

**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING  
LEARNERS WITH VISUAL DISABILITY: NARRATIVES  
OF SEVEN TEACHERS**

**by**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Education (Social Justice)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The constitutional dispensation and the subsequent recognition of education as a basic human right placed an obligation on government to accord to vulnerable sections of society an egalitarian status. For the education system, this meant that it had to ensure access to quality education for all learners, including those with disabilities, in order to enable them to reach their potential and meaningfully participate in and contribute to the wellbeing of society. This study sought to explore the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability.

Semi-structured interviews and observations were used to generate the data for this study. Semi-structured interviews sought to delve into the teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability, while structured lesson observations sought to elucidate these understandings by studying teachers in action. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, located within a critical research paradigm. The participants in the study were seven (7) teachers, who taught learners with visual disability.

Findings revealed that teachers were influenced by normative discourses that underpin inclusive education. Participants responded to these discourses in two ways. Some participants used the inclusive education policy as a means to accommodate learners' needs, while others had a perfunctory understanding of inclusive education, which often made them lose focus, leaving them to question their abilities to teach learners with visual disability. Secondly, findings revealed that participants' experiences were mostly negative, with lack of professional development programmes as a major barrier. However, participants used their agency to ensure that their learners learned, despite these challenges. For this study, participants concluded that curriculum planners and policy makers did not have learners with visual disability in mind when they were setting up the system.

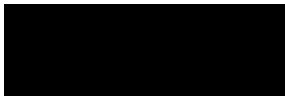

From this study, it could be concluded that, as much as Education White Paper 6 was promulgated to build an inclusive education and training system, implementation must consider the fact that education systems are power laden spaces, where practices are likely to reflect dominant values, norms and beliefs about disability. That is, inclusive education can only be effectively implemented if these normative configurations are diligently interrogated and troubled, and new realities are established.

## DECLARATION

I, Beryl Busisiwe Ntombenhle Dladla, declare that:

The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

- I. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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Date

# ETHICAL CLEARANCE



16 October 2019  
Mrs Beryl Busisiwe Ntombenhle Dladla (206521854)  
School Of Education  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mrs Dladla,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00000418/2019 Project title: Exploring teachers experiences of teaching learners with visual disability: Narratives of 7 teachers

## Full Approval — Expedited Application


This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 06 September 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL

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

This approval is valid for one year from 16 October 2019.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,

  
-----  
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

---

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics  
Committee Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)  
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

School 

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to begin by thanking God the Almighty for, without His grace, protection and blessings, this study would not have been possible. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the people mentioned below.

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Finally, Nkabi Yami, Thob'sile Shabane, who was my shoulder on my journey and supported me tirelessly.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my husband, Muzi Dladla, who has generously given me the time to finish my thesis. and my children, Colin, Minnie, Wa and Sibulelo, who were unbelievably patient with me throughout all this experience.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>DBST</b>	District-based Support Team
<b>FSS</b>	Full-Service School
<b>IEP</b>	Individual Education Plan
<b>LVD</b>	Learners with visual disability
<b>NCS</b>	National Curriculum Statement (Schools Grade R –12)
<b>OBE</b>	Outcomes-Based Education
<b>SBST</b>	School-based Support Team
<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>SIAS</b>	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>SNA</b>	Support Needs Assessment
<b>SSRC</b>	Special School as Resource Centre
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>WPRPD</b>	White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

*“Among the yardsticks by which to measure a society's respect for human rights, to evaluate the level of its maturity and its generosity of spirit, it is by looking at the status that it accords to those members of society who are most vulnerable, disabled people, the senior citizens, and its children”*  
(Mbeki, 1997, p. 1)

### **1.1 Introduction**

The above excerpt from the foreword to the Integrated National Disability Strategy by the then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, captures the attitudes towards disability, which the constitutional dispensation ushered into South Africa's legislative and policy environment. The primacy of human rights in the constitutional dispensation and the recognition of education, at both national and international levels, as a human right (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; World Declaration on Education for All, 1990) placed an imperative on the South African Departments of Education to rethink special needs education. To meet this imperative, Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education, 2001 was established (Department of Education, 2001). This study, using a narrative inquiry approach, explored the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability.

In this introductory chapter, I, firstly, provide the focus and rationale of the study. Next, I provide a general background on inclusive education in South Africa, especially teaching learners with visual disability. Relevant concepts, necessary to this study, are also explained in this chapter. The key research questions that framed the study are then presented. This is followed by a brief explanation of the theoretical framework used in this study, wherein I also discuss the epistemological and ontological positioning this study takes. I also introduce the seven teachers, who took part in this research study. Finally, I provide an outline of the five chapters that make up this study.

### **1.2 Focus and purpose of the study**

This study explored the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability. Furthermore, the study seeks to critically understand the various inclusionary and

exclusionary factors that influence the teaching and learning process. Given that this study is also positioned within the critical paradigm and narrative inquiry, it was important to hear the voices of the participants and to understand the various ways in which they showed their agency by negotiating exclusionary factors.

