

**Purely Policy? Educators' experiences and observations of
inclusive education in Pietermaritzburg schools**

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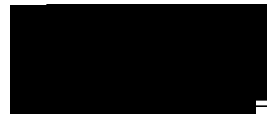
DECLARATION

I, *Catherine Joubert*, declare that:

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Signature of Student
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DEDICATION

This Dissertation is dedicated to my family. Firstly to my husband Kevin, you have been an unwavering support along this journey; you encouraged me and held my hand through the tears and celebrated my successes. To our son Joshua; you are the motivation behind my decision to study educational psychology and a blessing to our lives. To my mom and dad, Rob and Zoe, without you, this would not have been possible. Lastly, my sister and my in-laws, I cannot thank you enough for believing in me and supporting me. I love you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAPS – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DoE – Department of Education

LiEP – Language in Education Policy

LSEN – Learners with Special Educational Needs

SIAS – Screening, Identification, Assessment and Policy

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

ABSTRACT

The present study seeks to understand how policy development and implementation takes place in South Africa, the evolution of education policy internationally and how this sets the benchmark for national policy formulation. It looks at the direct role all stakeholders play in the education system and most critically to explore educators' experiences and observations in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years by ascertaining what inclusive teaching means to them within their vocational context. The study follows an interpretivist paradigm to explore and understand inclusive education as educators experience it. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with educators in all phases of teaching from three different school contexts. Two theoretical approaches are used in the present study. The first is adapted from Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model in order to contextualise the multiple environments of learners, educators and the education system. The second is Lev Vygotsky's perspective known as sociocultural theory which offers new perspectives on teaching and learning – one that emphasises the importance of social context and collaboration. The main findings indicate that there are various challenges when inclusive education policy is implemented. These stem from the labour intensive process working with inclusive education, the lack of adequate training, and support for educators, parents' lack of interest and commitment to child's learning process and barriers to inclusive education in South African schools. The study recommends a review of inclusive education policy in South Africa be undertaken that includes collaboration at all levels of the system: the Department of Education, district and school is needed, as sharing expertise and resources is one of the ways to sustain a transition to inclusion.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation.”

~Nelson Mandela~

1.1 Background to the research problem

Inclusive education refers to full participation of all learners in all aspects of school, regardless of individual differences, and means the eradication of segregated school settings for those who do not fit the typical view of normal (Loreman et al., 2010). It also implies conventional schools being proactive, responsive and willing to adapt in order to meet the diverse needs of all learners (Loreman et al., 2010). Diversity in education emphasises the obligation of mainstream state schools to identify and respond to a wide range of barriers to learning in a way that will enable all learners to achieve specified educational outcomes (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

The way a country organises its education systems has significant impact on the kind of society they are developing and their aspirations for the future. In South Africa, broad based transformation of society towards equality and the advancement of human rights post-1994 saw changes within the education system and a shift towards the initiation of inclusion (Makoelle, 2012). From 1996, the provision of education for learners with diverse education needs has been given prominence by legislation (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Swart et al., 2002; Walton, 2018). In South Africa, inclusive education recognises the rights of children to basic education and refers to the capacity of ordinary, local schools to respond to the needs of all learners, including those requiring extra support due to learning differences, physical disability, social disadvantage, cultural difference or other barriers to learning (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016). In 2001 the South African Ministry of Education released Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education – building an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education [DoE], 2001). This report detailed the guiding principles and strategies for developing an inclusive education and training system in South African schools. The requirement of Education White

Paper 6 is for mainstream schools to reasonably accommodate the inclusion of children with special educational needs or disabilities (classified as high, moderate or low support needs) to ensure an equitable and fair future for all learners (DoE, 2001; Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016). White Paper 6 describes inclusion as “supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met” (DoE, 2001, pp.14).

The Education White Paper 6 outlines the government’s policies for a single, undivided education system and since its release, research abounds in antagonism for the shortcomings of the policy and the challenges faced by schools and educators alike in implementation of the policy (DoE, 2001; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Swart et al., 2002). In 2014 the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) for implementation of White Paper 6 was released (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2014). This policy “aims at standardising the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school, making teachers and parents central to the support processes” (DBE, 2014, pp.13).

1.2 The Research Problem

From the current state of inclusive education in South Africa it appears that the policy has, for the most part, failed to be translated into effective practice. Further, the unrealistic expectations shouldered by educators when faced with additional needs of some of the learners, places further pressure on an already burdened system. Most low socioeconomic/rural schools do not have the resources or expertise to assist learners with additional educational needs as they receive inadequate support from the relevant education departments (Hodgson & Khumalo, 2016). Many former model-C and private schools themselves are ill equipped for the challenges they are faced with, and children are either moved into smaller learner support classes or to remedial schools, or else they are not given instruction in the way they require (Makoelle, 2012).

Despite the intentions of the Department of Education to respond to the needs of all learners, particularly those who are vulnerable, and likely to be marginalised and excluded, it is clear that South Africa's education system is plagued by an overwhelming number of challenges. Much is said in these policy documents; however, whether these documents have translated into action in ensuring that teachers are equipped and trained to manage an inclusive classroom is central to many debates (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Swart et al., 2002).

Education systems are contextualised by historical struggles that have shaped their role in society and inspired meaning for the future (Armstrong et al., 2010). They are subject to the contention between political and social values, and educators, as citizens, are role players in those struggles (Armstrong et al., 2010).

The study seeks to understand how policy development and implementation takes place in South Africa, the evolution of education policy internationally and how this sets the benchmark for national policy formulation. It looks at the direct role all stakeholders play in the education system and most critically, it explores educators' experiences and observations in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years, to ascertain what opportunities are available for educators and to provide recommendations that may help bring the policy into practice.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- i) To explore educators' experiences in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years.
- ii) To ascertain opportunities that are available for educators to implement inclusive education.
- iii) To suggest recommendations that may help bring the policy into practice.

1.4 Research Questions

The research addressed the following questions in selected Pietermaritzburg schools:

- i) What are the educators' experiences in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years?
- ii) What opportunities are available for educators to implement inclusive education?
- iii) What recommendations can be suggested to help bring the policy into practice?

1.5 Aims of the Study

The study seeks to understand how policy development and implementation takes place in South Africa, the evolution of education policy internationally and how this sets the benchmark for national policy formulation. It looks at the direct role all stakeholders play in the education system and most critically to explore educators' experiences and observations in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years. The research endeavours to understand the type of professional training and development educators have received to prepare them for an inclusive classroom and to explore how adequately prepared they feel they are to respond the various learning barriers they encounter. The research also aims to discover what opportunities are available for educators through exploration of strategies that they have practiced in order to adapt their teaching techniques to accommodate learners with varied learning challenges and diverse learning styles. Linked to the aforementioned objective of identifying expedient teaching strategies, recommendations will be put forward that will possibly enhance the educator cohorts' knowledge of inclusive teaching practices, to develop further understanding of the phenomenon and help bring the policy into practice.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The rationale of the study is to understand Pietermaritzburg educators' experiences and observations of implementing inclusive education within the last five years in order to determine what progress (if any) has been made in recent years. A search

of inclusive education within scholarly literature produces a plethora of previous studies that have investigated and debated this phenomenon, as well as detailing the challenges of implementing the policies that face schools, teachers and learners alike.

Two such studies are outlined: In 2002 Swart et al. presented a comparative analysis of the findings of three independent studies aimed at identifying and describing teachers' attitudes to and experiences in implementing inclusive education in South Africa. Their key findings indicated inadequate knowledge, skills and training of teachers, lack of educational and teacher support, insufficient facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices and potential effects of inclusive education on mainstream learners. More recently, Abongdia et al. (2015) reported on the challenges facing teachers in identifying learners who have learning barriers. The results of their study revealed lack of effective training of teachers, teachers' approach to identification of learning barriers, overcrowded classrooms and lack of parental involvement and collaboration among teachers.

The present study takes the experiences of inclusive education a step further by exploring what opportunities are available for educators and suggesting practical recommendations of successes that fellow educators may have been encountered, in order to help bring the policy into practice.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations refer to the boundaries of the research study, based on the researcher's decision of what to include and what to exclude.

The current study was delimited to six schools in Pietermaritzburg; two private schools, two former model-C schools and two rural/non-fee paying schools and this is the most apparent limitation of the study. Therefore the small number of schools selected cannot be generalised beyond the population from which it was gathered.

1.8 Chapter Outline

Chapter I serves as an introduction of the study and covers the background of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions the aims and rationale of the study and the limitations of the research.

Chapter II introduces the theoretical frameworks. Literature reviews relevant to inclusive education, policy formulation and implementation, the evolution of education policy, inclusive education within the South African context, the challenges of inclusive education and findings from previous research studies are discussed.

Chapter III details the research design and methodology that was implemented in the study. It covers sampling methods, methods of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter IV provides results of the qualitative data analysis making use of the themes that were generated to present and discuss the data. Chapter V is the culmination of the discussion of the findings of the study and the recommendations being made.

1.9 Conclusion

Chapter I provided an introduction to the present study. The main phenomenon of the research were analysed and explained; this chapter served as the under study and the following chapter will expand on relevant literature related to the research topic.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Despite the intentions of the Department of Education to respond to the needs of all learners, particularly those who are vulnerable, and likely to be marginalised and excluded, it is clear that South Africa's education system is plagued by an overwhelming number of challenges as discussed. Many of these challenges are systemic and include extrinsic as well as intrinsic problems. There have been attempts at addressing these problems however many teachers feel ill equipped to handle the challenges they face and there appears to be lack of support from all levels of the education system (Abongdia et al., 2015; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Swart et al., 2002). It is however clear that these difficulties are not limited to the South African context and the current UNESCO 2020 report indicates that similar obstacles and challenges are faced by different countries the world over.

Much is said in the policy documents; however, whether these documents have translated into action in ensuring that teachers are equipped and trained to manage an inclusive classroom is central to many debates (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Swart et al., 2002). Herein lies the opportunity to explore educators' experiences and observations to ascertain what opportunities are available for educators and to provide recommendations that may help bring the policy into practice.

2.2 Theoretical Approaches

Over the last few decades there has been a theoretical shift within the educational and psychological disciplines in South Africa, in line with developments of inclusion and equality espoused in the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Post-1994 has seen a shift away from the individually-orientated medical or deficit models of education towards contextually relevant and systemically sensitive approaches in education (Landsberg et al., 2016). This study will address the role of eco-systemic theory and sociocultural theory in forming the thought processes behind the overall design of the study.

2.2.1 The medical deficit model

In order to understand the theoretical approaches that underpin this study, it is important to contextualise the radical shift in education from a medical deficit or *within-child* model to a social systems change approach. In terms of medicine, the field of its origins, the medical deficit model is primarily focused on pathology, the nature and aetiology of the presenting problem, and on treating the specific pathology (Landsberg et al., 2016). Within the field of education, when applying this model, learners with any type of difference or specific disability are singled out and the origin of the difference is looked for within the learner (Landsberg et al., 2016). Labels are then attached to learners and as such, they are separated into special schools and treated differently (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Landsberg et al., 2016). Even though this philosophy has been challenged and criticised as discriminatory and limiting, evidence of the medical deficit model can still be found in educational and psychological policy, practice and attitudes (Landsberg et al., 2016). However, as Landsberg et al. (2016) clarify, this model should not be confused with medical diagnoses necessary to understand health, illness and disability so as to plan intervention and prevention strategies. The current holistic conceptualisation of a person's functioning and disability is understood in terms of dynamic interaction between biological, individual and social perspectives (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Landsberg et al., 2016).

2.2.2 Eco-systemic theory

Various terms are used to describe this holistic approach viz. systemic or systems approach, bio-ecological, eco-systemic or ecological-systems approach (Pilon, 2003). Inclusive education cannot be studied in isolation as education is part of the wider system that includes the human, political and ethical effort for the advancement of society (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007).

The theoretical approach is adapted from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological model in order to contextualise the multiple environments of learners, educators and the education system. According to a phenomenological approach, being in the world encompasses the inner world, the interactive world, the world of men and the

environment (Pilon, 2003). Existence should be understood as the focal point of these overlapping environments as the world is classifiable by different kinds of connections (Pilon, 2003). Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model is an example of a multidimensional model of human development that suggests that there are levels of interacting systems resulting in change and development in physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural contexts (Landsberg et al., 2016). The relationship between these systems are reciprocal, multifaceted and complex (Landsberg et al., 2016) and this is illustrated throughout the study when referring to the many causation factors of barriers to learning, as well as the various role-players within the lives of school-going children. The micro, meso and macrosystems are complex layers of the environment structure (Pilon, 2003).

2.2.2.1 The microsystem

This system is comprised of interactions, roles and interpersonal relations experienced between individuals and the systems in which they participate (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). The microsystem represents an individual's immediate context; it is characterised by direct, interactional processes (with family, close friendships and school) and these types of interactions are face-to-face, social interactions (Landsberg et al., 2016). At this level, relationships can impact in two directions – both away from and toward the child (Landsberg et al., 2016). At the microsystem level, bi-directional influences have the greatest impact on the child however, interactions at outer levels can still influence the inner structures (Landsberg et al., 2016).

The microsystems in which educators are concerned, when it comes to learners that experience barriers to learning, are the home environment and school. In relation to this study, regarding educators' experiences of inclusive education, these microsystems involve the face-to-face contact in the classroom and the reciprocal influence between educator and learner; as well as the role of families and communities where values and attitudes towards education are learned.

2.2.2.2 The mesosystem

The mesosystem refers to the relationships that develop and exist between two or more of the microsystems, i.e. the mesosystem is a system of microsystems (Landsberg et al., 2016). It comprises the interrelations between two or more settings in which the individual actively participates (Geldenuys & Wevers, 2013). At this level, the family, school and peer groups interact and influence each of the systems (Landsberg et al., 2016).

At the mesosystem the study will be exploring educators' experiences of the reciprocal effects and interrelations between home (parental involvement and home circumstances) and school (including interactions in the classroom). Experiences in one microsystem such as teacher–learner interactions may influence interactions in the family system and vice versa (Landsberg et al., 2016).

2.2.2.3 The exosystem

This relates to one or more settings that do not involve the learner directly as an active participant, but which may affect or be affected by, what happens in context and relationships that directly influence the learner (Geldenuys & Wevers, 2013; Landsberg et al., 2016). It includes external networks such as the education system, the media, parental employment, health services and community structures (Landsberg et al., 2016).

Aspects at the exosystemic level explored in the study have direct influence on educators' experiences of inclusive education. Even though these contexts may not implicate the educators or learners directly, it can potentially influence the relationships they have with other microsystems (Landsberg et al., 2016).

2.2.2.4 The macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to dominant and economic structures of the larger cultural world and the underlying belief systems and customs (Geldenuys & Wevers, 2013).

This level includes aspects such as government policies, political ideology, cultural customs and beliefs, historical events and the economic system (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013). This is most distal level that influences the nature of interactions of all other levels; providing the structure and content of the inner systems (Landsberg et al., 2016).

