

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO 4TH YEAR'S READINESS IN TEACHING IN INCLUSIVE
SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT STUDENT
TEACHERS AT UKZN**

BY

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**RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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Declaration

I Ezeonwuachusi Nnenna Fidelia, declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any university



Signature

10/10/2013
Date

I Dr. Kalenga R.C., the candidate supervisor hereby agrees to the submission of this dissertation.



Signature

10th 7/10/2013
Date

Dedication

This work is proudly dedicated to Almighty God with whose strength and guidance it was made possible.

To my hubby, Ikenna; for your love, support and encouragement; you are one in a million I couldn't have asked for more.

To my first generation; Angel and kiki for your love, care and concern for my late nights awake.

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I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following people:

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Abstract

South African education as a new frame of reference at the dawn of democracy is still on the slow progress towards the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers are seen as the key role players with regards to its proper implementation and acceptance in schools. As a result various researchers whose interest is on diverse needs have begun to examine the student teacher's willingness as well as their readiness among other links towards inclusive practices.

This study “an investigation into 4th year's readiness in teaching in inclusive school: A case study of Early Childhood Development student teachers at UKZN” aims to determine how ready the student teachers are and how well the curriculum prepared the students for the classroom to implement inclusive education; by thinking, teaching and working as an inclusive teacher in public schools in South Africa. This study also highlighted the importance of the Early Childhood Development teacher training Curriculum; to be reconstructed in order to expand, develop and reinforce more knowledge of inclusion to the pre-service teachers.

The literature study offered a review on the different studies of inclusive education with specific references on inclusion in global context, inclusion in South Africa context, inclusion in higher education, pre-service teacher's attitudes, readiness, challenges and perception to proper implementation, as well as multicultural education and Early Childhood Development (ECD).

Theoretical frameworks such as eco-systemic and social constructivist theories were employed to understand the theories influences on student teachers readiness. These were found to be appropriate in understanding student teachers readiness in terms of the structure of the curriculum and the extent of knowledge acquired by these student teachers with regards to implementation of inclusive education.

Data was collected using semi structured interview in a purposive sampling. Data analysis for this study was informed by concepts such as philosophy of inclusion, inclusive education and inclusion. The data analysis was informed by social constructivism and eco-systemic theories which helped to understand how the student teachers understand inclusive education and its implications in the classroom.

Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study that revealed that ECD curriculum of the University should be restructured to suit inclusive environments. This study concludes that the University of Kwa Zulu Natal should structure a curriculum for a Bachelor of Education in Inclusive Education.

Keywords: *philosophy of inclusion. Inclusive education, high education, multicultural education, Early Childhood Development, inclusive schools, readiness to work, inclusive teaching and teacher.*

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

Lack of access to quality education and training for younger children and youth is fast becoming a global phenomenon (UNESCO, 2009), particularly as each context is faced with different socio-economic and political and educational needs and challenges. The use of the word ‘needs’ in the context of this study relates to learners with disabilities, exceptional, physical and mental challenges, emotional vulnerabilities, as a result of racial and linguistic identities, socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds. The focus of this study is to explore ways in which educators can make education accessible to all learners, including those with challenges. Given the shortage of special schools and educators with knowledge, skills and practices to accommodate non-mainstream learners, many learners get excluded. As a consequence, at a global stage, the exclusion of learners with physical challenges at different levels of the education system has become one of the greatest problems (UNESCO, 2003). Part of the reasons for such exclusions in schools is a consequence of the education systems, over-emphasis on their own individual priorities rather than accommodating and adapting policies, something needed in running the day to day activities of the school (Sayed, 2002).

Within the context of the old South African education system under the apartheid government, there was a deliberate racial exclusion of learners. This pattern of exclusion was institutionalised and became the legalised and constitutionalised system of domination and oppression. Not only did the legalisation of the system result in overwhelming human rights violations and social injustice towards the majority of

people in the country, it also led to structural inequalities which brought about restricted access to resources and opportunities that were to enhance the development of the larger section of the population (Pendlebury & Enslin, 2004).

1.2. HISTORY OF EDUCATION: ACTS AND POLICIES FROM APARTHEID SYSTEM TO DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF RULING

From the period 1948 to 1994 a series of legislations by the then South African Nationalist government sanctioned racial, ethnic and even class practices which had a great influence in the education sector (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1999). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the National Education Policy Act of 1967, for example, stipulated that blacks would not be over-qualified for positions not envisaged for them, and promoted a racially and culturally segregated and differentiated education system based on the ideology of Christian National Education, respectively. Both legislations were re-enforced through the establishment of 18 different Education Departments. These departments were designed to serve different racial and ethnic groups within the country's education system. Accordingly, it was also characterized with discrimination and disregard for human rights. The fundamental goal through these structural decisions was, in Daniels' (2010) terms, to develop a separate system of development that will cater for different racial and ethnic groups. The outcome of these unfortunate choices was unmistakable, visible instances of racial inequality throughout South Africa. This was especially a consequence of unequal education for the citizens within the same country.

The early 1990s, however, marked the beginning of the end of legislated racial oppression. Discussions across various forums that involved specific stakeholders explored, amongst other things, ways in which the entire education system can undergo transformation. The history of discrimination, neglect and marginalisation of the large majority of the population (Ladbrook, 2009) had to come to an end. The rights of all citizens, through political, economic, social and educational transformation had to be protected through legislation. In this new context, the goal of the National Department of Education became that of championing equality in educational access and success for all, with the focus on individual and group needs taking centre stage (Engelbrecht 2006). In every respect then, the broader purpose became redressing past inequalities and creating equal opportunities in a single system of education by providing quality education (Lomofsky and Lazarus 2010). The goal was largely to meet the needs of all learners, irrespective of race, gender and class, or any form of classification that could be, and was, used against different groups in the past. South Africa's present educational goals, in other words, emerge from these sentiments: to provide quality education for all learners in order to enable them to realise their full potential and contribute and participate in the society (Prinsloo, 2001). To be able to achieve these laudable goals, the constitution of the country needed to be re-visited.

As the highest law of the country, the constitution of the new democratic South Africa expresses the nation's values and expectations of the roles, rights and responsibilities of all citizens. It is for this reason that it places value on equality, human dignity, life, freedom and security of all people (Republic of South Africa, 1996). It is against this background that all education policy documents that have emerged out of this constitution emphasize on an education system that is committed to non-discrimination,

human rights, social justice, better and equal education for all (Pendlebury & Enslin, 2004). Implied in all these values is an inclusive approach to teaching and learning, for they propagate the sense that all learners are entitled to appropriate education in an inclusive, supportive learning environment (Prinsloo, 2001).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was agreed upon universally with sets of standards and obligations towards the child and without discrimination, is the most universally accepted human rights in history (UNESCO, 2000b). It states that children everywhere, without discrimination, have the right to develop to the fullest and to participate fully in activities that will contribute into their development as human beings (Republic of South Africa, 1996). This means that every child has the right to relevant and good quality education, survival, protection from harmful influences, abuses and exploitation, to develop to the fullest and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The South African government has concerted to these rights and joined the league of other nations for protecting and ensuring children's rights. This means society can hold South Africa accountable if the rights contained in the Convention are violated.

South Africa's consent to the Convention is revealed in the South African Schools Act (Department of Education, 1996). The Act states that all learners should have equal access to basic and quality education without discrimination of any kind. It is in the context of this Act that public schools are expected to admit learners and serve their educational needs and requirements without unfairly discriminating in part or whole. This also means that schools should not deny access to learners on the basis of race,

language, religion, ability, disability, gender, culture, or any other form of discrimination.

As an international movement towards inclusion, an ethics of human dignity and equality; the Salamanca Statement made at the World Conference on Special needs education, furthermore, has served as a prominent force behind inclusion in many countries, including South Africa (Daniels 2010). The Salamanca Statement proposed a paradigm shift from a medical model of special needs which views the problem as something within the child. Instead, it proposes a systems approach which acknowledges the role of the education system, community, parents and other contributing factors which result in barriers to learning (UNESCO, 1994).

The Jomtien World Conference on Education for All sets the goal of Education for All. This goal aims to promote the right to basic education, ensures equal access and calls for the removal of all barriers (UNESCO, 2000a). At country level, different governments and non-governmental agencies are working towards achieving these goals. Having this in mind, a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) was appointed by the ministry of education. Its task was to investigate and make recommendations on “all aspect of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa” (Department of Education 1997). More specifically, the focus of the Commission was to develop education in ways that ensure that the system becomes more responsive to the diverse needs of the learner population and that the education and training system truly promotes education for all. The above commissions

presented their report in 1997 titled “Quality Education for All: Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development”. This report formed a conceptual framework for the National Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education entitled ‘Building an Inclusive Education and Training System’ published in 2001 (Daniels, 2010).

1.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (henceforth EDWP 6), arose out of the need for changes to be made to the provision of education and training so that it is responsive and sensitive to a diverse range of learning needs (Department of Education 2001). In Howell & Lazarus’s (2008) words, building an inclusive education “requires changes to the way in which people understand, conceptualize, explain and thus respond to different learning needs within the learner population”. This by implication is the aim of inclusive Education as defined by White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (Department of Education, 2001. Page 6). Inclusive education entails that:

- all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support;
- accepting and respecting the fact that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience;
- enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
- acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status;

- broader than formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures;
- changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners;
- maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institution and uncovering and minimising barriers to learners and;
- empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.

The above is clear indication that the principles underpinning inclusive education in South Africa aim to meet the needs of all learners by addressing barriers to learning, welcoming diversity and fostering maximum participation by all in the culture of the school (Daniels, 2010). It is also for this reason that inclusive education, can broadly be conceptualised as an education system that accommodates all learners' needs. It does this by acknowledging the barriers faced by the learners and meeting these needs in ways that ensure effective learning for all (Stofile, 2007).

1.4 RATIONALE

Since 1994, there has been a series of changes designed to restructure teacher education. This has been designed to align the system with the new policy and structural revolution to bring about the new democratic dispensation. These processes were necessary as South Africa's education system was determined to move from exclusive to inclusive. This new system, according to Mittler (2000), is called a paradigm shift in the education system. Paradigms according to Naickar (2000) is a move from one way of thinking and looking at something to a new way, this implies

that ways of seeing and evaluating including crucial practices have to change. The required paradigm shift for inclusive education to be successful in South Africa is evident as it requires a new culture, morale, and ways of teaching and learning. It is expected that this paradigm shift will face a number of challenges from education stakeholders. For example, teachers ability to provide for different learners at different levels in the same classroom and also government providing enough resources to assist teachers in the classrooms. Among such stakeholders, educators have a significant role to play to bring about an inclusive education (Engelbrecht, et al., 1999). Educators that are already in service face challenges when it comes to thinking, teaching and working as inclusive educators (Prinsloo, 2001). This is often a consequence of lack of proper training in inclusive practices and further professional development relating to inclusive education. Research has shown that educators have limited experience and understanding of inclusive education (Ntombela, 2011), lack of continuous improvement and development for teachers and teacher education will enable the inclusive reform efforts in schools and classrooms to fail (Engelbrecht, et al., 1999).

The need for adequate and appropriate improvements on the educator's knowledge of how to be a better inclusive educator will improve their attitudes, and this will in no time determine their commitment to inclusive practices (Bhengu, 2006). Most research on pre-service educators focuses on their attitudes (Mdikana, Ntshangase, & Mayekiso, 2007), sentiments and concerns (Oswald & Swart, 2011). Further study on the need to determine the extent to which "pre-service exit teachers" are ready and prepared for the implementation of inclusive education in public schools, nevertheless, is still necessary. Thus, it is the goal of this study to investigate student teacher's readiness to work in an

inclusive setting. It is also all the concerns discussed above that gave rise to the research questions for this study.

1.5 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How prepared are student teachers to work in an inclusive settings?
- Why do the student teachers consider themselves ready to work in an inclusive classroom environment?
- To what extent does the university curriculum prepare the student teachers to implement inclusive education?

1.6 OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives formulated in line with the above critical questions:

- To investigate the how ready the student teachers are to work in an inclusive settings;
- To investigate why the student teachers' think they are ready to work in an inclusive classroom environment and;
- To investigate the extent to which the university curriculum prepares the student teachers' to implement inclusive education.

1.7 PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which the pre-service educators are ready to work in inclusive schools as inclusive educators. This study also assists in informing curriculum re-structuring of ECD teacher training towards inclusive training and practice.

1.8 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Two theories were used in the present study as lenses to understand inclusive education and how the pre-service educators engage with the concept of inclusive practice. These theories are social constructivist and eco-systemic theories. Below I discuss each briefly.

1.8.1 Social Constructivist theory

Social constructivism as a theory of learning emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and in the process of constructing knowledge drawing from such understanding (McMahon 2007). Kukla (2002), furthermore, argues that social constructivism believes that reality is constructed through human activity. This is because knowledge is seen as a human product which is socially and culturally constructed as an individual creates meaning through their interactions with each other and with the environment they live in. Furthermore, McMahon (2007) highlights the importance of learning to be viewed as a social process as it does not take place only within an individual, nor is it a passive development of

behaviours that are shaped by external forces. This, according to Kukla (2000), is meaningful learning which occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities.

1.8.2 Eco-systemic theory

Eco systemic theory integrates both ecological and systems theories to form one theory (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010). Ecological theory is based on the interdependence between different organisms and their physical environment. This relationship between the organisms is seen holistically as every part is as important as the other. It is for this reason that system theory states that, in order to understand the whole, we need to examine the relationship between all the parts of the system. By implication, this theory sees different levels and groups of people as interactive systems where the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between all parts. This eco-systemic perspective is a situation where every individual and/or groups are linked in dynamic interdependence and in any form of relationship which might occur at any level (Kalenga, 2010). The levels the individual finds himself or herself includes the school, community, family and the broader society. Thus, this theory emphasises the need for the interaction and effects of different systems on an individual who finds himself, and this determines or influences their survival.

1.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study was conceptualized in terms of, and based on, the following concepts:

- Philosophy of inclusion;
- Inclusion and;
- Inclusive Education.

CONCEPTS CLARIFICATION

1.9.1 Philosophy of inclusion

Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, such as those connected with reality, existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language (Engelbrecht, et al., 1999). Inclusion is based upon the principle that all persons deserve to be treated equally. However, philosophy of inclusion, according to Engelbrecht (1999), has become one of the most important aspects of education within the international context and there is a need to consider it when one is faced with addressing strategies that have to do with learners experiencing difficulties in education. Kalenga (2010) points out that “the philosophy of inclusion centres on helping learners and educators to become better members of a community by creating new visions for communities and for schools”. In this context, students and educators are expected to be education reform advocates.

1.9.2 Inclusion

In Mittler’s (2000) terms, inclusion involves a process of reformation and restructuring of a school system as a whole by aiming to ensure that all people can have access to the whole range of educational and social opportunities offered by the school. This includes access to the curriculum, the whole school practices, assessment, and being able to be involved in activities within the school community. By implication, it is a concept that is wants children with any form of disabilities or diversity as active and full time participants in schools and communities. Inclusion implies a radical change of the

school in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and groupings of people (Naicker, 2006). Thus, inclusion depends on respect for diversity at all levels of education (Donald, et. al., 2010), that is, respect and cooperation is expected between each stakeholder and among the different stakeholders of education in our society. This will empower comfortable and confident learners and educators in classrooms practices. Stakeholders in the education system include learners, teachers, schools and the community as a whole.

1.9.3 Inclusive education

Inclusive education is a system of education that takes into consideration the challenges an individual faces with regards to his/her social and educational stability by valuing, welcoming and celebrating the individual differences (Mittler, 2000). It is a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of the learners. It involves all children learning together and extends the scope of the school so that it will include a greater diversity of children (Bhengu, 2006). The South African policy on inclusive education is based on providing education that is appropriate to the needs of all children, irrespective of their race, religion, gender, social economic status, among other tools that can be used to discriminate. It is a policy that considers, ensures and accommodates an inclusion of individuals with a full variety of educational needs in a single education system (Donald, et. al., 2010).

1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of this study will be done through important resources such as libraries and the internet (Google scholar). EBSCO, ERIC and Wilson searches of primary and secondary resources will be conducted to gather relevant information with the aid of the following key words inclusive education, exclusion, teachers, challenges, multicultural education and higher education training and learning among others.

The literature review focused on global understanding of inclusion, inclusion in South African context, inclusion in higher education training, multiculturalism and education, pre-service teacher's readiness towards inclusion, pre-service teacher's attitudes towards inclusive education, pre-service teacher's challenges to inclusive practices, pre-service teacher's perception and Early Childhood Education (ECD).

1.11 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research used both literature review and qualitative empirical research methods in answering the research questions listed in 1.5.