### **1.3 Rationale of the study**

The motivation for carrying out this research is both personal and professional. On a personal level, I decided to conduct this study as a way of understanding my own personal and professional experiences as a teacher and, subsequently, Departmental Head in a Special School, which is a Resource Centre for over twenty-three years through an academic lens. Firstly, I was deployed to my current station without any regard to the fact that I had no formal training in inclusive education, and there were very few support structures in the form of staff development initiatives to assist me to develop in my role. This state of affairs coincides with critiques against educational policy initiatives by commentators who observe that South African educational policy initiatives are generally oblivious of teacher needs and teachers are generally left to figure it out on their own (Campbell, 2020). Secondly, the study represents a personal attempt to immerse the experiences of the teachers into the ways that I lead, as well as to enhance professional development that I am required to provide as Head of Department. Lastly, the decision to explore the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability represents a humble attempt to contribute to scholarship, that seeks to deliver socially just teaching and learning environments, in line with the democratic and rights-based educational landscape that South Africa committed to deliver with advent of democracy in 1994.

My initial reading highlighted the state of inclusive education and also influenced my decision to conduct this study and contribute to knowledge when it comes to inclusive education. According to Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2015) in 2015, there were two telling reports that were released by an international and a local non-profit organisation, respectively lamenting South Africa's inclusive education current situation. The first report entitled "*Left in the Dark*", highlighted the level of dysfunction in the provision of education to visually disabled children in South Africa (Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2015). The Human Rights Watch report highlighted issues in South Africa's provision of inclusive education and called into question the government's claims that it had met its progress in

achieving primary education numbers and had met the United Nations Millennium Development Goal for education (Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2015). The report concluded that the South African government is “complicit in exclusion” of learners with disabilities (Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2015, p. 40). These two reports detail a range of challenges affecting the delivery of quality education to learners with disabilities, including inadequately trained teachers, poor infrastructure, lack of support materials for learning, teaching and an undifferentiated curriculum. A meeting between the Department of Basic Education and the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education in 2017 took note of the progress made with regards to the implementation of Education White Paper 6 on inclusive education. It was also noted that due to the lack of resources and qualified personnel, there was a danger that schools catering for learners with special needs would cease to be educational institutions and degenerate into nursery homes (Department of Basic Education, 2017).

Though the above reports and meeting are important indicators on the state of inclusive education, one cannot help but feel that teachers’ experiences are viewed and treated as a peripheral matter. This state of affairs is rather unfortunate, given the central role that teachers are supposed to play in the delivery of quality education. Given the array of challenges affecting the provision of inclusive education, it is a worthwhile endeavour to obtain an understanding of how the important players, namely, the teachers, are coping and navigating the various challenges affecting the sector. This study is located in the critical paradigm and in keeping with the tenets of this paradigm, the study foregrounds and privileges the voices of teachers, who are generally rendered invisible, when reporting on inclusive education.

In the foreword to the report by Section27, Justice Zak Yacoob lamented the absence of specialised sections in the various departments of education, that focus on specific disabilities (Yacoob, 2015). In addition, Justice Yacoob also observed that the policy on inclusive education is too general and does not provide plans that tackle specific disabilities and related curricula. The observations by Justice Yacoob influenced my decision to concentrate on the teachers' experiences teaching learners with ‘one’ disability, namely, visual disability. In making this decision, I hoped to obtain more nuanced analysis, instead of an analysis that lumps up all learners under one all-embracing banner, inclusive

education. Such an analysis would be more useful for decision making and as a contribution to knowledge.

#### **1.4 Aims and objectives of the study**

The aim of this study was to learn about the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disabilities in a Special School as a Resource Centre. Apart from understanding the experiences of teachers, this study also seeks to contribute to a body of knowledge on visual disability, as there is not significant research in this area, especially within South Africa. Research as evidenced in the literature review chapter, predominantly claims that teachers working with learners who have all forms of disability experience their teaching lives as negative. This study aims to focus not only on the negative aspects of teaching learners with visual disabilities, but also at the positive ways in which teachers work towards ensuring inclusive education principles and, more importantly, work towards meeting the needs that are specifically for learners with visual disabilities.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To explore teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability.
- To identify the factors that are both inclusionary and exclusionary that influence teaching and learning.
- To determine how teachers, negotiate exclusionary factors in their classrooms.

#### **1.5 Background to the study**

This study sought to learn more about teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability. Historically, in the South African context, learners with special needs have been marginalised and left behind due to limited access to quality education, to which all learners are entitled.

Inclusion is recognised as a fundamental human right, whose object is to embrace all people's diversity, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, or other differences (Department of Education, 2001). According to the Department of Social Development (2015), inclusion entails providing everyone with equal access to resources and mutual respect and tolerance for diversity. The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities (WPRPD) extends it to education, indicating how it should be implemented practically. In order to ensure an inclusive and participatory learning and environment that best meets their needs, the WPRPD defines inclusion as a structural transformation phase involving improvements and changes in content, methods of teaching, techniques, systems, and approaches to manage barriers (Department of Social Development, 2015).

Special needs education has been scrutinized since the implementation of White Paper 6 (EWP6) in 2001 to ensure that it embraces social justice, equity, and quality education for everyone. It called for the restructuring of schools to full service, resource centres and ordinary schools to allow all learners to gain full access and participation (Department of Education, 2001).

The Department of Education in South Africa is committed to establishing an education system that is inclusive will allow vulnerable learners to be included in general or mainstream classes while also removing barriers to learning. According to Naraian and Schlessinger (2017), inclusion seeks to eliminate disabling factors in the educational setting. The elimination of a segregated educational system is a significant achievement in which learners are physically included and do not feel excluded. In the implementation of inclusive policies, there are still both successes and setbacks. According to the Department of Education (2010: 13), there is a significant discrepancy between policy formulation and implementation, as well as its translation into practice.