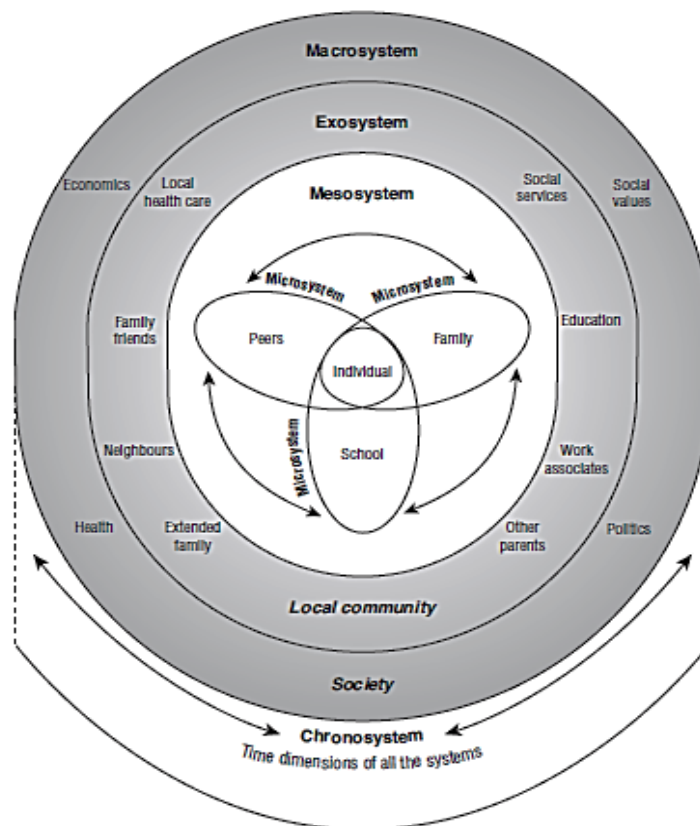
The macrosystems have an impact on the interactions of all the other levels. Fundamentally the South African Constitution provides the guiding light for the values and ideologies inherent to the systems of our society. The philosophy of inclusion and the policies which facilitate the implementation of these ideologies, fall within the macrosystem (Landsberg et al., 2016). The study will explore what opportunities are available in order for this to become part of school systems and cultures. Many of the recommendations that conclude this study have direct implication for the macrosystems.

2.2.2.5 The chronosystem

The chronosystem represents the changes that occur over a period of time in any one of the systems, it encapsulates the dimension of time and how it relates to the interactions between the systems and their influences on individual development (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013; Landsberg et al., 2016).

The chronosystem has a direct bearing on the changes needed in the education system over time for the transition to and implementation of inclusive education. Given the introduction of White Paper 6 almost twenty years back, this brings into question the relevance of the research and strategies proposed. The effectiveness of such measures is diminished in environments that are unreliable and unpredictable across space and time (Landsberg et al., 2016).

Figure 1. The bioecological model



The bioecological model. From: Landsberg, E., Krüger, D., & Swart, E. (2016) *Addressing barriers to learning: A South African perspective* (3rd ed), p. 14. Van Schaik Publishers.

Bronfenbrenner's theory is important with regard to inclusion as the bio-ecological model highlights the complexity of the interactions and interdependence of the multiple systems that impact learners, their development and their education (Landsberg et al., 2016). It is important to understand the continuous, dynamic interaction between the multiple influences in the lives of learners (Landsberg et al., 2016). Bronfenbrenner's framework, allows an understanding of inclusive education as being about the development of systems and the development of individuals within these systems (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013).

An ecological model of inclusive education in the South African context must be understood as it occurs at the microsystem level of learners, their families, and classrooms; at the mesosystem level of collaboration between parents and educators and relationships between learners and educators and their peers; at the

exosystem level of organisational structures (such as the Department of Education), policies (such as Education White Paper 6), and external role players; and at the macrosystem level of cultural beliefs, customs and values. These are critical and form a central part of Sociocultural theory which will now be discussed

2.2.3 Sociocultural theory

Lev Vygotsky's perspective known as sociocultural theory focuses on how culture (values, beliefs, customs and skills) is conveyed to the next generation (Berk, 2013). Social interaction is described as cooperative dialogues between children and more knowledgeable members, or expert peers, of a community, that is necessary for children to gain the ways of thinking and behaving that make up a community's culture (Berk, 2013; Hick et al., 2009). Higher cognitive functions and social skills are learned through participation in social interactions from early infancy and throughout life, and sociocultural theory emphasises language as an instrument for the development of higher cognitive functioning (Berk, 2013). The Vygotskian approach posits the notion of a complex relationship between teaching and development (Hick et al., 2009).

Vygotsky maintained that a learner's primary (organic) disability may impair certain social skills or acquisition of knowledge; however it is their social milieu that may severely limit development and result in delays or traits that characterise many people with disabilities (Hick et al., 2009). In other words, the social skills and behavioural differences often seen in those with disabilities are due to lack of sociocultural knowledge and lack of social interactions and experiences that could lead to the development of a secondary disability (Hick et al., 2009).

2.2.3.1 Sociocultural theory and cognitive development

Effective teaching anticipates the development of the learner, within his or her zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Hick et al, 2009). According to Vygotsky ZPD refers to the distance between what a learner can do independently and the potential he or she can achieve with guidance from and collaboration with a skilled or more capable

participant (Berk, 2013; Hick et al., 2009). The zone of proximal development symbolises the concept of readiness to learn that underscores higher levels of competence as well as highlights the importance of language in the development of higher cognitive functioning (Hick et al., 2009).

According to Berk (2013), in order to promote cognitive development, social interaction must embody the following:

- a) *Intersubjectivity*: the process whereby two participants who begin a task with different understandings arrive at a shared understanding. This creates common ground for communication as each participant adjusts to the other's perspective (Berk, 2013).
- b) *Scaffolding*: refers to adjusting the support offered during a teaching session to fit the learner's current level of functioning. Adults use direct instruction, dividing tasks into manageable units, suggesting strategies and offering rationales for using them. As the learners' competence increases, effective scaffolders gradually withdraw support (Berk, 2013).
- c) *Guided participation*: refers to a broader concept of scaffolding, of shared endeavours between more-expert and less-expert participants, without specifying the precise features of communication. This allows for variations across situations and cultures (Berk, 2013).

According to Vygotsky, learners with special education needs will have distinct ZPDs which reveal the hidden potential of these learners rather than just affirm the current level of development (Hick et al., 2009). Inclusion if related to sociocultural theories can enhance social interaction and benefit all students of all levels of ability (Verbitsky & Kalashnikov, 2013). Educators are thus required to fully understand each learner's potential and enter their specific ZPD, scaffold them in a regular classroom with support services until they can achieve a level of personal capability.

2.2.3.2 Sociocultural theory and education

Vygotsky theorised that instruction, is only useful when it moves ahead of development (Hick et al, 2009). This theory offers new perspectives on teaching and learning – one that emphasises the importance of social context and collaboration (Berk, 2013). Educators guide learning by means of explanations, demonstrations, verbal prompts and adapting their interventions to each learner’s ZPD (Berk, 2013). The teacher’s role is to encourage and support learners in their dialogue, using skills to help learners express and develop their ideas; it is this dialectic process in which teachers genuinely engage in conversation with learners that advances learning, confidence and interaction in the classroom (Hick et al., 2009).

Hick et al. (2009, p.60) cite Alexander’s (2006) theory of dialogic teaching:

1. *Collective*: teachers and children address learning tasks together, as a group or class, rather than in isolation;
2. *Reciprocal*: teachers and children listen to each other, share ideas and consider alternative viewpoints;
3. *Supportive*: children articulate their ideas freely, without fear of embarrassment over ‘wrong’ answers and they help each other reach common understandings;
4. *Cumulative*: teachers and children build on their own and others’ ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry;
5. *Purposeful*: teachers plan and facilitate dialogic teaching with particular educational goals in view.”

Learners have particular *cognitive styles* or *learning preferences* which can be accommodated by adapting and individualising the teaching approach (Hick et al., 2009). Educators may make use of multimodal aspects of communication – this approach describes communication practices in terms of the textual, aural, linguistic, spatial, and visual resources in order to communicate (Hick et al., 2009). Hick et al. (2009) point out, that learners may be visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learners;

therefore multimodal communication encourages a mutual dynamic process of interaction which has the potential to be a powerful influence in education. With regards to inclusive education, sociocultural thinking purports that learners and educators participate actively in the classroom, bringing knowledge and experience to each interaction; learning then creates new knowledge amongst participants and changes the knowledge that each takes away (Hick et al., 2009). According to these approaches to teaching, flexibility of educators is fundamental to the success of inclusive education.

2.2.4 The contextual approach

These two theories discussed are both suitable for the current study as they relate to each other in a contextual approach which considers the relationship between individuals and their physical, cognitive, and social worlds (Verbitsky & Kalashnikov, 2013). Both Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner's theories support the notion that without context, experiences cannot be interpreted and understood, and further, experience itself cannot exist without the context, as it exists phenomenologically for the individual in the form of psychological processes (Verbitsky & Kalashnikov, 2013). They also examine socio-cultural and environmental influences on development and the how the interacting systems result in change in physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural contexts (Landsberg et al., 2016).

2.3 Policy formulation and implementation process

2.3.1 Policy formulation

Since 1994 South Africa has been defined by extensive transformation at constitutional, political, and socio-economic level, and seen a re-entry into the global community (Roux, 2002). The South African public service has been engaged in the process of transforming itself into an effective, democratic, and development-oriented organisation (Brauns, 2014). This scale of reform inevitably paves the way for change and transformation in all areas of government and public administration and by virtue, public policy (Roux, 2002).

Roux (2002) cite Anderson's (1997, pp9) definition of policy as "a proposed course of action of a person, group, or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilise and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realise an objective". In other words, policies outline what the government ministry aims to achieve and the methods and principles it will use to accomplish these objectives. A policy document is not a law but it will often identify new laws needed to achieve set goals (Roux, 2002). It is an arduous responsibility for South African policy-makers and those involved in the assessment of policies to ensure that national policies reflect the values and principles of the 1996 Constitution, as well as align with international requirements (Roux, 2002). Further to this, these policies need to be cost effective and implementable, and meet the needs of a transformed society (Roux, 2002).

By and large, policy formulation is a complex and onerous task. Specific goals and objectives are established by the ruling party based on their overall vision and direction on specific societal issues (How law is made, 2020; Roux, 2002). Once a policy has been drafted, it then needs to be authorised by following the procedures prescribed by the Constitution; a policy is only considered practicable for the purpose of public administration after legislation has been passed (How law is made, 2020; Roux, 2002). This is a lengthy and slow process during which time the proposed policy is debated and negotiated with various stakeholders, such as opposition parties, the public, non-government organisations, and so forth. (How law is made, 2020). The government ministries draft discussion documents, referred to as Green Papers, on the policy to allow for deliberation and comment (How law is made, 2020). Various parliamentary and select committees in national Parliament and in the National Council of Provinces, as well as portfolio committees in Provincial Legislatures provide opportunities for public participation in debating the proposed policy (How law is made, 2020). Once a policy has been debated the Department and Ministry review the issues and possibilities, and draw up a final policy which is published as a White Paper (How law is made, 2020). The White Paper is a broad statement of intent of government policy which generally forms the basis of legislation (How law is made, 2020). The policy framework is debated and adopted by Parliament and approved by Cabinet, and it is subsequently the responsibility of

national and provincial ministries and departments to implement the policy (How law is made, 2020; Roux, 2002).

2.4.2 Policy implementation

Policy implementation refers to the actions taken that influence the achievement of intentions set out within the policy (Braun, 2014). Through policy implementation the goals and objectives of the policy-makers are put to the test and the strengths and weaknesses of the decision-making process are exposed (Braun, 2014). The onus of policy implementation is on government departments, municipalities, courts of law, interest groups, and communities; however, the process of implementation is not always guaranteed to succeed. Braun (2014) cite Ingram and Mann (1980, pp.12) who explain that the success or failure of policy implementation is “reflective of an individual’s goals, perceptions of need, and perhaps even psychological disposition towards life” and is hinged on whether or not the policy goals and objectives attract criticism of any significance, and if overall support is achieved (Braun, 2014).

On paper, South Africa appears to have some of the world’s best policies, yet there seems to be significant struggles with implementation thereof. A number of key findings regarding the breakdown between policy intent and implementation outcomes have been raised; namely that those who make the decisions may lack the capability to implement, that many policies are overambitious and lack quality and due to capacity constraints or logistical issues successful implementation has not taken place (Braun, 2014). Further to this, Braun (2014) suggests that insufficient and ineffective public servants at all levels of government contribute to the failed service delivery; hence, successful policy outcomes are as equally dependent on good policy development as they are on effective management of their implementation.

2.4.3 Policy evaluation

There are few studies that document the impact of education reform or can specify what factors contribute to the success and outcomes of education policy as change

takes time to manifest; in addition it is challenging to attribute outcomes to one specific policy (Viennet & Pont, 2017).

Viennet and Pont (2017) maintain that policy makers often do not give priority to implementation but rather focus their efforts on policy formulation; they site Hess (2013) who found that there is often a vast distance between policy and practice, particularly in education. It would seem that in South Africa, education policies are developed with little thought for the practicalities needed to ensure effective implementation and oftentimes, expectations relating to schools' capability to implement often exceed the reality. This top-down process of implementing education policy, does not necessarily consider ways of collaborating with the key stakeholders such as teachers, school leaders and learners and their parents (Viennet & Pont, 2017).

The Right Honourable Helen Clark, Chair of the GEM Report Advisory Board states that "Inclusion is not just a choice for policy makers. Imposed from above it will never work." (UNESCO, 2020).

2.5 The Evolution of Education Policy

South Africa's engagement in the global arena denotes that in many ways, international organisations and agencies, such as the United Nations, the European Union, the World Health Organisation and the African Union, among others, set the benchmark for national policy formulation (Roux, 2002). This includes global exchange in education policy-making through membership in these diverse institutions, paving the way for reform in education systems and setting global educational standards (Armstrong et al., 2010). Worldwide, social inclusion has come under the spotlight for policy-makers and how education transformation plays a pivotal role in promoting social integration and cohesion in increasingly diverse societies (Armstrong et al., 2010).

2.5.1 Segregated education

For centuries communities regarded individuals with physical or psychological impairments negatively, giving little attention to certain groups of impaired persons; these attitudes gave rise to questionable practices in the medical and educational fields (Weeks, 2003). After the Second World War, considerable research brought to the fore the concept of *learning disabilities*; described as physical impairments, not externally visible, that present as learning problems arising from neurological brain dysfunction (Weeks, 2003). It was during this time that learners were grouped into categories based on their diagnosis and taught in separate schools - education was aimed at improving learners' specific deficiencies (not to prepare them for life in society); there was a multidisciplinary medical approach to education and the influence of the environment and home were not considered important factors (Weeks, 2003). This clinical/ medical/ individual or curative approach to education gave rise to the term *special education* which resulted in exclusion, marginalisation and stigmatisation of learners due to the specialised nature of their education (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Weeks, 2003).

