, and environment – can be observed.”

Tps 5 added:

“Teachers needed to be given more guidance by specialists in order to improve their observation techniques. What I am saying is that teachers should have more guidance given by the specialists/experts on how and what to observe in different cases. Also, observation should be more structured and teachers should have more time to reflect on this.”

Concerning the use of portfolios with SEN learners Tps 3 said:

“A portfolio is a good way to find the best way of learning. It is an empowering tool.”

P1 concurred that portfolios can aid dialogue with pupils, supporting their self-assessment when she said:

“It is a good reflective method for all learners to own. Pupils can see their progression and be proud. A portfolio enhances creative self-reflective competencies on the part of the child.”

However, practically this was difficult to confirm as the researcher never found any portfolios for learners in schools. This was noticed in the four public schools visited. Only the teachers' record sheets have marks, but no evidence of the learners' work.

It was established from all interviewed teacher respondents that questioning was one of the most important tools on hand to communicate with a learner with special educational needs, but the function and the type of question could be different.

Concerning the use of questions as an assessment method, ILST 3 commented:

“If the questions are framed in a way that allows learners to have enough time to answer- the ‘wait time’ and if different stimuli to support questions (e.g. visual versus verbal stimuli) and ways of responding (e.g. eye contact) are considered, then they are useful.”

DST 2 and 3 pointed out that the use of dialogue in assessment is important and necessary with learners with SEN:

“Dialogue is valid where communication is based on verbal responses, but this is not always possible.”

However, they warned that in such circumstances, the teacher must be able to implement changes to the means and tools for communication.

4.5 Monitoring and support systems

Monitoring is the continuous process of ensuring that the implementation of the plan is proceeding smoothly. Curriculum designers need to provide the necessary support for their recommended programmes or programme modifications to facilitate their fast and smooth implementation. Education officers carry out this role of monitoring the implementation of curriculum in schools through supervisory duties. Their supervisory activities include a formative evaluation component, since they organize in-service

courses that update and extend the knowledge and skills of school heads and teachers. There is a need for constant visits to schools by the district personnel so that they have full knowledge of what is taking place in schools.

District Support Teams (DST) have a role to monitor how curriculum is being implemented in schools and render other relevant services for teacher growth. The schools are visited on equal terms, whether private or government. They are simply selected randomly. The research sought information on the visits by the DST. This had a bearing on the implementation process of inclusive education.

4.5.1 School visits by the DST

It emerged from information that there is inadequate visitation of schools by the DST. Schools are visited less often. It was established that some schools have been visited once while for others no visit had yet been made this year. Inadequate school visits were attributed to financial cost and lack of transport by the district personnel as they relied on Provincial transport. DST 1 said:

%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 year. Well, earlier in the year 2012 we could have made as many visits to schools, the car we usually use went to service at the end of 2011, and has not yet been returned. We could not make visitations to the schools.+

The issue of finance was lamented by DST 4:

%Sometimes I have offered my car with the hope that I will be reimbursed my fuel money, [but] not only did this take long to happen, I also realized that I am incurring wear and tear costs. Some of the schools we visit are in the rural areas and the roads are bad.+

It is also alleged that these school visits are sometimes conducted only for administrative purposes. The ILST at school 2 revealed that when the visits are

conducted with teachers, they are found to be beneficial. An ILST member from school 2 said:

"The DST was here in March this year. They led us through the identification process of what learning barriers are and how we can establish a learner has special education needs using a DVD which they later left in the school for use as reference material. I am certain I can make a preliminary identification of a learner with special education needs."

The school's log book confirmed this visit. The study also revealed that the DST gave the ILST and teachers some DVDs on identification of different barriers. This move by the DST was in line with the recommendations of the policy on inclusive education . Education White Paper 6 . Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001). The DST provides support to all educators, learners and the system as a whole. It (DST) also assists educators in creating greater flexibility in teaching methods and assessment of learning. The study revealed that although the DST has made this effort to develop teachers, it was not enough. Tps 6 revealed:

"Only the DST could assist in content adaptation; this practice of inclusive education would not be such a daunting task. Imagine, it's challenging for me, yet I have a qualification in Special Education. What of my counterpart who qualified with a general teaching qualification?+

An interview with the DST further confirmed that the identification of learners with SEN in some schools is encouraging. They attribute this to the use of DVDs by those few teachers. DST 3 said:

"Well, the blame game is what we have carried with us over time. If someone does not do their part, there is pushing the blame on someone. I can refer you to school, they are really following the guidelines as shown in the DVDs."

DST 1 concurred:

%identified learners really are needy, no question about it. You can see that it's not a question of performance alone that has been considered, but factors such as curriculum, social environment and language to mention a few have been considered.+

The researcher had the opportunity to see two learners' profile forms. This form is completed by the class teacher with support from the ILST and in consultation with parents or caregivers, DST and Health Professionals.

4.5.2 Class visits by ILST

The role of the deputy principal of a school and the ILST is that of getting things done effectively through class teachers. Class visits are mainly for developmental purposes and feedback. The deputy principal has to observe the instructional delivery by the teacher, check both students and teacher records during class visits, as well as give feedback. The staff will work well if they see that the administration take note of their work and constantly reinforces them according to their performance. Also, the staff will work well if they are properly briefed on what is expected of them as well as on changes taking place. Because educational needs are relative to the learning contexts that pupils experience, and to the attitudes and expectations of others, curricular and organizational factors contribute to the extent to which children experience difficulties at school. Most learning problems arise from a complex interaction among variables such as curriculum content, learners' prior knowledge and experience, learners' cognitive ability and task approach strategies. The teachers' instructional methods, complexity of teachers' language, suitability of resource materials, learners' confidence and expectation of success, and the perceived relevance or value of the learning task also give rise to learning problems.

Hence, it was important for the researcher to seek the views of the ILST on how often they visited classes. Class visits can be as important as conducting staff development workshops. The researcher solicited information about the regularity of class visits by the deputy principal of a school and the ILST, as it contributes towards teacher

improvement through feedback and reflection, which are important components of how people learn. Information revealed that the ILST rarely carried out class visits.

Evidence from interviewed teachers revealed that ILST less frequently made class visits. Tps3 commented:

“We have school supervision by the heads of departments. They make class visits and also do book inspections as well as records inspections. These inspections are done during such time when we complete IQMS forms. The supervisions are not beneficial, as they do not assist us to see our areas of weakness, such as handling learners with barriers so that we can correct ourselves.”

Tps 5 reported otherwise when she expressed her views:

“We have supervision from the deputy principal, who is also the head of the ILST as well as from school directors. In this school, you are also observed teaching by the management as part of an interview before you are offered a place.”

The assistance of teachers through supervision by the school management was confirmed by Tps 6 as she concurred with her school colleague:

“The school assists us through class visits and book inspections. From time to time the school management will come and observe while we teach. They also assist on content adaptation.”

Information solicited from respondents reveals that both students and teachers in the special school benefited from class visits and book inspections conducted by the management team.

According to the solicited information, there is inadequate supervision of schools from the district offices. It emerged that most schools are visited only after they raise an issue that require the intervention of the DST. Information also revealed that in some cases,

schools inspection were only conducted on administrative issues and neglected the core business of the school, which is teaching.

4.6 Teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of learners with SEN

Teachers were asked if they found working with learners with special education needs impacting on their ability to meet their classroom goal and the results are given in table 4.9 below:

Table 4-9 : Teaching learners with special education needs impacts on meeting goals (n = 20)

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	16	80
No	3	15
No indication	1	5

Information solicited from respondents through questionnaires reveals that 16 (80%) of the teachers have found working with learners with special education needs impacting on their ability to meet classroom goals. Three teachers (15%) have indicated that these learners presence has had no impact on their ability to meet classroom goals. One teacher said neither yes nor no. The general feeling of these educators was that it was time-consuming having these learners in class.

This was substantiated by four of the interviewed teachers (67%), who reported that they felt negative towards the implementation of inclusive education in general and having these learners in their classrooms in particular. These teachers were from public schools. Tps 1 said:

%prefer that the department should introduce special classes and they be taught by specially trained teachers. I do not see them learning quite effectively in the normal classroom."

Tps 2 commented:

“It doesn’t make it easy to have them mixed with other capable learners, because even other learners can identify them. So in my opinion, there should be a contingency plan for these learners.”