According to the findings of various studies, teachers experience varying levels of anxiety as a result of the various challenges they face when teaching learners with visual disabilities in an inclusive setting. According to Negash (2017) the lack of expertise and skills in teaching learners with visual disabilities is the result of a lack of professional development and training among teachers teaching inclusively hence, some people develop negative attitudes towards the changes as a result of inclusive education. There is also the issue of a rigid or inflexible curriculum, which limits teachers from including learners with visual disabilities on an equal footing (Khumalo & Fish-Hogson, 2016). Korir (2015) contends that the appropriate learner support and resources for learners with visual disability have been significantly scarce. However, teachers modify the available resources to ensure inclusive learning, although this places a strain on teachers and opens a door for learning

gaps (Maguvhe, 2015). In order to overcome these obstacles, teachers are taking initiatives to develop strategies to minimise barriers to education and learning (Walton, 2009).

## **1.6 Defining of key concepts**

### **a) Disability**

There is no consensus as to the exact definition of the concept of disability. The preamble, namely, Section E, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) states that “disability is a concept evolving and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis” (United Nations, 2006, p.1). Thus, ‘disability’ is a notion imposed by the society. Persons with disabilities experience three main types of interrelated barriers: social, psychological and structural. People’s attitudes towards disabled are based on their own worldview, but they are also influenced by prevailing discourses in society.

The argument above has some connections with the medical perspective towards disability. For instance, the medical model “sees people as being disabled by their impairments” (Greaves, 2020, p. 3). This suggests that the medical model may strengthen the implicit elements or factors that fuel the discrimination and segregation of persons with disabilities (Bunbury, 2019). The WPRPD defines an 'impairment,' which can result in limitation or loss of social activity in a perceived or actual feature in a person's body (Department of Social Development, 2015). Here, the discourse suggests that a fault resides within the person with a disability. On the other hand, the social model of disability argues that barriers exist and that these can be environmental, structural and attitudinal, but that the consequences are that the rights and lives of disabled people are impinged upon (Bunbury, 2019). In this instance, barriers are imposed upon learners or persons with a disability and that efforts needs to be made to ensure that these barriers are eradicated.

There are also several categories of disability, that is, “learning disabilities, mental challenges, visual impairments, hearing impairments, speech and language disorders, physical and motor disabilities, emotional and behavioural disorders and lastly health related disorders” (Chimonyo et al., 2011, p. 89 cited in Greaves, 2020). In this study, disability is conceptualised not as an attribute with a person, but as resulting from “the interaction between persons with

impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (United Nations, 2006, p. 1). This conceptualisation will thus deploy to explore teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disabilities.

### **b) Barriers to learning**

Barriers to learning are the obstacles in the educational system that restrict or hinder access to learning opportunities, involvement, and development (Department of Education, 1997).

### **c) Visual disability**

Visual disability includes two main categories, namely, blindness and low vision. Blindness is defined as being completely blind and unable to use both eyes (World Health Organization, 2011). A person with low vision does not see well, but with the adjustment to the font type and size, contrast, and use of colours can access visuals (World Health Organization, 2011).

In accordance with the Handbook of Resources and Services for persons who are Blind of 2015, a specialized learning support material (Braille, large print, or audio format) is required to teach learners with visual disabilities effectively (California Department of Social Services, 2020). In this study, however, I will use the term visual disability to denote the fact that disability is a social construction in an ability-oriented environment (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). This suggests that in this study the teaching standards, values and ideas prevailing in the main discourses are influenced by teachers who teach learners with visually disability. The fact that schools are microcosms, which mirror the dominant norms of society, inform this conceptualisation and are critical to unravelling.

### **d) Braille**

This is a tactile form of writing, which embosses dots to a paper and leaves raised dots, which are read by fingertips someone who is unable to use eyes to read and write print (Blind SA, 1953).

#### **e) Curriculum differentiation**

Curriculum differentiation entails when the teacher modifies, changes, adapts, extends and vary teaching methodologies, techniques, modes and strategies of assessment and curriculum content to meet all learners' learning needs (Department of Basic Education, 2011). That is, curriculum differentiation is a strategy used to consider the learners' abilities, needs and backgrounds in the teaching and learning process (UNESCO, 2004b).

#### **f) Full-service school**

A full-service school is a public school which has been designated, converted and resourced to provide learners with moderate support services (Department of Basic Education, 2019). Full-service schools should work together and support ordinary public schools (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

#### **g) Inclusive education**

Inclusive education entails recognising that all children can learn and building enabling systems, structures and teaching and learning methodologies to accommodate the needs of learners (Department of Education, 2001). Therefore, inclusive education is about enhancing participation in classrooms and reducing exclusion from education (UNESCO, 2007). Eloff et al. (2002, p. 83) states that “inclusive education involves the including everyone, regardless of their diverse identities and needs.” For Ainscow (1999), inclusive education is when a regular classroom is transformed to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners.

#### **h) Special needs education**

This refers to the individual or system's needs or priorities that must be addressed in order for the system to respond to differences in the learner population, remove learning barriers, and promote effective learning among all learners (ISCED, 2011).