2.5.2 From segregation to integration

In more recent decades, concerns about segregated special education were raised and it was suggested that it may not be in the best interests of those with disabilities to be separated from society (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Scandinavian countries (such as Sweden, Denmark and Norway) pressurised government to provide special needs learners with accommodations in normal schools and campaigned for *normalisation* to be included in legislation regarding the treatment of individuals with physical impairments or special education needs (Weeks, 2003). Normalisation referred to integration of impaired persons into normal society and exposure to circumstances as close as possible to normal in terms of environment, daily routine, education practices and so forth (Weeks, 2003).

2.5.3 Mainstreaming

The notion of normalisation brought about *mainstreaming* as the recommended strategy for addressing the concerns of educating special needs learners under normal circumstances (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Weeks, 2003). Hick et al. (2009) cite Berk and Winsler (1995) who maintain that the greatest difficulties for learners with special needs are not due to their particular disability, but as a result of isolation from typically developing children and the lack of opportunity for social learning with more capable peers and this refers to sociocultural theory. Mainstreaming gained momentum in the late 1970s, and involved placing learners from special education settings into mainstream settings that were considered the least restrictive and the closest possible to normal (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Weeks, 2003). However, criticisms for this approach started to surface as learners were placed into mainstream schools without the diversity of the learners' needs being taken into consideration and for the lack attention to individual needs (Hick et al, 2009; Weeks, 2003). This was well summed up by Vygotsky who called for "normalisation through mainstreaming" but at the same time was critical of "mindless mainstreaming" (Gindis, 2003 cited by Hick et al, 2009, pp.35). It was rather a case of learners adapting to the system rather than the system providing for them (Weeks, 2003).

2.5.4 From integration to inclusion

The *inclusive education* movement was characterised by high standards for a just and fair society, and the eradication of discriminatory systems that limited educational opportunities (Armstrong et al., 2010). Inclusion refers to the philosophy of accepting all learners as they are; as full participation of all learners in all aspects of schooling; and describes the extent to which a school makes provision and caters for learners with special education needs (Hicks et al., 2009; Loreman et al., 2010; Weeks, 2003). Further to this, inclusion espouses sound pedagogy from which all children may benefit, the opportunity to reach the highest possible level of achievement, and respect for both the differences and the dignity of all learners (UNESCO, 1994). As Hick et al. (2009) point out; inclusion is about valuing diversity rather than purely assimilating learners into a system. Thus, all learners should have

access to regular schools, education and curriculum; as well as schools being responsive and willing to adapt to meet the needs of all learners.

The paradigm shift from integration to inclusion was not purely for the interests of political correctness, but rather a fundamental change in perspective (Weeks, 2003). It implies a shift away from the deficit medical-model, where the assumption is that difficulties are purely intrinsic, to a social and ecological-model, where barriers to learning exist within the broader structures of families, schools and society. This move took place as a result of the shortcomings of the deficit medical-model approach and mainstream policy, which failed to acknowledge that no two individuals are alike and that human difference is normal (UNESCO, 1994; Weeks, 2003.) By its nature, normal society consists of diverse individuals in terms of culture, language, race, gender and ability. It is argued that since learners who experience learning barriers, physical or psychological impairment form part of normal society, they should be accepted as part of the normal education system (Weeks, 2003).

2.5.5 International policy on inclusion

Armstrong et al. (2010, pp.4) assert that the definition of inclusion is not clear-cut or universal, and they go as far as to suggest that the term may cleverly “blur the edges of social policy with a feel-good rhetoric”. The introduction of inclusive education policies to Northern countries and ‘developing countries’ of post-colonial globalisation is underscored by a complex process of social change (Armstrong et al., 2010).

The 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtien, Thailand, called on countries to take measures to ensure ‘equality of treatment in education’ and no ‘discrimination in access to learning opportunities’ for ‘underserved groups’ (UNESCO, 2020). The 1994 Statement and Framework for Action adopted in Salamanca, Spain, put forward the principle that all children should be at ‘the school that would be attended if the child did not have a disability’, which was endorsed as a

right in 2006 (UNESCO, 2020). These texts have influenced the international laws and policies on which progress towards inclusion is centred.

Armstrong et al. (2010) argue that inclusive education means different things and is used in different ways in different countries; it is sometimes framed in the context of social justice and extending opportunities to all, at times it is sought to establish systems and processes to manage children who do not fit within the system of mass schooling, and sometimes it is as a result of manipulation from external role players pursuing political agendas.

2.5.6 The current state of inclusive education internationally

According to the UNESCO 2020 report; *Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and Education – All means all*; fewer than 10% of countries have laws that help ensure full inclusion in education (UNESCO, 2020). Worldwide, the key factors that cause the exclusion of learners in education systems are background, identity and ability (i.e. gender, age, poverty, disability, ethnicity, language, religion, migration or displacement status, sexual orientation or gender identity, incarceration) (UNESCO, 2020). Poverty and inequality are currently the main obstacles to access with few poor, rural young women completing secondary school in at least twenty countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2020). The report also explores the challenges holding countries back from achieving this vision; these include conflicting understandings of the word inclusion, lack of teacher support, absence of data on those excluded from education, improper infrastructure, persistence of parallel systems and special schools, lack of political drive and community support, misdirected finance, uncoordinated governance, numerous yet inconsistent laws, and policies that are not being followed through (UNESCO, 2020).

While 68% of countries have a definition of inclusive education, only 57% of those definitions cover multiple marginalised groups (UNESCO, 2020). In the case of students with disabilities, laws in 25% of countries make provisions for education in separate settings, 10% for integration and 17% for inclusion, the remainder opting for combinations of segregation and mainstreaming (UNESCO, 2020). Those with a

sensory, physical or intellectual disability are 2.5 times more likely to have never been in school than learners without disabilities; socio-economically disadvantaged schools and classrooms are more likely to have less qualified teachers and 25% of teachers in forty-eight education systems report a high need for professional development on teaching students with special needs (UNESCO, 2020).

The report acknowledges that there are downsides and dilemmas involved in reaching the ideal of full inclusion; that in some contexts, well-intended efforts may inadvertently intensify pressure to conform (UNESCO, 2020). Group identities, practices, languages and beliefs may be jeopardised, devalued, or eradicated, thereby destabilising a sense of belonging (UNESCO, 2020). There are also practical challenges for countries, whether it requires backtracking from systems that were originally based on segregation or looking to construct an inclusive system anew (UNESCO, 2020).

2.6 Inclusive education within the South African context

Within the South African context, the notion of inclusive education is largely informed by the country's history, and is complex due to the heritage of colonial education that previously informed the education policies of the country (Engelbrecht & Green, 2009). Inequalities in education were far-reaching as segregation was not only implemented along racial lines, but as Engelbrecht and Green (2007) point out, anyone perceived as different and labelled as having special needs was placed in special educational settings that excluded them from mainstream education. Further to this, the conceptualisation of special education needs was in itself discriminatory since special needs were classified as only present in children with intrinsic barriers, emphasising personal inadequacies, and all extrinsic barriers (such as systemic and social inadequacies that existed for the disadvantaged majority) were ignored (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007, Hick et al, 2009).

2.6.1 Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN)

The term *learners with special education needs* was coined in England in 1978 in the Warnock Report on Special Education Needs and was included in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Weeks, 2003). LSEN implies that learners have different learning needs from those of the average learner (Weeks, 2003). Engelbrecht & Green (2007) define 'normal' learners as those learners whose learning needs can be met without additional support or intervention in the mainstream (or 'normal') education system, whereas special education needs refers to learners who experience difficulties within the system, and require specialised intervention or support to enable them to participate actively in the learning process.

This term was criticised as being too broad, for categorising learners who did not fit into the mainstream, for not giving insight into causes of the learning process to fail and for excluding extrinsically generated deficits (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Weeks, 2003). As Engelbrecht and Green (2007, pp.93) point out, this resulted in learners being labelled as 'slow learners', 'drop outs' or 'challenged'. Special needs epitomises an individualistic deficit paradigm whereas barriers to learning embodies a systemic paradigm in which the structure of the teaching and holistic learning processes are crucial to understanding problems and intervention planning (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). The emphasis therefore shifted from *special needs* to *barriers that learners may experience in learning* as a more positive approach to understanding what learners know and are capable of achieving (Weeks, 2003).

2.6.1.1 Barriers to learning

"Barriers to learning refer to difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself, which prevent access to learning and development" (DBE, 2014, pp.8).

This approach to addressing barriers to learning recognises that by developing learners' strengths and empowering them, it enables them to participate actively and critically in the learning process (DoE, 2011).

2.6.1.2 Causes of barriers to learning

Barriers to learning arise from a complex interplay between both internal and external factors (Landsberg et al., 2016). Methula (2013) describes four categories of barriers that learners potentially face:

1. *Systemic barriers*: inadequate infrastructure, facilities and human resources, classroom overcrowding, lack of materials and assistive devices, policy and curriculum issues, transport difficulties, exclusionary practices and/or policies, and inadequate external support.
2. *Societal barriers*: poverty which may affect a child's enrolment at school, a parent's involvement with the learning process, or children displaced from families due to health or employment difficulties.
3. *Pedagogical barriers*: teaching incompetency and lack of learning materials may prevent a child from receiving a quality education.
4. *Intrinsic barriers*: challenges within individual children, which may stem from disabilities and other medical causes affecting their physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial development.

Added to this multiplicity of factors, Makoelle (2012) points out that as a developing country, many South African learners lack access to basic services such as welfare and health services. For those whose basic needs are not met, support for schooling is seldom provided (Makoelle, 2012). The HIV/AIDS pandemic has dire consequences for inclusion due to the emotional challenges it brings to the classroom, for both learners and teachers, and stigmatisation of those with the disease has the potential of resulting in exclusion (Makoelle, 2012). Learners increasingly have to take care of themselves, their parents and their siblings in families affected by HIV/AIDS (Landsberg et al., 2016). Furthermore, South Africa constitutes learners of different races, ethnic groups and linguistics as well as different socio-economic, political and religious backgrounds, making this a challenge for teachers in ensuring that all learners understand and respect one another (Makoelle, 2012). Landsberg et al. (2016) state that stereotyping and attitudes towards those with *differences* further creates barriers to learning in the

South African context. Therefore, it is clear that barriers to learning are not “caused” in one system and only one-directional, rather, barriers to learning can be the result of, or results in, an interaction between multiple systems as addressed by eco-systemic theory (Landsberg et al., 2016). Further, sociocultural theory posits that lack of social influence further exacerbates primary (or organic) learning barriers that can then lead to the development of secondary learning barriers such as psychological or behavioural differences (Hicks et al. 2009).

2.6.2.2 Identifying barriers to learning

In South Africa, identifying and responding to learners who experience barriers to learning is a formidable task. Educators are the key force in determining successful implementation of inclusive education and educators are expected to possess knowledge of learning difficulties and identify them through assessment process (Abongdia et al. 2015). However, research emphasises that teachers do not have the requisite skills and training and therefore quality support is not always available for learners who experience barriers to learning (Abongdia et al., 2015; Swart et al. 2002). As discussed, SIAS was introduced in an effort to establish a support package to address barriers, and outlined therein are three stages of implementation: Stage 1) The initial screening guided by the learner profile; Stage 2) Identifying and addressing barriers to learning and development at school level; Stage 3) Identifying and addressing barriers to learning and development at District level (DBE, 2014). The procedures that have been put in place by the various education policies have been criticised as lacking specificity and detail, and providing only broad strategies, resulting in limited direction on how to effectively implement these policies (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Abongdia et al. (2015) found that the SIAS policy does not alleviate challenges faced by educators as it consists of an excessive amount of paperwork and does not provide practical guidelines to assist already overburdened educators.

2.7 Challenges of inclusive education

Literature regarding the difficulties of implementing inclusive education continues to proliferate within research. The prevailing argument is that it will require more than

the implementation of policies for inclusive education to be realised (Abongdia et al., 2015; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Swart et al., 2002). Successful inclusion depends on the attitudes of the schools and the investment of educators in creating the culture to support inclusion (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Educators are the fundamental agents and the primary resource through whom successful implementation of an inclusive education system will be achieved (Swart et al., 2002).

Swart et al. (2002) identified the following common challenges experienced by educators, in a comparative analysis of three studies: a) inadequate knowledge, skills and training of teachers; b) lack of support for teachers; c) insufficient facilities, infrastructure and technology; and d) potential effects of inclusive education in the mainstream. More recently, a study by Abongdia et al., (2015) found that educators lack the background expertise in identifying learners who experience barriers to learning; overcrowded classrooms impede the educators' ability to respond to all learners' needs; there is a lack of parental involvement and support; there is insufficient collaboration among educators and lack of time. Donohue and Bornman (2014) further state that the DoE appears to have deficits in funding for schools in order to support learners with diverse needs in one classroom. Learners who require specialists (such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists etc.) to provide specific systemic support are seldom accommodated for (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Makoelle and Van Der Merwe (2014) point out that implementing inclusive education requires change, and bringing about change is a complex and difficult process. Educators have increased responsibility and administrative loads which are serious hindrances in the realisation of change in schools (Makoelle & Van Der Merwe, 2014). A great deal is expected of teachers despite the lack of support they receive from the education authorities and parents (Makoelle & Van Der Merwe, 2014).

These issues are not exclusive to South Africa. A study conducted in Israel by Crispel and Kasperski (2019) showed that although most teachers are in favour of

inclusion, the success of inclusion depends largely on teachers' attitudes as well as special education training and knowledge. They reported that educators struggle to overcome the issues of implementation due to lack of understanding and inadequate teaching methodologies (Crispel & Kasperski 2019). In Hong Kong research found that mainstream educators are inclined to display less agreeable attitudes towards inclusive programmes as their training lacks relevant pedagogy and does not develop competency for teaching learners with special needs (Lee et al., 2015).

The recent report by UNESCO (2020) points out that a major barrier to inclusion is the lack of belief that it is possible and desirable and that education systems the world over experience similar difficulties. The realisation of inclusive schools will require more than simply implementing policy as the South African education system is fraught with challenges and requires long-term commitment from the DoE, schools, educators and parents.