Tps 3 concurred with Tps 1 and Tps 2 when she said:

“I am not quite comfortable having learners with special education needs in my class. They take a longer time to grasp concepts; as a result I cannot meet some of my targets. The nature of demands by our employers is such that one has to rush through the work and in the year so that the syllabus is covered by end of the year ... It is not a good idea to teach challenged children in regular classes. Actually, it is time-consuming.”

On the other hand, 33% (2) of teachers indicated that the presence of these learners in their classrooms had not impacted on their ability to meet classroom goals. It emerged that these two teachers were from the special school.

“Every child has a right to education. If these learners are separated, we are going back to education before 1994, where for these learners the medical model was used to meet their needs. I have grouped my learners heterogeneously: they learn from friends and friends learn from them. It is not that if a learner is said to have special education needs they know nothing of their own.” (Tps 5).

Tps 6 pointed out:

“I have not found any difficulties working with these learners. Here at this school, we also have the added advantage that we have teacher aides. So much of the work we share.”

It has to be noted that some of these teachers in the public schools were new in the schools.

The four interviewed educators from public schools claimed that when they ventured into the teaching profession, they did not anticipate meeting such learners in the classrooms, as their training did not encompass management of special education

needs. As such, they considered themselves inadequately trained to teach such children. They said that they experienced a feeling of incompetence when they implemented inclusive education in their classes.

Tps 1 emphasized the importance of training for teachers:

“Teachers should be retrained, because each and every day changes are taking place – [for instance] maybe one can talk about global warming in education. Curriculum changes are inevitable but little work-shopping on these changes is done.”

She added:

“Teacher training takes three to four years but now I am required to know all about inclusive education during a one-day workshop. I did not get information from the workshop that I attended.”

Asked on how then she manages, she reported that,

“I use my own experience as a parent as to what to do to such learners. Sometimes I feel like I am an educator that cannot teach. It’s like I cannot do my job well, which is not true, but I am not well trained. As a result, I spend most of my time on these children and end up not being able to finish the syllabus.”

For Tps 2, the feeling of incompetence was evident from what she said:

“I still need more training. I have attended a three-day workshop on inclusive education but it was not enough. If it had been a week I still believe it would not have been enough. 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, which if they can do this workshop again, oh! It will be better.”

This sentiment of incompetence was also echoed in the words of Tps3 when she said that,

“Because we are not receiving enough support from the department of education, I am doing it for its sake [implementing inclusive education] ... I did not get enough information from the workshop that I attended, but I have to help these learners so sometimes I ask colleagues or use my many years of experience as a teacher.”

Although the four respondents from the public schools are reportedly implementing inclusive strategies such as curriculum adaptation and multi-level teaching, they did not lay claim to effective inclusive strategies. Tps4 said:

“This does not go well with me. In my class I have noticed two learners who are experiencing problems with their writing. As much as this is so, I do not know what exactly the learners’ barriers are. I do not know or understand why they cannot write.”

The questionnaire responses gave the same impression. The teachers were asked to indicate if they believed they were skilled enough to implement the inclusion policy by rating themselves using a score of 0- 5, where 0 represents %not skilled+ and 5 represents %very skilled.+ Table 4.10 indicates teachersqskill level with regards to the implementation of the inclusion policy.

Table 4-10: Teachers’ skill level with regards to the implementation of the inclusion policy

Rating	Number of teachers	Percentage
0(not skilled)	7	35
1	1	5
2	5	25
3	4	20
4	1	5
5(very skilled)	2	10

As the data in table 4.12 display, 65% (35% + 5% + 25%) of the teachers rated themselves as not skilled and slightly skilled. Only 35% rated themselves as satisfied with their skill levels. Data from the table reveals that the highest numbers of questionnaire respondents 35% (7) are teachers who have indicated that they are not skilled, with a rating of 0. The 65% is of major concern because the implementation of a policy such as inclusion depends heavily in part on the teachers' teaching skills.

The responses of the primary school teachers in a questionnaire to six questions assessing their attitudes and beliefs in working with learners with special education needs are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4-11: Beliefs and attitudes of teachers

Beliefs/Attitudes	Number of Teachers
Fascinated to learn about special education needs	17
Altering teaching strategies to accommodate learners with special education needs	20
Desire additional training in learning how to teach learners with special education needs	20
Found that working with learners with special education needs has impacted with my ability to meet classroom goals	18
I believe I am knowledgeable about the background and special education needs of my learners	13
I have worked with the parents of my learners	4

The results indicate that the teachers are very keen to learn about special education needs (N = 17), but they are only moderately knowledgeable about the background and special education needs of their students (N= 13). Teachers strongly believe they have had to alter their teaching strategies to accommodate learners with special education needs (N = 20), but that working with learners with special education needs has greatly impacted their ability to meet classroom goals (N=18). There was considerable agreement that they need and want additional training in learning how to teach learners with special education needs (N = 20). Finally, teachers indicated that they had relatively little contact with the parents of their diverse students, as only 4 teachers indicated that they worked with the parents of their students, while 16 indicated that they did not.

With regards to parental support, the interviews gave the same impression. Teachers bemoaned the lack of parental involvement in the education of their children. For teachers, the lack of parental support was considered a recurring problem. This problem increases and becomes a significant stressor for educators. Educators were most vocal in their criticism of parents. Tps 2 remarked:

“Parents are letting us down big time. They do not realize how much we have at hand. Our roles as teachers are very stressful due to lack of parenting and lack of parental responsibility to seek professional support such as speech therapists as supplementary to the teacher’s service.”

Tsp 1 mentioned that:

“Parents who lack education often do not realize the extent of the curriculum, the amount that their child has to learn and what should be achieved.”

Lack of responsibility and inadequate parenting skills negatively affected the progress of the learner. Factors pertaining to parenting problems normally include family breakdown, single parents and working mothers, delegation of responsibility to aftercare facilities, lack of education and resources of parents, and differing values caused by the generation gap (DoE, 2001).

From an educational perspective, some working parents; single parents because of divorce, death or because they were never a couple, may unavoidably have their children at risk. This is because the time for engagement, bonding and educational support is reduced and very often emotional factors emerge for children caught up in the dynamics of broken homes. For instance Tps4 gave the following comments:

%Parents do not have enough knowledge of special education needs. A mention that, as a teacher, I see a need in the child for some extra help if the child is to do better in school would be interpreted as a label. Sometimes I send a note to the parent explaining the plight 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."

Concerning parents from a problematic socio-economic background, Tps3 said:

"Some homes are not conducive for learning, parents are alcoholics. There are a lot of bad habits done in these environments and the children should not be on the receiving end of not having their rights of being cared for. The support of school, home and the department of education in combination are necessary for the child to have less worry and concentrate on his or her studies."

Tsp 1 said:

%Parents who lack education often do not realize the amount of damage they do to their child as a result of their non-co-operation in his/ her studies. They do not realize the amount that their children have to learn and what should be achieved, as they themselves have not experienced school as their child is experiencing it in present day."

Tps 6 said:

"They came from an era where their own education was characterized by less structure. It now rests upon us as teachers to teach children what parents were

failing to do. Parents do not understand that inclusion is very difficult for the teachers and part of the problem is, they have shifted their responsibility of looking after their children onto educators whereas it should be a joint responsibility or partnership of teacher and parent.”

Tps 5 said:

“This means that teachers need to be prepared emotionally and otherwise for inclusive education to be achieved.”

An interview with P2 revealed that parents were not able to monitor their children’s work.

“I have had teachers bring reports to me on the non-co-operation of parents on their children’s education. Children are given homework and they come the next day with the work not done. Upon asking one learner, he reported that- kange ndimve kakuhle utishala ekufundiseni, nookandzikucacisela umakazi wam ukuze naye akwazi ukundinceda (I did not quite get the teacher’s explanation as he was teaching, so it became very difficult when my aunt asked me to explain so that she could find a way of helping me).”

Above all, most of the parents are not educated. The observation by the respondent is important, as students need parental guidance in order for them to succeed in their school work. Such issues could have a negative impact on the implementation of inclusive education.