1.11.1 Research paradigm

This study selected the interpretivist paradigm with its emphasis on investigation into 4th year students' readiness to teach in inclusive schools. The interpretive paradigm is fundamentally concerned with meaning making and seeks to understand a situation by producing descriptive analyses (Creswell, 2009). The interpretivist world view aims to capture the lives of the participants in order to understand and to interpret the meaning (Walliman, 2005). Knowledge according to this view is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Within this paradigm, knowledge is built through social construction of the world.

1.11.2 Research design

The appropriate research design that was employed for this study is a qualitative research design. Qualitative method of research is important for this study because it is more descriptive, holistic, explorative and contextual in its nature and aims to produce rich description of investigated phenomena (Creswell, 2009).

Qualitative research design, furthermore, is one in which the researcher often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspective (Walliman, 2005). It is this manner that the researcher acquires knowledge about the study based on multiple meanings the participants attach on the subject. Qualitative researchers, furthermore, are those that seek a better understanding of complex situations by selecting participants who can best shed light on the phenomenon under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

1.11.3 Context and sample

The context under study was the ECD student teachers (4th years) who were registered students at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. This technique allows the researcher to choose the study participants who are the typical sample that is needed based on the purpose of the study (Walliman, 2005). This means the sample needs to be data rich. Based on the purpose of this study, the criteria for selecting the sample was registered ECD 4th year students of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal School of Education on the Edgewood Campus.

1.11.4 Research methods

Research methods are all those methods and techniques that are used for conducting the research. It is those methods the researcher uses to conduct the study and includes those methods which are concerned with the collection of data, the statistical techniques and those methods which are used for analysis of the collected data (Walliman, 2005).

As the study was concerned about an investigation into 4th year students' readiness to teaching in inclusive schools, the specific technique for data collection in the present study was one and one interview between the participants and the researcher.

1.11.4.1 Interview

Semi structured interviews were used with an intention to understand students' knowledge of inclusive education, its application in a classroom situation and their readiness to work as inclusive educators in inclusive schools. This enabled the researcher to gain a detailed picture of the participants' views on the particular topic (Walliman, 2005). The researcher probed further for clarity where there was a need. Although semi-structured interviews are sometimes time consuming, it was important for the present study when a series of follow up questions were used to clarify some concerns and aspects of the study and to get accurate interpretation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

In conducting interview, a tape recorder was used. The research questions helped in developing the interview questions and also observation notes were made during the interview. A tape recorder was important as it allowed the researcher to keep a full record of the interview recordings without having to be distracted by detailed note-taking. Using the recorder also showed the interviewees that they were taken seriously. The research questions ensured that the researcher was well prepared and was not trying to get questions ready during the course of the interview. The observation note served to record important aspects that occurred during the interview by the interviewee that is out of ordinary. Each interview lasted for about half an hour.

1.11.4.2 Data analysis

In an interpretative study, there is no clear point when data collection stops and analysis begins. In my study, for example, there was a gradual fading out of the one and a fading in of the other so that at first I was mainly collecting data and towards the end I was mainly analyzing what I had collected (Creswell 2008). Data analysis involved reading through my data repeatedly and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematizing and categorising) and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting).

Data generated from this study was analysed by familiarisation and immersion into the data; coding; building themes; elaboration and finally interpreting and checking the data through discussion. Data analysis in my study, as is the case in all qualitative research, was certainly interpretive. Thus, the analysis was less a completely accurate representation, but more of a reflexive reactive interaction between the researcher and the de-contextualized data which were already an interpretation of a social encounter (Cohen, et al., 2011).

1.11.5 Ethical consideration

The necessary permission to conduct the study was obtained in writing from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education Edgewood Campus through the Dean and the Head of Cluster of Education Studies. According to Creswell (2012), consent letters which indicated the participant's right to participate or not was given to the participants to sign. This indicate that the participants could withdraw from the

study at any time if they so wished. The obtained permission enabled the researcher to conduct the research with the selected student educators of the ECD phase specialization from the University. This is in keeping with the research policy of the university through which this study was to be conducted.

1.12 Contribution of the study to the focus area

This study was designed to offer recommendations to curriculum developers of inclusive education in the Early Childhood Development phase of the university to understand from the teachers what can be done or added to their curriculum that will enhance better training of ECD pre-service educators. It will also recommend what can be done differently with pre-service educators' curriculum in general, which will enhance their training and better equip them as inclusive teachers.

1.13 Division of chapters

This study investigated 4th year students' readiness to teach in inclusive schools. The study is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Orientation of the study;

This chapter has introduced and provided a brief overview of the study, highlighting the rationale for the study, theoretical frameworks underpinning the study, and the research process.

Chapter 2: Literature review;

This chapter engages in literature which helped in the understanding of the present study.

Chapter 3: Conceptual framework and theoretical framework;

This chapter discussed the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, namely: the philosophy of inclusion; inclusion and inclusive education; theory of social constructivism theory and eco systemic theory.

Chapter 4: Research methodology and design;

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in this study. The research is based on a qualitative method. Data was collected through interviews.

Chapter 5: Data analysis/interpretation and Findings/discussion and;

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings.

Chapter 6: Recommendation and conclusion.

This chapter recommends and concludes the thesis. In addition, limitations for the study were identified.

1.14 Conclusion

This chapter served as an introductory chapter to the present study. A brief overview of what the whole study entailed was given. Beginning from the literature, theories and concepts used to how the data will be collected and analysed was discussed briefly. The next chapter is the review of literature which will discuss the relevant literature that assisted the researcher to engage in the present study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a paramount aspect of the education system in the South African context. This is because it has the potential to enable every child in the country to acquire education without facing any form of exclusion. According to Howell & Lazarus (2008), to build an inclusive education system is necessary in order to avoid exclusion. Building an inclusive environment requires changes in the way in which people understand, conceptualize, explain and respond to different learning needs within the learner population. By learning need I mean the nature of the teaching and learning process that is required to ensure that a learner is able to access the curriculum effectively and with ease (Lessing & DeWitt 2007).

Scholarship within South African and beyond reveal that there are challenges facing educators in implementing inclusive education (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin 2006; Ntombela 2010; Sukhraj nd), about the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education (Brown, Barkley & Higginbotham 2011; Oswald & Swart 2011; Hsien 2007; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle 2009; Mdikana, Ntshangase & Mayekiso 2007), questions on how inclusive education can be promoted through practice (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin 2006), concerns about professional development and inclusion (Lessing & De Witt 2007). Considering these factors will help improve on teacher training education.

Education White Paper 6: *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* highlights ‘how the importance of transformation on education and training system must transform itself to contribute to establishing a caring and humane society’ (Department of Education 2001 p. 11). Having this in mind, the successful implementation of inclusive practices within a South African classroom requires a proper and intense education and training for both in service and pre service educators. Such training, according to Oswald and Swart (2011), will facilitate better inclusion and achievement in the classroom. It is important that such training within higher education context on pre service educators (as I pre assume that they are still young and vibrant) will provide training to enhance teachers with knowledge of different learning needs, disabilities, skills development and language proficiency among others.

It is such considerations that will develop a wealth of knowledge and show how effective pre services educators’ skills and training can become effective in combating exclusion of some learners and do away with their fears of inclusive practices. It is this training that will also enable the provision of avenues and opportunities for experiencing and practicing the acquired content knowledge in an inclusive classroom before the end of their teaching training programs. However, the pre service educators’ exposure to different learning needs will, to an extent, determine how well they can work by including all learners irrespective of learner’s race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, geographic origins and culture. This is because inclusion requires teachers to accept the responsibility for creating schools in which all learners can learn and feel like they belong (Rouse, 2009).

As a global movement towards inclusion, the Salamanca Statement proposed a paradigm shift from a medical model or within-child model to a social system change approach. The contrary proposal is that the system needs to acknowledge the different stakeholders beginning from the parents, education system, and community among others, to be one of the factors that contribute to the barrier to learning (UNESCO, 1994). By barrier to learning, Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana (2010) assert that this has to do with those factors that are a hindrance to students' ability to learn. These factors may be intrinsic and essentially within the learner, such as physical, mental, intellectual, and extrinsic factors, which are factors that operate essentially outside the learner such as poverty, socio-economic, or also inadequate learning support from the school. Irrespective of these factors, inclusive education places emphasis on quality education for every learner. Learners are not just to be accommodated and taught a different curriculum but rather, should have access to quality education which would enable them to graduate and ultimately contribute to the economy as an equal citizen (Department of Education, 2005).

For the purpose of this chapter, it was important to discuss literature that is related to the present study. Beginning from the history of inclusive education (education white paper 6) to literature focussed on inclusion from global perspective, inclusion in the South African context, pre-service educators' attitudes, inclusion in higher education, pre-service educators' challenges, multicultural education in higher education, Early Childhood Development and teacher training and pre-service educators' readiness to work.

2.2 The History of Inclusive Education (Education White Paper 6)

Before 1994, South Africa as a country under the apartheid system of government was divided along the racial lines which affected different races at different levels and its education system was extremely affected. For example “Special needs education is a sector where the ravages of apartheid remain most evident as the segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability” (Department of Education 2001 p 9). This segregation brought about lots of marginalization and affected how learners were shaped during these period, as different learners especially those with disability experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education. The result of segregation and systematic under resourcing according to Department of Education (2001 p 9) are apparent in the imbalance between special schools that catered exclusively for white disabled learners and those that catered exclusively for black disabled learners.

At the end of apartheid system of governance, there was reconsideration, restructuring and changing of existing policies and documents into a more democratically flexible and respectable policies that considers and also promotes human rights. The South African Ministry of Education in October 1996 appointed a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and a National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). The two committees (NCSNET and NCESS) were tasked “to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa” (Department of Education, 2001 p 5). They were assigned to investigate and advise the Ministry of Education on how to develop a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of the learner population (Department of Education 1997).

“Having completed their investigation, the two committees identified numerous factors that cause barriers to learning and development, factors that could be located within learners, within centers of learning, within the wider system of education or within the broader social, economic, and political contexts” (Ntombela 2006 p 1). Also Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001 p 311) highlighted that “the commission recognized that a diverse range of needs exist and that the education system needs to be structured in such a way as to accommodate a diversity of learner and system needs”. These reviews by the committees explained by the above authors implies that the educational experiences of learners with moderate to severe disabilities in mainstream education, where these learners were formally found in special schools (during apartheid government) as a result of exclusion was also considered; as a range of needs exists among learners and within the education system among other systems in the environment.

However, in addressing the problems faced by the education system, the Department of Education (1997) highlighted on the importance of the education system to provide all learners with quality education which will enable them to reach their full potential. The consequence is on identifying all ‘barriers to learning’. Barriers to learning according to Department of Education (1997 p 12) are “those factors which lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, which lead to leaning breakdown or which prevent learners from accessing educational provision”. The commission (NCSNET and NCESS) identified the following barriers to learning in the South African context; socio-economic deprivation, barriers arising from impairments, negative attitudes and stereotyping of differences, an inflexible curriculum, inappropriate languages or language of teaching and learning/language of communication, inappropriate/inadequate provision of support services, inadequate policies/legislation and lack of parental recognition and involvement.

From the above recommendation from the committee (NCSNET and NCESS) helped to inform the final policy document on inclusive education, namely the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: building an inclusive education and training system released in 2001 (Department of Education 2001). Inclusive education became one of the aims of the democratically elected government towards the education system of South Africa. Kader Asmal the then minister of education in the document referred to inclusive education as “another post-apartheid landmark policy paper that cuts our ties with the past and recognizes the vital contribution that our people with disabilities are making and must continue to make, but as part of and not isolated from the flowering of our nation” (Department of Education, 2001).

In every respect, according to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2010) the main purpose became to redress past inequalities and create equal opportunities in a single system of education by providing quality education. The main goal was largely to meet the needs of all learners, irrespective of race, gender and class, or any form of classification that could be, and was, used against different groups in the past. South Africa’s present educational goals, in other words, emerge from these sentiments: to provide quality education for all learners in order to enable them to realize their full potential and contribute and participate in the society (Prinsloo, 2001).

In the Education White Paper it is stated “classroom educators will be the primary resources for achieving our goal of an inclusive education and training system” (Department of Education 2001 p 18). This will demand the need for change in attitude to accommodate different learners and also to improve on their knowledge, skills and develop new ones. Swart

and Pettipher (2005 p 18) highlighted more by indicating that “educators will require support in the form of staff development, in-service education and training, and the opportunity to collaborate with special schools and other education support personnel within district support services”. Ntombela (2011 p 6) also emphasis on the importance of teachers knowledge and understanding of inclusive education would be greatly influenced by, among other things, the quality and quantity of professional development opportunities available to them”.

The consequences of the above aforementioned is that for our education system to be transformed it needs to actively involve educators and their concerns. Research by Mdikana et.al (2007) and Brown et.al (2011) indicated that proper pre-service training in inclusive education and continued professional development are of paramount significance if inclusive education is to be successfully implemented which will help bridge the gap of learning in schools. This to an extend shows the importance of higher education training for teachers to subsequently attach the need of inclusive education in their teacher training.

2.3 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature review is the first and foremost tool in the contextualization of a study which assists in arguing a case (Kalenga 2010). Literature on international and national views on inclusion, early childhood education, pre-service educators, and multi-cultural education will be reviewed. This is done to have a deep understanding of the present study.

2.3.1 Global understanding of inclusion

The concept of inclusive education enjoys a high profile around the world by virtue of its incorporation into policy documents of numerous international organizations, most notably the United Nations. According to Florian (2005, p. 13), some United Nations policy documents like the convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with disabilities of 1993 and the 1994 UNESCO report on the education of children with disabilities popularly known as the Salamanca statement, have contributed and affirm the rights of all children to equal education without discrimination within the mainstream education system.

Since then, Inclusive education has been a global struggle as the first movement was made towards this new approach to education. The first movement was established in 1994 by the Salamanca Statement which proposed an educational system which allows all learners their right to education in an inclusive school which provides the necessary support and resources to promote effective schooling for all (Daniels, 2010). Almost two decades have passed and some countries are still facing the challenge of implementing inclusive education in their schooling systems. This is despite a sound policy backing on inclusive movement. This implies that there is a gap between inclusive policy and its implementation process, and this need to be addressed.

Many countries face challenges of implementing inclusive education. As a consequence of this they see it as an impossible process in their education system. This could be as a result of the lengthy process of attempting to implement inclusive

education and its contextual meaning. Inclusive education will take a different form in various places. This will depend on the situations, and this is despite the fact that many jurisdictions base arguments for inclusive education on human rights (Florian 2005). This, by implication, means that every country will base their inclusion practices on what they perceive to be a problem at a particular time or on a practice the country wants to uphold. Rouse (2009) argues that there is a widespread support for inclusion at a philosophical level. This highlights concerns that the policy of inclusion is difficult to implement because teachers are not sufficiently well prepared to work in inclusive ways; as inclusion requires teachers to accept the responsibility for creating schools in which all children can learn and feel they belong.

2.3.2 Inclusion in South African context

At the end of apartheid, a series of changes emerged. Among these changes was the need to include different learners with different abilities in the mainstream classrooms. This was in line with social justice and inclusion, an important change for the education system as they call for deeper understanding of the differences in the background, ability and culture of learners. Education White Paper 6: *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* arose out of a need for changes to be made to the provision of education and training so that it will be responsive and sensitive to a diverse range of learning needs (Department of Education 2001). This report reviewed and assessed different education systems that have been applicable for decades in South Africa. However, Education White Paper 6 is a post-apartheid landmark policy paper that cuts ties with the past and recognizes the vital contribution that people with disabilities are making and must continue to make.

South Africa's policy on inclusive education is vastly influenced by its history of segregation experienced during the apartheid era, and hence inclusion is not limited to learners with disabilities, but to all learners who were previously disadvantaged and to those who face any barriers to education (Department of Education, 2001). For the South African education system to become inclusive rather than exclusive, teachers need to be in the forefront of this movement. This by implication requires every teacher to support all learners, irrespective of background, religion, social economic status, race and any form of disability. Educators' preparation to deliver inclusive services to all learners, irrespective of their differences, is increasingly important because of the changes in law and policy emphasizing student access to, and achievement in, the general education curriculum (Florian 2005). In-service educators who had their training during the apartheid period did not have the basic training on how to be inclusive in teaching and learning. However, higher education training for teachers has made inclusive training part of the requirements for teacher education and training.

The aim of inclusive education is that it will bring fundamental changes to improve schools and accommodate learners' diversity in order to ensure quality education for all. This is in line with the aim of teacher training towards inclusion in higher education, which is set to equip teachers in educating all children more effectively than may have been done in the past. As it (inclusion) has become a challenging goal confronting teacher education program (Shade & Stewart 2001). The need to adequately educate pre-service educators towards inclusive practices will help prepare and motivate them for a more diverse student population as demands are required for

teachers to accommodate different learners in classrooms (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle 2009). With these aims in mind, pre-service educators are being studied to determine their different challenges and motivations to becoming inclusive or to work in inclusive schools.