2.7.1 Responding to challenges in implementation of inclusive education

To date there has been considerable literature on how implementation of inclusive education can be addressed. In 2007, Engelbrecht and Green suggested fostering new meanings of diversity amongst communities such as parents, the general public and educational professionals so as to embrace change. They suggested promoting inclusive practices in schools which depends on the availability and quality of educational support at all levels of the education system (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Additionally they recommended building connections between schools and communities to foster collaborative partnerships of coequals who share in decision making (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). Abongdia et al. (2015) put forward the need for teachers to change their mind-set and embrace a passion for helping learners who experience barriers to learning as well as be willing to adapt their teaching methods for successful implementation of inclusive education. Further to this they espouse the importance of re-training of educators in inclusive education practices (Abongdia et al., 2015). In their study on educational change and inclusion, Makoelle and Van Der Merwe (2014) found that an inclusive pedagogy could be accomplished through collaborative problem-solving, peer coaching, co-teaching and

facilitating cooperative learning. Donohue and Bornman (2014) place the responsibility at the feet of the DoE and advocate that progress can only be made if procedures are clarified, directives are given and the appropriate authorities assume accountability and control of its implementation.

2.8 The role of educational psychologists within an inclusive education context

Educational psychology encompasses the study of emotional, learning, academic, intellectual, behavioural and social development, as well as assessment in and out of schools (EPASSA, 2020; Woolfolk, 2016). In the United States, the National Association of School Psychologists views educational psychologists as fulfilling an essential role in developing knowledge bases for both psychology and education, using effectual skills and strategies in order to support learners to succeed academically, socially, behaviourally and emotionally (Mohangi & Berger, 2015). According to the Educational Psychology Association of South Africa (2020), the role of educational psychologists includes assessment, diagnosis, psychotherapy and to work holistically with all role-players within any learning environment to optimise individual, group and systemic functioning (EPASSA, 2020). Furthermore, educational psychologists have a responsibility to improve educational policy and practice (Woolfolk, 2016).

Given the confluence of challenges hampering the progress of inclusivity in South Africa, an extended community of support should be encouraged by professionals such as educational psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists, to collaborate in a multidisciplinary approach to provide appropriate interventions to certain barriers. In South Africa, an educational psychologist is equipped with a range of skills and knowledge to aid learners facing barriers to learning and their affected families (Mohangi & Berger, 2015). Educational psychologists have the competencies to make a difference to individual learners, and support the teacher in effectively delivering quality education in an inclusive learning setting (Mohangi & Berger, 2015). Engelbrecht and Green (2002), confirm that educational psychologists can play a vital role in empowering teachers

with the necessary skills to address the diverse and unique needs of all learners in their classrooms.

The study by Mohangi and Berger (2015) found that a selection of educators in Gauteng regarded educational psychologists as professionals essential to the support of an inclusive system - as being able to screen learners experiencing barriers to learning, as well as to mentor and advise teachers. Furthermore, educational psychologists were perceived as assessors and counsellors to learners as well as to the educators and school management team (Mohangi & Berger, 2015). They concluded that educational psychologists can advise and support educators on developing individual learning programmes for learners, on types of support needed, and ways the curriculum could be adapted to accommodate learners with diverse needs (Mohangi & Berger, 2015). At a systems level, they are able to assist the whole school in reflecting on their practice and advise on developing plans to implement change for the benefit of all learners (Mohangi & Berger, 2015).

The success of inclusive education depends on the availability and quality of educational support that is offered in mainstream schools, and educational psychologists can help to achieve this (Engelbrecht & Green, 2002; Mohangi & Berger, 2015). In order for educational psychologists to participate meaningfully in an inclusive schooling system, there is a need for research and a solid foundation that will help to address the dynamics of learning barriers.

2.9 Conclusion

Chapter II provided the theoretical frameworks that are used to conceptualise the nature of the research problem and the form the basis of the analysis used to investigate the problem. National and international literature relevant to inclusive education were considered to provide further insights into this topic; including policy formulation and implementation, the evolution of education policy, inclusive education within the South African context and the challenges of inclusive education. The chapter concluded by looking at the role professionals such as educational

psychologists can play in an inclusive schooling system. The following chapter will cover the research design and methodological approach to the study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the design and methodology that were employed in conducting the study and the methods in which the research questions were investigated. It provides the discussion regarding ethical issues and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research method

Qualitative research seeks to gain insights through in-depth exploration and descriptions of data to understand and depict the experiences and actions as seen through the eyes of those who are part of the story (Wagner et al., 2012).

The qualitative interviews allows the researcher to engage with educators who have experienced inclusive education within the last five years, understand their experiences and provide -rich descriptions of the phenomenon under study. This is achieved through interaction during the interview process and immersion in the data during the interpretation and analysis stage.

Using this research design and methodology, the researcher explores educators' lived experiences and observations working within the context of an inclusive education system and, examines the meanings these experiences hold for them.

3.3 Research paradigm

The research follows an interpretivist paradigm to explore and understand inclusive education as educators experience it. Interpretivist research is based on the assumption that knowledge is gained through social constructions, such as language and shared meaning, and acknowledges the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied (Rowlands, 2005). The implication of this is that the researcher plays a vital role in the research process and is immersed in the study through interactions with the participants. Interpretivist research recognises this

visceral relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon being explored, as well as the situational context shaping the research process (Rowlands, 2005). By using this approach, it is possible for the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of the research topic and to fully engage with the exploration and interpretation of inclusive education as educators experience it.

Interpretivist research is defined in terms of epistemology (Rowlands, 2005). Somekh and Lewin (2011) define epistemology as the philosophical questions relating to the nature of knowledge and truth. Interpretivist research aims to understand the social context of the phenomenon and the process through which the phenomenon influences and is influenced by the social context (Rowlands, 2005). This definition refers to the discovery of how people make sense of their social worlds and that the construction of realities occurs in social interactions and in shared accounts of the world (Rowlands, 2005; Wagner et al., 2012). The underlying principle of interpretivist research is that all human action is meaningful and has to be interpreted and understood within the context that it occurs (O'Donoghue, 2019). Social realities are meaningful because members of social groups construct meaning through interaction (Wagner et al., 2012). Interpretivist research examines the meanings that phenomena have for people in their everyday settings, the social meanings people attach to the world around them and how they respond to them (O'Donoghue, 2019). The emphasis is on inter-subjectivity and shared meaning making (Wagner et al., 2012) therefore the interpretivist paradigm will enable the researcher to explore and understand the educators' shared experiences of inclusive education.

3.2 Research design

The research design is informed by a direct phenomenological approach which involves selection of participants [Pietermaritzburg educators] who experience the phenomenon in question [inclusive education] through investigation [semi-structured interviews] and to then transform these subjective constructs, through interpretation, to present them as objective constructs (Somekh & Lewin, 2011). In contrast, indirect phenomenology explores human being through accessing pre-cognitive

knowing accessed through the researcher's immersion in the participants' social world (Somekh & Lewin, 2011).

Phenomenology focuses on understanding the essence and interpretation of phenomena and the meaning that certain experiences hold for participants (Laverty & Calgary, 2003; Wagner et al., 2012). The emphasis is on the world as lived by a person, not as separate from the person and asks "what is this experience like?" as it attempts to unfold meanings as they are lived in everyday existence (Laverty & Calgary, 2003, pp.22). As discussed, the present study seeks to do just that in exploring the experiences of inclusive education that educators encounter within the everyday classroom context. Somekh and Lewin (2011) express that the search for knowledge is understood as seeking the truth or reality, and obtaining the truth is about understanding the phenomenon that one is exploring. Phenomenology is suited to qualitative interviews that will complement the present study.

3.4 Sampling

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) studies are typically conducted on small sample sizes due to the comprehensive analysis of individual transcripts and the aim of the study is to explore in detail the perceptions and understandings of the lived experiences of the participants (Smith & Osborne, 2003).

Based on the aforementioned, six participants were recruited from Pietermaritzburg. The sample comprises two educators each from rural schools, former model-c schools and private schools. The researcher engaged two forms of non-probability sampling, i.e. purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is suited to IPA as it makes use of a closely defined group and is deliberate (Smith and Osborne, 2003). This type of sampling requires the researcher to use specific criteria to identify the most suitable participants who are considered as representative of the relevant population (Etikan et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). Snowball sampling involves asking participants to recommend other potential participants. It entails approaching a few individuals within the relevant population;

these participants are then asked to recommend other individuals to take part, who in turn are asked to recommend more individuals (Wagner et al., 2012).

The researcher was granted permission from the DoE to recruit the educators as participants for this study (see Appendix 1). Once permission had been granted, access to the educators was sought from the principals of the relevant schools (see Appendix 2). The researcher approached educators within the target population (i.e. they have been teaching in Pietermaritzburg within the last five years). The researcher invited these educators to join the study. Once they had agreed, a signed informed consent form was obtained from the participants (see Appendix 3). The researcher then enquired if the participants could recommend other educators who are within the relevant population that the researcher then approached to interview. The process was repeated until six participants had voluntarily agreed to take part in the study.

3.4.1. Profile of the participants

Participant 1	Previously taught at private schools; she was a Drama and English high school teacher with 20 years teaching experience. She left teaching 2 years ago to pursue other endeavours.
Participant 2	A Foundation Phase teacher; currently teaches at a former model-C primary school. She has previously taught at a private inclusive school as well as a non-fee paying school. She has been teaching for 4 years.
Participant 3	Currently teaches at a former model-C, Afrikaans primary school. She teaches Social Sciences and Life Orientation in the Intermediate Phase and has 10 years' teaching experience.
Participant 4	Previously a high school teacher for 12 years, working predominantly in private schools. She taught English and History. She recently left teaching to pursue her studies. She has an Honours degree in English.
Participant 5	Has taught at 3 different rural/non-fee paying schools over the last 5 years. She currently teaches most subjects in the

	Intermediate Phase.
Participant 6	Has 10 years teaching experience; having previously worked at a non-fee paying school as well as a former model-C school. She is trained to teach Intermediate Phase and has earned her Master's degree in education. She has recently returned from overseas, teaching English in the Far East.

3.5 Data collection

The data collection method that was used in the present study consisted primarily of flexible, open ended questions to generate semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews define a line of enquiry that enables the researcher to probe and explore deeper to get a real sense of the emerging data and in doing so, the researcher can capture unexpected and varied information through the responses (Somekh & Lewin, 2011; Wagner et al., 2012). The researcher provides a stage for the emergence of the voices of those educators who experience the phenomenon in their classroom contexts. By allowing this, the researcher gets as close as possible to the real-life experiences, where the educators discuss, formulate and contextualise their views through conversations, allowing themes to unfold naturally (Somekh & Lewin, 2011).

This method is suitable for this study as it aids in expanding the understanding of educators' experiences and in exploring techniques that have worked and not worked in implementing inclusive education. The researcher followed an interview schedule (Appendix 4) that had been developed by the researcher and informed by literature and policy. The interview schedule has a pre-set format of questions to guide the interview. It is based on the research problem, research questions and other information regarding the research topic structured in a manner that assisted the researcher in obtaining the data that addresses the research questions of the study (Wagner et al., 2012). Interviews were set up for after work hours at a time convenient to each participant and the researcher spent a maximum of 60 minutes with each participant. The aim of the interviews was to collect rich, descriptive data through a two-way conversation between the participants and the researcher

(Wagner et al., 2012). The interviews were conducted in English as the researcher's first language is English; therefore no translation was required.

3.6 Data analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. The aim of IPA is to explore in detail the participant's view and lived experiences of the topic and to determine how they make sense of their experiences (Smith et al., 1999; Wagner et al., 2012). The phenomenological approach focuses on the individual's perception as opposed to an objective statement, and recognises that the research process is a dynamic exercise that is experiential, idiographic, inductive and interrogative (Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Osborne, 2003; Wagner et al., 2012). IPA involves an interpretative process on the part of both researcher and participant and is concerned with the detailed examination of the data - first providing an in-depth account of each case before looking for patterns of convergence and divergence across cases (Eatough & Smith, 2008).

Meaning is fundamental to understanding the content and complexity of the data and involves the researcher engaging in an interpretive relationship with the transcript (Smith & Osborne, 2003). The following practical steps were employed in analysis of the data according to Smith and Osborne, 2003:

- 1) Transcribing of the entire interviews, verbatim, at the semantic level. This includes false starts, pauses and laughs and noting non-verbal cues (e.g. facial expressions, tone etc.) (Smith & Osborne, 2003).
- 2) Reading the transcript a number of times to become familiar with the stories and noting items of interest or significance, including use of language and the sense of how respondents portray themselves. From this point, emerging theme titles are identified. The themes should elicit a higher level of abstraction and psychological terminology and each theme should be truly represented in the transcript and not selected purely on the basis of prevalence (Smith & Osborne, 2003).

- 3) Further exploring the emerging themes for connections and/or similarities in order to cluster them. The clusters represent superordinate themes. When clustering themes, connections are continually checked in the transcript; this form of analysis is constant and repetitive and requires close interaction between the researcher and the data (Smith & Osborne, 2003).
- 4) Producing a table of themes, ordered logically, from those identified that appear to significantly capture the respondent's experiences on the topic. The table lists the subordinate themes which correspond with each superordinate theme and an identifier is added to each item for organisation of the analysis to indicate where in the transcript instances of each theme can be found. This is done by including key words from an extract as well as the page number of the transcript (Smith & Osborne, 2003).
- 5) Analysing the other transcripts by looking for more instances of the identified themes and searching for new ones that may arise. The aim of this step is to discern patterns and to recognise convergences and divergences in the data (Smith & Osborne, 2003).
- 6) Producing a final table of superordinate themes once all transcripts have been analysed. Themes should be selected based on prevalence, richness of the account which illuminates the themes and how themes help elucidate other aspects of the account (Smith & Osborne, 2003).
- 7) Writing up a description of what the participants experienced, the meanings central to the participants' experience and how the context or setting influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Themes are translated into a narrative and analysis is expanded to explain and illustrate themes. This step includes the researcher's own experiences and care is taken to distinguish the respondents' account and the researcher's interpretation of the account.

3.7 Establishing trustworthiness

Qualitative research can never be completely value-free; however, the researcher engaged techniques to enhance the trustworthiness of the study guided by the

following criteria: credibility, dependability and confirmability and transferability (Nowell et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2012).

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility of a qualitative study is determined when readers are able to recognise the experiences represented in the study (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility addresses the compatibility between the participants' responses and the researcher's representation of them (Nowell et al., 2017). This can be accomplished using techniques such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, researcher triangulation and peer debriefing (Nowell et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2012). For the present study, the researcher made use of triangulation which refers to the combination of data sources and multiple perspectives on the topic to arrive at conclusions about the research questions (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.7.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the research process being logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Nowell et al., 2017). The researcher demonstrates dependability by providing an audit trail. This audit trail indicates the accuracy of translations of various data sources; it provides the confirmability of the findings, the evidence of the decisions and details regarding theoretical and methodological issues throughout the study (Nowell et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2012).

3.7.3 Confirmability

Confirmability is concerned with establishing that interpretations and findings are clearly grounded in and derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been derived (Nowell et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2012). The researcher made use of markers to indicate the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study. This enables others to understand how and why decisions were made and

that findings are not solely from researcher construction (Nowell et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2012).