Teachers had a section in their portfolios where they write about meetings they hold with parents. The entries include date of meeting, purpose of meeting, resolutions and parent signature. In three of the six teacher documents analysed, nothing was recorded in this section while in one teacher’s portfolio, only two entries were made since beginning of the year. The other two teachers had constant records which reflected a concern for the child’s education from the partnership of parent and teacher. There were follow-up reports from the parents and teachers as to the child’s progress after the discussion.

The matter of meeting the needs of all learners including those with special education needs was of concern to all the teachers interviewed. In the questionnaire teachers were asked how they felt about the inclusion of learners with special education needs in classes overall. The majority of the respondents indicated that such inclusion does not make teaching and learning conditions easy; rather, there should be an arrangement or plan to have an educator with a qualification in special education in each school, so that these learners can be catered for under one roof and they get the individual attention they need. Learning is not very effective in the mainstream.

4.7 Summary

The purpose of the research was to assess the way in which teachers implemented the inclusion policy. The implementation of the inclusion policy seems to have many challenges. The data gathered revealed that although teachers are professionally qualified, they are not qualified enough to teach inclusive classes. In other words, they were not trained in preparation for the implementation of inclusion policy. Only those teachers in the special school were trained in special education. This can have a negative impact on the implementation of the inclusion policy in public schools. It was also revealed that parental involvement is minimal. Parents need to take part in the education of their child, consult with teachers so that teachers get to know other background information about the child and parents accept their children's learning barriers and do not deny them. The solicited information revealed that teachers were not comfortable implementing the inclusion policy. Finally, structures of implementation (ILST, DST, a special school and trained teachers) are in place but they are not fully functional. It was established that in most cases teachers were not receiving enough support from parents, the Institutional Level Support Team, and the District Support Team. The Deputy Principals and the District Support Team did not monitor the progress of the implementation of inclusive education policy adequately enough in schools. The following chapter will discuss the findings of this study.

5 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 4, the researcher presented results from solicited data regarding the assessment of the Implementation of the Inclusive Education policy for learners with Special Education Needs in Grahamstown District in the Eastern Cape Province. This chapter discusses the results and findings of data presented in chapter 4 based on four broad themes that formed the pillars of this study, namely teacher skills (teacher capacity), teaching strategies (delivery of the curriculum, and content and pedagogy adaptation), support and monitoring given to teachers and finally the perceptions of teachers on the inclusion of learners with special education needs in their classes. A discussion on each of the four thematic areas follows.

5.2 Teacher capacity

Capacity of teachers includes variables such as one's specialisation and experience. The teacher's own background, training and level of confidence and his/her commitment can affect the implementation of a programme (Swart *et al*, 2001). It need not be emphasized that teachers are the chief curriculum implementers because they interpret the national curriculum according to the individual teacher's level of professional training, personal qualities, intelligence, and school environment and to the learner's characteristics. Thus, the teacher's level of competence can influence effective inclusive education implementation. However, it has to be noted that the quality of teaching for learners with special education needs hinges on a number of variables. These include relevance of content, teacher qualifications and strategies used to teach. These variables tend to have a symbiotic relationship, that is, if one of them malfunctions, the rest become affected (Mbele, 2005). Therefore, teacher qualification and experience on their own cannot bring about successful implementation of inclusive education and learning for learners with special education needs.

5.2.1 Teacher skills

Teachers are capable of inspiring significantly greater learning gains in their students. According to Landsberg *et al* (2005:458), a teacher who is organised, who keeps the lesson flowing and has good communication skills can greatly bring about change in the education of a learner with SEN. The study revealed that most of the teachers who participated in the study knew the learning material well and were prepared to teach it well. Their challenge was that of making appropriate adaptations or modifications which ensured the curriculum was accessible to all learners. Through observation, the findings of the study are that all the teachers who participated in the study could not keep the lesson flowing although they try to communicate well with the learners.

5.2.2 Age of teachers

Chetty (2004:110) maintains that the majority of the teaching body in South Africa consists of mature educators, a result confirmed by the study. Table 4.4 confirms this statement in showing that 80% of the educators in schools under study were above 40 years. Possible reasons for this finding are as follows:

- a. Research found that mature educators show more empathy with learners that experience barriers to learning (Brodin, 1997:139).
- b. Most primary schools have mature educators (Reay and Denninson, 1990:42)
- c. A mature educator, especially if female, represents a motherly figure and is more acceptable to younger children in primary schools as being *in loco parentis*.

5.2.3 Teacher qualifications

One of the elements of the foundation of the present study was that implementation of inclusive education suffers from poor qualification and lack of specialised teachers. The study found out that schools under study had inadequate and unqualified teachers. Teachers' qualities determine the success of the programme. Ozigi (1983:18) argues that:

No matter how efficient and well intentioned you are as a school administrator, you can hardly achieve success without the support and co-operation of well qualified, dedicated and adequate staff. It is through them that the actual education process takes place, indeed high quality teachers are your very best resource asset.

The study found that Grahamstown district's teachers under study lack these qualities cited by Ozigi (1983), Monk (1994) and Smith (2007). A similar problem was also observed in studies carried out in Mozambique (World Bank 2004). Similar results were established by Kerre (1986) in his studies on inclusive education in Kenya.

One major determinant of the quality of education is the teacher. It is critical to pay attention in the design of training programmes, to the level of a teacher's knowledge of relevant subject areas and teaching experience. When courses fail to take the teacher's level of knowledge into account, implementation of the reform will be hampered (Verspoor, 1995).

Zimba (1999) in Angelbrecht and Green (2007:46) found that teachers who implemented inclusive education in Namibian schools were the same professionals trained for the general education, a result confirmed by this study. The study established that learners with SEN were being taught by teachers most of who had not trained in inclusive education. This implies that most of the teachers who trained over sixteen years ago might not be familiar with the content and strategies for supporting learners with SEN. Therefore it becomes difficult for such teachers to impart relevant knowledge to learners. Elmore (1990) notes that poor teaching creates misunderstanding that has socio-emotional effects on the learner. The learner becomes exasperated, temperamental and may withdraw from school. In such situations, teachers should be well qualified to deal with students.

One of the interview questions dealt with the teachers' training, that is, what they had learnt about the teaching of learners with special education needs. It emerged from the study that most teachers mentioned that they had not received any formal training on

addressing students' needs in an inclusive classroom. Three of the four educators interviewed from public schools pointed out that the training they had received during pre-service teacher training had little or no bearing to the inclusion of learners with SEN. The findings of this study confirm what Winkler *et al* (2006) has said about teacher training in South Africa. The authors pointed out that teacher training courses in South Africa concentrated on the role of the teacher in the classroom.

As revealed in the earlier section, teachers in this study did not have the necessary qualifications and experience to implement curriculum for learners with SEN in the primary schools under study in the Grahamstown district. This requires a drastic step to be taken to make sure teachers are given the opportunity to upgrade themselves in the most needed skill and knowledge. In summary, it is quite clear that there is a need for in-service training from relevant authorities and policy makers to address the specific challenges that are faced by teachers in the teaching of learners with SEN.

The study also found that teachers lacked skills and competence to accommodate diversity in inclusive classrooms. This finding was also confirmed by the researcher's observation during class visits for document analysis. Lack of skills and competence (or, in this case, the perception of lack of skills and competence) has been mentioned in several studies on inclusion in South Africa (Engelbrecht *et al*, 2003; Hay, Smit, and Paulsen, 2001).

Findings from school record books such as the minute book show that teachers have reported lack of specificity in the trainings and workshops they have attended. In one of the school documents read, there was a comment, "When there is training, teachers complain later that the training did not address the issue of learners with learning difficulties." In an interview with participating teachers, a concern was raised that the Ministry of Basic Education had ignored Special Education by not upgrading their knowledge and skills on the subject matter, but has rather focused on Mathematics and Science. This makes it difficult for teachers to implement the inclusion policy well.

The findings of this study are that in all the government schools under study educators reported a lack of personnel development opportunities a need for training on how to address learner needs and behaviours effectively. They are concerned about the lack of learning and reading culture and low-learner motivation in their respective schools. It can also be confirmed through this study that learning support in the classroom is also inadequate despite the Department of Education's initiatives in this respect. In all the schools, a few computers are at the disposal of the learners. The internet service though an essential service in teaching and learning has been disabled.