#### **i) Special School as Resource Centres (SSRC)**

These are special school that have been selected, equipped and resourced to provide, in addition to, high levels of support to learners with special needs, outreach services to full-service schools and, where necessary, public ordinary schools (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

## **j) The social model of disability**

The barriers approach to disability is sometimes referred to as a social model, which is not viewed in terms of the disability of persons but rather as environmental, structural and attitude barriers that affect the lives of people with disabilities and have the potential of impede their inclusion and progress in many areas of life, including employment, education and leisure (Oliver 1996).

### **1.7 Key research questions**

The key research questions for the study were as follows:

- What are the teacher's experiences of teaching learners with visual disability in an inclusive school?
- What are the inclusionary and exclusionary factors that influence teaching and learning?
- How do teachers negotiate these factors?

### **1.8 Theoretical framework of the study**

To explore and understand teachers' experiences teaching learners with visual disability, I adopted the Theory of Practice Architectures, which uses the concepts of '*sayings*', '*doings*', and '*relatings*' to describe teachers' educational practices (Kemmis, 2014). When looking at what strategies teachers use in the classroom, for example, one can notice that they are influenced by a variety of factors. These material conditions of the school could be: where resources will enable the teaching and learning process to continue successfully; cultural and social discourses regarding disability; and political arrangements evident in the policy, all influence what people, such as teachers, *say*, *do*, and *relate* to.

The theoretical concepts of Practice Architectures (Kemmis, 2014), which are '*sayings*' in the medium of language, have influenced the ontological view outlined above. The policy influenced by the social rights movement around disability assures particular kinds of ideology and serves as a guiding principle that teachers can use to bring about change in their teaching practice. These are observed, for example, when teachers engage in active learning about inclusive education and display a commitment to ensuring that learning occurs for learners with disabilities. Resources are material-economic arrangements that

make teaching and learning possible. The kinds of resources available for teachers either enable or disable teaching and learning practices from occurring properly (Department of Education, 2001). Within the classroom, teachers are in a relationship with learners. If learning must occur smoothly, then the relationships should emphasise shared responsibilities, collaboration and reflection on the social-political arrangements that serve as a medium of power (Kemmis, 2014).

Epistemologically, this study assumed that teachers are able to generate knowledge of their experiences based on their own interpretations of reality and knowledge. The critical paradigm provides a device to conceptualise and demonstrate this understanding of the social world through direct personal experiences in real-world settings (Asghar, 2013).

### **1.9 Methodological approach**

This study used qualitative narrative inquiry to explore teachers' daily experiences of teaching learners with visual disabilities. Narrative inquiry enabled me to access teachers' experiences, their various emotions, and ways in which they negotiated challenging circumstances in an authentic manner in order to improve teaching and learning. The stories told by the teachers in this study exemplify their voices, which research argues are not fully heard and accounted for. In order to gather data, participants were asked to tell their stories through the use of two semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. Here, teachers provided insights into their various teaching experiences for learners with visual disabilities. As Webster and Mertova (2007) assert, this enabled the capturing of their stories more fully, which included factors that teachers believed were exclusionary as well as inclusionary to the learners that they taught. The narratives of these teachers enabled me to gain a more holistic picture of the complex ways in which they attempted to challenge the exclusionary and embrace and sustain the inclusionary factors.

### **1.10 Introducing the participants**

In this section, I introduce the seven (7) teachers who agreed to participate in this study. One common thread that runs across their profiles is that none of them had ever envisaged that they would be working with learners with disabilities. In the section below, I present a brief introduction of each of the participants.

**a) Thembi**

Thembi is a 51-year-old female teacher. She has always liked working with children. She has a Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma, an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) and a Bachelor of Education Honours in Educational Management. She has been in the school for 13 years and is actively involved in music and sports.

**b) Teresa**

Teresa is a female who is 61 years' old, who has been teaching for 34 years in the same school. She is very passionate about teaching learners living with disabilities. Teresa has a Senior Primary Diploma in Education, a Diploma in Special Education, Bachelor of Arts Degree, and an Honours Degree in Education. She started teaching when it was compulsory for every special needs teacher to have a qualification in special needs education.

**c) Linda**

Linda is 53 years old and teaching has always been her passion. She has worked for twenty-three years in this school. Her professional qualifications include a Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma, a Higher Diploma in Education and an Honours Degree in Education. She did her practical's towards qualifying as a teacher in the same school. She is a go-getter and possesses a keen willingness to learn. She has acquired braille certificates and has attended many workshops on inclusive education and has also initiated staff development programmes at the school.

**d) Shaun**

Shaun is a 41-year-old female. Prior to her qualification and subsequent employment in the school as a teacher, Shaun worked at the school as a teacher assistant for four years. She has a Diploma in Marketing and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. She has been in the school for seven years.

**e) Sharon**

Sharon is 36 years old. She never had intentions of becoming a teacher, but when she completed her Bachelor of Social Sciences degree, she could not find a job, leading to her decision to enrol for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. She has worked in the school for eight (8) years.

#### **f) Joy**

Joy is 47 years old. She has a Bachelor of Education degree and has been teaching for five (5) years. Joy teaches Grade R at the school. Although she does not have any formal training in braille or inclusive education, she is very eager to learn. She uses her free lessons to observe other teachers' lessons, in addition to spending time consulting with either her Departmental Head or School Therapist. Joy is convenor of the cultural committee.