There are other factors that contribute to the success or failure of the implementation of inclusive education. These include involvement and commitment of all stakeholders. The Education White Paper 6 also acknowledges the need for support teams in order to successfully implement inclusive education. These support teams include, but are not restricted to, institutional level support teams which include the schooling community who are to identify learning barriers and liaise with the circuit-based support teams and district-based support team (Department of Education 2001). The district level support team includes specialized support services to assist the institutionalized support team (Department of Education, 2001). These teams are developed based on the needs identified in each community and dependent on the skills available in the district (Department of Education, 2005).

2.3.3 Inclusion and higher education and training

Beyond the primary, secondary and special school sector, the goal is also to transform further education and higher education to recognize and address diverse learners needs, especially the needs of disabled learners (Daniels 2010). South Africa's higher education institutions have incorporated the theory and practice of inclusion into the curriculum for pre- and in- service training of educators and other relevant professionals (Lomofsky & Lazarus 2001) as pre-service education will present an

opportunity to address teachers' concerns and alter negative attitudes towards inclusive education before formal engagement with students (Oswald & Swart 2011). It is of high importance that undergraduate programs provide courses and relevant experiences that prepare pre-service educators to interact with, and have a positive effect on, diverse learners (Brown, Barkley, & Higginbotham, 2011). Pre-service educator training on Inclusion, according to Hsien (2001 p 54), is the most appropriate and effective platform to prepare teachers on inclusive practices as they may not yet have had to cope with most of the additional demands of teaching, such as increased administrative or extra-curricular responsibility. These, by implication, will aid educators with new knowledge of experiencing different learning needs alongside with educational strategies.

Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001, p 213) suggest that "a huge effort will have to be made by policy makers and provincial education departments to effect the paradigm shift towards inclusive education" as they found that an average teacher is neither prepared nor ready to teach learners in inclusive classroom effectively as a result of the challenges they face. This has placed demands on higher education training for educators on what their curriculum should contain; as what will be learnt will help change the unforeseen attitudes and how pre-service educators view inclusion. However, Prinsloo (2001, p 344) argues that the most important problem that has to be overcome in the process of proper inclusion in classrooms is the "training and empowerment of teachers to identify and effectively support learners who experience barriers to learning".

Engelbrecht (2006) argues that lack of effective accommodation of unique individual educational needs in the classroom is as a result of a gap in the education of future educators. This means that there is a great need for pre-service program of teachers to be developed around a philosophy that incorporates a clear vision of inclusion and promotes acceptance of all learners regardless of ability. Winter (2006) suggests that teacher education and training must ensure that this curriculum prepares them to include all students into mainstream classrooms regardless of individual difference. Furthermore, Daniels, (2010) highlights the importance of high quality professional preparation and development of pre-service and in-service educators which will equip them for and update their knowledge in meeting the needs of a diverse classroom population.

With proper training and development, educators will be empowered to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom. Prinsloo's (2001) study of working towards inclusive education in South African classrooms highlights the importance of educators' training in pre- and in-service programmes to focus on the strengths of learners and to regard the different cultural and ethnic backgrounds of learners as having the potential to stimulate a richer learning environment. Such training, according to Gagliardi (1994), will help educators understand the diverse needs of learners, identify their problems and to be able to give support in order for them to learn and develop optimally within the context of the classroom.

Brown, et. al., (2011) found that pre-service educator participation in courses that expose them to inclusive practices increased their overall awareness and willingness to

work with diverse learners. This is in line with Ryan, et. al., (2009) recommendations that teacher education institutes should offer field experiences, as well as courses focused on teaching diverse learners. Courses that focus on teaching diverse learners should consider multiculturalism in their curriculum. This, according to Brown, et. al., (2011), suggested that a multicultural curriculum together with the quality of their (pre-service teacher) field experiences can work, in order to construct a more accurate reality for pre-service educators as it will relate more to the needs of diverse learners.

2.3.4 Inclusive education and curriculum

Developing an inclusive setting, school, environment and education involves developing a curriculum that will reflect the principles of inclusive education (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1999). Curriculum is socially constructed. This means that it is developed by people who have particular beliefs about the process of education at a particular time and because it is constructed it can be changed and reformed. Since 1990, there have been several curricula introduced and reformed in order to get the South African education system right.

The first phase of curriculum change according to Schlebusch, Baxen, Wildsch, and Naicker (1998) involved the merging of the syllabus documents of different education departments into one national syllabus. The second phase was the development and launch of Curriculum 2005, the South African version of outcomes based education (OBE), which was introduced to usher in an exciting new era in the education system. The goal was to enable all children to have high-quality education that was to fully prepare them for life (Schlebusch, et., al 1998).

Curriculum 2005 as well as inclusive education are learner centred (Naicker, 2006). This is different to the previous practice of “teacher centeredness” in the classroom, which (curriculum 2005) was one of the strategies to eliminate and address the injustices that were done to the education system during the apartheid government. This implies that every learner’s strengths and needs was to be known and accommodated in an inclusive classroom, something to enable each learner to achieve the required outcomes (Naicker, 2001).

The third phase of curriculum reform was the review of curriculum 2005. The new curriculum document which resulted from this review came to be known as National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Schlebusch, et., al 1998). The fourth phase of the curriculum took place in 2010 to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the national curriculum statement. The team recommendation was that all documents be consolidated into one curriculum document per subject and the document was renamed Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

The educator is the ultimate key to this educational goal and improvement. Bhengu (2006) suggests that educators do not merely deliver the curriculum as given. Instead, they develop, define and interpret it to their level. In other words, the educators’ beliefs, thinking and experiences will influence the teaching and learning that will take place in the classroom. This is supported by UNESCO (2003) which suggested that an adequate curriculum can facilitate the development of more inclusive settings when it leaves

room for the centre of learning or the individual to make adaptations so that it will make better sense in the local context and for the individual learner. Therefore, there is need for South African schools to be restructured in terms of the review of the new curriculum. With the collaboration of the various stakeholders; teachers need to be adequately trained in both pre-and in-service programmes which will aid them to focus on the strengths of learners and to regard the differences in learners as a means to stimulating a richer learning environment (Prinsloo, 2001).

2.3.5 Teacher development

The shift to an inclusive education system assumes that teachers have been confronted with new policies, assumptions and practices which will require a new mind set, attitudes and practice, thereby making them the most influential resources for the successful implementation of inclusive education (Oswald & Swart, 2011). Although teacher education has been restructured in line with policy and structural innovations envisaged for post-apartheid South African education system, there is still need for continuous professional development (CPD) among educators (Lessing & DeWitt, 2007). Educators who were trained pre-1994 were trained in a dual system of teacher education which was separated along the lines of mainstream and special education. With the movement on inclusion in the classrooms these educators find it difficult to adapt to the new system.

Engelbrecht (2006) argues that lack of effective preparation of educators to accommodate unique individual educational needs in their classrooms brings about challenges to the implementation of inclusive education. Bhengu (2006) argues that

even among teachers who are exposed to inclusive education practice, though their attitudes were largely positive, yet they still felt incompetent due to lack of teaching facilities and resources. Naidoo (1999) suggests that teachers need to be given opportunities to challenge their knowledge and beliefs about how learners learn best. This, by implication, suggests that the curriculum should accommodate programmes which will showcase pre-educators acquired skills. For example, part of their curriculum to be an exposure in special schools as part of their teacher training requirement. However, Charlton & David (1993) in Prinsloo (2001) suggested that there is an increase in challenges for schools with regards to determining how fit they are towards inclusive practices. This will require schools to examine what they are offering to their learners, how it is offered and whether it meets the needs of the learners and the public. This puts the educators in the lime light.

In an international study conducted in Finland, the authors stated that the flexibility of the system which enables the educators to use their professional expertise to plan individual support guarantees the right to meaningful learning with the focus on the learner's individual needs as educators are expected to arrange a good learning environment and adequate support for these needs, no matter what the type of class or school it is (Halinen & Jarvinen, 2008). This means that the curriculum of teacher education programme should be well advanced to equip the teachers with skills that will enable them to become inclusive in their thinking and teaching.

2.3.6 Multiculturalism and education

South Africa is home to a range of languages, religions, ethnic groups and cultural traditions and practices. The phrase ‘the rainbow nation’ has been used to highlight this rich and colourful diversity. This rich and colourful diversity is referred to as multiculturalism (Sleeter & Grant 1994). Multiculturalism relates to people/communities containing multiple cultures, beliefs and ways of life which recognizes the potentials of all (Gumbo 2001). Apartheid government in the old South Africa was driven by the goal of oppression. However, recognizing multiculturalism will be an avenue driven by the goal of alleviating and undermining oppression. This system (Apartheid system) of ruling also insisted that traditional cultural groups needed to be segregated from one another, not only to avoid irresolvable conflict, but also to ensure the integrity and continued survival of distinctive cultures. In clear contrast to this, Gumbo (2001) argues that multiculturalism holds the view that diverse social groups need to be accommodated in the same geographical, political and institutional spaces. By implication, multicultural education is a form of education that accommodates a variety of cultures in a mutually respectful environment in common institutions.

Multicultural education has emerged as an umbrella concept that deals with race, culture, language, social class, gender and disability (Gumbo 2001) as it challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice. According to Sleeter and Grant (1994), multicultural education means teaching the exceptional or the culturally different so that they can achieve in schools and better meet the traditional demands of the society. This is in line

with Gumbo's (2001) ideas that multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students, regardless of their gender, social class and their ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics, should have an equal opportunity to learn in schools. This means that every child is expected to be in school and be accepted, irrespective of his or her differences from the mainstream.

Mathunyane (1996) argues that South Africa should enthusiastically embrace the politics of difference and build a multicultural education into the heart of its system of public education. Politics of difference are those differences which do not only focus on differences between individuals, but also on differences between groups. Moreover, the social diverse nature of South Africa will favour the politics of difference and foster multicultural education. Multicultural education is an approach to education which entails much more than simply offering education to a multicultural class or school composition, or both: it requires a paradigm shift, a change of heart, an unprejudiced re-orientation and an innovative attitude by all (Gumbo 2001). Education is responsible for exposing learners to culture; on the other hand cultural innovation and progress have a significant impact on education. Education is and remains one of the most significant instruments in the process of cultural creation, development and dissemination. In a multicultural school setting, the duty of the school is clearly to transmit culture in order to preserve and protect a particular cultural identity.

Gollnick (1980) in Sleeter and Grant (1994, p. 167) described the following as the goals of multicultural education:

- promoting the strength and value of cultural diversity;
- promoting human rights and respect for those who are different from oneself;
- promoting alternative life choices for people;
- promoting social justice and equal opportunity for all people and;
- promoting equity in the distribution of power among groups.

Looking at the goals of multicultural education, one could say there are not much differences between these goals and the principles of inclusive education. As the principle of inclusive education according to Mittler (2000) is to redefine our thoughts, ideas and attitudes about people who are different and value them for whom they are.

Societies as much as schools are becoming more culturally, linguistically, and socio economically diverse. For a proper practice of inclusive education in South African classrooms, Le Roux (2010) argues that the society will have to first practice multicultural education as a strategy for curriculum development, teacher training and the existing practice of education. This strategy, according to Mathunyane (1996), if practiced, will bring to light how easy it is to accommodate every individual given the necessary skills and knowledge. Teachers' beliefs are interrelated to their teaching, therefore if exposed to multicultural education in teacher training; there will be chances of becoming a more inclusive teacher. Brown et. al., (2011) suggest that higher education institutions should implement multicultural pre-service education programs in their curriculum. This will enable the pre-services educators to develop cultural

knowledge of different learners and will enable them to address the beliefs, attitudes and fears that they face.

Multicultural education in the higher education training for educators is important for many reasons. One such reason, for example, is that it will help develop pre-service educators' capacities to work with learners who have a variety of learning needs across racial, class and gender lines, and with disabilities for which mainstream educators are not always prepared (Gagliardi, 1994). Le Roux (2010) suggested that all educators in South Africa who are seriously concerned with the formal education of children will have to become equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to initiate and facilitate optimal learning in a multicultural context. This is a demand on programmes for teacher education in higher education to incorporate multiculturalism as one of the key aspects. Tellez (2008) reports that teacher education has struggled to better prepare beginning educators for an increasingly diverse student population. Teacher educators, furthermore, now understand that a beginning educator's knowledge about teaching is drawn from many sources. Gay (2008) highlights that educators themselves are obstacles to the implementation of multicultural education. This is in line with Gagliardi's (1994) finding that most educators are unconvinced of its worth or its value in developing academic skills and building a unified national community. Le Roux (2010) further reports that educators who are more accepting of multicultural education are nevertheless sceptical about the feasibility of its implementation.

2.3.7 Pre-service teacher readiness towards inclusion

Pre-service teacher readiness towards inclusive education is a determinant of their preparation for inclusion practices. Hsien (2007) highlights the fact that the general and special education and training for educators has traditionally been separated from each other. This is because they are known to have different focuses and priorities, with marked disparities in content and pedagogical approaches. However, with the birth of Salamanca Statement in 1994, the traditional ‘dual system’ of education has introduced a situation where learners are grouped and educated according to their different abilities (Engelbrecht 2006). By traditional education system I mean an education system in which general and special education are taught in different schools and teachers are educated differently. Today the principle of inclusion is against this practice. Instead, it encourages a system which respects the rights of different learners with different abilities to be educated in the same educational setting as their peers Engelbrecht (2006). With this in mind, all pre-service educators today are educated in order to be able to teach either as an inclusive teacher or in an inclusive school.

Not much research has been done in South Africa on pre-service educator readiness to implement inclusive practices in the classroom. Hsien (2007 p 49) suggests that the “acquisition of essential knowledge and strategies in the implementation of inclusive practices is critical during pre-service training”. This means that if the pre-service educators are properly trained and exposed to inclusive principles, they can be able to face any challenges at any level of their practice. Because, increased knowledge on inclusion will bring about higher levels of confidence, less fear and anxiety often

associated with the lack of awareness and exposure to children with disabilities/different levels of abilities.

Research has shown that pre-service educators who are ready to work within the principles of inclusive education have high levels of efficacy and training which affect their interest towards inclusion (Romi & Leyser 2006). In a study by Hsien (2007), efficacy is taken to mean the confidence, knowledge, and training associated with the extent of implementing inclusive practices within the regular education classroom. Adequate training on inclusion brings about sufficient knowledge on inclusive education and confidence and/or ability to manage diverse learners, adapt curriculum and instructional strategies to facilitate learning outcomes (Lessing & Witt, 2007). This means that the more the pre-service educators are properly trained in the higher education system, the more they will have the right attitude to face the challenges of inclusive principles and practices.

2.3.8 Pre-service teacher attitudes towards inclusive education

Inclusive education is a broad concept which expands much further than including learners with disabilities, but also includes all learners with their differing educational needs and meeting and supporting these needs to promote effective learning. A pre-service educator's attitude is important for the implementation of inclusive education. These pre-service educators' attitudes, according to Mdikana, Ntshangase and Mayekiso, (2007), are paramount in determining the success of inclusive education. Brown, et. al., (2011) also highlight that pre-service attitudes towards diverse learners can greatly affect student success and achievement in the classroom setting. Wilderman

& Nomdo (2007) argue that educators who are often driven by passion for their careers are indeed the frontline runners in implementing and ensuring the success of inclusive education by means of adapting teaching strategies in such a way that all learners, regardless of their learning barriers, are able to actively participate in their learning environment. However, the view on educators attitudes, according to Brown, et. al., (2011), somehow provides a defective understanding that schools are meant to optimize and prioritize teacher's comfort rather than optimize children's education/learning experience.

Many pre-service educators enter the field of education with preconceived notions about teaching and learning that may be incorrect or not applicable to all teaching situations (Brown, et. al., 2011). These preconceived ideas determine how the attitudes of these pre-services teachers will be based on their experiences. Mdikana, et. al., (2007) in their study state that attitudes of teachers toward their students have a significant impact on the students' academic success. It can be said that before the awareness about inclusive education, pre-service educators often enter a classroom unaware of the diverse backgrounds of their students, and this prevents them from successfully meeting the different needs of their diverse learners. Brown et. al., (2011) state that, in respect to this, pre-service educators' misguided attitudes can and will affect how they approach diverse learners. However, relevant pre-service training can go as far as shaping positive attitudes towards learners with special needs (Hay, Smit & Paulsen 2001).

Studies conducted on in-service educators' attitudes towards inclusion reveal that there is a negative attitude of these educators towards learners and inclusive education. This the authors reported that it is as a result of "inadequate skills, knowledge and training to help implement inclusive education; lack of educational and teacher support; inadequate provision of facilitates, infrastructure and assistive devices; and potential effects of inclusive education on learners with special educational needs, as well as other learners in the mainstream" (Bhengu 2006, Engelbrecht et.,al 1999, Florian 2005). These negative attitudes were seen as the teachers have not made the necessary paradigm shift expected of them as it requires a new culture, morale and ways of teaching and learning. However, it is expected that inclusive practices will face a number of challenges, such as reluctance from community and educators due to fear of change of success/failure, of their personal ability in incorporating the necessary changes among others.