According to Lewis and Wray (2000), the most effective in-service training would appear to be ongoing and focused upon improving classroom practice. With school-based in-service training, members of staff are all involved and they report back to the rest of the staff on what they have done. In this way, new ideas are shared, some of which help learners with special educational needs. In a situation where in-service training was lacking, the implementation of the inclusion policy has chances of being affected.

It emerged from the study that the in-service training teachers received in preparation for inclusive education was too brief, mainly conducted in the afternoon after a long school day. The in-service training of teachers should be regarded as continuing education and an essential component of basic education. The findings of this study are that no in-service training workshops were conducted in schools with regard to learners facing barriers in learning. Although it is a requirement that teachers meet the needs of all learners, it was difficult for these teachers.

5.2.4 Experience

One of the elements of the foundation of this study was that the teachers' experience had an effect on the implementation of inclusive education (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006). For learners with special educational needs, an experienced and mature teacher has greater ability to manage learners with special educational needs. The findings of this study established that the majority of teachers had more than five years' teaching experience. Teachers in this stage have the know-how to cope with classroom

problems. The teacher serves as a resource and an agent: developing curriculum in committees, implementing it in the classroom and evaluating it as a teaching team. Therefore, there is a need for the teacher to have experience to effectively execute his/her duties.

This study found that the majority of teachers who participated in the study were highly experienced general education teachers. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2004), it is the experienced teacher who is able to use the relevant teaching methods in class, understand interest and learning needs of the students, and the content as well as use the relevant teaching materials. It emerged from the study that the teachers who participated in the study had taught at primary school all their years in teaching.

Teachers with long service are in most cases viewed to be conversant with numerous teaching strategies and teaching methods as well as with the adaptation of content to suit learners with SEN (Rice, 2003). The findings of this study contradict Rice (2003). It emerged from the study that learners were different from year to year. This is in accordance with Nel et al (2012:4) who say that all learners come to school with their own characteristics and identities that influence one's academic progression.

5.2.5 Teacher specialisation

Monk (1994), points out that deep content-area knowledge is an attribute of teachers that seems to have a positive impact on student achievement. Deep content-area knowledge implies that the educator knows his/her subject area well. Educators with less content knowledge have been found to produce smaller gains in their students compared with more seasoned teachers (Smith, 2007).

From an assessment of teacher specialization in SEN, the study revealed that none of the teachers in the public schools had had training in the area of special education. Thus they are not qualified enough to handle learners with special educational needs and this could be one of the reasons why there is a high level of under-achievement for

such learners. This confirmed the statistics at the district offices that there was a shortage of specialised teachers in the district of Grahamstown and that most teachers had trained for the general education. According to Swart *et al* (2001) schools with unspecialized teachers can find it difficult to implement the designed programme. In support of the above analysis, the teacher documents assessed concurred with the interview results that there was no special educational needs component in their training. Educational courses prepared them to teach in the mainstream class without considering learners with special educational needs. Rice (2003) points out that teacher quality is in fact the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement.

Angelbrecht and Green (2007) found that teachers who implemented inclusive education in primary schools in South Africa were the same professionals trained for general education, a result confirmed by this study. This study further established that students were taught by teachers with diplomas and degrees that were not relevant to the subject content when it came to matters of special education needs. Therefore, it becomes difficult for such teachers to impart relevant knowledge and conduct proper assessment to learners with special education needs for learning.

This study attributes the shortage of professionally qualified personnel to factors such as: course content in training institutions, and government attitude to special needs education. The findings of this study further confirmed those of Swart *et al* (2001) who also found that schools which practised inclusive education in South Africa suffered from shortage of professionally qualified teachers. Such situations are a cause for concern to the policy makers. Therefore, if implementation of inclusive education is to succeed, policy makers need to address those issues.

The study revealed that children with special educational needs will continue to experience challenges in their learning. This is drawn from the findings that teachers do not have the necessary qualifications that may enable them to manage a class of mixed abilities which include learners with special educational needs. This study confirms

findings by Swart *et al* (2001) which revealed that a number of South African educators lacked professional training and experience with regards to learners with special education needs. Inadequately qualified professional personnel can compromise quality in teaching and learning.

The research findings indicated that inclusive education was bedevilled by a shortage of adequately qualified teachers. Two-thirds of the interviewed educators were teachers who only possessed an ordinary teacher qualification such as the Advanced Certificate in Education and or a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Questionnaire findings gave the same impression. According to Cook (2004) such teachers had no capacity to support the implementation of inclusive education.

It seems as if there is a consensus among scholars like Kansanen (2003:89) and Swart *et al* (2001) who all concede that teacher's training and the level of teacher's confidence can affect the implementation of any programme. Therefore, the use of teachers by South Africa who lack training in content, knowledge and relevant instructional delivery methods compromised the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Under-qualified teachers can face challenges in the interpretation of a policy as well as in class management. Lack of these competencies could lead to the poor performance by learners with special education needs. This view is shared by Husen, Saha and Nooman (1978) cited in Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985), who postulate that the quality of teachers is another vital determinant of pupil performance.

According to Kansanen (2003:89), failure to successfully implement inclusive education in the studied area could be attributed to lack of capacity to support innovation, as quite a number of teachers were professionally untrained and lacked content matter, because none of the teachers in this study have a specialisation in Special Needs Education. This challenge does not face South African schools only as confirmed by Swart *et al* (2001), who concede that lack of content matter knowledge by teachers found in other parts of the world is also a major problem in countries like Swaziland and Ghana. Evans (1993) argues that it is self-evident that professionals cannot perform their roles without

specialist knowledge. The implementation of inclusive education is in limbo because of such challenges.

5.3 Delivery of the curriculum

Curriculum and organisational factors contribute to the extent to which children experience difficulties at school. Beveridge (1999) points out that any curriculum for special educational needs learners usually emphasizes planned activities that aim to enhance both feelings of personal worth and also confidence. In South Africa, the fundamental aim of the education system is for all learners to succeed, with school experiences redefined as a preparation for life rather than preparation for more schooling.

Learners with special education needs do not develop skills incidentally, but need to learn skills so that they can later apply them in new learning situations (Lindsay, 2003). It is for this reason that the teacher works with learners step-by-step and be sure that in this journey no child is left behind. The amount of teacher-learner interaction necessary to promote active learner involvement within a supportive context will vary with each individual and with differing classroom situations (Knight , 1998).The teacher works with learners to develop skills and then gradually fades out cues and assistance, thus enabling learners to be more independent in their learning. Hence, the researcher sought to establish strategies used by teachers in their lessons. Below is a discussion on the findings regarding strategies used by teachers.

5.3.1 Teaching strategies

One of the objectives of the study was to explore teaching methods used by teachers in ensuring all learners are catered for. Ellis (2005) notes that there is no single instructional method that deserves sole claim to being best practice. Thus teachers' decision to select a particular approach for use at a particular time must depend upon the nature of the lesson content, learning objectives and the characteristics of the students in the group.

Evidence from the study showed that the majority of teachers do not have a particular teaching method to ensure all children learn. A teacher respondent commented that her teaching methods were guided by the content and learner ability. According to Farkota (2005) current evidence suggests that many problems associated with learner learning can be directly traced to the method of instruction.

The study revealed that teachers used a variety of strategies as need arose and some depended on the type of educational needs a learner has. Evidence from the study further revealed that teachers blame the learner for his or her failure in class. This finding is in line with the medical model theory in that the learner is responsible for his or her failure in school because his or her brains do not function well. It emerged from the data that those teachers in government schools under study saw learners with SEN as not belonging with the learners who do not have special education needs. The suggestion is that they be educated in the own class with learners of their kind.

The study also found that some teachers altered grading and testing procedures. The altering of grading and testing procedures allowed learners with SEN a chance to succeed and experience self-worth. Further assessment procedures enabled teachers to re-design learning opportunities where learners had not done well.

The maturational lag theory emphasises the importance of information on the learner's growth and development. This implies that parent involvement in the education of their children is important. Parents provide detailed information about their child's growth and development, information that helps teachers articulate their pedagogy more clearly. The study found that parents were not willing to participate and to get involved in school activities. When called to school for teacher-parent consultations, parents did not turn up. Even when it was end of term and they had to come and collect reports for their children, they sent a neighbour or siblings.