#### **g) Purity**

Purity is 46-years old. Her professional qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Graduate Diploma in Business Management and Marketing and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Purity has not always wanted to be a teacher, but along the way she discovered that her passion was teaching, and subsequently studied towards a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. For ten years she has been at this school.

### **1.11 Organisation of the study**

This dissertation on the teacher's experiences who teach learners with visual disability is divided into five (5) chapters. The content of the five (5) chapter is summarised in the section below.

In **Chapter One**, I provide a rationale for the study. In addition, I provide a general background on inclusive education in South Africa. This is followed by an outline of the questions that the study sought to answer. I then introduce the seven (7) teachers who participated in this research study. Finally, I provide an outline of the five (5) chapters making up this dissertation.

In **Chapter Two**, I review both local and international literature on inclusive education. Next, I review empirical research on teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability. Then, I present a discussion of Kemmis et al.'s (2014) Practice Architectures Theory, which provided a template for understanding the findings and arguments in this study. This theoretical device, coupled with the literature review, provided an analytical lens that I used to make sense of the findings in this study.

In **Chapter Three**, I present the methodological and design decisions that I made in responding to this study's key research questions. Thus, I discuss the data collection

methods used in the study as well as issues of trustworthiness, the limitations of the study and, finally, ethical considerations made to ensure the respect, upholding and protection of the rights of the participants in this study.

In **Chapter Four**, I present and analyse the data gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations. The themes that emerged from the data coding are discussed in relation to the theoretical framework and the literature review.

In **Chapter Five**, I conclude the study by providing a summary of the key findings of the study. Next, I reflect on the limitations of the study. Then, I discuss the significance of the study and, from the findings of the study, suggest possible areas of further investigation. future research. Lastly, I provide concluding comments, with a view summing up the key message of the study.

## **1.12 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I provided a broad overview of the study. I began doing this by providing a general introduction to the study, background and purpose, and focus and rationale for the study. Next, I provide a brief review of literature, in order to provide an initial foundation for the study. Lastly, I discussed the key research questions, methodology and design considerations, and provided a theoretical framework for understanding the findings of the study.

In the subsequent chapter, I provide an in-depth review of literature, in which I engage with the debates regarding the problem under investigation in this study, with a view to locating it within the broader scholarly conversation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

I present a review of national and international literature on teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disabilities in this chapter. I begin the chapter by interrogating policies and legislation that relate to inclusion. Policies and legislation on inclusion are useful for providing an understanding of how nations are going about implementing their commitments. For this study, they paint a picture of how the nations are making adaptations to their education systems to ensure that learners can access and enjoy their constitutional rights in respect of teaching and learning. In my engagement with literature on inclusion, I have repeatedly encountered a message that suggests that inclusion is not a reality in the lives of many people for who it is purported to be intended. To this end, in respect of this chapter, I discuss the inclusionary and exclusionary factors, which manifest in the work and lives of teachers and learners. Finally, I discuss the theoretical framework used to analyse, make sense and understand findings in this study, namely, Practice of Architectures. In this theory, I borrow the notions of *sayings*, *doings*, and *relatings* as elements of the theoretical device for this study.

#### **2.2 Legislative and policy framework on inclusive education in South Africa**

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in Spain in 1994, where 92 governments and 25 international organizations gathered to reaffirm their commitment to Education for All (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1994, 2006), influenced the international implementation of an inclusive education system. These nations made a commitment to transform their education systems by promoting inclusive education to ensure that all learners, irrespective of their geographical and socio-economic circumstance, can enjoy uninhibited access to education. Thus, this gathering of nations created a greater awareness on disability and other issues, and to ensure that the rights the most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, to education are upheld, respected and protected. This is eloquently captured in the Salamanca Statement, which was focuses international attention not on just including the learner into the education system but interrogating and transforming the cultural configurations of education systems (Fullan, 1990; UNESCO, 1994). In essence, the Salamanca Statement

and Framework for Action provided the foundations for enabling nations to build inclusive education and training systems and, in so doing, embrace the practices and principles of EFA.

Section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa affirms inclusive education principles and guarantees the fundamental right to a basic education (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Human dignity, equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, as well as freedom from unfair discrimination, are all emphasized in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Human dignity and equality are listed as substantive rights in the Bill of Rights, which is Chapter 2 of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). Essentially, the Constitution provides guarantees in respect of the minimums that must be accorded to all the citizens of our country, irrespective of their differences.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 repealed all the apartheid-informed laws in respect of schools and outlines how schools must be governed in line with the new democratic ethos. (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). For instance, section 5(1) of the Act states that a “...public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way” (Republic of South Africa, 1996b, p. 7). This section gives expression to section 29 of the Constitution, which guarantees everyone the right to a basic education (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). The Act further makes education compulsory for children, including those with disabilities, between the ages of 7 and 15. This means that government must ensure access to education for all the children who fall into this category.