3.7.4 Transferability

Transferability refers to the possibility of transferring the research findings to similar contexts; the basis of making similarity judgements (Nowell et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2012). Transferability was achieved by maintaining all versions of the data in their original form and the researcher providing thick descriptions, so that those who undertake to transfer the findings to their own site can judge transferability (Nowell et al., 2017; Wagner et al., 2012).

3.8 Ethical considerations

3.8.1 Reflexivity

This journey that the researcher undertook to learn about inclusive education, to understand the processes and dynamics of policy development and in talking to educators about their personal experiences was somewhat tumultuous. As an educational psychologist in-training, the researcher came across many barriers to learning having completed internship in a school. The researcher was able to experience and appreciate all sides of the coin. The researcher strongly believes that every child has a potential to fulfil, that no child should be left behind and that given the right support, interventions and strategies this could be their reality. However, the truth of South Africa is that we are not a wealthy nation, families are struggling to survive, and many schools are without basic necessities as was exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 (Dube, 2020). Under these circumstances, is it reasonable to expect parents, educators or school management to attend to each child's specific difficulty when they are working with larger, more pressing matters of survival? Perhaps in an ideal world with all the necessary resources, inclusive education is the gold standard to which we could all aspire, but in their current context it simply appears impossible. The researcher's personal impressions on the matter have waivered from complete belief in the system to utter scepticism. As the researcher came to the end of this journey, the conclusion

reached was that inclusive education in South African still has a long way to go and policy needs to be re-addressed, however there are opportunities out there, and where there are opportunities there is hope.

Throughout the research process the researcher did the utmost to ensure that there was no researcher bias and mindfulness was taken of the researcher's position when conducting the interviews. Objectivity and accuracy was achieved by continually monitoring analysis against methodological procedures, making use of multiple sources and considering multiple perspectives. Further, consultation with a research supervisor ensured that the respondents' voices are heard in Chapter IV.

3.8.2 Gatekeeper's permission

A gatekeeper is defined as a person (leader or official), an agency or board who controls access to an institution or an organisation (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). The gatekeepers were informed of the proposed research methods and processes, the potential value of the study and the recruitment process (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). The researcher received permission from the DoE to recruit the educators as participants for this study (see Appendix 1). After permission was granted, access to the educators was sought from the principals of the relevant schools (see Appendix 2).

3.8.3 Informed consent

Informed consent refers to the right of individuals to decide for themselves if they want to participate in the research project and to be fully informed about all aspects of the project that may influence their decision to take part (Ruane, 2016). All participants were required to sign an informed consent form that provided information on the nature of the study and how the results will be used (see Appendix 3). Only respondents who freely gave their permission participated in the study and they were informed that they were free to withdraw at any stage without negative consequences (Ruane, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). The researcher sought

permission to record the interviews and if any participant refused to be recorded; the researcher took down written notes as accurately as possible (see Appendix 3).

3.8.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality assumes a relationship of trust and confidence between the researcher and participants, where private information is shared on the understanding that the identity of the participant will not be divulged (Wagner et al., 2012). The researcher assured the participants of complete confidentiality by not including any names on the transcripts (pseudonyms have been used) (Ruane, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). All data will be accessed only by the researcher and her supervisor. Hard copies are stored in a locked filing cabinet and electronic data are encrypted with a password on a hard drive. All data files will be kept by the researcher's supervisor for a five year period and thereafter disposed of appropriately (i.e. shredding of documents and formatting of the hard drive).

3.8.5 Beneficence and non-maleficence

The research aims are to explore what may or may not have worked for educators whilst teaching learners with learning barriers that could be shared with other educators who have struggled with the challenges of inclusive education. These proven successes (and failures) could potentially be communicated to the DoE as suggestions to the policy-makers to re-address the implementation of White Paper 6 and to encourage further steps to be taken to assist schools in bringing the policies into practice.

All participants were treated fairly and no one was discriminated against (Wagner et al., 2012). The researcher ensured that the questions were in no way traumatising to the participants and did not push for answers if they chose not to answer a particular question (Ruane, 2016). The researcher did not foresee any questions leading to distress or discomfort; however participants may have felt strongly about the issue at hand and at the very least they may have felt passionate and intense about the topic.

The researcher's ethical responsibility was to make research findings known to participants (Wassenaar & Mamotte, 2012). Once the researcher has completed the study, participants will be given summarised feedback on the results and provided with practical recommendations that may help bring the inclusive policy into practice.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research design and methodologies that were used to generate data to address the research questions. It also covered sampling methods, methods of data collection and data analysis, as well as ethical considerations. The next chapter provides details about data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents the findings of the educators' experiences of inclusive education and the challenges they face as well as the opportunities they feel are available within their contexts. Each of the participants involved in the study is introduced briefly, followed by a detailed description of the findings.

The data were gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews with six participants: two from private schools, two from former model-C schools and two rural/non-fee paying schools. The rationale for selecting educators from different socio-economic school contexts was to determine whether educators in these schools experienced similar or different challenges. The interviews took place after school hours and each session lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. To ensure confidentiality of the educators participating in this study all participants were given codes in the place of the real names, i.e. Participant, Participant 2 and so forth.

4.2 Themes that emerged from data analysis

A total of six participants participated in this study. Upon analysing the transcribed interviews the below themes were identified in exploring teachers' experiences of inclusive education during the last 5 years were interviewed and asked to talk as widely as possible about their experiences of inclusive education. The participants' accounts were clustered around five superordinate themes: Theme 1) the labour intensive process working with inclusive education; Theme 2) the lack of adequate training, and support for educators; Theme 3) parents' lack of interest and commitment to child's learning process; Theme 4) barriers to inclusive education in South African schools; and Theme 5) suggestions to successfully roll out inclusive education in South African schools.

Theme 1: The labour intensive process working with inclusive education

During the course of interviews, it became clear that many respondents, in varying degrees and ways, experienced the processes and strategies needed to implement inclusive education as difficult and cumbersome. The formal procedures are complex, the paperwork is interminable and many of the educators are not even certain what the paperwork refers to or what is required. The process of getting concessions formally and in the correct manner proves to be particularly labour intensive.

Interviewer: *“...the administration of trying to get those concessions... Can you talk me through your experience of that?”*

Participant 2: *“It’s a nightmare. To be honest. Because you get this lump of a pack which you have to fill in between classes, in between extra murals, running to, I do tennis, coming back and then you have the academic hour and you have to fill in these forms. And from personal experience half the time I don’t even know what they want.... And there was literally papers of papers of papers that I had to fill in, I had to send in examples, I had to make copies of his books. Everything. It’s really time consuming. They don’t make it very easy to do. Like I said, most of the time I don’t know exactly what they want. And you answer to the best of your knowledge, but you don’t know if that’s what they want.... because it is such a big thing, we just give the concessions at our school internally.”*

The above participant’s account emphasises the frustration educators experience with the system of applying for concessions and the subsequent processes involved. She reflects on her negative experience of feeling overburdened with all her duties that she has to fulfil in a school day, that she finds the entire process cumbersome and painstaking and a sense of despair at not knowing what is expected of her. Her sentiments sum up many of the other participants’ frustrating experiences within inclusive education that is often earmarked as being time consuming, complex and confusing, especially within the South African context. Makoelle and Van Der Merwe

(2014) similarly found that educators have increased responsibility and administrative loads which are serious hindrances in the realisation of change in schools. Participant 2 also expresses her exasperation in stating that her school reverts to doing concessions internally, a clear indication of the lack of assistance from higher authorities, such as school management and the DoE. This certainly points to issues within both the mesosystem (the relationship between the educator and her school management) as well as the macrosystem; specifically the lack of support she feels that should come from the DoE.

Inclusivity means having to adapt lessons and meet each child where they are in order to help them with whichever barrier they are experiencing. Meaning that, in essence inclusive education can feel laborious, even without the addition of heaps of ambiguous administration that is often required during formal processes such as applying for concessions. It is evident from the data collected that assisting and educating learners with special needs and learning barriers is extremely difficult and onerous as it means having to connect on an individual level with each learner in order to successfully implement inclusivity. Inclusivity in the classroom means going the extra mile and adapting standard, existing lessons and material according to the specific learning barriers that learners face, as explained by the below participants' quotes:

Interviewer: *"How are you able to adapt your lessons?"*

Participant 1: *"In my subject, in Drama it was about confidence and creativity and definitely because it was just really about that, we do it for all the pupils because they are all different actually in some ways, so if you connect with each one of them you get something out of them... so, it did prove effective in that space. And I would often design like theatre games that were um kind of inclusive. And it would stretch them. Um but I can't imagine, I wouldn't know how to do that. In English (the subject/module), no. In English we just, you kind of just lowered the standard."*

Participant 2: *“I have a data projector so I try to have all my lessons on visuals. I know that helps. I mean for myself, seeing rather than just reading the whole time. Not all my lessons. I am trying to systematically.”*

The account by Participant 1 pertains to sociocultural theory; where she discusses the concepts of connecting with each child at the level that they are at (their ZPD) and adapting lessons (scaffolding) to get the best out of them. She recounts that a more creative space with flexibility allows her these opportunities to relate to her learners in innovative ways that she feels is not possible in more formalised subjects, such as English. The attitudes towards inclusivity of the participants are underscored by their capabilities and the resources they have. Here again it is noted that schools are inclined to manage matters of learning barriers and assisting learners, in their own way; in this case by lowering the standard of the material being taught.

Inclusive education is dependent on the necessary skills training of the teacher, and often a multidisciplinary team is the best bet in successfully assisting children with more severe learning barriers. This notion is accentuated by Participant 2:

Participant 2: *“So we had a lot of visual schedules. A lot of meetings. You have to update yourself all the time. And its trial and error. This may not work for this kid but it may work with another. For your severer cases you need the support. You have got to have the behaviour therapists on site. At least be trained to know what to do.”*

A great deal of expertise and knowledge is needed to respond to specific intrinsic barriers, such as neurodevelopmental differences that not all educators are equipped to handle. These types of barriers require specific training and a team of professionals and these are not always available. Learners who require specialists (such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists etc.) to provide specific systemic support are seldom accommodated for (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). School management invariably push these responsibilities onto the educators as there seems to be a lack of cohesion across the various systems within the school setting.

Participant 2: *“So we had this thing that he screamed a lot and after six months I could not take it anymore. And I remember sitting down with my principal and saying I can’t do this and the (other) kids can’t do this. We can’t help him. And she said. “Well where is he going to go? And if you tell me now that you just can’t do anymore then I will take him out and will tell that parents we can’t help. But that is your choice.” And I felt that it was so unfair, it was being put back into my place. So we went through different things. Clipboards of writing down behaviours. Times? What is the trigger? Is it a colour? Is it when I wear purple to school? Is it a certain time of day? So he’d scream sometimes 30 times a day. So I had to record time. What happened before; why he screamed? What happened afterwards? What was the consequence? And as a team we’d sit down and sort that out. And anyway he stayed with me for two years never mind six months.”*

Participant 2 spoke extensively about a young learner with Autism Spectrum Disorder that she previously taught. Despite calls for help to the principal this teacher was left to her own devices and forced to improvise by attempting to pinpoint the reasons for the disruptive behaviour without any specialised knowledge or assistance. She reflected on her feelings of despondency regarding the young boy and the difficulties she faced on a daily basis dealing with his behaviour; as well as the unjust situation where she as the teacher was burdened with the weight of finding a way to help this child. Conditions such as this highlight that educator training lacks relevant pedagogy and does not develop competency for teaching learners with special needs (Abongdia et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2015). This leads to the following theme which further expands on the lack of training and support for educators.

Theme 2: The lack of adequate training, and support for educators

There was a general consensus amongst the respondents regarding the little or no training they received on inclusive education whilst studying. In addition, there was unanimity regarding the lack of input from the DoE on implementing inclusive education once qualified. There was a sense of ambiguity from school management concerning evaluating learners within the broader classroom context and as a result

educators are often left to their own devices and are forced to improvise and adapt to accommodate those with learning barriers. Educators do not have the requisite skills and training and therefore quality support is not always available for learners who experience barriers to learning.

This sentiment is clearly shared by the following respondents who replied to the question: *“Have you had training specifically related to, or for this kind of education?”* as follows:

Participant 1: *“So, No. None what so ever. If there was a child with a known problem we were asked to accommodate and sometimes the accommodation was just a time concession. We were not given any guidance as to how to teach. I had one pupil in particular who was quite severely dyslexic and we were given like a vague instruction to mark... when she was writing essays, like how we interpreted.”*

Participant 3: *“I have attended a few workshops in the past ten years. In the last five years maybe one or two. But it’s not like excessive training. It’s just like a basic workshop. Giving you a few tips... But we are not equipped, there’s no special... like instructions on how to handle them, or a special class for them.*

Participant 4: *“Shockingly, we get nothing. I have had nothing. In my career at one or two schools we may have had a visiting psychologist, and optional talk on emotional issues. You know children dealing with trauma or grief. But it was never a whole staff event. Or maybe a psychologist has come in and spoken on children with ADD. Otherwise we have had nothing. Nothing. Nothing in terms of inclusive education. Um, Ja. Honestly. I don’t think we have been well equipped.”*

Participant 5: *“We haven’t had any workshop or anything specific like that about implementing inclusive education in our schools.”*

These quotes highlight the definite lack of training on how to manage an inclusive classroom and how to attend to specific barriers that learners experience. Educators feel ill-equipped and are left floundering when it comes to the expectations of education authorities and policies. As far back as 2002, Swart et al. cited research across three studies that established that educators felt that they had inadequate knowledge, skills and training to teach learners with specific education needs. The present participants convey the impression that little progress has been made and similar attitudes proliferate in modern day schools. The responses hint to the perception that deficits in training is not only at educator level, but at higher levels of management too. The lack of knowledge at the exosystem has direct bearing on the microsystems and the ability of educators to work effectively with diverse learners. Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) maintain that inadequate efforts by school officials to provide appropriate learning and developmental opportunities for all learners has the consequence of affecting the way educators implement inclusive education.

A few of the respondents indicated that they had been exposed to the concepts of inclusive education and learning barriers; they had in the very least attended workshops. When questioned about the quality of training and feeling prepared for an inclusive classroom, the educators conveyed negative reactions and overall the sense that they were not adequately prepared for dealing with many of the barriers that learners experience.

Participant 3: *“Well those workshops did give me some tools, but I think it doesn’t really prepare you 100%. Like you need proper training, if you’ve got one or more of those children in your class with a learning barrier you need proper training to work with them. So I don’t feel it’s adequate enough for you to, yes they give tips which could be helpful, but to me personally you would need more and in depth.”*

Participant 2: *“Because I went into those remedial schools, but it was also special needs schools like ‘X school’, and you got some children from your cerebral palsy and some of your um autism and stuff. I found it very difficult.*

You are walking into this and you are getting experience, without any knowledge.”