Mdikana, et. al., (2007) in their study on pre-service educators attitudes towards inclusive education found that pre-service educators held positive attitudes towards inclusive education as it is seen as the way forward to bridge the gap and reduce the effects of apartheid education. Although these pre-service educators have not gained much experience and skills to face various learning barriers, Mdikana, et. al., (2007) argue that it is important to maintain these positive attitudes by providing the necessary resources, skills during training in order to maintain educators' positive attitudes/confidence in meeting the entire learner educational needs.

2.3.9 Pre-service teacher's challenges to inclusive practices

Since 2001, the Department of Education in South Africa has sought to work increasingly towards the establishment of an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education 2001), but resistance to the implementation of inclusive education remains a challenge (Wilderman & Nomdo 2007) as there is a wide gap between policy development and implementation (Oswald & Swart 2011). This is because inclusive education presents many exciting opportunities as well as challenges for education in this country. Engelbrecht (2006), however, highlights that lack of effective preparation of teachers to accommodate unique individual educational needs in their classrooms will bring about challenges to the implementation of inclusive practices. This is because there is a growing need for educators to understand and assist different learners' needs which serve as a barrier to effective learning, and also it is difficult for educators to deal with an increasing number of children with different abilities in the classroom (Prinsloo, 2001).

Prinsloo (2001) reports that feelings of inferiority and fears of breaching learners rights resulted in a lack of motivation and enthusiasm to meet the needs of all the children in the classroom. This, for example, implies that pre-services educators who are on field training and not sure of how to handle a particular learner would be faced with fears of what to do, thereby causing them not to make an effort at all. If this happens, it causes the educators to neglect the learners. This is in line with Ntombela (2011) and Mdikana et. al.,'s (2007) arguments which highlight that educator's lack of training on inclusive education, and this affects their confidence and motivation in teaching learners with special needs, especially those with severe learning difficulties.

Oswald and Swart (2011) in their study of addressing South African Pre-service educators' sentiments, attitudes and concerns regarding inclusive education found that pre-service educators' concerns about implementing inclusive education is on their challenges of an environment where support and resources were limited. This lack of an environmental support and limited resources are among the highlights of the national commission on special needs in education and training (NCSNET) and the national commission for education support services (NCESS) listed to be among key barriers to learning in South Africa. However, the committee's emphasis was on the importance of removal and preventing these barriers which, according to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001), will reduce and assist the education system to become more responsive to the diverse needs of the learner population. Another challenge to the implementation of inclusive education is that educators felt unprepared and under equipped to teach integrated classes, and ascribe this to lack of training, lack of time, large classes, lack of facilities and lack of teacher experiences (Hay et. al., 2001, Ntombela 2011). With these challenges facing the education system with regard to the implementation of inclusive education, pre-service educators seem to have a negative perception towards inclusion in general.

2.3.10 Pre-service educator's perception of inclusion

Educators are crucial in building an inclusive system in schools and classrooms. This is the reason Ahsan, Sharma and Deppeler (2012) suggest that it is important that their teacher training program promotes values of inclusive education to enable them include all learners. However, how they feel and perceive their roles towards this task is important. Rouse (2009) reported that "primary teachers are more likely to see their

identity as a class teacher first, then as a learning support teacher, whereas secondary learning support teachers probably will have made a specific career choice and are more likely to have undertaken additional professional development leading to qualification.” This implies that the secondary school educators do most of the time describe themselves as a learning support teacher; by implication a lot is expected on the primary school educator in terms of inclusion than the secondary school educator. Rouse (2009) emphasizes that an educator’s identity has an influence on how the educator sees her role. What people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave (Bandura, 1986, p.25). If the Early Childhood Development (ECD) educators see themselves as a class teacher first, it means that they will to a greater extent practice inclusion if given the necessary support.

2.3.11 Challenges in teaching Early Childhood Development (ECD) phase

In South Africa, “ECD is an umbrella term that applies to the process in which children, from birth to at least nine years of age, grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially” (DoE 2008 p. 12). After 1994 South Africa accepted the moral responsibility to address significant inequalities in opportunities by strengthening the focus on the earliest years of childhood development and had adopted the international definition of ECD as focusing on children from 0 – 9yrs (Makgate 2009). It is also of note that beyond South Africa, millions of children enter pre-school each year and they are not all provided with the same opportunities to develop the necessary skills to succeed in school (Preston, Cottrell, Pelletier & Pearce 2012). This is as a result of these children bringing in with them a range of backgrounds and experiences that facilitate or impair their further learning; as learning begins at birth,

and all aspects of a child's healthy development are directly dependent upon that child being immersed within a nurturing environment from early days of life (Makgate 2009). Young children, according to Makgate (2009), have a need to acquire both academic and social skills development which will aid them to enter school with the confidence, motivation and curiosity to be successful individuals.

Lee & Burkam (2002) report that before some children reach school age, factors such as poverty, race/ethnicity, and home language, among others things, influence the child's success at school. Teachers are expected to be competent experts to handle this situation in early childhood education of learners. Having a good and well informed ECD teacher is a major challenge for early childhood development program. "Early childhood education teachers are generally required to attain standardized qualifications before being considered for employment within the early childhood education sector" (Preston, et. al., 2012 p. 10). In South Africa, various initiatives have been put in place to improve the professionalism of ECD teachers (Harwood, Klopper, Osanyin & Vanderlee 2012) due to the fragmented nature of the provisioning of teacher education and the high numbers of unqualified and under-qualified educators. However, quality educator preparation programs focused primarily on early child development and education is one of the main factors in assuring an excellence in future development of the child (learners). There is thus a need for a well-trained educator because they are the main pillars of a sound and progressive society. After all, they pass on knowledge, skills and values to younger generations.

Lee & Burkam, (2002) reported increasing numbers of children from diverse linguistic, racial/ethnic, cultural and social economic backgrounds with decreasing number of educators from similar backgrounds. This will have a negative effect on the training of these learners as the number per class is more than the educators. It is important that at teacher education colleges, pre-service educators are educated and trained to teach children from different racial/ethnic, cultural, language, or socioeconomic backgrounds (Oswald & Swart, 2011). Pre-service teacher education programs must attend to the changing needs of children, society, institutions, professionals and the profession by being in tune with changes and interactions within and between all of these systems (Forlin, et. al., 2009).

The inclusion of different learners is currently recognized as a preferred service delivery model in early childhood care and education (Lee & Burkam 2002). This implies that every child, irrespective of what makes that child different from others, must receive the proper kind of support to ensure meaningful participation and membership into settings with age appropriate peers. An ECD class, for example, is expected to be inclusive in nature. This is because early childhood education sets the groundwork for subsequent levels of schooling; and thus the emphasis on a good quality education at this level is pivotal for educational reforms. Laying the foundation in the education of young learners is important and not limited to the classroom. However, ECD educators are the first line of defence in the teaching and learning of young children. The impact we have today will be felt tomorrow and for generations to come.

The problem of ECD provision in South Africa circulates between access and equity (DoE 2001). This means that some families have access to ECD services of considerably higher quality and quantity due to their socio-economic status, while others do not. With the demand of quality education at the ECD phase of a child education, the boundaries of teaching have changed drastically for teachers as there is high expectation of what they can do. As we have become a more complex and diverse society, the roles traditionally ascribed to teachers have taken new meanings and significance (Cruz, nd). This has in fact expanded the role of ECD educators to encompass many. This includes duties and responsibilities that were often considered to be part of the home. This is now part of what the educators of young children should know and be able to do have taken new directions and or meanings (Florin, et. al., 2009). However, the pre-service education and training is expected to impact on these pre-service educators the importance of Early Childhood Education on the development of these young learners. This can be done if the curriculum of the pre-service educator contains well enough and important content that will aid this knowledge.

2.4 Conclusion

Inclusive education is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal education settings. This chapter outlined factors relating to inclusive education and pre-service educators. Such factors include the challenges they face, their training at higher education level, their perception of inclusive education, multicultural education and Early Childhood Development. For student teachers to be inclusive in classrooms require the higher education training centres to re-adjust their curriculum content to deeply address the demands of the society with regards to inclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As already pointed out, this study investigated the Bachelor of Education 4th year students' readiness to teacher as an inclusive teacher. Also explored is the extent to which higher education prepares these students with necessary skills and knowledge to face the challenges of inclusive practices. As stated in the previous chapter, the education of pre-service educators in higher education is important as their exposure and experiences to inclusive practice will help determine their readiness to work as inclusive educators in inclusive schools.

This chapter discusses the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin this study. These theoretical and conceptual frames will help explain and enable the study to engage with the factors that contribute and influence the readiness of pre-service educators to work as an inclusive teacher and in inclusive schools.

For Landsberg, Kruger and Swart (2005), theory “can be defined as a set of assumptions and concepts ordered in such a way that their idea tells us about the world, ourselves or an aspect of reality.” Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) support this line of thinking and point out that a theory is a conceptual framework or system of ideas that explain, but goes beyond facts. Thus, theory is of little value unless an understanding of its influence on what we do with it and how one uses the theory is grasped. Landsberg et. al., (2005) argue that theories are not fixed, and therefore not

ultimate truths. This is because the full complexity of life cannot be captured in a single theory. The usefulness of theory lies in its ability to provide a set of organized principles that, together with the contextual knowledge, can generate insight into specific situations (Landsberg et. al., 2005).

3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is a “very general theoretical system with assumptions, concepts and specific theories” (Neuman, 2006, p. 52). Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2004) point out that a theoretical framework allows explicit assumptions to be made about interconnectedness in the world. This means that a theoretical framework is the lens through which the researcher views the world. By implication, this means that different people can view the world in different ways, depending on what problems they want to investigate and the purpose for such investigation. For the purpose of this study, where the readiness of 4th year students to teach in inclusive schools was investigated; theories derived from educational psychology in the social context are relevant in forming a framework for the complexity of the factors. The following theories were viewed as potential vehicles for understanding the study. This framework rooted the various conceptual elements involved in the process of planning the study prior to its implementation and gave direction to the design of the study.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of development is important in examining the relevance of the social context of the pre-service educators. The social ecology model, also called Social Ecological Perspective, is a framework that examines the multiple effects and interrelatedness of social elements in an environment. Vygotsky’s social

constructivism theory is another lens through which the study is approached. As Vygotsky lays emphasis on the influence of the society on an individual development, this helped in understanding how the pre-service teachers' society influences their readiness. In qualitative studies, this makes it possible for various contexts, involving people and the environment, and also the influences each has on the others, to be analysed.

3.2.1 Social Constructivism theory

Since Social Constructivism is a theoretical perspective that is based on the view that knowledge is constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world (Donald et. al., 2010), it is valuable in this study. This is because the study is of the view that meaning and understanding comes from social interactions and knowledge is seen not as a given, but as actively and continuously constructed and reconstructed by individuals, groups, and societies.

This theoretical framework emphasizes how meanings and understandings grow out of social, historical, cultural encounters and contexts (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Donald et. al., 2010). Vygotsky (1962) observes in his study that, when learners were assessed on tasks which they worked on without help, they did not do as well as they did when they worked in collaboration with an adult or other learners. This is not because the adult is teaching the learners all the time, but because the engagement with adult and other learners helps to refine the thinking of the learners and, as a result, they perform better. A learner interacting with an adult or with other learners will enter another zone or

level of understanding to reach attainable levels of expectation and beyond expectations (Kalenga 2010).

3.2.2 Eco-systemic

The study is located within the broad framework of eco-systemic theory. As the name implies, ecological and systems theory, it is a blend of ecological and systems views of interactions between different levels of the social context and the individuals within them (Donald et. al., 2010). Its central argument, as highlighted by Kalenga (2010, p. 88), “is that individual people and groups at various levels of the social context are linked in dynamic, interdependent and in interacting relationships”. This implies that every individual or group of individuals in any given context will be influenced by every relationship the individual has with a significant other. This also shows how individual development is influenced and shaped by the society the individual finds himself. That is, every individual has a relationship with the world (Kalenga 2010). However, this view highlights how the individual is influenced in his world and how that same individual influences the world around him. In this context, every individual does not live and cannot live in isolation. He/she needs direct or indirect influence and support from his/her environment.

3.2.2.1 Ecological theory

For Donald et. al., (2010), Ecology is the study of the environment and the way the organisms live together and affect each other. This theory postulates the interdependence and relationships between different organisms and their physical

environment, and this relationship is seen holistically (Donald et. al., 2010). Donald et. al., (2010, p. 36) further indicate that every part is as important as another in sustaining the cycles of birth and death, which together will ensure the survival of the whole system. Within the human environment, the interdependence between human and ecological relationships in the social environment is important. However, when there is conflict or disturbance in the relationship of people and their physical environment, the whole system will fail to be sustained as they will struggle to sustain their balance. Balance, according to Donald et. al., (2010, p. 37), “is central to ecological concepts” as when there is a balance between the whole system relationships and cycles, there will be sustainability. However, ecological theory is based on the interdependence and relationship between different organisms and their physical environment. These relationships are seen from a holistic viewpoint (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

3.2.2.2 Systems theory

This theory postulates that in order to understand the whole, we need to examine relationships between all the parts (Donald et. al., 2010). This means for a whole system to function well, the parts of that whole need to interact as the whole will be dependent on the parts to function. According to Donald et. al., (2010) theorists have applied similar concepts to relationships between human being and the interactions between groups of people in their particular social context. This, according to Kalenga (2010), can be used to develop our understanding of families, classrooms, and school systems in which one is directly involved. Sarason (1990) in Ntombela (2007) suggests that those parts of the whole system stand in a diverse relationship to each other and

that between and among those parts are boundaries of varying strengths and permeability.

This system approach highlights relationship between the school, society, and the education system within which these relationships operates. In the context of this study, schools are seen as an open system that gets input from different related systems and sub systems such as other schools, families, teachers, departments of education and others. As the system theory assumes that all parts of the systems are interrelated and interdependent, they influence each other. To illustrate this point, the key function of the district based support teams is to assist education institutions (including ECD centres, Further Education College, higher education and teacher training colleges) to identify and address barriers to learning and to promote effective teaching and learning. In higher education and training centres, the inability of pre-service educators to identify barriers to learning can be as a result lack of appropriate exposures to barriers.

Using Bronfenbrenner's contextual framework, Donald et. al., (2010; 40- 43) highlights the role played by different levels of a system in ones development. That is, how different levels of system in the social context interact with development. This development is located within four systems: the Micro-system, mesosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem which interacts with the chronosystem. These different systems are discussed briefly below.

3.2.2.2.1 Micro-system

Micro-system is a system of the family, the school, and the peer group in which learners are closely involved in continuous face to face interactions with other familiar people (Donald et. al., 2010). At this level, relationships have an impact in two directions: both away from the child and towards the child. For example, a child's parents may affect his beliefs and behaviour; however the child also affects the behaviour and the beliefs of the parent. This, according to Bronfenbrenner, is called bi-directional influences. At the microsystem level, bi-directional influences are strongest and have the greatest influence on the child (Ntombela, 2006). Furthermore, it is at this level where daily patterns of activities, roles, relationships and interaction occur (Kalenga 2010). When two or more systems interact, it is seen as been a mesosystem.

3.2.2.2.2 Mesosystem

Mesosystem at this level involves the peer group, school and family systems which interact with one another. If there is an imbalance in the micro-system it will affect how the child responds at school. If the child is experiencing adversity at home and the school provides support and protection, then the child's sense of belonging and security increases, effectively modifying the child's behaviour (Donald et. al., 2010, p.41). This implies that what happens at home or in the peer group can influence how learners respond at school.

3.2.2.2.3 Exosystem

Exosystem includes other systems in which an individual is not directly involved, but which may influence, or be influenced, by the people who have proximal relationships with her/him in her/him microsystem. In a situation where the parent workplace schedule or community is affecting the relationship of the parent towards the immediate family (micro-system); the child (learner) is not directly involved with the parents workplace, but he does feel the positive or negative force involved through the interaction with his or her family (Kalenga 2010).

Macrosystem involves dominant social structures, laws, customs as well as beliefs and values that influence a society and are influenced by all other levels of the system or the cultural values, beliefs or respect for adults that occur in the society (Donald et. al., 2010, p.42). These values or beliefs could influence the proximal interactions in the child's microsystem and run through the whole system. This system is equivalent to social system as a whole (Donald et. al., 2010, p.43).

3.2.2.2.4 Chronosystem

The chronosystem includes the dimension of time as it relates specifically to the interactions between these systems and their influences on individual development (Swart & Pettipher 2011). According to Kalenga, (2010), elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the maturation of a learner. As learners get older,

they may react differently to the changes in their environment and may be more able to determine how change will influence the learners.

3.3 Concepts

Conceptual frameworks were used to inform the data collection and analysis in the present study. These were the concepts of philosophy of inclusion, inclusion, inclusive education, inclusive teacher, inclusive schools, readiness to work, Early Childhood Development and higher education and training.