The findings of the study revealed that this was most common in township government schools. Research has substantiated that parents refusal to help their children do

homework should not always be associated with non-cooperation (Whalley, 2008). Parents have indicated that some home works are too long and interfere with family time. A study by Whalley (2008) found that where parents and teachers worked together, they provided the optimum opportunities for children to learn and develop. In thinking about what inclusive practice involves we also have to be sensitive to the complex nature of teaching.

It is through shared experiences that colleagues can help one another to articulate what they currently do and define what they might like to do (Mitchell, 2008). In relation to shared experiences, the study found that although teachers do hold staff development workshops in relation to teaching and learning, these workshops had little relevance to addressing the needs of learners with special education needs. Although structures of implementation such as the special school are in place, they were not fully utilised. The study also found that teachers in the ordinary schools under study did not collaborate with teachers at the special school which was just a stone's throw away.

Teachers have an important role in the implementation of inclusive education as they must teach content and functions required. By the engagement with the content, they make learning effective, meaningful, integrated and transferrable. The success of implementing inclusive education in South African primary schools is dependent on the teaching strategies used by teachers. It emerged from the study that teachers used cooperative learning activities when teaching learners with SEN. The facilitation of effective group work is an art that all teachers in the study have mastered. Through cooperative activities, learners with SEN were found to be showing academic and social progress by teachers. Regardless of which philosophical view one has of education, there is no doubt that teachers influence students' learning as better qualified teachers foster better students (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004:321).

5.3.2 Large classes

The literature has shown that in South Africa, schools in townships and rural areas may have fifty or more in a class and very often the group comprises learners of different ages. For educators, the stress of the challenge of large classes is often compounded by the teaching of children who have limited support from home and are frequently considered by educators to lack identification with authority traditionally invested in their role as educators.

The size of the class and their modes of functioning are determined by political and economic factors. These factors are subject to numerous internal and external matters. The size of classes and effective modes of functioning depend directly on the number of schools and classrooms available, as well as the number of students and teachers available (UNESCO, 2004).

Class size is of paramount importance in diverse classrooms. Learners have to receive teacher assistance and have access to adequate equipment. The teacher-learner ratio as per government requirement in South African primary schools is to be 1:40 (Motseke, 2005). The results of the study showed that the majority of primary school teachers who participated in the study had far more than the stipulated teacher-learner ratio in their classes. On average there are fifty learners in a class in government township schools. This did not give a teacher chances to monitor individual learners and provide them with necessary assistance.

Sayed (2003) notes that the numbers of learners in a class determine the quality of teacher-pupil interactions, the frequency of homework, and the opportunities offered to students to discuss and exchange ideas. The study found that in the special school where classes were small, learners were given adequate teacher assistance and there was a lot of teacher-learner interaction. Research has shown that large classes are difficult to manage and there is low teacher-learner contact time. Class size remains a key topic in school quality debates. Evidence suggests that quality education (in terms of learner achievement) is associated with a small class size (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Large classes, a result confirmed by this study in the government schools under study; make it difficult to implement the inclusion policy. Learners need close and personalised supervision. The study had contrasting findings from the special school where classes had seven to twelve learners. One would assume there is human resource underutilisation in special schools. The nature of these learners's handicap has made it difficult for teachers to meet their individual learners's needs. The study also found that there is a teacher aide in each class at the special school.

5.3.3 Assessment methods used by teachers

The purpose of assessment when learners appear to be faced with barriers to learning, is to gather information about their (learners) learning which will contribute meaningfully to their learning support (Landsberg *et al* 2005: 47). According to Mitchell (2008:39) assessment should assist the teacher to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods. That is, where learners show that they have not understood the work, assessment should allow the teacher to find out how learners were lost and then re-design the learning opportunities. This is also emphasised in the White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education that in addressing barriers to learning it is important to understand how learning is assessed. In making learning accessible to all, serious consideration needs also to be given to assessment.

Assessment of the learner is the critical teaching skill which contributes in a large measure to quality learning of the learner. It emerged from the study that teachers used a variety of methods to assess learners for learning. These included observation, questioning, portfolios, diaries and dialogue. The use of varied assessment methods is important when the teaching objective is learning with all learners including those with SEN. Using only one of the varied methods of assessing learners for learning could have a negative impact in the process of gauging learners's understanding of key learning knowledge outcomes.

Assessment for learning enables teachers to modify teaching strategies, content and teaching aids. Neglecting these could have a negative impact in developing learners' skills and preparing them for the world of work as proposed by the ecological systems theory. The ecological systems theory illuminates the complexity of the interaction and interdependence of multiple systems that impact on learners, their development and learning. The ecological theory thus looks at how systems like the environment, child development (maturation) and society play a role in the learning process of any child. As has been mentioned earlier, the use of varied assessment methods by teachers in the study helped tap into these entire fields to enable them (teachers) to give the necessary assistance to learners.

5.4 Support and monitoring

5.4.1 At District level

The findings of the study indicated that Grahamstown District has a shortage of Special Education experts. In the district, there are four special education experts to a population of 101 primary and secondary schools. Inadequate special education experts means school principals, heads of departments and teachers are deprived of that expert advice which could be valuable for the implementation of inclusive education in schools. It can be observed that shortage of special education specialist officers is not unique to the studied area as it is common among other African countries. Anumonye (1991) in (Eleweke and Rodda 2010), for instance, investigated the problems of inclusion in Nigeria. The data indicated that the required education specialists were not provided or were inadequate in regular schools where learners with special needs were being included.

The study further reveals that most of the schools were not inspected for long periods, hence, depriving these teachers of an essential service. The lack of school inspections by the district personnel may confirm the fears by some teachers that learners with special education needs may not be accessing education as per policy requirement due to their lack of proper training and supervision by the district personnel (DoE, 2001).

Inadequate transport to carry out supervisory duties by external supervisors was cited as a major challenge for quality assurance in schools which leads to poor performance among learners (Boyer and Gillespie, 2000). This challenge was confirmed by this study as it emerged that failure to conduct regular school inspections by the district education officers was attributed to lack of transport within the district due to high cost. Some primary schools were not visited by education officers for two or more years. The study further revealed that there was a high supervisor-supervisee ratio. The DST has to visit 101 schools in the district including both primary and secondary schools and it is not possible to give adequate supervision to all teachers. Although the district has its own government vehicles, they are all under repair so they have to use personal cars.

5.4.2 At school level

Management of school is about looking after the people in the school and this includes educators and learners with special educational needs. For one, the management directly assists educators in designing and adapting the curriculum. The study established that learning support and especially support for learners with special education needs was inadequate in the schools under study. Teachers had big classes (50 and more learners in government schools under study) and struggled to facilitate a positive learning environment conducive to the involvement of all the learners in their classes. The study further found that education support teams in the schools did not function to the benefit of all learners and teachers. Collaborative partnerships as well as collaborative problem solving are not part of the learning support scenario in these schools a result also found in the study. The schools battle to establish an inclusive learning culture.

According to Swart and Pettipher (2005), important trademarks of inclusive education are the effective utilisation of existing resources and increasing additional resources, from within the school but also from the community in which the school is situated. If a school is not in a strong collaborative partnership with the community, it is difficult to draw from these resources. The study has revealed that although there is a special

school that the public schools could use as a resource centre, this was not being done. Government schools do not seek human and material resources from the special school. Thus the structures of implementation are not fully functional as stated in the policy.

The findings of the study are that teachers were encouraged by management to go on workshops organised by the department but teachers had stated that these workshops did not help them much when it came to managing learners with special educational needs. Results further show that monitoring lacks in practical terms. Members of the school management team rarely made class visits and class observations. They relied on the reports provided by the teachers, mentor, and analysing teacher and learner document. This result was particularly important for this study because it established that management at school sometimes did not take up its role to the fullest. As a result, other than their teachers, learners were left with no other to monitor their progress, to verify if teaching methods used helped in the teaching of skill development. The findings of this study further confirmed those of Mitchell (2008) where inclusive education suffered from lack of monitoring. Engelbrecht and Green (2007) argue that the principal has been cited as the single most influential individual in creating favourable conditions in schools. In a situation where management neglects its duties of class visits, inclusion policy implementation can be affected as teachers continue using wrong teaching methods. There is a danger of individual teachers adapting pedagogy according to their own understanding. This might lower the standard of work given to learners with SEN. Based on the findings of this study, it follows then that lack of full commitment by the SMT could be a factor contributing to large numbers of learners who experience barriers in learning, such as those with special education needs.