It does seem probable that expectations relating to schools' and educators' capabilities to implement often exceed the reality. The lack of training on inclusive education experienced by the educators is closely associated with their feelings of being inadequately prepared to identify specific barriers to learning in order to ensure appropriate intervention. Landsberg et al. (2016) discuss a number of suggested requirements needed to ensure that inclusive education be successfully implemented; amongst these needs are systematic and intensive training, support and guidance from professionals and skills in adapting and modifying the curriculum to address different learning requirements. Educators are not equipped and adequately trained to work with children with learning barriers and this is a prerequisite that undoubtedly needs to be addressed

As discussed in earlier chapters, The Education White Paper 6 outlines South Africa's policies for an inclusive education system and the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) was released for implementation of White Paper 6. However despite the efforts by the policy makers, it is quite troubling that as an educator of ten years, Participant 3 is not aware of the policies that are in place to guide her in the classroom:

Participant 3: *“No, I, this is actually the first time I have heard of this SIAS. I haven't had any training in that besides workshops, and nothing specifically. Not that I can remember. I mean I should remember if we did because I would have it in my mind but I can't remember having any training or being told about that.”*

Abongdia et al. (2015) emphasised that this policy (SIAS) does not in fact alleviate challenges faced by educators as it consists of an excessive amount of paperwork and lacks practical guidelines to assist already overburdened educators. This finding strongly links back to the first theme relating to the complex formal procedures of

implementing inclusive education. This certainly highlights the deficits in effective policy implementation and supplements the assertion by Armstrong et al. (2010) and other similar authors cited in this study; that policies are often developed with little thought for the practicalities.

Feelings of inadequacy add to the emotional burden placed on these educators and it would seem that the need for speciality knowledge and a fully equipped, multidisciplinary team school system is of great importance to the success of inclusive education. The following quotes touch on the point that oftentimes difficulties are generalised and learners are labelled as having attention issues.

Participant 4: *“Um and I still think a lot of, for me, ADD is labelled laziness or incompetence because it’s poorly understood. I think the more academic barriers are better tolerated by educators than the emotional” (Interviewer: “Behavioural?”) “Behavioural ones. Definitely.”*

Participant 1: *“And also, but what I think would be important is to actually educate all educators on identifying barriers. Because at the moment they just refer for assessment the moment there is anything out of the ordinary, without any accommodation, and um they all just assume it’s an attention issue or something like that.”*

Within this comment is the notion that the lack of knowledge about learning barriers is a hindrance to addressing each learner, and educators not being capable of doing justice to the specific difficulties is also encapsulated. It emphasises how the current situation not only places a burden on teachers, but it also jeopardises the progress of the children with learning barriers as the majority of learners who require intervention go unsupported and ergo restrict their full participation in diverse mainstream classrooms (Landsberg et al., 2016).

Much has been said about the DoE; however the question of whether universities are possibly also to blame for not adapting their curricula adequately according to

official DoE regulations became evident during the interviews. Various participants mentioned the lack of inclusive education training and exposure during their studies, and they shared the view that their tertiary education did not adequately prepare them for teaching within the inclusive education classroom.

Participant 1: *“My training made me aware that there are barriers out there, but it didn’t teach us what to do with it.”*

Participant 3: *“We had a subject in our 4th year. It wasn’t a full year subject it was a semester, barriers to learning. But we had a book this thick. Which, I’m not going to lie to you if you did like the different pages it wasn’t even the amount of a chapter, that we just skipped, like every two chapters, but it was very rushed up, and we just touched the surface.”*

Training needs to start at the beginning, the foundation needs to happen at the universities. This level of involvement would be at the exosystem and can be empowering for educators and learners at the microsystem level as a quality education policy at university level improves the overall experience for all involved (Landsberg et al., 2016).

Further recommendations to successfully roll out inclusive education, such as the one proposed above, will be discussed within the body of Theme 5.

Theme 3: Parents’ lack of interest and commitment to child’s learning process

Parents undoubtedly play a significant role and have a far-reaching impact on their children’s education. This is largely influenced by culture, parent education and the ability to be involved. From the data collected it became evident that some educators are of the opinion that parents are often apathetic or refuse to acknowledge difficulties when it comes to the education of their children, and more specifically when children with learning barriers are involved. Numerous participants mentioned the negative influence of parents’ seeming lack of interest, and from the

accounts of the educators below, one almost gets the feeling that parents expect teachers to assume full responsibility for the educational progress of children.

As **Participant 5** explicitly states:

“Because parents sometimes will become the barrier.”

Participant 2: *“Ja, parents, besides finances, besides not having the tools, parents are also a great a big barrier... There was also in ‘X primary’ the lack of support. In parents evening I maybe had two parents come through.”*

Participant 3: *“.... because the parents weren’t involved there’s no backing from the parents... And it’s sad because like I said, that one girl who failed – her mom works at the school and she just doesn’t care.”*

Participant 2 poignantly adds:

“But you get parents that are just not interested.”

The lack of parental interest and lack of involvement inhibits educators giving learners what they need if they don’t have the parents’ support. This situation of disinterest and apathy by parents could arguably be one the greatest shames when it comes to children not receiving the intervention they need. Educators feel a heart rendering burden when parents are unwilling to even turn up. Given the context of South Africa and the high number of low-income families and parents and caregivers working long hours, struggling to provide for the household, makes this theme a prevalent part of the greater problem within South African communities (Makoelle, 2012).

Interestingly the difficulty with parents exists on the other side of the spectrum, in private schools, where parents carry huge expectations of the educators and schools and this privilege becomes the burden to educators.

Participant 4: *“And it’s worse in a private school where there is a lot of privilege and the parents feel entitled to buy their education, so there is an expectation that well, you as the teacher must just make this thing happen. And a lot of ‘my child is a precious; gifted, and you just don’t understand them’ as opposed to acknowledging that maybe there is an issue. Behaviourally especially... And, um, there are lot of very privileged parents who just won’t acknowledge any issues.”*

Across cultures and socioeconomic status, educators experience difficulties as parents have their own expectations of their children’s abilities and often refuse to hear when educators bring children’s learning difficulties to their attention. There is a clear sense of denial which is closely correlated with insufficient knowledge or awareness of learning difficulties. As discussed by Landsberg et al. (2016) the lack of parent education on the issue of learning differences poses a threat to successful implementation of inclusive education.

The following quotes bring to the fore the matter of parents being dismissive of educator recommendations, or concerned about stigma and the shame of having a child who may need additional help.

Participant 3: *“Then you have got the parents that are really in denial. I have got a boy in my class, who is gosh, can’t remember now, he needs one on one attention, but his father is the typical ‘Afrikaanse’... And he says “No that’s my boy”. Because of his pride he is a barrier to his son. He is one of the boys that I mentioned that, he is so clever, but he writes so slowly.”*

Participant 4: *“They will fight as soon as you say “I as a teacher feel that these steps need to be taken” with regards to a child. They will take the offensive. And if it’s the stigma in our communities, it is the lack of information that the parent does not want to accept that my child is different, but can be in a normal school if they have this support... Because you will find that some parents will tell you directly that “there is nothing wrong with my child”.*

Participant 5: *“I had a really bad encounter with a parent just for the child to get glasses. They were scared and went and did a traditional ceremony. A Zulu traditional ceremony to fix the child’s eyesight. And I could see the child, that all he needed was glasses because they would squint their eyes to see or when you read they hold the book too close.... The parents, mmm, they don’t want to take that from the teacher... And it’s a shame, because sometimes you really have to dig deep with the parents.”*

The above accounts emphasise the frustration educators feel when dealing with parents who refuse to acknowledge a child’s difficulties or to consider the help being recommended. A number of respondents experienced similar predicaments when dealing with parents’ denial and fear of stigma. What comes across is that educators’ opinions and concerns are not always respected by parents and this has the consequence of undermining educators’ abilities to carry out their jobs as well as posing a barrier to children receiving corrective or interventional services or learning aides. Studies have found that parental perceptions and expectations of their children strongly influence how they respond to the education of their children (Makoelle, 2012). Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) similarly found that parents perceive their children’s difficulties as a fault in the quality of their parenting and resist recommendations from the educators.

One participant described her experience in the private school context where parents had interpreted her well-meaning recommendations as a form of racial bias and in this way; the tables were turned on the educator and she became perceived as the barrier by the parents.

Participant 4: *“The other thing that I have come across is that there is a cultural bias in terms of if a student is not strong at Science and Maths, which is many of us; I was not strong at Science and Maths. I am an Arts brain. It’s often perceived as a race related issue by some parents who insist that their child do Science and Maths because of a feeling that they might be discriminated against otherwise. So, I have parents who were, like when I was*

in a management position, say “You are trying to dumb my child down just because they are black”. So, you don’t want them to take Science, [because] they are failing it and they are getting 25% for it. That kind of thing.”

Finding herself faced with such a sensitive situation was challenging and at the same time disappointing as she had the learner’s best interest at heart, but other influences from the macrosystem, specifically cultural expectations, impeded the learner’s best chances at school. The findings at the mesosystemic level highlight the difficulties pertaining to the collaboration and cooperation between the two microsystems. As Landsberg et al. (2016, pp.13) point out, “implementing inclusion is not possible without paying attention to developing relationships between the different microsystems”.

Following on from this theme, come the overarching issues of barriers to inclusive education within the wider education system which will be discussed in Theme 4.

Theme 4: Barriers to inclusive education in South African schools

From the interviews conducted, there is little doubt that many educators are willing and able to assist with minor issues and barriers to learning. However, it becomes clear that they cannot be expected to be fully inclusive educators without the proper training and resources, or to fulfil the role of an educational psychologist or similar professional whilst in the classroom environment with a large number of learners. There are many barriers to inclusive education in South Africa that stretch beyond the educator: poverty, hardships and difficult family and home circumstances. Many of the quotes and discussions from this theme will form the basis for the recommendations in the following theme.

With no formal knowledge or understanding about specific barriers to learning the educator feels even more in the dark as to what and how to adapt the classroom environment, further they are not trained to identify these barriers themselves, so they feel it should not be expected of them, as Participant 3 reflects:

“So, they haven’t been tested or assessed or anything.”

Interviewer: *“Ok, so do I understand you, that it makes it even more difficult because you don’t know what you are dealing with?”*

Participant 3: *“Exactly so I don’t know, maybe it is dyslexia; maybe it is something else, don’t know what, what the reason is. Number one, I don’t know what the issue is and how to help. And if I knew what it was I would need some training or something or somebody telling me what to do... And even if you come to me and say what this child has got it’s not always easy to give that child that one on one in that lesson”.*

Participant 3’s sense of helplessness is apparent as she feels ineffectual regarding the difficulties that she encounters in the classroom; if she doesn’t know what she is dealing with she doesn’t know how to intervene. As discussed in Theme 2, this oftentimes leads to the generalisation of symptoms as attention issues or worse still, laziness. This speaks to the deficit model of labelling which is discriminatory and limiting (Landsberg et al., 2016)

Expanding on an issue that Participant 3 discusses above of attending to learners individually is especially worth mentioning when they are faced with large numbers of students in the classroom.

Participant 3: *“How do you deal with those kids in a class, a big class? Not just like your ideal 12 kids in a class thing. That’s not how it is... But because of finances we are sitting with 43 kids. It makes it so difficult. But inclusive education is the right way to go if you have got smaller classes... You have big classes and big classes just don’t go with learning barriers. Regardless of which learning barrier, you need those smaller attention classes.”*

Participant 2: *“And high numbers in the classroom. I mean 48 in a class that’s huge and especially looking at Grade 1s that have never been to school and don’t speak English.”*

Participant 6: *“I had 54 at the time. But the one school that we had to spend a few (days) in, it was like a week. Just observing, we didn’t do any teaching, it was, there were 80. 80 students in a classroom. And it was a high school. Not even little kids.”*

These examples highlighted above really underscore the difficulties educators face, of needing to attend to individual learners and adapting lessons when the pure logistics of having so many children in the classroom makes the reality of inclusivity out of their reach. Previous research by Abongdia et al., (2015) similarly emphasised that overcrowded classrooms impede the educators’ ability to respond to all learners’ needs. This situation makes it impossible for educators to respond to and have access to all learners.

Linked to the issue of large classes is the lack of resources. Educators are expected to give each learner what they need, however they feel that they are struggling with limited access to key facilities that could help them in their job. As Participant 2 points out:

“We had a computer room and we had five or six computers in it. The old ones. But the kids weren’t allowed to use them because they kept breaking them. So, those were off limits.”

Participant 5: *“We have 21 computers to a class of 40; certain things are not going to work. As much as you try as a teacher to use different resources, like I will go out of my way to try and find resources, so that my learners get certain concepts”.*

Participant 3: *“But they have stolen all the projectors out of the classrooms. So now it’s a battle, there is only like six between all of us. And you have to*

sign out. And I am trying to do some of my lessons on the projector if it's available."

In 2002, Swart et al. found that insufficient facilities, infrastructure and technology were among some of the common challenges faced by educators in trying to address inclusivity. It would seem that, in the 18 years since that particular study, this is still a problem in South African schools. It is clear that educators aspire to do better in order to help their learners; they are trying, but come up against many obstacles along the way. Engaging and accessible information resources that can accommodate diverse language groups and a variety of reading levels, as well as relevant assistive technological devices are vital to the implementation of inclusion (Landsberg et al., 2016).

Over and above the extrinsic barriers such as large classes and lack of resources, another important area of concern that many of the educators brought up was that of language barriers. Many parents recognise the benefits of their children becoming fluent in English, as this is commonly used in further education, as well as in most types of employment fields. Therefore they select English medium schools for their children despite these learners having very little exposure to the language. Participant 2 describes her experience with younger children and their difficulties with language:

"So yes, at 'X primary', when I was doing the grade 1s, a lot of them didn't speak English, so that was a language barrier. And it took at least the first two months for them to even try to understand what I was saying."

Participant 4 had similar encounters at high school level:

"So some students there's language, is a huge barrier. And a big disadvantage for students from not English first language backgrounds. And some of them it does disadvantage them massively. And then the quality of the primary school education has a huge impact as well. So students who have come from, scholarship students, have come from rural schools, are really on the back foot."

Many children are schooled in their indigenous home language with English as a first additional language until the end of Foundation Phase (Junior Primary); from Grade 4 (Intermediate Phase/Senior Primary), the curriculum material is taught in English. This is yet another well documented challenge within the South African education system that has hindered progress for a number of years.

Participant 5: *“Oh, I’d say language is the major one. Our kids lack understanding of a lot of concepts, a lot of things because there is a language barrier... they were learning everything in isiZulu. Everything. All the subjects in isiZulu and doing English as a second language. Right. And then getting into grade 4, now they get introduced to English. Instructions are given in English. All of a sudden they have Social Science and all these other subjects they have to do English. So how we expect them to continue in a different language?”*

The South African Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) states that Foundation Phase schooling should be instructed in learners’ mother tongue (DoE, 2007). Therefore early education is offered in the eleven official languages of South Africa; however the challenge faced is that from Grade 4 onwards, education is only available through English medium teaching (Posel & Casale, 2011). Probyn et al. (2002) found that this resulted in the Grade 4 learners making use of rote learning strategies as they had not developed the language proficiency necessary to attain comprehension of the subject content.