3.3.1 The philosophy of inclusion

Philosophy of inclusion is a series of changes in societal thinking and education systems that have evolved to the development of inclusive education which is promoted nationwide. These changes, according to Naylor (2005), began from the institutionalization of the 19th century accompanied by a medical model of diagnosis and referral, followed by a period between 1900 and 1950 where segregated schooling became the norm. There was an increase in categorization of people in the 1950s and 60s, which separated high and low incidence categories, with the most of the students categorized as low incidence still being educated separately, and high incidence classes educated in separate classes and not in separate schools. In 1970, there was subsequent shift in thinking which came with notion of integration and stressed education in the least restrictive environments, as mainstreaming in the 1980s promoted the placement of high incidence students in regular classes. Finally, inclusion is seen to have emerged

more commonly in the 1990s, as there was need for all learners, irrespective of their differences, to be taught in one class.

Engelbrecht (1999) highlights that the philosophy of inclusion has become the core of education policies internationally and has become the centre of debates regarding effective strategies to support learners experiencing difficulties in education. This means that there is need for teachers who are at the frontline of implementing inclusion to change their teaching strategies to be able to accommodate different learners with different learning needs. The movement on inclusive education started in developed countries as a challenge to exclusion of students by mainstreaming. Instead it became a preferred strategy to address the learning needs of all learners. Inclusion is based on a value system that invites and celebrates difference and diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language, socio-economic background, cultural origin and level of educational achievement and disability (Landsberg et. al., 2005). Furthermore, it seeks to overthrow exclusionary paradigms and practices (Ntombela, 2006). These lead to the coining of ideas on inclusive education.

During the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand saw the initial movement of inclusive education. Four years later in Spain, the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education proclaimed inclusion as a right and re-emphasized the need to provide children with special needs with access to regular schools as a means of developing an inclusive society, and attaining education for all. In Salamanca, there was a major challenge of which children will benefit from education for all. Such children are those found on the streets,

children in employment and children from ethnic minorities, among others. These lead to the birth of inclusion which was based on the movement that learners and educators can become better members of a classroom and school communities.

3.3.1.1 Inclusion

Inclusion, a complex, multidimensional and controversial concept (Swart & Pettipher 2005), provided a broad conceptual framework for this study. It has come to mean different things for different people and country as it has to be seen from the lens of contextual demands of a particular country. Countries like South Africa will view inclusion based on the effects of apartheid in their education system, thereby more emphasis will be laid on correcting the imbalances of the past system of ruling towards their education system. In terms of education; inclusion is a universally used word, as Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.3) state: “it has become something of an international focus and national buzzword”.

In a wider understanding, Inclusion is about recognizing and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities (DoE 2001). It is developing inclusive community and education systems based on a value system that invites and celebrates differences and diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language, socio-economic background, cultural origin and level of educational achievement and disability (Landsberg et. al., 2005). All learners, teachers and the system as a whole is supported in inclusive education so that a full range of learning needs can be met however, the participation of all learners are maximized by changes in attitudes,

behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all the learners (Department of Education 2001).

Full inclusion sees that all learners with disabilities should be educated together with their non-disabled peers at all times (Mittler 2000). Furthermore, Lazurus & Lomosky (2010) indicated that the possibility of full inclusion practices is having an education system where all stakeholders, work together to create learning that will meet to the diverse learning needs of every learner. This means that there is a very high expectation from every stake holder with regards to their thinking, attitudes and above all tolerance which will allow every individual to feel accepted thereby creating inclusive school and classroom. However, inclusion is a continuous process rather than a change or a shift as it is dependent on the continuous educational and organizational developments of both schools and communities.

3.3.2 Inclusive education explained

Inclusive education is a significant shift from the medical model which practiced segregation and exclusion to social ecological model which is an advocate of integration and inclusion. According to Ntombela (2006), inclusive education is an intervention strategy that ensures that all learners can assess and participate actively in the learning opportunities provided by the schools. It is a system of education that is based on values that accepts and celebrates differences in people and by providing education that is appropriate to the needs of all learners irrespective of those differences. This means that education system should accommodate the full variety of educational needs as a result of learner's origin, background, ability or circumstances.

White paper 6 (DoE 2001 p 6) states that inclusive education and training is about:

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth needs support;
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases;
- Acknowledging that the children have a prior knowledge and have been influenced by their families and communities before they were enrolled into schools and as a result leaning have occurred either within formal setting and o informal setting;
- Educators must change attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curriculum and environment to meet the needs of all learners and;
- Maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning.

Inclusive education is not an end in itself; but rather a means to an end as the above definition from the White Paper 6 (DoE 2001) acknowledges:

- The differences in learners;

- That educator's must change attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricular and the environment which will aid them to meet the needs of all learners;
- That learners must be empowered and;
- That learning occurs in other places the child relates to other than the school.

From the above it is seen that the principles of inclusive education are set on participation of every learner in the education systems as it avoids any form of exclusion of any learner irrespective of their differences. This implies that every individual deserves to have a sense of belonging and acceptance in the schools and therefore there are a lot of demands on how educators and the systems respond to individual differences.

3.3.3 Inclusive teaching and inclusive teacher

Inclusive teaching means teaching in ways that do not exclude students accidentally or intentionally, from opportunities to learn. This by implication means a kind of teaching that recognizes, accommodates and meets the learning needs of all students; by acknowledging that students have a range of individual learning needs and are members of diverse communities. Inclusive teaching is more likely to be a good way of teaching, as we live in a diverse society: our education should reflect, promote and facilitate inclusive practices. Inclusive teaching should also influence the assessment strategy the teachers uses in the classroom. This is important because it will support the learning of all learners. However, an inclusive teacher is one who is responsible for

accommodating and delivering instruction to different students with different needs and abilities in the classroom; and working to develop and manage a classroom environment that supports differentiated instruction and student progress.

3.3.4 Inclusive schools

In terms of inclusive education practice, it is necessary that schools become inclusive. According to Mittler (2000, p. 113), “inclusion is a journey without an end” and not a destination however Swart & Pettipher (2011) highlighted that the process of this journey depends on schools, as inclusion differs from school to school. Inclusive schools are schools which recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities (Swart & Pettipher 2011). Inclusive schools are not usually by definition schools that provide resources, make good matric results and have more than enough teachers, it is more to that. This is because some schools with records of good results might not have facilities to accommodate learners with disabilities such as wheelchair users.

Inclusive schools are the primary units of change: As they provide the most effective means of educating the majority of children while combating discriminatory practices. This should be done according to Florian (2005) as they are foreseen as diverse problem solving organizations with a common mission that emphasizes learning for all students. Moreover, they should be able to increase participation and decrease exclusion from mainstreaming social setting by accepting all children irrespective of

their differences. Staff and learners in inclusive schools view students with any form of disabilities as having sets of capabilities that need to be further developed and will determine educational provisions accordingly (Mittler 2000).

Inclusive schools promote inclusive education, quality teaching and classroom practices that are responsive to the individual needs and diverse learning styles of students. This by implication means that these schools will sustain their inclusivity by adjustments to the school buildings, curriculum content, assessment procedures, the format and sustainability of teaching materials, learning activities, modes of delivery and teaching styles. This education system can be broadly conceptualized as a schooling system which provides all learners including those with disabilities and additional learning needs with a schooling experience that is meaningful and rewarding.

The ultimate goal or purpose of building an inclusive school according to Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht (1999, p. 46) “is to contribute towards the development of an inclusive society where all members of society are able to fulfil their potential and participate optimally, and where respect for and valuing of diversity in the context of integration is an active value”. With this in place teachers will be ready to face the challenges they will come across.

3.3.5 Readiness to work

Readiness is “willingness to do something” and or “the state of being fully prepared for something”. This study ‘4th year (ECD) student teachers readiness to work as an

inclusive teacher in inclusive school' will reflect these student teachers willingness to work in schools and be able to accommodate different learners in their classrooms. In the context of this study it will be seen as "how ready are these pre-service teachers to work", have they been prepared in terms of skills, attitudes, psychological, cognitive and emotional level to be able to work with all learners? However, to be fully prepared to work and accommodate different learners in schools, the university curriculum need to checked and to know if the content will equip these student teachers with needed skills. This is necessary because it will help prepare students for more diverse populations.

Research found that universities and other student training institutions will become pivotal in ensuring the success of inclusion (Forian, 2005). This by implication will put a lot of demand on the university to re-adjust or re-design their curriculum on inclusive training to become more challenging to student teachers training which will aid in their development as teachers. According to Hsien (2007), training for inclusion within general education teacher preparation programs will alert and equip teachers to better understand the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for the various support services available to cater for children with different abilities.

3.3.6 Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Preston, et. al., (2012) reported that Early childhood development (ECD) is the all-round development of children to help them to further develop from childhood into adulthood. There education which is any program, activities and/or experiences which intends to promote the overall health and education of these children under the age of

nine years has recently been the focus of increased attention from different constituents in the public and private sector (Preston, et. al., 2012). Research have emphasized the importance of quality education in closing the achievement gap and call for pre-service teacher preparation programs to address the issue of teacher quality as the prime factor for student achievement (Lee & Burkam, 2002). A number of international agreements including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Children's Rights, the Education for All Declaration, the Dakar Framework for Action, the UN Special Session for Children and the Millennium Development Goals have recognized the role and importance of ECD (Harwood, et. al., 2012).

According to Preston, et. al., (2012), ECD refers to a comprehensive approach to policies, programmes, activities, for children from birth to nine years of age with active participation of their parents and caregivers. Furthermore, ECD includes early socialization, education and readiness for school, as well as, the provision of basic health care, adequate nutrition, nurturing and stimulation with a caring environment (Preston, et. al., 2012). At this age from birth to nine years form the foundation for all further development that a child will undergoe. By implication, this stage serves the purpose of protecting the child's rights to develop to his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potentiality which takes place in the life of the children. However, teachers who train to teach in this stage will help to develop children irrespective of their different background, races, physical abilities, socioeconomic status and beliefs.

3.3.7 Higher Education and Training

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) consists of three phases, namely the General Education and training phase, the Further Education and Training phase and the Higher Education and Training phase with different levels in each phase. Higher Education and Training (HET) forms the third phase of the NQF consisting of tertiary institutions like universities and colleges. The South African Higher Education and training curriculum is based on the principles of social transformation and justice.

Higher education means all learning programmes leading to qualifications higher than grade 12 or its equivalent in terms of the National Qualifications Framework. Higher education institution is any institution that provides higher education on a full-time, part-time or distance basis. Education refers to an activity in which a learner is assisted in learning to know and to do certain things. To learn is to acquire certain knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfil responsibilities in different roles in life (Forian 2005). Training, on the other hand can be described as the intentional and planned activities through which the learner is equipped by the trainer with knowledge, skills and attitudes to function as an individual in a particular role of life (Steyn et. al., 2002).

3.4 Conclusion

Through this study, I hope to gain some understanding of how ready pre-service teachers are to work as an inclusive teacher in inclusive schools. Specifically, I was interested in how ready they are and how well the curriculum on inclusive education which their training is based on prepares them towards inclusive practices. The next chapter will look at the research methodology and research design.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The present chapter looks at the research design and methodology. The specific key research questions and objectives (cf.1.5 & 1.6) of the study as highlighted in chapter one, were as follows:

- How ready are the student educators to work within the inclusive education principles?
- Why do the student educators consider themselves ready and/or not ready to work within an education system that promotes inclusive education?
- To what extent does the university curriculum prepare the student educators to work in inclusive schools as inclusive educators?

The following were the objectives formulated in line with the critical questions:

- To investigate how ready the student teachers are to work as inclusive teachers;
- To investigate why the student teachers think they are ready to work in inclusive school and;
- To investigate the extent the University curriculum prepares the student teachers to work in inclusive schools as inclusive teacher.

Although researchers agree on the importance of a research design and a methodology in any research study, the scope of what this should constitute seems to be an issue of debate for most researchers. Researchers are often not able to differentiate research

design and research methodologies (Durrhiem 1999). According to Walliman (2005), research design and research methodology are two different aspects of a research project. For the purpose of this study both research design and research methodology will be explained as it will help put clarity on to concepts and procedures for the study.

Design, according to Fouche (2002, p. 271) , “are all those decisions a researcher makes in planning the study”, this is supported by Creswell (2012) as the entire process of research from conceptualizing to writing the narratives to explain the findings; this means the features you can use to collect, analyze and interpret data using either or both qualitative and quantitative methods. Creswell (2012) and Fouche (2002) highlighted that research design is a strategic frame work for action on how the researcher will systematically collect and analyze the data as well as serve as a bridge between the research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. In other words, their views entail that research design should provide a plan that specifies how the research is going to be executed in such a way that it answers the research question(s). This is in line with Walliman (2005) views that a research design is a logical strategy for gathering evidence about knowledge desired as emphasis is laid on the end product, formulation of the research problems and also to focus on the logic of the research.

According to Durrhiem (1999), one could relate a research design to a plan an architect designs for a house. In order for the building to be done in a systematic way a design is needed as it will help the architect eliminate the chances of unforeseen circumstances. In research such a plan is known as research design. This plan is helpful in the following ways: the process of study will be easier for the researcher to understand and

also serve as a visual representation of the process the study will take. However, it can be said that a research design is a combination of the entire process that will take place in a research study. This will include from how the data will be collected, to data analysis and interpretation as well as the paradigm that will be employed to answer the research question. In other words, it is the logical sequence that connects the whole study from the empirical data to a study's initial questions/problems which will lead to the findings and the conclusions in the study. This by implication requires every empirical research study to report on its design and I am compelled to do so.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2011) highlighted that research design as a framework links the research question to the execution of the research and is developed through the process known as research methodology. Research methodology requires the researcher to describe how he will gather data/information that will address the research questions and also “as a basis for inference and interpretation for explanation and prediction” (pg 47). Research methodology refers to techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering (Creswell, 2012). Research design and research methodology can be used to refer to be the same. As the research design tends to have all the basic process which the methodology explains further. With the architect, the process of executing the plans of completing the building he will explain the different stages and the tools/materials he will use in the process. In relating it to research it would be the methodology. However, the aim of methodology is to describe approaches to, kinds and paradigms of research.

Having the above discussion in mind, this chapter tends to explore the research design, research methodology I will employ for this study. For a successful completion of this study, the research questions and the focus of the study “investigating 4th year (ECD) student teachers readiness to work in inclusive schools” where considered. By examining aspects such as appropriate research paradigm, the research style or approach, the sample choice and its size. Data generation and data analysis methods are discussed. All these aspects of research design and methodology will be interrogated first to identify their strengths and short-comings but most importantly, to justify their choice for and application to this study.

4.2 The Research Design

“Research designs are specific procedures involved in the research process: data collection, data analysis, and report writing” (Creswell 2012, p.20). Furthermore, a research design according to Durrheim (1999, p.29), “is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research”. This means that it is a plan that guides the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose. However, the aim of a research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximised (Mouton & Marais 1990 in Durrheim 1999).

This research will be conducted by means of review of literature and an empirical investigation through a qualitative study using interview as way of generating data.

4.2.1 Empirical research

The research design was qualitative in nature.

4.2.1.1 Qualitative Research

This study will be approached from a qualitative perspective. Qualitative research according to Gay, Mills, & Airasian, (2009) is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest. Cohen et. al., (2011) supported this by laying emphases that qualitative research is concerned with an in-depth intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable and observable phenomena, attitudes, intentions and behaviors. By implication, a qualitative research must produce finding that are not arrived at quantification (numbers) as in the case of quantitative research. Rather this kind of research centres on how meaning is situated in a particular perspective or context, and because different people and groups often have different perspectives and contexts, as the world has many different meanings and none of which is necessarily more valid or true than another (Gay, et al., 2009).

Considering the research questions and problem underpinning this study, this approach is ultimately the most suitable as it allows for an understanding of the exit teacher's readiness to work in inclusive schools or as inclusive teachers. In this regard, Creswell (2012), submits that these are the sort of questions qualitative researchers seek answers to, as the researcher seeks understanding of the views of one group or single individuals.

4.2.1.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

The theoretical framework for most qualitative research emerges from an interpretivist perspective (Ulin, Robinson, Tolley, & McNeill, 2002) , in other words qualitative research links itself to interpretive paradigm. This is argued by Hart (2003) who highlighted that it is a mistake to conclude that all interpretive research is embedded in a qualitative study. Creswell (2012) elaborated this further as he submits that interpretive research method describe, interpret and explain to understand people's feelings as they make sense of their experiences rather than assigning numbers to measure those experiences. This by implication shows that qualitative researchers are interested in quality in terms of richness of data rather than quantitative research approach. The assumption here is that people's experiences are subjective in nature and must be taken into consideration when interacting with them, through or during interviews.