Implicit in the philosophy of inclusive education is the significance of the role that the parents hold in making decisions about their children and in support of the children through their education (Engelbrecht *et al*, 2001:462). Shared ownership among educators, administrators, parents and learners; the shared responsibility for nurturing

the development of all learners; and making sure all needs are met; are critical elements in inclusive education.

5.5 Teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of learners with SEN

Sayed (2003) concedes that attitudes such as beliefs and feeling guide and affect the way people treat and socialize with each other. It can therefore be argued that if teachers have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of learners with special education needs, this attitude could influence them to have a positive attitude towards learning. Issues like educators' commitment to education can improve students' attitudes towards the proposed innovation (Rogan and Grayson, 2003).

The study found that educators had a negative attitude towards the education of learners with special education needs as they cited lack of knowledge, poor support provisions by schools and the DST. One educator said that,

Because we are not receiving enough support from the department of education, I am doing it for its sake (implementing inclusive education). I did not get enough information from the workshop that I attended, but I have to help these learners so sometimes I ask colleagues or use my many years of experience as a teacher.

Asikhia (2010) acknowledges that healthy interpersonal relationships among the personnel in the school setting help to promote the teaching-learning situation. This healthy relationship between educators, the school and DST could attract and sustain the academic interest of the learners. Positive attitudes by educators are of great importance as they could motivate all learners, including those with special education needs. One of the instructional implications of Piaget's theory of cognitive development is that learners need to be kept active by providing them with rich environments that allow for active exploration and hands-on activities (Schunk, 2004:4).

Swart *et al* (2001: 183 . 185) summarised their research by highlighting the following contributors of negative attitudes towards inclusive education: inadequate knowledge,

skills and training of educators for effective implementation of inclusive education: lack of educational and teacher support; insufficient facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices. Without adequate support, educators feel unsure and lack motivation, and become negative and pessimistic. Instead of viewing the situation from the perspective of ~~my~~ learner+ and ~~your~~ learner+, all the educators must be prepared to share the responsibility for the learning of all learners (Corbett, 2001:10)

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, the major findings show that schools lack the capacity to support implementation of inclusive education as instituted by EWP 6 of 2001. The implementation of inclusive education in primary schools is fraught with numerous problems, which include inadequate specialists (human capacity). Schools have a shortage of professionally qualified personnel and they end up resorting to use of teachers who lack relevant teaching skills and experience. This has negatively affected the performance of learners as well as skills production. The findings showed that the curriculum for learners with special education needs is also compromised. District Support Team members have failed to supervise curriculum implementation and improve classroom practitioners' teaching methods through in-service training programmes.

These findings provide valuable preliminary information about the extent and nature of inclusion within ordinary school classrooms in Grahamstown, including alterations in instructional and classroom practices made in response to availability of learners with special education needs in classrooms, assessments of the effectiveness of various teaching strategies, and overall attitudes and beliefs of teachers about their experiences with learners with special education needs in classrooms. The next chapter provides a summary of the study, the major conclusions that were drawn from the study as well as some recommendations that could be adopted by policy makers in an effort to address the problems facing the implementation of the inclusive education policy in primary schools in the Grahamstown District.

6 CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, the researcher discussed the findings of this study as per data that were presented and analysed in Chapter 4. This chapter intends to summarize the study and draw conclusions. The chapter has been divided into four sections. The first section summarizes the major findings of the study, taking into consideration the research objectives, questions and assumptions of the study. The second section draws a conclusion based on the findings of the study. The third section offers recommendations based on the major findings. The fourth section presents areas for which further studies could consider.

6.2 Summary of key ideas

This section summarizes the major findings as per the main themes of the study in line with the research questions and objectives of the study. Thus the section gives a summary of the findings on teachers' professional qualifications and experience, as well as the monitoring and support mechanisms put in place to ensure implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs.

6.2.1 Teacher skills

Educators are described in the Education White Paper (EWP) 6 (DoE, 2001:18) as the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system. It must therefore be in the interest of education that educators are adequately trained for new demands in education. Knowledge and skills are twofold. Educators need a knowledge base for inclusive education as in the very least conceptualised by the policy documents. Moreover, they need knowledge and skills for teaching diversity in the classroom. The latter includes an understanding of special education needs in order to modify and adapt teaching methodology in the classroom. The EWP 6 (DoE 2001:29) recognises this need. The EWP 6 (DoE 2001:18) states that staff development and on-going assessment of teachers' need to take place at both school and district level.

Landsberg *et al* (2005:6) say that for inclusive teaching, teachers need systematic and intensive training, either as part of their initial training, or as well planned in-service training by competent and experienced people. As key to successful implementation of an inclusive system, educators will need time, on-going support and in-service training (Swart *et al*, 2001).

This study found that the majority of teachers who participated in the study were not professionally qualified to teach learners with special education needs and inclusion. The training that this study refers to is in-service training, which prepares them for the implementation of the inclusion policy. This study found that there was minimal in-service training conducted with primary school teachers in the schools under study to enable them to implement the inclusion policy. It also emerged from this study that most staff members who participated in the study attended staff meetings and subject staff development workshops that had little bearing on learners with special education needs. These decisions could impact negatively on the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs.

6.2.2 Qualifications

It is mandatory for all teachers in South African schools to have at least a three-year education diploma obtained from a teacher training college, or a four-year professional degree, obtained from a university. Some teachers initially qualified for academic degrees then later studied towards a one-year education diploma in order to qualify as teachers. All these qualifications are accepted as professional qualifications in South African schools. This study found that the teachers under study had the relevant qualification that enabled them to teach. They either had an ACE, or three year diploma or a four-year professional degree (B.Ed). The minority had a special education qualification. This qualification enabled them to teach learners with special education needs and to understand the policy on inclusion.

6.2.3 Specialisation

Being a specialist in a certain area helps the teacher to be conversant with the content of that particular area, thus making him/her confident in delivering lessons to the learners. The study found that none of the participating teachers who taught in public schools had specialised in special education. This study further established that learners were taught by teachers with diplomas and degrees that were relevant to the general education, but not including learners with SEN. Thus, some of the teachers felt inadequately trained to teach learners with SEN and suggested that they be provided with such training. This is one of the biggest challenges that the implementation of the inclusion policy is faced with. This overburdens them, as they require extra preparation.

6.2.4 Teaching experience

The findings of this study were that the majority of teachers had more than 10 years of teaching experience. It is the experienced teacher who is able to use the relevant teaching methods in class, understand the interests and learning needs of the learners, together with the content and the use of the relevant material (Fullan, 1991; Hunkins and Ornstein, 2004; Rogan and Grayson, 2003).

This study also found that there were primary school-teachers who had a long service record of teaching . although this experience was primarily in the old curriculum, which did not include inclusive education. In most cases these teachers are viewed as conversant with numerous teaching strategies and the management of learners.

6.2.5 Delivery of Curriculum

6.2.5.1 Teaching strategies

Ellis (2005) notes that there is no single instructional method that deserves sole claim to being 'best practice'. Thus a teacher's decision to select a particular approach for use at a particular time must depend upon the nature of the lesson content, learning

objectives and the characteristics of the students in the group. The findings of this study were that the majority of teachers do not have a particular method to use in ensuring all children learn.

In addition, there is evidence that teachers in this study modified their classroom practices when teaching diverse learners and frequently modify seating arrangements and assignments.

6.2.5.2 Large classes

Swart *et al* (2002:184) contend that, large classes were perceived as the most difficult obstacle to the successful implementation of inclusion. This study revealed that primary school teachers in the schools under study in Grahamstown District had overly large classes. The teacher-pupil ratio in most schools is 1: 50 which is very high. This did not allow the teachers to monitor individual learners or give them the needed assistance. Large classes were not manageable and there may be no significant teacher-learner contact time. To show the negative impact that large classes have on the implementation of the inclusion policy; this study revealed that although teachers used a number of teaching strategies, they mainly used cooperative learning most of the time.

6.2.5.3 Assessment methods used by teachers

Assessment for learning is a critical teaching skill which contributes in a large measure to quality learning of the student. This study found that teachers in this study used a variety of assessment methods to assess learners for learning. It also emerged from this study that the practice by teachers was in line with the medical model of disability. Teacher used assessment to find out where learners had problems so that they can give them the necessary and ideal support as demanded by the child's needs.