The LiEP goes beyond the basic concept of communication; it is the recognition of cultural diversity and the encouragement of multilingualism; it refers to the support of languages for religious purposes, as well as alternative and augmentative communication (Veriava et al., 2017). These are fundamental principles that recognise individual rights; yet, they are described and perceived as barriers to children’s education.

Extrinsic factors are a reality when children come from disadvantaged backgrounds; fractured families, instability at home, trauma and grief are similar realities facing many children. Educators are regularly confronted with these family concerns and

dire personal circumstances that impact negatively on the education of the learners in their class. Participant 2 had many personal encounters with these grim realities:

“I had a girl with HIV. Her sister had passed away the year before, also from HIV... I also had a kid whose brother passed away from German Measles, oh no, Mumps. The little brother died in her arms and she was at school the next day. So that whole thing of the sympathy, the empathy – Oh that’s life, that’s how it works and that’s how you go. Um but then also children without parents, living with grandparents. Also... I had one child whose dad, he only had a dad, who after school he would go home on the taxi by himself and then he would go with his dad to work every night. So he would spend the entire night at his dad’s work then be dropped off, so his sleeping – he wasn’t sleeping, and things like that.”

Participant 2 went on:

“So, they provided everything at home. They did the cooking. Even electricity. They didn’t have electricity to do homework. Um yes. I didn’t get to know the grade 7s as well as I would have liked to but there were things they chatted about. Like they couldn’t do their homework because there was no power... So, you know, it’s very tragic.”

Landsberg et al. (2016) raised the awareness of families affected by HIV/AIDS as well as learners increasingly have to take care of themselves and their families. Related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic are the dire consequences for inclusion due to the emotional challenges it brings to the classroom. In addition these circumstances raise the concerns of child-headed households. Statistics South Africa (2019) report that children living in child-only households are rare relative to those residing in other household types, however, there frequent circumstances when there no adults in the home for periods of time for example due to adult caregivers working long hours. This is clearly a huge burden for young learners to be faced with.

“If you look at transportation in the sense, like every day I’d walk these little grade 1s and, I mean it would start even from grade R, they’d walk to the gate

and they would say goodbye and these little five-year olds, six-year olds, seven-year olds would leave the gate, they would just go home. And when I was there, not the year I was there but the year before, one of the little boys was killed- he was pulled under a truck, he was crossing the road. He was in grade R. And they would walk across to the trains. There were train tracks. One of the other kids was killed. So, you think about these little, little people and you just close your eyes and you pray. Please come back tomorrow.”

These harrowing stories from Participant 2 point to bigger systemic problems within South Africa as a whole. Her distress in witnessing these adversities is clear - she was powerless to help the young learners who faced these hardships on a daily basis. Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) contend that children experience negative influences in their home environments battle to meet the academic demands of school and to manage their relationships with others such as their peers and educators at the microlevel.

Commonly coupled with these dire family circumstances is poverty, where there is scarcity of financial resources for basic provisions such as food. Children cannot learn if they are hungry and this is addressed through feeding schemes provided either by government, external organisations or the school itself.

Participant 2: *“A lot of feeding schemes. So, no lunch... Also, malnutrition. A lot of malnutrition, you could see the yellow in the eyes, the extension of the stomach. There were kids that we raised red flags up against.”*

Participant 4: *“We do have a feeding scheme at the school, which is great. It used to do breakfast and then lunch. But the breakfast got cut off, recently, which is horrible because you find that a child comes to the school in the morning very hungry because they haven’t had breakfast, so it’s solely a matter of them waiting until they get that lunch at lunch break.”*

Participant 3: *“... my colleague... she has a store and hands out food parcels, each week, but only she knows who, like we talk about her*

'customers' as kind of a nice way, so she knows who the families are... And we do have the 'sop kombuis' (Interviewer: "soup kitchen") Soup second break and porridge in the mornings, for all those kids coming to school hungry, which hasn't eaten or, because you can't concentrate on an empty stomach.'

The National School Nutrition Programme is the school feeding scheme that provides a small quantity of food to help to relieve child hunger and to aid caregivers when they are unable to provide enough food for their families (DBE, 2019). The issue of hunger seems to stretch across the spectrum with many educators describing the lack of nourishment as an especially heart-breaking situation that they face.

Participant 6 voiced what many of the other educators had likewise expressed, however she added an additional layer to the understanding of these barriers; that there are educators who are unable or unwilling to tolerate these issues facing the learners.

"Obviously these students came from a very poor background, where they were late for school every day, the school could not start on time, and due to these issues, extrinsic issues, management and teachers lost hope, lost patience, were not interested in the students, and the curriculum that had to be delivered. It was, "I am arriving to school to get our pension and leave", basically."

Participant 6 went on:

"I am not even joking, Catherine. I would arrive to school and the teachers would have all the ingredients to make a curry, and they would leave the students unsupervised in the classroom while they all sit up in the staffroom and make lunch and go and have a fat party at break time and not care about the students that were in their classrooms. I would be walking around, like "where is the HOD? Where is this English teacher?"... Because when I arrived (I was told) "don't expect to get anything with these students, they are

not here to learn, they are here to just get away from home, um, they arrive late, they don't care"... I literally took over the English department and the, what is it called? Life Orientation; I just took over... Why not just start the school day a little later? Just start it at 8 o'clock instead of 7:15. So for those 45 minutes I had it as free writing, free talking. It's still supervised and controlled and monitored, but then I only started the actual lesson when I knew everyone could get there. And they worked so hard and they, like it was amazing what I got out of the students... and the students cried when I left. They were like "who is going to teach us? Who is going to teach us now?"

This heartfelt account from Participant 6 clearly points to her passion for teaching and for helping those in her class despite the difficulties she faced. Her dismay at this situation was evident. These incidents at the school she was working at clearly demoralised her and forced her to take matters into her own hands. Further her narrative indicates that every level of the system has the ability to impede the education of children; including the school and teachers themselves.

Participant 6: *"And I feel, OK can you blame the teachers? Yes and No. When you are not supported by management, not supported by the Department (DoE), not getting the resources that you need, um, not getting the support from the parents. I suppose. Ok, fine, after you have been there 20, 30, 40 years you can kind of lose that passion and are not keen. But I don't feel it's fair on the students because it's not the students' fault, ever, what's happening in their life from parents' side, from poverty side, the money aspect of things..."*

The negative attitudes of educators has been well documented, Makoelle and Van Der Merwe (2014) address the phenomenon of low morale and low motivation experienced by educators since a great deal is expected of them and very little support is provided. They cite Fuller (2001) who found that since school systems are generally highly politicised this creates a barrier to the effective implementation of inclusivity.

Theme 5: Suggestions to successfully roll out inclusive education in South African schools

Throughout the above body of work numerous propositions to enhance inclusive education in South African schools can be identified, hence the addition of this ending theme. Several suggestions were made directly by this study's participants, and together with suggestions identified by the researcher, these will be considered next. The suggestions regard: training, further knowledge on dealing with specific barriers, collaboration and professional support, and the need for resources.

Training was and is one of the key issues that resound in previous literature and in the present study. When asked, *“given the opportunity what suggestions would you make to the departments of education about how effective implementation of inclusive education could take place?”* the responses were unanimous:

Participant 1: *“I think it should start in training... And that is something that needs to be made mindful that teachers who trained many years back and who are still currently teaching, you know, they haven't had that module... Um, so I just think there just needs to be availability for those kinds of courses. And perhaps insistence on it.”*

Participant 2: *“The first thing they have got to do is in-house train. I struggled in my first year, because even though in theory I had sat down and learnt what all these things were and inclusive education and White Paper 6. The reality is getting in there is not. So maybe these teachers need to be trained within a school.”*

Participant 3: *“... training will really help.”*

Participant 4: *“We definitely could have better training.”*

Participant 6: *“Should you want a policy put in place that you are expecting to work effectively and efficiently, ground level teachers need to go through adequate training... And I also think that should be implemented during the prac (practicum) process... I feel that that may be a good start when teachers are initially being trained... Termly, yearly, at least twice a year I would say there should be training where you can update your knowledge.”*

In 2002, Swart et al. identified that inadequate knowledge, skills and training of teachers was a fundamental area of concern regarding the successful implementation of inclusive education and from the present study this still seems to be a prevalent concern. Participant 1 makes a valid point in that educators, who had trained many years back, may not have been exposed to inclusivity in the way that more recently trained educators have been and this should be addressed. Participant 2 who is a younger educator and did have some level of formal instruction at tertiary level feels that practical in-house training, at school is one way to approach the matter and Participant 4 feels similarly about practical on-the-ground training, which goes beyond just the theory, as well the importance of ongoing professional development. Educators should have a solid foundation in the principles and values of inclusive education and should be equipped with the appropriate skills, methods and procedures to effectively carry out these requirements in the classroom (Landsberg et al., 2016).

From the data collected, there are two matters that go hand-in-hand with training, that of understanding inclusive education and how to implement it, as well as knowledge about barriers to learning. This encapsulates identifying such barriers and knowing how to respond to these barriers.

Participant 1: *“And also but what I think would be important is to actually educate all teachers on identifying barriers.”*

“You’ve got teachers who are unqualified and you want to throw in... five inclusive kids there and see how she copes. Where they are battling to cope with the neuro-typical kids as it is... So maybe going into a school that has a

good foundation. And starting slow. I wouldn't put five in a class. I would start with one. I would help that teacher. Educate that teacher."

Participant 2 makes a valid suggestion about starting the process in a slow manner - implementing properly in schools that are well run and that have a good foundation. She feels that lack of careful planning and further burdening educators is not going to warrant success. The DoE too, recognises that inclusivity can only happen if all teachers have a sound understanding of how to identify and address barriers to learning, and how to plan for diversity (DoE, 2007).

The old adage by John C. Maxwell goes "*teamwork makes the dream work*" and this is especially pertinent to making inclusivity work. To see the policy become a reality, the momentum needs to come from all the relevant support structures within the school community, including teachers, school based support teams, district based support teams and parents. This need for collaboration is recognised by the educators themselves; that the responsibility lies within all levels of the system:

Participant 1: *"So you are looking at management. And management has to be more open minded about things. Because how things were taught 20 years ago have changed. So, again, you have got to have a team, close teachers... It's a team. Can't just be a teacher, you need therapists involved here. (Interviewer: "And the parents?") "And the parents". (Interviewer: "And the school?"). "Yes."*

Participant 4: *"It has to involve the teachers because they are the ones that have to deal with the children. You cannot skip the person that is with the child five days a week... And I feel as well that they have to involve the parents in certain workshops that are done, if schools are going to be inclusive... So I feel like it has to involve all parties. Both from management to the educator. Even to the parents and guardian, whoever is responsible for that child."*

Participant 2: *“Having a support system, like having extra teachers, assistant teachers.*

Participant 3: *“... any teacher’s assistants... If we can have that it will make it more easy...”*

Participant 4: *“I personally think that every school, I don’t know if this is pie in the sky again, should have a psychologist. No seriously.”*

Participant 6: *“But then once teachers are in the classroom, definite support from the Department... Um, we need to get specialists on board that need to screen each and every child, whether the parent thinks there is something there or not.”*

Makoelle and Van Der Merwe (2014) wrote extensively about the need for collaboration, stating that collaborative problem-solving, peer coaching, co-teaching and facilitating cooperative learning are key to implementing change. Landsberg et al. (2016) similarly highlighted the importance of support personnel, management specialists, government professionals and administrative specialists in the realisation of an inclusive system. Beyond this is the need for additional support in the way of professionals (therapists) as well as teaching assistants; these tie in very closely with the resources suggested to undertake full inclusivity. The above quotes all indicate the educators’ similar sentiments and link back to the issues discussed in the previous theme regarding barriers to inclusive education; educators feel that they are not trained to fulfil the role of an educational psychologist or similar professional therapists. Mohangi and Berger (2015) identified this need and found that collaboration of a multidisciplinary team was crucial to responding to diverse learners and that educational psychologists were necessary to screen learners experiencing barriers to learning, as well as to mentor and advise teachers. Their function is to teach and educate learners yet much more is expected of them.

Throughout the body of data, it becomes clear that educators feel that they are expected to do more than what they feel is applicable to them or what they and their

schools are capable of. As discussed in Chapter 2, it would seem that in South Africa, education policies are developed with little thought for the practicalities needed to ensure effective implementation and oftentimes, expectations relating to schools' capability to implement, exceed the reality.

Participant 4: *"It becomes really, really hard... There has to be another way to do it because sometimes I think the ideas are not for our communities. They are not for the reality that we live in. It's almost like taking ideas from first world countries and trying to implement them at my school! Come now!"*

Donohue and Bornman (2014) highlighted that learners with specific barriers require specialists (such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists etc.) to provide specific systemic support. This concern is raised by a number of the educators who are mindful of their limitations and their scope within their context and the impression that comes through strongly is that the role of fully trained professionals needs to be considered during the policy-making process. In this vein, the following quotes resonate:

Participant 5: *"And I think the Department should be doing this with professionals who are trained and who have mastered...You will be better at doing therapy or any sort of assessment than I would."*

Participant 4: *"Because for me, dealing with young people who are vulnerable. You need a professional.... there definitely should be a psychologist at every school."*

Furthermore there is the issue of infrastructure needed to accommodate different learners' needs. As Participant 2 points out:

"Classrooms have to have different areas. They have got to have sensory areas; they have got to have equipment. They have got to have an OT (occupational therapy) room. You can't not have an OT room. You have got to have those children who are blind, those children who are - just physical

disabilities. Muscle dystrophy, can't get around. You got to have wheel chair access..."

In the same way Participant 5 realises these needs, and she underscores the importance of the DoE understanding what is happening in the schools and that without collaboration with all stakeholders, if imposed from above, inclusive education will never work.

"So we need to find and create ways that work with our specific children... We don't have children that have gadgets and that access to the Internet or all these things. We need to design methods that work for our kids... they (DoE) are not practically sure of what is happening in our schools. It's like they just take things from hearsay. Um they need to experience our schools; you'd be shocked at what teachers go through on an everyday basis."

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the themes that emerged from the data analysis and the results thereof. The results indicate that the educators experience many challenges regarding the implementation of inclusive education and that despite their belief in the idea of inclusive education; they struggle to make the policy objectives a reality in their classrooms. This chapter moreover indicates that despite the educators developing various strategies to address the barriers they experience in the classroom, they feel ill-equipped to deal with special learning needs. Consequently, it is clear that more needs to be done to assist educators and in fact, address the education system and policy making process at a grassroots level. The last chapter concludes the study by presenting the findings and giving recommendations.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The study was undertaken to understand the current state of inclusive education in South Africa and internationally. It aimed to explore educators' experiences and observations in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years by ascertaining what inclusive teaching means to them within their vocational context.