This paradigm was adopted for this study. A paradigm is the fundamental model or frame of reference we use to organize our observations and reasoning (Fouche & Delport 1998). Interpretive paradigm is characterized by a concern for the individual and its central aim is to understand the subjective world of human experiences (Cohen, et al., 2011) and defend it as an important element in the research process (Ulin, et al., 2002). By implication, in a research here, the world is perceived partially and many aspects of reality are viewed to enable different ways of interpreting social world. Denzin & Lincoln (2008) also highlighted that it is a paradigm that sees the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions with each other

and with wider social systems. This means that research based on this paradigm focuses mainly on people's view and feelings they attach to a particular issue on investigation.

The focus of this research being to gain a deep level of understanding on ECD student teacher's readiness to work as an inclusive teacher in inclusive school ties in with the interpretive paradigm, especially considering Bernstein's in (Cohen, et. al., 2011) argument that the process of one's interpretation and definition of a situation is indeed a product of the circumstances in which one is placed in. This circumstances will enable the participants to be able to reflect meaningfully of the situations and will seek to produce descriptive analyses that will emphasize deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena. As a result this study will produce thick description of the individual's uniqueness in connection to their real world of practice.

4.2.1.3 Case study

From the view of all I have stated above with regards to the features of a qualitative research, it is important to mention that I adopted a case study approach as part of the research design. Creswell (2008) indicated that different researchers have provided different interpretations of case study research. Some identify the case as an object of study, a unit of analysis and also as a process of inquiry (Nieuwenhusi 1998).

A case study research is a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest (Nieuwenhusi 1998). Lindegger, (1999) suggested that "case studies are ideographic research methods, that is

methods that study individuals as individuals rather than as members of a population". Case studies are descriptive in nature and provide rich longitudinal information about individuals or particular situations (Cohen & Manion 1989). Creswell (2012) stated that a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system. Bounded according to Creswell (2008) means that the case is separated out for research in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries.

The aim of applying case study design was also in line with one of the objectives of this project which is to inform policy, practice and for future research in the area. Cohen and Manion (1989) notes that a case study would also serve multiple audiences, in this case it involves anyone interested in pre-service teacher's curriculum development or restructuring, it also involves stake holders responsible for policy making regarding inclusive education in higher education in South Africa. However, this study will not be generalized, according to Lindegger (1999), generalization cannot be made from a single case study due to the validity of the study cannot be verified.

4.2.1.4 Interview

In an interview, data is collected through face to face or telephonic interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. A qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants general, open ended questions and record their answers (Creswell 2012, p.217). In this research, the interviews were semi-structured and done face to face between the researcher and the participants. Face to face interview is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions to and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time. Semi-structured interview are less formal.

This technique allowed for questions to be repeated and rephrased in order to suit the situation. This type of probe allowed the researcher to clarify anything he was uncertain about and probe for additional information when a response seemed incomplete or not entirely released.

In this study the researcher contacted the participants on the phone, explained the purpose of the study and also made appointment when to meet with the participants who agreed to be interviewed. The researcher had a set of questions during the interviews and still probed the participants for more clarity in what they answered. However, it is important to note that interviews are not like survey where the same questions are asked for each participant. Questions varied from interviewee to interviewee because each of them was expected to have his or her own unique experience that is different from other participants (Creswell 2008). The type of questions asked were open ended questions which encouraged lengthy and full explanation from the participants.

4.2.1.5 The sample

Due to the fact that this is an empirical study, the appropriate sampling method and choice was considered critically and carefully in order to link the sample to the aim of the study. This enhanced not only the quality of this study but also increased the trustworthiness of the research findings. Also the need for careful sampling was to eliminate any forms of generating information which might not be useful or related to the aim of this study.

Creswell (2012) highlighted that in a qualitative inquiry, the intention is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in depth exploration of central phenomena. Therefore the best way to understand this phenomena, the qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals for study having in mind when we draw our sample, we want to have a good representation of all of the kinds of people in the population. This means that a sample of that population is needed in order to conduct the study. According to Robson (2002) a sample is a selection from the population. In relation to this Cohen et. al., (2011) suggest that it is important that the sample in fact represents the whole population. Therefore sampling means taking any portion of a population of universe as representative of that population or universe (Strydom & Venter, 2000).

Cohen et. al., (2011) suggested that the two major types of sampling used in research are probability sample also known as random sample and a non probability sample also known as purposive sampling. In differentiating the two forms of sampling they argued that, “in probability sample the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are known, whereas in a non probability sample the chances of the wider population being selected are unknown” (2011, p. 110). Creswell (2012) supported this by adding that when the purpose of the research is to generalize from a specific sample to a population, random sampling methods are preferred. This is because probability sample methods produce representative samples. The basis for a random sampling rests with the intention of the researcher to generalise directly to a

sample population which should be based on the researcher's result (Strydom & Venter, 2000).

The aim of this type of sampling is to study a phenomena and interpret results in their specific context. In other words a non probability sample deliberately avoids representing the wider population as it seeks only to represent a particular group and or a particular named section of the wider population. This means that the primary concern of a researcher using this sampling method is not to generalize research outcomes to the entire population but to provide detailed and in-depth descriptions and analysis within the confines of the selected unit of analysis otherwise known as the sample.

As a researcher in the interpretive paradigm, am not concered with statistical accuracy or representativeness of the data to an entire popualtion. Instead the focus of this study was on generating rich qualitative data. In the present study, the selection of the participants; ECD student teachers was based on the non probability sampling. The researcher met with the personnel in charge of accessing the database of the registered students, the list of the students was collected from the personnel by the reseacher. With the list of the whole sixty four students, the researcher found that they was only nine males that are registered and all are Africans. The researcher selected three males out of the whole nine and selected four females from the whole fifty five registered female ECD pre-exit teachers. The selection of the males where done first; as the whole list were arranged alphabetically the reseacher took the first, the fourth and the seventh name of the males in the list. With the selection of the female, the reseacher selected one from each of these four races Indians, black, white, and coloured. This is because

they are the only race that is found among the registered ECD pre-exit teachers. The first four names of each of these races was selected. However the researcher did another selection of the females as some of them did not show up at the arranged time for the interview.

4.3 Ethical clearance

Considering the fact that this study involves humans the issue of ethics was important, the researcher had to consider the ethical responsibilities associated with qualitative research (Creswell 2012). This is in line with the research policy of the university under which this study was conducted. Ethical clearance was applied for and was granted by the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics committee of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal with reference number: HSS?0763/012M (see appendix 1 for copy).

4.3.1 Informed consent

Informed consent implies that all possible, important information regarding the purpose of the study, the procedures which will be followed and the possible advantage and disadvantage or dangers to which the participants may be exposed are given to the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). Creswell (2012) added that informed consent is a necessary condition than an hindrance.

In this study all the participants were given the necessary information about the aims, the process as well as the benefits of the study. Participants were made aware of their

voluntary participation and were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation or prejudice.

4.4 Data collection

Information in terms of research questions was needed to address the problem of this study on “ investigation into 4th years readiness in teaching in inclusive schools’. The researcher proceeded with the interview immediately as arranged with the interviewees after the ethical clearance was given. As the participants came through for the interview, the importance of the study was explained and informed consent forms were given to the participants to sign. The interview was recorded with a tape recorder with the permission of the participant so that everything the participants said could be preserved. The interviews were transcribed as soon as the last interview was done in order to ensure as much relevant data was generated.

4.5 Data analysis

According to Blanche & Kelly (1999), data analysis involves reading through the data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematising and categorising) and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting). Before engaging in the activities of breaking down the data, the researcher familiarized and immersed herself in the data; this helped to develop ideas around the phenomenon being studied and understand the meaning of the data. This was done through reading the data over and over again; making notes and brainstorming ideas; this helped to know more or less what kinds of things might be found. Themes were generated based

on the commonalities in the data. Blanche & Kelly (1999, p. 141), highlighted on the “importance of themes to arise naturally from the data and will also have a bearing on the research question”.

During the activity of developing themes, data was also coded. This according to Blanche & Kelly (1999, p. 143), entails “marking different sections of the data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or more of generated themes” from the data. Coding means breaking up the data in analytically relevant ways (Creswell, 2008); and during this the researcher used different coloured marker pens to highlight pieces of related text. With these the themes were explored more closely and a finer and more specified ones were generated. The themes were put together for interpretation in a written account of the phenomenon investigated; and main themes, sub-themes and the ‘verbatim’ data that was captured during the interview sessions were all presented.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research design was presented. The purpose of this chapter was achieved by outlining the methodology that was used to obtain and utilize information from sources towards the attainment of the research objectives (cf. 1.6) of the study. An account of how the methodology was implemented was given. In the next chapter, data analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings will be looked at.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter looked at the methodology and design which the study adopted. This chapter will present a report of the data analysis and discussion of finding the readiness of ECD student teacher's readiness to work in inclusive school. A total of seven (7) in depth interviews were conducted among the registered fourth year students of the ECD specialization. In the discussion that follows, the researcher will first present a table that summarizes the themes and sub-themes generated from the data when analyzed; interpretation and the discussion of the themes will follow. Each theme will be individually analysed and discussed by the researcher according to the data generated from the participants. Below is a representation of the main themes and sub-themes that emerged from data:

5.2 Table of findings of main themes and sub-themes

Main themes	Sub-themes
<p>5.2.1</p> <p>Understanding of inclusive education.</p>	<p>5.2.1.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion of inclusive education is formed through experience. <p>5.2.1.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of understanding inclusive education on practice/teaching. <p>5.2.1.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of terms like <p>5.2.1.3.1 inclusive schools</p>
<p>5.2.2</p> <p>Challenges to their readiness.</p>	<p>5.2.2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shift in responsibility. <p>5.2.2.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parental involvement and guidance. <p>5.2.2.3 Unavoidable challenges</p> <p>5.2.2.3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources. <p>5.2.2.3.2</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes of mentors
<p>5.2.3</p> <p>Expectations of their training.</p>	<p>5.2.3.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language of teaching and learning. <p>5.2.3.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to diverse learners and special education in teaching and learning.
<p>5.2.4</p> <p>The way forward.</p>	<p>5.2.4.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural education

The analysis under the above themes and sub-themes unfolded as follows:

As humans need food to survive, so as education is important to the growth and development of the child. Every child is special, different and unique that's why inclusive education has been established as an important strategy within the field of education (Slee, 2001) in order to be able to accommodate these differences and uniqueness of every individual. Notwithstanding that, in trying to include all individuals others are excluded however, this study focuses on investigating ECD student teachers readiness in teaching in inclusive settings.

The first research question in this study investigates “how prepared are student teachers to work in an inclusive settings”. This research questions examines some issues like the student teachers understanding of inclusive education and the influence of their understanding to how they will work. To this effect, the understanding of inclusive education creates knowledge and access to opportunities of experimenting on one’s ability.

5.2.1: Understanding of inclusive education.

Different participants have their own understanding of the meaning of inclusive education. Their understanding is found not to be contextual.

Angela stated that:

“When I think of inclusive education the first thing that comes to mind is a school system where everybody is included where there is no discrimination, your religion, race, your disabilities are not necessarily a factor, anybody is welcomed to the school environment”.

Dube indicated that:

“Inclusive education is an education system that includes and accommodates cultural baggage, social factors, economic liability, religious beliefs and personal differences. Differences in the sense that there will always be a clash between what we believe in and what others believe in”.

Afonri stated:

“Inclusive education to my own understanding, according to me is education which improves all people. All people in the sense that even those who are disabled where also accommodated in the very same education and it is done in this way. You might find that those people who are disabled and then the school itself in structure it must also accommodate them. Perhaps those who are using wheelchair they must be some ramps where those people can move well. And even the facilities at school must just also accommodate those people who are having disability of some sort so that is how I understand it. And even in the classroom perhaps maybe they are those who can't see which means the resources must accommodate those people so that they must be part of the whole education the very same education process yes”.

Nnede said:

“Okay inclusive education entails for education that everyone is entitled for despite his education disabilities. If we try not to be looking at this factor then our classrooms is inclusive. Therefore I will say inclusive education is when we see everyone as equal and the same without us thinking twice that this person is different due to that disabled nature in a very small way”.

There is evidence of varied and limited understanding of inclusive education. These participants indicated that inclusive education is an education system which has many factors to consider like cultural differences, disabilities, economic liability and so on. This understanding indicates that the student teachers understood inclusion and did not only equate it to learners with disabilities. Also, there is an understanding that

education should not be discriminated on any grounds (disability, ethnicity, religion and so on). These factors for the participants should not be a reason one is excluded from school but with the help of inclusive education one can create a welcoming and conducive classroom and school where all learners will feel they belong to; and will be encouraged to participate in irrespective of their differences.

Participants show the importance of recognizing different diversity as it is worth celebrating. By celebration, it means every individual learner will be given a chance to learn. As formal education and learning starts in the classroom, teachers are expected to create a relaxed and conducive environment where teaching and learning takes place. There is also evidence of the importance of not looking at the physical differences of the learners instead they looked at what can be done for every learner irrespective of any factor. This way of looking at inclusive education by the participants shows people who are ready to work in inclusive settings as they tend to look at the realities of recent times in terms of how diverse the society is becoming. The acknowledgment of the diverse schools and classrooms by these participants do imply that student teachers to an extent are beginning to question their abilities and competencies; and by so doing they will be able to accept and include any kind of differences having in mind that, inclusive education creates the awareness of unity in race, gender, socio economic status, religion and culture of all human being.

Vygotsky's theory (cf. 3.3.1) which emphasizes societal roles in the construction of knowledge of an individual influenced the pre-service teachers understanding of inclusive education. This is seen in how the participants showed their understanding of

inclusive education showing an influence of a general belief of their society with regards to what inclusive education is. To an extent one cannot take away what their beliefs and understandings are, as there is a strong influence of their society in their perceived knowledge.

The student teachers understanding of inclusive education indicates they are prepared to work in an inclusive settings. One of the goals of higher education in teacher training is to assists student teachers to recognize and support diverse learners need (Daniels 2010), this would have lead to these student teachers understanding of inclusive education. Oswald and Swart (2011) stated that student teachers education will present an opportunity for exposure of their (student teachers) concerns and alter their attitudes towards inclusive education. This according to Hsien (2001), is the most appropriate and effective platform to prepare student teachers for the classroom. However, it is of note that effective preparations of student teachers to accommodate unique individual's educational needs will reduce the challenges to the implementation of inclusive education (Engelbrecht 2006).

5.2.1.1. Their passion for inclusive education is formed through their experiences

One's experience can help in building or destroying the individual psychologically. In this study student teachers experiences mostly transformed them in having positive urge in seeing that every learner is accommodated in the classroom. This is to say that the passion they have for their profession to becoming a teacher; will be an important component of their role as a teacher. This is seen in the following extracts.

Angela said:

“I repeatedly failed maths because my teachers shove me a lot. I was so angry with my teachers for their lack of support by not giving me chance to do better. In my training, I now know that a child can do better with a little push and encouragement from me. So I can go all the way, in terms of my time, money and even visiting or inviting the parents to come and be involved in their child’s education”.

Dube stated:

“I wouldn’t have been here if not that my teacher pushed me, then I thought she was always picking on me, but now I know that I wouldn’t not have even get to matric level without her. So tell me why I would just ignore these children like that. I know I will have the strength and I will do the much I can do, to make that little difference in my class”.

Afonri stated:

“I will involve everyone. This is because I was never excluded in any school activities. I never had any experience where the teachers looked down on my abilities in the classroom. Everything I did, I did voluntarily. I never had bad experiences at school and even here on campus. That has advantaged me a lot. So am gonnna put that into practice so that I don’t disappoint any learner but I do not care if I disappoint the teachers as most of them don’t care for the learners”.

Experience they say is the best teacher in life is a slogan which is an old proverbial adage and it is a more powerful foundation for teacher development than in teacher training. In this study, the participants recognized the fact that their lived experiences provided an avenue of acknowledging and showcasing their abilities. Both pleasant and unpleasant experiences contributed to the participants' ideological change of trying out every option that is available for including different abilities in their classrooms. In terms of pleasant experiences the participant (Afonri) appreciated all his past teachers who made it possible for him to acquire an education as he believes he wouldn't have been where he was now, if not for those teachers. Although before now he felt the teachers did not like him, however his understanding of inclusive education makes him to think about and appreciate those involved.

With regards to when these student teachers become teachers, Dube will do everything possible (like using corporal punishment and or swearing at learners) to see that every learner gets along in the teaching and learning. This is because from his view he will feel that it is the right thing to do in order to avoid excluding any learner in the classroom however, the chances of the learners to see it as he is being very strict and disrespectful to them is there. For Dube, his experiences were a positive reinforcement and motivator for building his work ethics. With regards to unpleasant experiences, the participant Angela seems to believe that she would have been a better learner if she was supported by her teachers. Nevertheless that does not mean that she would neglect her learners as she was neglected, as she strongly believes that every child deserves to have

a chance for improvement even if it means giving an extra push which can make a whole lot of difference in the child's life.

Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism (cf. 3.3.1) had an influence on the student teachers educational training and development as a teacher. Their direct social encounters with their teachers had an effect in their development, and also of understanding of what and how education should be. This in effect will enhance their relationships in the classroom as their social setting. Where their previous experiences and knowledge of what a classroom is and will influence their life and the life of their learners. These participants as learners were not a passive recipient of knowledge, but a constructor of their own knowledge, however meanings and understanding of this knowledge was through social construction.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated that a child's development is strongly influenced by the family, school, peers, neighborhood and community contexts in which they live. Attitudes towards different learners can greatly affect student success and achievement in the classroom (Brown, et. al 2011). For this reason, Wilderman & Nomdo (2007) stated that educators who are often driven by passion for their careers are indeed the frontline runners in implementing and ensuring the success of inclusive education by adapting teaching strategies in such a way that all learners, regardless of their learning abilities, are able to actively participate in teaching and learning.

5.2.1.2 The influences of understanding Inclusive Education on their practice/teaching

As inclusive education means different things to different participants due to some contextual factors and or reasons. These different understandings lead to the passion of what they want to do, what they can do and how they want to do it.

Afonri said:

“So to me like a teacher has to put more effort in their work and even include their own budget into helping the learners because that’s what I also did during my teaching practice. Some of the resources I had, I used my own personal money to buy. For example, I usually buy things to be used as resources in order to show learners during teaching. This is because requesting for those things from the school is such a waste of my time and the learner’s time. This will also enable you as a teacher to be ready for your teaching and cover the curriculum I time”.

Dube stated:

“Knowing and appreciating the lack I had in my past affected me towards my educational development, always makes me aware that there is a child who needs love and care. So am always not worried about what the other teachers say. I am only interested and focus on what I can do to help learners, which I believe will and can bring a change in their life”.

Finding joy in working as a teacher in a diverse school system should be something that the pre-service teachers should want to do on their own. If these pre-service teachers are well trained and exposed to different kinds of learners during their training, they will be able to face any challenges whatsoever. Moreover, if their training does not empower them to face these challenges there will be chances that they will not find joy in going the extra mile in the classroom. Having passion for a particular thing is what will come from one's heart without a push. Passion is not learnt or bought, but it naturally comes as a desire like a need on one's life. With passion one can do anything without seeing it as a burden.

The inter link between these pre-service teachers' understandings of inclusive education and their experience also determines what they will do as teachers in terms of their practice. A good knowledge of what inclusive education implies creates awareness on the importance of one's teaching strategy, materials/resources and methodology. This is elaborated in Swart & Pettipher (2011) that an inclusive school will recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuing quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnership with their communities. However, these student teachers would not see lack of resources to be a reason not to teach; instead they can use their personal budget to see that they have everything in term of resources they need to teach. This is because these teachers understand what lack can do, due to one's social-economic status and its effect in the development of a child. As a result of these, they are motivated to do the little they can to help.

5.2.1.3 Lack of understanding of terms

Different participants are quite sure and convinced that they are ready to work as inclusive teachers in an inclusive setting. However, most of them do not know the meanings of the concepts that are related to inclusive education and what they represents. This is probably as a result of success of inclusive education been attributed to sufficient resources for its proper implementation.

5.2.1.3.1 Inclusive school

From this study it is seen that most of the participants think that inclusive schools are former model c schools and private schools due to resources they have.

Afonri indicated:

“Public schools are not inclusive schools due to the fact that they do not have resources like the private schools”.

Nnede said:

“I never did my teaching practice in an inclusive school, as I do not want to fail my teaching practice due to not been able to communicate 100% in English”.

Hamid stated:

“The truth is most schools in the rural areas cannot be inclusive as the effects of apartheid education still exist there. So talking about inclusive schools is not for that end, we need to go to schools in the nice neighbourhood and say all these stories because that is the inclusive schools”.

Ability to understand and differentiate concepts related to inclusion by pre service teachers will help in their knowledge of inclusive education. However, these misconceptions on what an inclusive school is will make them not know that inclusive education is and can be practiced in schools that are not only former model c and private schools. These participants were also found not to understand concepts related to inclusion like inclusive schools. A good inclusive practice lays emphasis on the resources, teaching methodology, strategy used among others; these student teachers have a misconception that the whole idea of inclusive practice would be possible in former model c and private schools. This misconception could be looked at negatively as, the student teacher will tend to be relaxed and not notice even when his/her colleagues are practicing inclusive education.

5.2.2 Challenges to their readiness

One’s willingness and excitement to practice as an inclusive teacher in inclusive settings could be cut short if there are challenges the individual faces. These ECD student teachers are willing and ready to practice inclusive education in an inclusive setting, however, the realities and challenges in South African schools tend to be or

cause a barrier to their readiness. Some of these challenges include a shift in responsibility, in lack of resources, lack of parental guidance and role models.

Though these student teachers will be desperately in need of support from all stakeholders to avoid challenges in their work, does not mean these challenges cannot be avoidable. These challenges are in form of manmade and those that are unavoidable. For these pre-service teachers those (challenges) that are manmade are shift in responsibility, lack of parental involvement and guidance and lack of resources while unavoidable challenge is the involvement with their role models. Manmade challenges are those challenges which we as human beings created on our own. These challenges can be avoided if we handle them properly in our choice of our priorities.

5.2.2.1 A shift in responsibility

Being dependent on some other person seems to make life easier for one to be able to push blame of whatsoever to another person especially in situations where an individual does not want to live up to his or her responsibility.

Hamid stated:

“There is lot of challenges because the classes are still overcrowded and the communities are not like the past where they build their own schools instead now they are waiting for government to build schools for them”.

Afonri said:

“Most of the modules we did, did not expose us on the problems we would face at school and how to identify those barriers to learning. Instead we were left to figure out how to identify these problems the learners are faced with after we have come from teaching practices. Maybe a student experienced that he or she comes to class to narrate her story”.

During apartheid system of ruling, the dominated race did not depend on the government for most of what they needed for a successful school; they built their schools and provided for their children. With the end of apartheid, the nation has become one which everyone knows his/her rights and will forever uphold their right, the people deserve and will depend on the government to provide for them. Total dependence on government to provide every educational requirement would be as a result of increase in quest for a better life and also the need to move to a higher social class. These needs are affecting the individual's priority in the sense that instead of the parents of the learners making sacrifices to support the teachers by getting books and stationery for the child, they would prefer to use the money to buy something envouge at that particular time, which results in them waiting for the government to provide books and stationery when they can with a little sacrifice.

The student teacher also highlighted on the importance of their teacher training exposing them to all they need to know about the classroom. This student teacher emphasis is on how their higher education training fails them in equipping them with the required knowledge of how to identify different learning barriers; instead they

acquire the knowledge after they have come from teaching practice by learning through someone's experiences. Personally this student teacher fails to acknowledge that learning can take place though one another not necessarily through ones lecturer.

According to social constructivism theory by Vygotsky, the social context of the individual is important in his/her development. The individual choosing to maintain a social class over educational development (for example by deciding to spend the little money he/she has on other needs that is not education needs) is caused by the influences the society and communities have on one another. Although at the time, the individual might see it as a once off thing but the effect will be more than that. Also the participant highlighted on inability of their training exposing them to classroom issues, instead they were left to discover these by themselves during their teaching practices.

The aim of teacher training in higher education is to equip the student teachers with skills of teaching that they will need to become a qualified teachers. Daniels (2010) argues that the goal of higher education is to recognize and address diverse learner's needs, as it is important to enhance these student teacher's confidence and knowledge towards their readiness. Brown et. al., (2011) supports this by stating that undergraduate programs should provide courses and relevant experiences that prepare pre-service educators to interact with, and have a positive effect with diverse learners. Lack of effective preparation of teachers to accommodate unique individual educational needs in their classrooms will bring about their challenges to their inclusive practices (Engelbrecht 2006).

5.2.2.2 Lack of parental involvement and guidance

Parents and teachers working together can produce more effective changes in a learner's academic performance. Either of the party can or will be able to give information to the other on how well the learner can learn. This will help increase the teacher's ability to include the learner despite how different the learner is from other learners. However, lack of education in most parents brings about a mild form of intimidation on some parents towards what is happening to their child at school.

Nnede said:

“In farm schools parents are not educated so it is very difficult to involve the parents. In fact when you even invite them to come they will not come because they think you want to make them look stupid”

Hamid stated:

“Most children in ECD find it difficult to cope as they are still young so I started a program for the parents and guardians called ABET (adult basic education and training) in the school. This program is just a means of getting them involved in what is expected of their children in foundation phase and also to improve their knowledge. I bought the resources with my money but they still did not show up”.

Inclusive education white paper document identified non-recognition and non-involvement of parents as a learning need; this implies the need for school collaboration

and stronger role of parents in their children's education. This collaboration is expected to be an avenue for child's improvement in school, through the home as parents will be vital and in the forefront of the process. Collaboration is effective because people accomplish more and make better decisions when they work effectively together. As these participants of the study are student teachers who are training to be ECD teachers, it is important that the parents are involved in the day to day activities of their children as this cooperation will be beneficial to both the learners, teachers and the parents.

Even though this collaboration will bring a fruitful package for the development of the learners, the help from the parents would be able to assist these teachers to know why the child is lacking or not coping, what can be done and how it will be done to assist these learners. This will be good suggestions from the parents. Good home school relationship is an effective, accountable and reliable method of including all learners in the classroom during teaching and learning. This finding is in line with Uludag (2008) who found that parental involvement increases academic performance. Also in line with this finding is Greenwood and Hickman (1991) who reported that children are best supported and included in the classroom when families and schools have shared goals and work collaboratively.

However, with this mind (involvement of parents) there is an indication that these student teacher education training program do not have parental involvement modules in their curriculum. Finding from other research show that there is need for more initial training and in-service training for teachers if teachers are to take on an increased role in terms of parental involvement in children's school learning (Greenwood & Hickman

1991). Hiatt-Micheal (2001) also reported that pre-service teachers who received training of how to involve parents in their pre-service teacher preparation report feeling well prepared with the ability to engage in an assorted number of parenting practices.

According to Bronfenbrenner's systems theory, (cf. 3.2.2.2) shows that child development is influenced by peers, schools, parents and the society. Although, the influence from the home and school can and will affect the child development, the teacher's role is to keep the communication line open to be able to involve and accommodate the parents and not to scare them away with the attitude of what do the parents know. In terms of readiness of these pre-service teachers, if they do not get the necessary support from the parents or home, it will affect their relationship with the child as they would pay more attention a to child whom they know his or her background and what they can do better to help the child.

5.2.2.3 Unavoidable challenges

These challenges are those which cannot be avoided due to the environmental factors, religious and cultural beliefs and also social economic status and factors of the community. As the effect of apartheid still lingers on old historic schools also lack in resources and attitudes of role models will still be a problem in the classrooms.

5.2.2.3.1 Lack of resources

Resources have always been a necessary need in education. Lack of resources is a reality in South African schools and a student teachers need as much as resources they can get if that will boost their confidence to work as inclusive teachers in inclusive schools.

Hamid indicated:

“Working in deep rural schools has a lot of challenges due to lack of resources. Even the ones that are been provided are stolen from the schools due to lack of important resources like security and good buildings to house those resources. So if all these are put in place I think I can work in a deep rural school and still implement inclusive education there even though it will be very challenging. Then I will know am only bothered about what I can do better in the classroom”.

Angela stated:

“Having a smart board, enough books, conducive classrooms and school environment is not just enough resources. I feel the most important resources are been able to tap into the learners and building their confidence and self esteem”.

Resources have been an important factor to teaching and learning. Inadequate or lack of resources can cause barriers during teaching and learning. For efficient practice of

inclusive education adequate resources are needed as it (resources) will enable these teachers to be able to include different learners by making learning easier during teaching and learning. Although government will not be able to boast of adequate resources in rural public schools as much as it is in former model 'c' schools, this does not mean that the teachers cannot improvise. Exposure at teacher training on resource making and using, is an advantage for student teachers as this will bridge the gap especially where there is lack in resources.

Adequate resources in the foundation phase are important as they will enhance and equip teachers with enough information for the learners, as in this level learners are more of visual learners than auditory learners. This implies that teachers at foundation phase should be able to make resources on their own without depending on government to provide for them. For effective inclusive programme, how existing resources are used in new ways and how additional resources are increased are very important in the student teacher's readiness to inclusive practices. This finding is in line with Oswald and Swart (2011) finding that pre-service teachers concern about implementing inclusive education is on their challenges of an environment where support and resources are limited.

5.2.2.3.2 Attitudes of mentors

Having one to look up to as a mentor is important as some people try to emulate the good things their mentors do. However, some mentors do not live up to what is expected of them. In terms of this study the student teachers do not seem to agree that their role models (in-service teachers) have a lot to offer especially in terms of handling issues.

Hamid said:

“We look up to these people as our role models, but what they do is very bad as they are relaxed and take advantage of the fact that the schools are in the deep rural areas so they think the students can’t improve like those children who are in the urban areas”.

Angela indicated:

“I think government should retire teachers as early as possible. This is because they get tired and frustrated about the learners challenges. Now the university sends us to them and they want them to monitor our progress and learn from them. Tell me what I can learn from someone who indirectly discourages me on what I want to do, who we do not always agree on an issue and someone who swears on people’s inabilities”.

This student teacher’s need for a role model is related to their need for support to share their experiences, knowledge, information and problems with others in either similar circumstance or those who have experienced that before them. However, this study found that these pre-service teachers are not getting the support and guidance they need from their role models. These could be as a result of any of the following factors:

- Their role models are experiencing burnout with regards to not knowing what to do in a large diverse classroom;

- Lack of training on inclusive education;
- Tired of facing the same situation every time in the classroom;
- Not interested in the learners who are not ready to participate in the classroom and;
- Teaching might not have been their best choice of a job.

Research on in-service teacher attitude reported that lack of training on inclusive education presents challenges to its implementations (Oswald & Swart 2011). Ntombela (2010) found that in-service teachers have not made the necessary paradigm shift expected of them to enable them practice inclusive education. Furthermore, Mdikana, et. al., 2007 reported that in-service teacher's negative attitudes are often as a result of lack of training, resources, policy/leadership, and exposure to inclusive teaching practices. This is in line with some of the participants concern about their mentor teachers (in-service teachers) attitudes towards different learners and their attitudes in the classrooms.

On the other hand, the pre-service teachers might be the problem and this could be as a result of the following factors:

- They might be thinking they are young and vibrant and they cannot listen to what the older teachers have to say;
- They might have come with an attitude of questioning the knowledge of their role models;
- They might think they are better than they are;

- They fail to understand that one's experience is a good foundation compared to one's training without experience and;
- Negative attitudes towards role models during teaching practice.

Research on pre-service teacher attitude towards inclusive education found that pre-service teachers held positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Mdikana et. al., 2007).

The second findings of the study: challenges to their readiness, Bronfenbrenner's theory which emphasizes the direct and indirect influences on a child's life by referring to the many levels of environment or context that influences a person's development. For example, in the "shift in responsibility" the student teachers highlighted that so much dependence on government in providing everything have brought more lack especially where the people can provide. Also inability of the parents (Microsystems) not getting involving in the academic performance (the school/mesosystems) of their children is a thing of concern for these pre-service teachers.

The third research question "to what extent does the university curriculum prepares the student teachers to implement inclusive education" saw questions like what in your program/curriculum have informed you about inclusive education? Do you think the information you got on inclusive education within your class or in the context of your study have empowered you to be prepared to work in inclusive settings? And also from your experience at the university level would you say studying through English has been a challenge. These questions spoke to theme three and four of the present study.

5.2.3 Expectations of their training

Life is full of expectations as expectations are inevitable situations of life; and when what we expect does not happen as we expect it, there tend to be a conflict in what we do. With this in mind, these student teachers expected a well-structured curriculum that will speak to the challenges they faced in schools. However, not being aware of these situations brought about disappointments for them. By implication it implies that these student teachers having gone through teaching practice as a requirement for their trainings do expect a better way their profession would have taken place. These ways they think would have prepared them better for their teaching profession. These they believed would have contributed to their training especially in terms of communication and exposure to what they were suppose to know and do in terms of classroom challenges.

5.2.3.1 Language of teaching and learning

South Africa is a multi-lingual country; language difference is much evident in the heterogeneous population. However, it is a challenge in the classrooms.

Angela said:

“In my early years in the university I battled to understand what was being said. This is because the medium of communication was more of Zulu and i was very disappointed. As English based university we should stick to English but now we the non Zulu speakers we are being marginalized during teaching and learning”.