6.2.6 Support and monitoring

There is evidence of the monitoring of teachers through the schools' internal systems following the supervision schedule by HoDs and the schools' ILST. However it is not enough. Teachers' portfolios and a sample of learners' portfolios are inspected by

HODs. There is also monitoring, support and evaluation of the implementation of the inclusion policy which is supposed to be done by the DoE through the DST. The DST may task the special school teachers with a Special Education qualification or the ILST to assist in monitoring process.

6.2.6.1 Support and monitoring at district level

The DST did not execute its duties as indicated in the EWP6-structures of implementation. These included guiding and supporting teachers, organising on-site support as well as monitoring and evaluating all the curriculum programmes. It was also revealed that the DST could not carry on with its duties properly because of transport constraints. Schools lacked quality assurance inspection from the district officers due to transport problems. All teachers who participated in the study agreed that they did not receive sufficient support from the Department of Education to assist them in implementing the inclusion policy.

6.2.6.2 Support and monitoring at school level

The majority of HoDs did not execute some of the duties stipulated in the Manual for School Management (2000). This study revealed that HoDs were not monitoring and providing enough support to teachers. Teachers did not receive any assistance from the HoDs in terms of content; neither did the HoDs pay them any class visits, nor monitor learners' progress by examining their exercise books. This study further revealed that the failure to execute the duties and roles HoDs could be blamed on a lack of training on inclusive education on the part of the HoDs. This could have a negative impact on the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with SEN, as HoDs will not know what exactly how learners learn and what their content is like. Thus they cannot offer support to teachers and learners.

6.2.7 Teacher perceptions

The notion of inclusion is being met with some resistance from regular classroom teachers worried about the impact on their teaching and other students in the classroom

(Knight, 1999). Florian (1998) indicates that teacher resistance will occur because educators have serious reservations about supporting the widespread placement of learners with SEN in ordinary schools and that many questions about teaching and learning in inclusive schools remain unanswered. The study established that teachers had a negative attitude towards the education of learners with SEN, as they cited lack of knowledge, large classes, poor support provisions by schools and the DST. This suggests that these learners may be in class, but the teachers will not go the extra mile for them.

6.3 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to assess how teachers in four primary schools implement the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs in the classroom. The use of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observations and analysis of documents served as the research tools in the study. The 20 teachers, who participated, did so voluntarily. An ecological model framework was used to guide this study. This framework examines all the different systems that influence the ability of the learner to succeed in school, and for that matter, in everyday life. It puts emphasis on the fact that barriers to learning are not only the result of individuals, but also the result of interactions between individuals and the environment that is not designed to enhance participation. The analysing of the raw data saw recurring themes emerge.

With regards to teacher experience of learners with special education needs it must be acknowledged that the teacher is faced with a number of issues in the day-to-day interactions in the class. From the responses of some of the teachers, it is apparent that teachers do not have time to give individual attention to learners as they may need. Therefore, teachers tended to treat all the learners alike and no particular attention is given to the diversity that exists within the class.

In analysing how teachers construct learners, it is evident that the teachers did not really know who their learners are and it follows that if teachers do not know who their learners are, they cannot provide the learners with equitable opportunities for learning.

In this study, it was found that there was some negativity amongst the teachers with regards to teaching in a classroom that had a sizable number of learners with special education needs.

The schools under study lagged behind in the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs at all phases of learning. This was largely caused by the lack of resources and the negative attitudes of both at the school level and the department level. There was no staff development of regular educators. In conclusion, the implementation of inclusive education for all learners with special education needs still leaves a lot to be desired.

The failure to provide training to regular educators and inadequate supervision of the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy by both the school and the DST has seriously derailed the intentions of the programme. While the specialist educators are highly qualified, they are not fully utilised to assist the unqualified. The need for the proper in-service training of regular teachers cannot be over-emphasised, as is clearly demonstrated by the inability of the majority of them to teach learners with special education needs.

Although Education White Paper 6 on SNE, as a policy provides a comprehensive framework for the provision of all learners within an inclusive system, education facilities for learners with special education needs are still provided within the predominantly segregated model (Wilderman and Nomdo, 2007), in the sense that provisions are inadequate, support and monitoring is not effectively done and teachers are not properly qualified to teach learners with SEN.

6.4 Recommendations

It was established that there are challenges experienced by educators and these prevented effective implementation of inclusive education with negative implications for most learners. It was also established that there were learners with special education needs in the classrooms of those educators who participated in the study.

Challenges must be identified, acknowledged and addressed at all levels of education. The provision of support is an indispensable factor called for by successful implementation. On every level, inclusion should be based on the need for support. It is about maximising participation of all learners and minimising barriers. The following recommendations are made:

1. All educators and other personnel in school must receive adequate training.

This training could take various forms:

“Principals and school management teams at institutional level should receive a comprehensive training programme as they are the primary advocates for change within the schools.

“Short programmes conducted by universities. Part of the teacher training course in universities in recent years, is a component of inclusive education. Thus universities can upgrade teacher professional qualification by offering in-service courses in inclusive education.

“Specialist educators might be used for training of educators at sites of learning through cluster meetings and workshops scheduled in proactive programmes.

“Suitably qualified and skilled personnel should be shared among districts for capacity building at all levels.

“Special schools should network with ordinary schools in terms of support provision.

“Research, consultation with universities and engagement with experts of education is important to the right of all learners.

2. The need for support must be met

- At schools with sufficient number of learners with language barriers for example, post provisioning should allow for a specialist educator to teach the language of learning and teaching (LoLT).

- Educator training programmes are a priority for consideration. Schools should insist on training programmes for educators. At best these should be formulated by academics at university level. Although this should be a priority for the National Department of Education through the district, if motivating such a programme does not occur at this level, the school governing bodies should take responsibility for motivating such programmes for educators. A body of specialist educators from special schools might form part of the personnel used to present training programmes.
- District personnel should be visible, proactive and empowering for educators at the sites of learning.
- Qualifications of educators should be appropriate to the work to be undertaken.

6.5 Further studies could consider the following areas

- a) Attitudes to inclusive education of both learners in the classroom who have special education needs and of those who do not.
- b) Additional studies related to the relationship between learner success and teacher preparedness in inclusive educational models would also be beneficial in future training implementations.
- c) Further studies related to teacher perceptions and learner success might equip educators with additional knowledge related to content modifications within inclusive environments.

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8 Appendices

APPENDIX A: Letter of request from the university to carry out research in school

Faculty of Education
Department of Further and Continuing
Education
Stuart Hall, Alice

Phone: Alice: 040602412
| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za|



15 November 2011

To: District Director
Grahamstown District
Grahamstown

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to Collect Data: Mrs G. Shadaya (Student Number 200909136)

This is to confirm that Mrs G. Shadaya is pursuing MEd degree at the University of Fort Hare. Her research title is **An Assessment of the implementation of inclusion policy for learners with special education needs: A case study of four primary schools in Grahamstown District**. She is supposed to collect data from schools during the months of November and December 2011. 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



C. Thomas
Director, School of Further and Continuing Education
Faculty of Education

APPENDIX B: Letter from the District Director granting permission to conduct Research in Graham's town schools

*Faculty of Education
Department of Further and Continuing
Education
Stuart Hall, Alice*

*Phone: Alice: 040602412
| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za|*



15 November 2011

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Sincerely



**C. Thomas
Director, School of Further and Continuing Education
Faculty of Education**

- Approved: [Signature]

**A T FETSHA
DISTRICT DIRECTOR**

23/11/11

APPENDIX C: Consent letter for all participants

CONSENT LETTER FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

I am Girlie Shadaya, a Masters candidate at the University of Fort Hare. I am conducting research on the Assessment of the Implementation of the Inclusion Policy in Grahamstown Primary Schools as part of my programme. As part of the process, I am inviting you to participate in an Interview/questionnaire survey. Please answer the questions honestly and truthfully by ticking what you think are relevant answers and also provide answers on the provided spaces. Should you find the provided space inadequate, use the back of the page.

I guarantee you that if you agree to participate, any information you have provided will be confidential. At no time will your identity be known by anybody other than the researcher.