Education White Paper 6 (2001) lays out how the Department of Education should go about creating a system that is inclusive of all learners. This is an important framework, which provides guidelines as to how the education system must accommodate and cater for the needs of all learners, irrespective of their difference. Education White Paper 6 provides a mechanism to shift from the medical deficit to a social rights model. Education White Paper 6 shifts the focus from special educational needs to learning barriers. The notion of learning barriers highlights the fact that there are numerous barriers to learning, including negative attitudes toward difference, rigid curricula, inappropriate learning and teaching

language, unsafe and inaccessible environments (Department of Education, 2001). The notion of barriers to learning encompasses all the possible obstacles, not just disability and impairment. This means that the notion of learning barriers alerts us to the possibility of barriers within the learner, the school, the educational system, and the broader social, economic, and political context, and that these barriers may manifest in a variety of ways in the lives of learners, only to surface as learning breakdown or when learners drop out of school (Department of Education, 1997).

The Department of Education also developed guidelines whose object is to aid in the implementation of inclusive education. These guidelines include the Department of Education's Conceptual Operational Guidelines for Special Schools as Resource Centres (Department of Education, 2005a); *Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes* (Department of Education, 2005b); and *Guidelines for Full-Service Schools/Inclusive Schools* (Department of Education, 2005c; Department of Basic Education, 2009a).

In 2014, the Department of Basic Education promulgated the *Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS)* (Department of Basic Education, 2014). The Policy on SIAS provides a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide support programmes for all learners who require additional support (Department of Basic Education, 2014). The policy guides officials and teachers in not assessing only for intrinsic factors in the child, but to also examine (environmental) barriers to learning and development. The procedures and processes in the Policy on SIAS are to all learners who require (additional) support; not just learners who have a disability. This highlights the importance of ensuring equitable access to quality education for all learners.

### **2.3 Inclusive education in South Africa**

South Africa had been an undemocratic state before 1994 in which apartheid persisted. Prior to this, the education system racially segregated learners with disabilities under apartheid. When South Africa democratised in 1994, this brought significant reforms to South African education system. New school policies and legislation were promulgated in sync with the advent of democracy. As a result, the new administration restructured the education system in order to establish and enforce a new ethos founded on equitable access

to education for everyone (Taylor, 2009). Given the fact that the reforms sought to do away with discrimination and segregation, this meant that all learners, including those with disabilities, had to be accommodated in education.

Education in South Africa is regarded as an instrument of accommodating the diverse learning needs of all learners and to achieve social justice for those who are vulnerable and marginalised, including learners with disabilities (Department of Education, 2001). The shift from exclusionary to inclusionary governance of education requires education to be configured such that it responds to the educational needs of all learners and to identify and remove all barriers to learning. For instance, this means that schools must offer curricula that are flexible and can release and advance the potential of every learner (Ntombela & Soobrayen, 2013). From an inclusive education perspective, this means that the education system must commit to the inclusion of all learners in a single education system. Furthermore, schools must be changed into welcoming environments; teachers must be capacitated to teach inclusively and work with learners with diverse educational needs; and adapt, modify and differentiate curricula to accommodate all learners.

In many instances, teachers still find it difficult to put policy into practice, particularly when it comes to implementing inclusive practices in classrooms for learners with differing learning needs. To this end, Special Schools as Resource Centres were established to provide outreach services to public ordinary schools to ensure that they can support learners experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2005a). This implies that Special Schools as Resource Centres must be converted and resourced to make them transformative and inclusive, and develop their capacity, not only to accommodate learners with high intensity support needs, but to provide professional support to other schools in respect of curriculum, assessment and instruction to ensure that teachers in these schools can support learners (Department of Education, 2005b). In addition, Special Schools as Resource Centres have expertise and service that are unavailable in public ordinary schools. Therefore, Special Schools as Resource Centres provide therapeutic support to learners with disabilities in public ordinary schools (Department of Education, 2005a).

Although teachers in South African have embraced inclusive education in principle, findings of a study on establishing inclusive schools by Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2017)

revealed that teachers were concerned that the support they were receiving for the implementation of inclusive education was inadequate. This is concerning as teachers are regarded as the primary resource to achieve inclusive education system. Kamanga, (2013) cited in Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht, (2018) assert that. Historically, teacher development programmes have been inadequate. With inadequate teacher professional development programmes, it may be utopian to expect them to teach inclusively and to advance the implementation of inclusive education. For teachers to be able to adopt inclusive pedagogical practices, identify and address barriers to learning that their learners may be experiencing, they must be prepared adequately.

#### **2.4 Access to education for learners with visual disability**

Learners with visual disability are categorised as learners with high-intensity support needs (Department of Education, 2001). Visual disability one of the most feared disabilities on the planet (Maguvhe, 2015). For instance, learners with visual disability are often labelled, discriminated against, and treated with contempt (Maguvhe, 2015). To this end, this has become a major obstacle to the actualisation and implementation of inclusive education (Negash, 2017). In addition, the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability are an under-researched area (Negash, 2017). Therefore, given what Maguvhe (2015) has observed about visual disability, there is a need to investigate this area to ensure ways in which learners with visual disability are understood.

The Salamanca Statement states that schools must consider the needs of learners with visual disability and ensure that they are equally accommodated, and their needs are met (UNESCO, 1994). This is to ensure that they receive a good education alongside their peers without segregation. However, Wilson (2016) has observed that teachers continue to pose a consistent threat to the accommodation of learners with disability. This manifests itself in various ways. For example, teachers often lack relevant skill and expertise to include learners with visual disability in their classrooms (Maguvhe, 2015). Teachers often struggle to find ways of effectively teaching these learners to enable them to access the curriculum. This effectively means that learners may be physically present in many classrooms, but may not be participating in learning (Mukhopadhyay, Molosiwa & Moswela, 2013; Penda, Ndhlovu & Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2015). This implies that learners with visual disability often tend to be passive learners, invisible and quiet in classrooms

(Penda, Ndhlovu & Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2015). As it can be expected, the consequence of this is poor academic performance. Moralle (2016) contends that the inability of teachers to understand the rationale behind inclusive education in general is the main impediment to the effective implementation of inclusive education.