Hamid indicated:

“Knowing that we are going to become the educators in the schools whereby the foundation of our learners are somehow dependent on our abilities, I felt it was important the school curriculum would have accommodated different languages in our training having in mind that this is a multi-racial nation”

English as a language of teaching and learning is a barrier for some of the pre-service teachers, as the higher institution is located within Kwa-Zulu Natal and there is a common language Zulu which is spoken by native individuals. The participants indicated that at the early years of their study, their lecturers used more of Zulu to teach in order to accommodate those whose first language is different from English by doing code switching. Code switching is the practice of moving back and front between two languages. This practice will enable the learners to have a clear understanding of what they are being thought in the classroom. In doing these, most of the learners will be excluded because there is a possibility of not being fluent in either of the languages. This by implication means that in the bid to include all learners during teaching and learning exclusion occurs. Some of the participants from this study are from nearby provinces which have a different language for communication. This indicates that there is a very strong diversity in terms of language within the higher education classrooms. However, exclusion in language use is not only found between two races it is also found within the same race; as the participants here indicated on the importance of having an understanding of what is going on during the lecture periods.

5.2.3.2 Exposure to diverse learners and special education in teacher training.

No knowledge they say is a waste, as that knowledge which do not seem to be useful now can become useful in the future. Being aware and having knowledge of different situations that can be faced in the classroom is better than not having an idea of what one can face in a classroom situation.

Hamid stated:

“But part of our curriculum breakdown should have been dealing with special needs education and even a compulsory teaching practice at a special school”.

Angela indicated:

“Having special educational need/learners as a module would have been good. Whereby in a great detail it will inform us on different types of barriers to learning, how to identify them and what to do about it would have made a whole lot of difference”.

According to the participants, there is need to accommodate different educational needs, barriers, diversity and a very in depth training in special education in the curriculum. Educational needs are those demands which are needed by learners to ensure that barriers to learning are reduced which will enhance teaching and learning. Exposure to different barriers to learning is another important aspect of teacher training,

this is because it will help the pre-service teachers to be able to identify those barriers when they come across them as it is expected they lack experiences in the classrooms.

Exposure to diversity is a necessary knowledge for every pre-service teacher. This is important because with the quest for more money and needs in life people are moving from one place to the other for a better and improved life. This movement has increased the diverse nature of the classrooms, as children from different cultures are expected to be enrolled in schools. Exposure to an in depth understanding of diversity will enable the pre-service teachers to understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and they will be able to create teaching opportunities that will be adapted by the diverse learning.

Also of note, is the need for the curriculum to expose these pre-service teachers to a well detailed module on special education and to do teaching practice in a special school. This is important because as an ECD training teacher, been aware of what and how to work in a special school, will be able to help these pre-service teachers to be more patient in their teaching profession; as it is believed that any teacher who is teaching learners at ECD level will and should be patient with them as they are still very young.

The third findings of the study: expectations of the training, Vygotsky's believes on the influence of the society on an individual relates to this finding. As these pre-service teachers engaged in their training requirements like teaching practices which is a social

engagement with the classroom and society, they saw the importance of exposure like diverse learning/special needs education. Also in terms of language of teaching and learning, these participants felt the need from learning from each other however, if the language is a barrier in their classrooms it shows that there will be inability of these pre-service teachers communicating with each other and among each other during teaching and learning.

5.2.4 The way forward

In terms of teacher training, there are areas that these exit teachers felt the need for adjustments which would have equipped them better for their training as a teacher. In other words curriculum for the teacher training should have accommodated in-depth training and exposure of multicultural education.

Angela stated:

“Inclusive education and what it is in terms of culture, religion, social status, abilities and others should stand alone in the teaching syllabus in order to emphasise the importance more”.

Afonri said:

“I strongly believe that our degree curriculum is incomplete without us experiencing the basics of differences in South Africa. I mean since South Africa is a multi-nation with regards to language, culture, religion, race among others and the classroom is somehow a place where you can experience this well. So I feel that a lot should be invested on teachers about multi education system”.

According to this participant, for the training of the pre-service teachers to be more effective during their practice, the curriculum should expose them to some realities in South Africa like multiculturalism and multicultural education.

5.2.4.1 Multicultural education

Having had expectations of how and what the pre-service training should contain made these pre-service teachers have an idea of what could be done differently in their teacher training services and field experiences. Field experiences for pre-service teachers are a very important component for their training. These pre-service teachers had a strong view of, if they were exposed to a type of training which accommodates different individuals in terms of culture, beliefs, gender, race among others they will be better prepared from their training; having in mind that present day classrooms are more diverse. This is in line with Cambourne (2002) who reported that the major concern of the participants studied was the dissatisfaction with their pre-service education and they do not possess what they deem to be the essential training competencies to solve the challenges they are confronted with in the classrooms. This type of exposure/ education would be multicultural education.

Multicultural education is important for this student teacher's readiness because if implemented in pre-service teacher training it will help ensure that these pre-service teachers will be equipped with cultural knowledge of different groups and will address the beliefs and attitudes of pre-service teacher. Finding of importance of multi-cultural

education in teacher training and development from this study is in line with Brown et. al., (2011) arguments that teacher education has the responsibility to prepare pre-service teachers to effectively serve students, regardless of their backgrounds, experiences and areas of diversity. Spinthourakis (2007) supported this finding by highlighting the need of specific skills and knowledge in respect to cultural diversity if pre-service teachers will be a positive agent of change and good advocates of inclusive education.

Multicultural education would help in teacher training to expose the students on the existence of many cultures in a particular locality. For instance the student teachers would be aware that beyond Kwa-Zulu natal there are other cultures which supersede the Zulu culture in their locality.

The fourth findings of the study: The way forward. Bronfenbrenner's theory had an influence. The exosystem refers to one or more environment in which the developing learner is not involved directly as an active participants but which may influence or be influenced by what happens in the settings and relationships that directly influences the learner. Here the curriculum is a system which the pre-service teachers do not determine the content, but they are involved with it as it involves the requirement of their teacher training and development. Although these pre-service teachers felt they were ready to work as an inclusive teacher they also emphasizes on the need for the curriculum to accommodate multicultural education and special needs education which would have done more to equip them on their readiness.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the study. The data was presented in form of themes and sub themes. The extracts from the data (participant's direct quote) are highlighted. Discussion was made based on the extracts and also speaking to the themes and sub-themes. From the discussion and interpretation, it is seen that these pre-exit teachers seem to believe they are ready to work as an inclusive teacher in inclusive schools. The next chapter deals with the summary and recommendations of the present study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the five preceding chapters. Firstly, a summary is presented on the statement of the problem, the review of literature, the research aims and objectives as well as the methods that was used in the study as highlighted in chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4. A summary of the findings of the research as revealed in chapter 5 will then be presented. Finally, recommendations will be made regarding the curriculum of the ECD teacher training in higher education.

6.2 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 outlined the rationale of the study, which included aspects such as the South African education systems, inclusive education, rationale for the study, research questions, research design, theoretical and conceptual framework. This chapter aimed to inform the reader about the content of this research study which focused on student teacher's readiness in teaching in inclusive schools.

The second chapter focused on the literature which helped in the development of the research questions which brought to light the problems that was investigated in the present study. Literature reviewed were such as inclusion as a global concept, inclusion in South African context, inclusion and higher education training, inclusion and multicultural education, pre-service teacher readiness towards inclusion, pre-service

teacher' attitudes towards inclusive education, pre-service teacher's challenges to inclusive practices, pre-service teachers perception towards inclusion and ECD teachers and inclusive education.

The third chapter focused on the conceptual and the theoretical frameworks which were used as a lens in understanding the present study. Theories such as Bronfenbrenner's systems theory and Vygotsky's social cultural theories were employed in the study. Concepts such as philosophy of inclusion, inclusive education, inclusion in higher education, multicultural education, inclusive teacher, inclusive school, readiness to work, early childhood development and higher education and training were used in the study.

The fourth chapter focused on the research methodology and design. The study was a qualitative research done under the interpretive paradigm. A case study research was employed and the sample and the type of sampling used were discussed in this chapter. In the fifth chapter, data analysis and the interpretations of the findings were presented and discussed in themes and sub-themes. The main themes and the sub themes of the study include:

6.2.1 Understanding of inclusive education

- Passion of inclusive is formed through their experiences;
- The influences of understanding inclusive education on their practice/teaching and;
- Lack of understanding of term like inclusive school.

6.2.2 Challenges to their readiness

- A shift in responsibility;
- Lack of parental involvement and guidance;
- Lack of recourses and;
- Attitudes of mentors.

6.2.3 Expectations of teacher training

- Language of teaching and learning and;
- Exposure to diverse learners and special education in teacher learning.

6.2.4 The way forward

- Multicultural education

6.3 Findings from the Research

This section presents findings from the literature reviewed and also from the present study.

6.3.1 Findings from the literature study

Finding 1:

Inclusion is a major educational trend and teachers are the essential to proper implementation of inclusive education. However, in-depth creation of awareness of inclusion is needed at teacher training levels.

Finding 2:

Pre-service teachers enter the field of education with preconceived notions about teaching and learning that may be incorrect or not applicable to all teaching situations.

Finding 3:

Lack of skills, knowledge and training to help implement inclusive education causes negative attitudes towards inclusive education by in-service teachers. However pre-service teachers hold positive attitude towards inclusive education as they see it is the way forward to bridge the gap and the effect of apartheid era.

Finding 4:

Teacher education should be enhanced to foster positive regard concerning the accommodation of students with disabilities in general education classroom.

Finding 5:

Preparing pre-service teachers for the task of educating students with disabilities has become a challenging goal confronting teacher education program.

Finding 6:

In pre-service teacher training, effort should be put in place in making sure that the pre-service teachers are able to differentiate between different concepts related to inclusion. For example inclusive schools, private and former model c schools.

Finding 7:

Early Childhood Development pre-service teachers should be trained to develop skills on how to teach a diverse class.

Finding 8:

Multi-cultural education is important to be part of higher education training of pre-service teachers as it will enhance the pre-service teacher's knowledge of different learners and their culture.

Finding 9:

Multi-cultural education will help prepare the pre-service teachers address the beliefs, attitudes and fears that pre-service teachers will face as they work.

Finding 10:

Multi-cultural education is important because it will help develop pre-service teacher capacity to work with different learners as they will be ready to use the information in teaching and communicating with learners from different cultures.

Finding 11:

How an individual handles his or experiences will determine how those experiences affect what the individual does.

6.3.2 Findings from the present study

The following are findings from the present study.

Finding 12:

Five of the participants have a general understanding of what inclusive education is and two participants understands inclusive education and recognizes different factors of what it constitutes, in terms of culture, beliefs, disability, social economic status, gender, biographies, physical and mental disabilities. This finding is supported by literature where many researchers relate understanding of inclusive education with contextual factors.

Finding 13:

Three of the participant's childhood experiences played a big role in how passionate they are about inclusive education.

Finding 14:

Two of the participants believed that how they practice is based on their understanding which is linked to their childhood experiences and societal influences.

Finding 15:

Five of the participants are not aware that inclusive schools are not ex model c schools and private school.

Finding 16:

Two of the participants are worried that the community chooses to maintain their status over their child's education.

Finding 17:

Five of the participants are concerned that without adequate resources, it is difficult to teach ECD learners. This is supported by literature that lack of resources delays the implementation of inclusive education and inclusive practices (Stofile & Green 2007).

Finding 18:

Two of the participants felt that their role models (in service teachers) do not support them as they should. This is supported by literature that due to lack of training in inclusive education in-service teachers have a negative attitude towards learners.

Finding 19:

Two of the pre-service teachers are worried about the inability of parents to involve themselves in the academic welfare of their child. 67% are more concerned that their pre-service training did not expose them on how to deal with parents of their learners. This is supported by literature as most literature is emphasis on the importance of parent's teacher collaboration in higher education training and development.

Finding 20:

Two of the participant is concerned about the language of teaching and learning in higher education training. These participants are either fluent in English or any other language that is not Zulu.

Finding 21:

Two of the participants requested that their teacher training should expose them to both practical and theory courses on special needs and education. This is supported by literature that ECD pre-service teachers should do modules that will expose them to different barriers to learning and also in their field practice.

Finding 22:

Five of the participants were concerned that none of the module they did had a deep exposure to multi-cultural education. This is in line with the literature on the importance of multi-cultural education on higher education training and learning for teachers.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this research was to investigate (ECD) pre-service teachers readiness to work as an inclusive teacher in inclusive school. In order to realize this aim, a literature study was undertaken which served as the foundation for empirical research. The findings of this study are incorporated into the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

A review of inclusive education curriculum content of the University, in its role in pre-service teacher training to acquire skills and knowledge of inclusive education.

Recommendation 2:

To look beyond the University curriculum to see what strategies are being put in place in other jurisdiction to provide pre-service teachers the required skills and knowledge needed in a school environment.

Recommendation 3:

ECD curriculum of the University should be restructured. In re-structuring the curriculum, it is important that representatives from national ECD and inclusive education specialist should be consulted during the process. This is important as they will aid in the restructuring of the curriculum in such a way that it meets the envisaged needs of Early Childhood Development.

Recommendation 4:

Parental involvement strategies should be included in ECD curriculum as topics or modules and also provide experiences regarding parental involvement.

Recommendation 5:

ECD lecturers should be trained on skills and knowledge to support pre-service teachers on how to handle different learners in the classroom.

Recommendation 6:

Teacher education and training should provide knowledge and skills on multiculturalism and special needs education.

Recommendation 7:

The University should employ more academic staff that are competent in the use of ethnic languages in teaching and learning.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

It should be noted that this study is not without limitations. In fact, one of its constraints was that the study was conducted in one higher education institution (Edgewood campus of University of Kwa-Zulu Natal) only. Because of this, the findings based on this research might be construed by other researchers as not representing the views of majority of pre-service exist teachers in South Africa. Another limitation is the time frame for the research and also inability to have a male representative from other races besides the Africans in ECD phase specialization.

6.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the light of the possible limitations of this study, the following suggestions for further research are made:

- An investigation into the curriculum content of higher education training of ECD pre-service teachers;
- An investigation into the link between multi-cultural education and inclusive education;
- Develop program to empower these pre-service teachers on multicultural education and inclusive education and special needs education and;
- An investigation of pre-service teacher readiness work as an inclusive teacher with a larger sample.

6.7 CONCLUSION

This study investigated by means of a literature review and an empirical research pre-service teacher readiness to work as an inclusive teacher in South Africa. It also explores how well the pre-service curriculum prepared these pre-service exit teachers. Recommendations were made based on the findings of the study that revealed that ECD curriculum of the University should be restructured to suit inclusive environments. This study concludes that the University of Kwa Zulu Natal should structure a curriculum for a Bachelor of Education in Inclusive Education. The researcher hopes that this research will make a valuable contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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APPENDIX

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3 Lynbrook, 11 Lily vale Road Ashley
Pinetown

Dear Professor Kamwendo,

My names are Ezeonwuachusi Nnenna Fidelia; I am a registered master's student of University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Edgewood College in the school of Education studies (Educational psychology). I am presently doing a research project on "The Early childhood development (ECD) pre-exit teacher's readiness to work as an inclusive teacher in inclusive schools". I intend to use some of these registered exit pre-service teachers as part of my participants.

I will be grateful as my request will be granted.

Yours Sincerely

Ezeonwuachusi N.F

3 Lynbrook, 11 Lily vale Road Ashley
Pinetown

Dear Dr Sithabile Ntombela,

My names are Ezeonwuachusi Nnenna Fidelia; I am a registered master's student of University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Edgewood College in the school of Education studies (Educational psychology). I am presently doing a research project on "The Early Childhood Development (ECD) pre-exit teacher's readiness to work as inclusive teacher in inclusive schools". I intend to use some of these registered exit pre-service student teachers as part of my participants.

I will be grateful as my request will be granted.

Yours Sincerely

Ezeonwuachusi N.F

Declaration

I (Full names of gatekeeper) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this research project and the nature of its content.

Signature of gatekeeper

Date

Interview schedule

- What is your understanding of inclusive education?
- How ready are you to teach in inclusive schools?
- How ready are you to teach as an inclusive teacher?
- With your experiences of inclusive education would you say you are ready to teach in inclusive schools or as an inclusive teacher?
- What in your program/curriculum have informed you about inclusive education?
- Do you think the information you got on inclusive education within your class or in the context of your study have empowered you to become an inclusive teacher?
- From your exposure at the university would you say you have gained experiences of inclusion in terms of language, technology and curriculum in general

Informed consent form

Dear participants,

My names are Ezeonwuachusi Nnenna and I am a master's student of this University. I intend to conduct a study on the "ECD pre-exit teacher's readiness to Work as an inclusive teacher in inclusive schools". I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. This will involve signing an informed consent form and also a one and one interview.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you chose not to participate, nothing will be held against you. You are also free to withdraw at any time during the process and there will be no negative consequences associated with your withdrawal. All the information you will give will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the transcribed interview. After analyzing the research data, it will be stored away safely and securely by the researchers for 5 years after which it will be destroyed.

If you have any queries about the research please contact my supervisor Dr. Rosemary Kalenga on 031- 260 7583 and kalenga@ukzn.ac.za.

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of participant