Thank you

Researcher's signature

Date

o o o o o o o o ..

o o o o o

I o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o hereby give the consent to participating in the study on Assessment on the Implementation of the Inclusion Policy in the Grahamstown Primary Schools. I understand that I am participating freely without being forced in any way. I also understand that I can stop participating in this study and my decision to do so will not affect me negatively.

APPENDIX D: Questionnaire for teachers on the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with SEN

PART 1

1.1 Teacher Demographics

Please provide the following information about yourself and your work

Gender: Male Female

Age: 0 -20years 21 -40years 40years+

Ethnic group: English African Asian Other
(specify)

1st Language: Zulu Venda English
IsiXhosa Tswana Afrikaans

Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed
Separated

1.2 Teacher's educational background

How many years of academic education have you completed? (Do not count grade repetition years)

.....years of primary school

.....years of secondary school

.....years of post secondary academic education

How many years of pre-service teacher training have you received altogether? (Please circle one option only)

- a) I did not receive any teaching training
- b) I have had a short course of less than one year
- c) 1 full year
- d) 2 full years
- e) 3 full years

f) More than 3 years

Teacher qualification: diploma or lower

Bachelor's degree or higher

Teaching experience: 0- 5yrs

6- 10yrs

11- 15yrs

16yrs+

Specialisation: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Recent training: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ .

What is your employment status as a teacher at this school?

Full time

Part- time (temporary)

Substitute

1.3 The School

1. What type of community is served by your school? (please tick one box)

A small town community

A large town community

A city

2. Number of learners in the school

0 . 100

100 . 500

500 . 1000

1000+

3. Number of learners experiencing barriers to learning in your class(s)

0 . 5

6 -

11+

4. Total number of learners you teach in your class

10- 20

21- 30

31- 40

41+

1.4 Belief and attitude of teacher towards learners with special education needs

a. How much in favour of learning about special education needs are you? Choose a score from 0 to 10, where 0 represents %not in favour+and 10 represents %absolutely in favour+.

b. To what extent do you agree that having learners experiencing barriers to learning in a class means content and pedagogy are adapted to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners? (cross-out one box)

Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree
----------------	----------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------

c. Have you found working with special education needs students impacting on your ability to meet your classroom goals?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer.....

d. What is it that you particularly desire as additional training where the teaching of learners with special education needs is concerned?

.....

e. Do you believe you are skilled enough to implement the inclusion policy for learners with special education needs? Choose a score from 0 to 5, where 0 represents %not skilled+and 5 represents %very skilled+.

f. Have you worked with parents of your students? How would you rate your working relationship; (Tick the appropriate box)

Always

Frequently

Seldom

Never

PART 2

Instructional modifications related to teaching learners with special education needs

In this section, kindly indicate whether or not you have altered the following aspects of the teaching process because of the availability of learners with special educational needs in your class.

Practises	Yes	No
1. Seating arrangements		
2. Strategies used to present information		
3. The way you give instructions for assignments		
4. Assessment (testing) procedures		
5. Time allocated for classroom activity		
6. How you put students in groups or pairs		
7. Communicating and interacting with students		
8. Expectations for your students		
9. Amount of time devoted to working with students one-on one		
10. Choice of words or language used in the classroom		
11. Length and timing of lessons		
12. Involvement with parents		
13. Motivating students to learn or participate		
14. Classroom rules and discipline		
15. How you handle inappropriate behaviour		
16. Giving make-up work for students who are absent		
17. Time spent preparing lessons		
18. Subject matter, topics and units that you teach		
19. Textbooks and choice of reading materials		
20. Homework assignments		

PART 3

Teaching strategies and their effectiveness

In this section, kindly indicate how effective the following teaching strategies are based on your experience.

Teaching strategy	Ratings				
	Have never used it	Not effective	Partially effective	effective	Very highly effective
Use of visuals					
Peer tutoring					
Cooperative learning					
Role playing					
Use of guest speakers					
Inviting parents to visit and participate in child's learning					
Field trips					

How do you feel about having learners with special education needs in your classroom?

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

APPENDIX E: Interview schedule for teachers on the implementation of the inclusion policy for learners with SEN

1. Why did you choose to become a teacher?
2. During teacher training, what did you learn on the teaching of learners with special education needs?
3. What are your perceptions on the inclusion of learners with special education needs in ordinary classrooms?
4. What does barriers to learning mean to you?
5. How have you supported students with barriers to learning in your class?
6. How do you adapt the content and pedagogy to ensure it meets the needs of all learners?
7. Can you describe the teaching strategies you have actually adopted to ensure the inclusion of learners with special education needs?
8. What techniques would you use to keep students actively involved and motivated during the lesson?
9. In your opinion, how should a student's educational achievement and progress be measured?
10. What are your comments on the opportunities for team teaching or team planning?
11. How would you describe the in-service training opportunities in your school and off school (e.g. as a cluster or district)?
12. Can you comment on the kind of support/mentoring available to teachers? (the positive and negative aspects)

13. Your school is close to a special school, would you tell about the assistance you get from the special school? How has it improved the learning of students facing barriers in learning in your school?
14. In your opinion, what are the issues/ challenges affecting the implementation of inclusive education?

APPENDIX F: Interview schedule for principals on the implementation of the inclusion policy in the school

1. What is the type of your school?
2. At what level do you select learners who have special education needs?
3. How do you select them and why do you use that method?
4. Do learners and their parents have a say in the selection process?
5. How would you describe the attitude of your teachers towards learners with special education needs and the implementation of the inclusion policy?
6. Would you say your teachers are qualified to implement the inclusion policy?
7. What support mechanism do you have for improving teacher performance?
8. What training or workshop programmes are in place to improve the teachers' teaching skills?
9. How often are these workshops held?
10. Who conducts the workshops and how long do they last?
11. Do you have schools' educational visits from the district office and how many have you had this year?
12. What support do you get from the district offices?
13. On average, how many class visits do you make per term?
14. What suggestions do you have on the implementation of the inclusion policy?

APPENDIX G: Interview schedule for the District Support Team on support and monitoring of the implementation of the inclusion policy in the school

1. What is your position in this office and how long have you held that position?
2. What is your experience with regards to learners with SEN?
3. How many schools are in the district (Primary and Secondary)?
4. How many teachers are in the district?
5. Of these, how many have a special education qualification?
6. How are learners in the district identified and classified as having SEN?
7. In your own opinion, what is the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education?
8. What qualification should one have to be considered adequately qualified to teach inclusive classes?
9. As a district, what training programmes or workshops have you put in place to assist school heads, teachers and learners with SEN?
10. Do you have a stipulation of how many visits you are supposed to conduct in schools per term or year?
11. In the past two years, how often have you visited schools?
12. What major concerns have been raised on the implementation of the inclusion policy by schools?
13. What support do you give to schools?
14. What are your suggestions on the improvement on monitoring and support systems to schools?
15. What are your suggestions on the implementation of the inclusion policy?

APPENDIX H: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE

Teacher documents will be analysed with reference to:

- Teaching strategies
- Assessment for learning
- Content adaptation
- Provision for learners with SEN
- Any other issues relating to implementation of the inclusion policy

School documents will be analysed with reference to:

- Staff development programmes
- Class supervision
- Support provision to teacher and learners
- Any other issues relating to implementation of the inclusion policy

District Education Office documents will be analysed with reference to:

- Staff development workshops
- Monitoring
- Support provision
- Any other issues relating to implementation of the inclusion policy

APPENDIX I: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE

The researcher will observe the following aspects:

- Teacher provides explicit instruction to build background and/or tap prior knowledge
- Lesson includes a variety of opportunities for learner engagement and active participation
- A variety of strategies are used to make new concepts clear and focused
- Ongoing assessment of lesson objectives prior to activity is evident
- Teacher's degree of mastery of content and pedagogy
- Content structuring in the lesson that caters for different levels of learners
- Strategies and flexible grouping are in place to differentiate instruction while doing an activity
- Opportunities are provided to connect new knowledge and skills to daily life, and new situations
- Providing independent thinking time and writing time before discussion or sharing
- Monitoring groups during learner sharing
- Following group work with teacher mediated unified class discussion to ensure all learners understand essential information
- Teacher's degree of awareness of the readiness level of the learners to receive the content
- Psychological climate in the classroom (that is teacher's attitude towards the lesson and the learners)
- Sitting arrangement or grouping system
- Classroom appearance promotes learning beyond teacher instruction