This chapter presents a summary discussion on the findings of the study drawn from the data analysis presented in Chapter IV. Based on the findings, recommendations are then made.

5.2 Summary of the study

This study explored how policy development and implementation takes place in South Africa, the evolution of education policy globally and how this sets the benchmark for national policy formulation. It looked at the direct role all stakeholders play in the education system and most critically explored educators' experiences and observations in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years. The researcher undertook to understand the type of professional training and development educators have received to prepare them for an inclusive classroom and to explore how adequately prepared they feel they are to respond the various learning barriers they encounter. The research also aimed to discover what opportunities are available for educators through exploration of strategies that they have practiced in order to adapt their teaching techniques to accommodate learners with varied learning challenges and diverse learning styles. The role of eco-systemic theory and sociocultural theory were discussed in addressing the research questions. The study was undertaken using an interpretivist paradigm and the design was informed by a direct phenomenological approach

5.2 Conclusions drawn from the research questions

This study was conducted in Pietermaritzburg with the aim of exploring educators' experiences and observations in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years.

The first research question was “*what are the educators’ experiences in implementing the inclusive education policy in the past five years?*” The findings indicate that educators experience the process of implementing inclusive education as time consuming and as a labour intensive process that is complex due to the ambiguity of the requirements and the abundant paperwork. There is little doubt that they find the administration required for formal processes such as applying for concessions as confusing and they feel overburdened. Further to this, they feel overwhelmed when faced with large numbers of children in the classroom and having to adapt lessons in order to help each learner with whichever barrier they are encountering. This is exacerbated by the little or no training they received on inclusive education whilst studying and they are given minimal support from the DoE and school management when it comes to evaluating and accommodating those with learning barriers. As a result educators are often left to their own devices and are forced to improvise and adapt on their own. The educators’ success in attending to learners with barriers is often hindered by the negative influence of parents’ seeming lack of interest or reluctance to accept that learners require intervention. This makes their experience of inclusive education more challenging as learners present with many difficulties; intrinsic barriers as well as social barriers that stretch beyond the educator, such as poverty, hardships and difficult family and home circumstances.

The second research question was “*what opportunities are available for educators to implement inclusive education?*” Many educators are willing and able to assist with minor issues and barriers to learning and they aspire to do better in order to help their learners despite coming up against many obstacles along the way. Although the educators do their best to develop various strategies to address the barriers they experience, they feel ill-equipped to deal with special learning needs. It is clear that policy-makers need to understand the reality of being an educator in a South African classroom and educators should be consulted on matters relating to education policy. Consequently, it is clear that more can be done to assist educators and in fact, address the education system and policy-making process at a grassroots level.

The third question asked, “*What recommendations can be suggested to help bring the policy into practice?*” Several suggestions were made directly by this study’s participants, as well as suggestions identified by the researcher. Adequate knowledge, skills and training of educators is a fundamental area of concern; this includes training at tertiary level, in-house training in schools as well as ongoing professional development. The need for collaboration between all the relevant support structures - from the DoE, within the school community, including teachers, school based support teams and district based support teams to parents, as well as the requisite for additional support in the way of professionals (therapists) as well as teaching assistants. Proper resources and infrastructure are necessities for accommodating specific learning barriers and these should be considered during the policy-making process.

5.4 Implications for theory

Over the last few decades there has been a theoretical shift within the educational and psychological disciplines in South Africa, towards contextually relevant and systemically sensitive approaches in education (Landsberg et al., 2016). The current holistic conceptualisation of a person’s functioning and disability is understood in terms of dynamic interaction between biological, individual and social perspectives (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Landsberg et al., 2016).

5.4.1 Eco-systemic theory

The theoretical approach adapted from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bio-ecological model was used to contextualise the multiple environments of learners, educators and the education system as a whole. The findings indicate issues embedded in all five levels of Bronfenbrenner’s framework. The implementation of inclusive education within South Africa has been severely obstructed by a lack of cohesiveness and preparedness of all role-players at the different levels of the education system. Inadequate and non-functioning support structures are a consequence of improper policy implementation and it is clear that within the different layers of the ecological system there is reluctance to embrace inclusive education. With limited collaboration and cooperation between the various levels,

there is the sense that inclusive education policy as it currently stands is an unrealistic, tall order for South African's school systems.

While the transition has been made to an inclusive education system in South Africa, significant provisions (i.e. training, infrastructure, support etc.) have not been adequately provided to prepare schools and educators for the changes required over time, or to support the education system to cope with the changes in order to implement inclusive education. This need for preparation of schools for change over time is indicative of a larger systemic problem in South African society and it appears that the policy has, for the most part, failed to be translated into effective practice.

5.4.2 Sociocultural theory

Lev Vygotsky forged a sociocultural approach that aimed to promote an educational model with a less distinctive dividing line between ordinary and special education. The current study reveals that there are educators who have the motivation to provide learners with what they need to make their learning experience meaningful and many of them are willing to subscribe to such a theory to bring about a transformation of the ZPD. However in the context of the South African social and economic landscape, it is evident that South African schools still have long way to go before such a theory can be applied for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

5.5 Implication for policy development and implementation

An important focus of this study related to understanding how policy development and implementation takes place in South Africa. It is an arduous responsibility for South African policy-makers and those involved in the assessment of policies to ensure that national policies reflect the values and principles of the 1996 Constitution, as well as align with international requirements. Inclusive education can only be realised if government is aware of the nature of the problems of the policies and are committed to resolving these issues.

On paper, South Africa appears to have some of the world's best policies, yet there seems to be significant struggles with implementation thereof. The move towards inclusion is a gradual one that should be centred on clear principles that address system-wide development and involve all levels of society. Given the finding in the present study it is imperative for collaboration between policy-makers, educators and other stakeholders in the education system; an information flow between professionals at all levels as well as between the school and families. Input from these multiple levels should shape the way policy-makers think and should be guided by further research and monitoring at all levels of the system.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in scope as only six educators in the Pietermaritzburg area of Kwa-Zulu Natal were included, therefore the findings from this small sample cannot be generalised to the entire population of educators working in South African schools. For future research into this topic, it is recommended that a larger sample size be employed. In addition, other relevant stakeholders in the education system such as policy consultants, DoE management and other professionals have been excluded.

Currently a plethora of research is available regarding educator insights and experiences of inclusive education. Therefore an in-depth qualitative study that investigates the macrosystem of policy development and the economic structures that provide the basis for education planning in South Africa, could shed light on how and why from initiation to implementation, impetus seems to recede and how this could be remedied.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that a review of inclusive education in South Africa be undertaken as White Paper 6 was developed almost twenty years ago. Much has changed across the South African education landscape since 2001 and further research by the DoE needs to be conducted on how to implement inclusive education. Given the recent COVID-19 pandemic it has become

evident that solutions implemented should respond to the diversity of all learners and should consider their needs. This should include teaching and learning using online platforms.

Collaboration at all levels of the system: the DoE, district and school is needed, as sharing expertise and resources is one of the ways to sustain a transition to inclusion. Inclusion cannot be enforced from above therefore engaging in meaningful consultation with communities and parents is essential. Since educators are fundamental to the successful implementation of policies in classrooms they should be consulted when key decisions are being made during policy development and planning. This includes proper piloting procedures and problem-solving strategies at all levels.

Compulsory training on inclusive education, widening the understanding of what inclusivity means and how to respond to barriers to learning is of utmost importance. All educators should be equipped to teach all students, and this could be achieved by preparing, empowering and motivating the education workforce. This means improving pre- and in-service training, mentorship and continuous professional development. Moreover, policies should provide for training of skills in new and alternative teaching methods as well as promote peer facilitation amongst teachers. Policy objectives must include detailed procedures to achieve policy goals.

Equity and inclusion will not be achieved without adequate funding reaching schools and students, and according to reports from Europe and North America, it costs about 2 to 2.5 times more to educate students with disabilities (UNESCO, 2009). This paints a sombre picture for poorer districts with lower capacity to raise revenue as the expense involved in educating learners with barriers to learning needs to be addressed. Policy-makers need to make provision for resources to provide critical infrastructure to accommodate learners, smaller class sizes are needed, educators require support teams and trained professionals are needed to provide therapeutic interventions. By making space for additional professional support, a multidisciplinary approach can fill gaps and make sure schools work towards the

same inclusion goal. In order for a meaningful multidisciplinary approach to an inclusive schooling system, there is a need for research and a solid foundation that will help to address the dynamics of learning barriers.

5.8 Conclusion

The present study concludes that there is no single solution that can instantly solve these long-standing issues. The challenges of inclusive education have been well documented and recommendations to remedy these are nothing new; both nationally and internationally. South Africa is not in a unique position however, there are circumstances that are unique to this country. It has been almost 20 years since the launch of Education White Paper 6 and there are still many barriers to providing quality and inclusive education to all learners in South Africa. Most children with disabilities or special needs are still not taught in classrooms with typically developing learners and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds are continually disadvantaged. However, this study does illustrate that the situation is not hopeless and the obstacles are not unsurmountable.

Education is a universal right, and should be a reality for all. Education makes a crucial contribution to building inclusive and democratic societies as the quote by the late Nelson Mandela at the beginning of this paper testifies to. Our rapidly-changing world faces endless challenges – from climate change, conflict, the forced movement of people, intolerance and hate – which further magnify inequalities between groups and individuals. As humanity, we have a collective responsibility to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, and to help to minimise ongoing societal dissonance. Inclusion in education is about ensuring that every learner feels valued and respected, and feels a sense of belonging. Inclusion is a process, not an end point and it epitomises the pursuit of social cohesion and the celebration of diversity.

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APPENDIX 1



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref:24/8/1840

Ms C Joubert
1 Meadow Lane
Kloof
3610

Dear Ms Joubert

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "PURELY POLICY? EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PIETERMARITZBURG SCHOOLS", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 04 July 2019 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMgungundlovu District



Dr. E V Ndama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 July 2019

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 - Pietermaritzburg - 3200 - Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street - Anton Lembede Building - Pietermaritzburg - 3201

Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 - Fax: +27 033 392 1000 - Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za - Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DOE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

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APPENDIX 2

Date:

Dear

My name is Catherine Joubert and I am a Masters student in Educational Psychology from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

As part of my degree I am required to conduct research and I request your permission to invite one of the educators at your school, to take part in an interview.

The title of my research is: *Purely Policy? Educators' experiences and observations of inclusive education in Pietermaritzburg schools.*

The aim and purpose of this research is to identify and describe educators' experiences and observations regarding proven successes and failures they have encountered in the classroom and curriculum under the policies of Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education – building an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001).

The study will involve a semi-structured interview that will take place after work hours at a convenient time and will take a maximum of 45 to 60 minutes.

We hope that through this exploration the researcher will identify proven successes that participating educators have encountered that may prove beneficial to fellow educators in helping bring the inclusive education policy into practice.

The names of the schools, principals and participants will be kept confidential and will not be divulged in the final report. Pseudonyms will be used and will apply should the research be used in any publications or conference presentations in the future.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSS/0276/019M).

Permission has been granted by the Department of Education (see Appendix 1)

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at: Email: 219026179@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Phone: 074 1020 801

Or my supervisor Dr Phindile L. Mayaba

Email: mayabap@ukzn.ac.za

Phone: 033 260 5374

Or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Catherine Joubert

APPENDIX 3

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Dear

My name is Catherine Joubert from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Discipline of Psychology
School of Applied Human Sciences | College of Humanities
University of KwaZulu-Natal | Pietermaritzburg Golf Road Campus

Email: 219026179@stu.ukzn.ac.za
Phone: 074 1020 801

Supervisor: Dr Phindile L. Mayaba
Email: mayabap@ukzn.ac.za
Phone: 033 260 5374

You are being invited to consider participating in the study *Purely Policy? Educators' experiences and observations of inclusive education in Pietermaritzburg schools*.

The aim and purpose of this research is to identify and describe educators' experiences and observations regarding proven successes and failures they encountered in the classroom and curriculum under the policies of White Paper 6.

The study is expected to enroll six participants who will be recruited from Pietermaritzburg. The study will comprise two educators each from rural schools, ex model-c schools and private schools. It will involve a semi-structured interview that will take place after work hours at a convenient time and will take a maximum of 45 to 60 minutes.

The researcher will ensure that the questions are in no way traumatising and will not push for answers if you choose not to answer a particular question. However, the researcher does not foresee any questions leading to distress or discomfort.

We hope that through this exploration the researcher will identify proven successes that participating educators have encountered that may prove beneficial to fellow educators in helping bring the policy into practice.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSS/0276/019M).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at: Email: 219026179@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Phone: 074 1020 801

or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Should you be willing to take part, you will be required to sign this informed consent form. Participation is purely voluntary and you will be free to withdraw at any stage without negative consequences. With your permission, the researcher would like to record the interview; however you may refuse if this is not acceptable.

The researcher will meet you at a convenient time and place however should you incur any travel costs; the researcher will cover these costs.

The researcher assures all participants of complete confidentiality by not including any names on the transcripts (pseudonyms will be used, e.g. Participant 1). Pseudonyms will apply should the research be used in any publications or conference presentations in the future.

All data will be accessible only by the researcher and her supervisor. Hard copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and electronic data will be encrypted with a password on a hard drive. All data files will be kept by the researcher's supervisor for a five year period and thereafter disposed of appropriately (i.e. shredding of documents and formatting of the hard drive).

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I _____ have been informed about the study entitled: Purely Policy? Educators' experiences and observations of inclusive education in Pietermaritzburg schools by Catherine Joubert (student number: 219026179)

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

**Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)**

Date

APPENDIX 4

Interview schedule

- 1) Please provide a brief history of your teaching experience and qualifications to date.
 - a) How long have you been teaching?
 - b) What grade do you currently teach?
- 2) What does inclusive education mean to you?
- 3) What types of barriers to learning have you seen whilst teaching during the last 5 years?
- 4) What training/ professional development specifically related to inclusive education have you received?
 - a) Could you describe the quality of this training and whether you feel adequately prepared to teach in an inclusive classroom?
- 5) How would you rate the implementation of inclusive education at your school on a scale from '*completely lacking*' to '*completely inclusive*'?
 - a) Please explain?
- 6) How are you able to adapt your lessons to accommodate children with learning barriers in your class?
- 7) What teaching strategies, if any, have you implemented in your classroom that have proven effective for those with barriers to learning?
- 8) Given the opportunity, what suggestions would you make to the DoE about how effective implementation of inclusive education could take place?

APPENDIX 5



15 October 2019

Mrs Catherine Joubert (219026179)
School of Applied Human Sciences – Psychology
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mrs Joubert,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0276/019M

Project title: Purely policy? Educators' experiences and observations of inclusive education in Pietermaritzburg schools

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 03 April 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Phindile L Mayaba
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Ruth Teen-Tomaselli
cc School Administrator: Ms Priya Konan

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za


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