Apart from teachers presenting as a barrier, there are other systemic barriers that exist that prevent learners from accessing and participation in education. Johnson-Jones (2017) indicates that learners with visual disability do not only experience challenges with teachers but have limited access to opportunities to acquire specialised skills such as braille, which is required to open learners up into the world reading. Without this critical skill, learners often are trapped in inevitable failures. According to Habulezi and Phasha (2012) and Nasiforo (2015), education for learners with visual disabilities must be assisted so that they can access the curriculum. The curriculum for visually disabled learners often requires adaptation, modification and adaptation so as to ensure they can learn and succeed.

#### **2.4.1 Teachers' attitudes towards including learners with visual disability**

This section discusses different teachers' perceptions of inclusive education. A recurring theme that emerged in the literature that was reviewed was teachers' attitudes regarding the implementation of inclusive education.

Findings of a study by Donohue and Bornman (2015) revealed that there were different attitudes among teachers, which were influenced by a number of factors, such as age, education and training, lack of support, teacher resisting change, learners' disability, teachers' incompetence, availability of resources, curriculum offerings, class size, time and experience. According to Donahue and Bornman (2015), teachers can be assisted to develop self-confidence and self-efficacy in their abilities to include learners with disabilities through appropriate training, experience and exposure (Bornman & Donahue, 2015). However, factors outside of their control, such as class size and curriculum offerings, have been reported to affect teachers negatively as they felt that they did not have adequate knowledge and skills to adapt the curriculum or develop appropriate resources for teaching learners with visual disability.

Florian (2012) has reported that teachers may be unwilling to accept learners with disabilities in their classrooms. For instance, in this study, teachers reported that they preferred not to have learners with disabilities in their classrooms, because they perceived them as a hindrance in the success of other learners (Florian, 2012). Teachers reported that teaching of these learners was often time-consuming and took away the time which teachers thought could spend supporting other learners. This position has been supported by Schoeman (2012), who found that learners with disabilities were often not supported and attributed this to the fact that some teachers were not ready to accommodate the diverse educational needs of learners. This is quite concerning that teachers, as key education policy implementers, their attitudes are of utmost importance as they can determine the extent to which learners experiencing barriers, including those with disabilities are accommodated.

#### **2.4.2 Professional development for the teachers**

Inadequate professional development and training is among most critical barriers for teachers to confidently teach inclusively. Engelbrecht and Swart (2001) assert that this often causes stress for teachers. That is, being required to implement a policy initiative for which they have inadequate understanding makes them feel more deskilled (Engelbrecht and Swart, 2001). For the successful implementation of inclusive education and meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse learner population, teachers will require continuous professional development (Department of Education, 2007).

Professional development is often undertaken individually and collectively by teachers throughout their careers with the intention of enhancing their professional knowledge, understanding, competence and capacity (Engelbrecht & Swart, 2001). Professional development also improves teachers' mastery of the curriculum, improving their pedagogical skills, developing their understanding of learners and their learning needs, as well as reinforcing their commitment to enhancing the quality learning and teaching (Luning, 2015). Professional development can take the form of in-service training courses, workshops or formal qualification programmes through collaboration between schools and teachers across schools (Engelbrecht & Swart, 2001).

Currently, it would seem that a significant proportion of teachers have inadequate understanding of inclusive education. Walton and Lloyd (2012) suggest that teachers should be trained on how to meet diverse learning needs. Without training, teachers' confidence is compromised, which is by far the biggest factor for success for teachers. Confidence often comes from a combination of training, support, experience, and competence. Razali et al. (2013) supports the argument that for inclusive education to be implemented successfully, teachers must be equipped with knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to intervene to ensure that learners are adequately met. If this does not happen, the desperation for support often leads to frustration and disempowerment on the side of teachers (Ntombela & Soobrayen, 2013).

Education White Paper 6 foregrounds the importance of continuing professional teacher development as a strategy required for the transformation of schools. It is for this reason that Rajasenathipathi (2014) has pointed out that teachers must be trained, as this is the only means by it would be possible for learners to access the curriculum. In other words, if this does not happen, learners will be denied access to learning opportunities. In South Africa, various professional development programmes and services for building the capacity of teachers to implement inclusive education. An example would be the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in inclusive education, which sought to build the capacity of teachers to teach inclusively and contribute to the notion of inclusive schools (Maguvhe, 2015). However, despite these efforts, the implementation of inclusive education has been inadequate (Schoeman, 2012). The mystery is that even where professional development programmes have had a direct inclusive education focus, these have historically been inadequate (Kamanga, 2013 cited in Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018).

A study by Nkonyane and Hove (2014) on the effectiveness of professional development programmes found that, in special schools, there was a need to make continuing professional development opportunities available for teachers and school management teams so that they could support learners' educational needs and serve as a resource for other schools and teachers (Nkonyane & Hove, 2014). However, Lewis and Bagree (2013) have found that the responsibility of special schools to serve as resource centres may not be achieved if teachers are not equipped with the requisite skills to assist teachers in mainstream schools to make learning inclusive. For instance, in this study, this is a crucial

issue as teachers play a central role in ensuring that these learners learn. Thus, from the perspective of a special school as a resource centre, it is important that teachers have specialised knowledge about how to teach and support learners with a range of learning needs so that they can support others.

Bandora and Fialova (2014) assert that one of the most important barriers to the effective implementation of inclusive education is when teachers feel that they have not been adequately prepared to deal teach inclusively. In particular, they argue that teacher professional development programmes should be reformed to focus more on learners' diverse needs (Bandora & Fialova, 2014). For instance, within the context of a school that serves learners with visual impairments, the training of teachers must focus on the particularised needs of learners. Thus, continuous professional teacher development is essential for system change, improvement and reform (Engelbrecht & Swart, 2001).

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), in its *Priorities for Inclusive Education*, has pointed out that teachers who teach learners with a visual disability require a special kind of training (National Education Collaboration Trust, 2013). However, the NECT questions in the assumption that teachers already have the required professional qualifications to teach learners with visual disabilities. In investigating this, they argue that there is no national consensus on which qualification one should possess to be regarded as a qualified teacher for the visually disabled (National Education Collaboration Trust, 2013). They then argue that such a qualification must include equipping teachers with specialised training on the use of Braille, appropriate teaching strategies, knowledge choosing and using appropriate assistive technologies, and adapting the curriculum to meet learners' needs (National Education Collaboration Trust, 2013).

The Department of Basic Education (2010c) has identified a lack of specialised skills in the education system. It states that teachers in special schools still lack specialised knowledge in most of the key areas of disability, but that, most critically, in the fields of education for learners with visual impairments. The argument that, currently, there is an insufficient number of teachers who have knowledge and skills to teach learners with diverse educational needs within a single classroom (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Habulezi & Phasha, 2012; Noeng & Mateusi, 2014). This is problematic given the fact that within a school that caters for learners with visual disability, teachers must consider the other needs

of learners who may have different abilities. Thus, a teacher within such a context must be equipped with knowledge and skills for adapting, differentiating and modifying curriculum and meeting the individual needs of learners (Habulezi & Phasha, 2012; Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2015; Nigawaba, 2014).

If teachers have inadequate knowledge and skills and they are subsequently placed in schools without support and expected to perform (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2013; Habulezi & Pasha, 2012). Education White Paper 6 states that teachers must be capacitated to implement the national curriculum in a manner that ensures that they can provide for a full range of learning needs (Department of Education, 2001). In this context, teachers are expected have skills and knowledge to tailor the curriculum to cater for the diverse needs and the appropriate pacing of learning.

Studies that have been conducted on the education of learners with visual disability in developing countries, such as Ghana, has revealed commitment to inclusive education (Alhassan, 2014). For instance, historically, Ghana and South Africa, had segregated education systems for learners with disabilities. For instance, teachers in Alhassan's (2014) study had not had prior knowledge of inclusive education. Alhassan (2014) asserts that when inclusive education was first introduced in Ghana, teachers assumed that if they could receive in-service training on inclusive education, this would make implementation easier for them. However, this had not happened in the case of these teachers, they were still struggling, as their professional developmental needs had not been met. This has repercussions for access to education for learners, especially those who may be vulnerable to the situation.

Professional development programmes must equip teachers with knowledge and skills to adapt their classroom practices, attitudes and beliefs (Jez & Kakoma, 2018). Effective teaching and learning, thus, requires both content and pedagogical knowledge, as well as the teacher's willingness and ability to reflect on practice. Such knowledge and re-skilling on the relevant instructional practices could occur in higher education institutions and, at the level of the district, on an ongoing basis (Jez & Kakoma, 2018; Taronbe, 2013). Given the fact that there is dearth of rigorous continuing teacher professional development programmes, teachers are often unable to do what they are supported to do. To this end, learners with visual disability often find it advance smoothly with their education

(Mushome & Monobe, 2013). The challenge is that even in higher education institutions, these challenges prevail. For instance, in a study by Mushome and Monobe (2013) it was found that lecturers had not been trained to teach the learners with visual disability. What makes matters worse is that there are limited human resources, support services and budget for the visually disabled (Mushome & Monobe, 2013; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Zwane & Malale, 2018). However, Similalo (2017) has pointed out that transitioning to university has since improved because of the use of technology which has influenced acceptance because of their independence and participation academically.

### **2.4.3 Expanded core curriculum**

Learners with visual disability are taught the same core curriculum as learners in ordinary schools. Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2015) argues that the curriculum used in schools does not consider learners' varied disabilities and question its fairness. This is particularly evident for schools that cater for learners with visual disability, as the curriculum lacks vision disability specific skills. Their report on the state of education provision for learners with visual disability in South Africa is unfair. Who can and who cannot participate is determined by how the core curriculum is designed. Furthermore, teachers working with this curriculum are expected to provide quality education through improvisation and accommodating learners at their discretion, as well as differentiate the curriculum, regardless of their knowledge, expertise, or skill. This becomes virtually impossible when there has been ineffective training and therefore, the validity of the expanded curriculum is questioned.

Allman and Lewis (2014) argue that needs of learners with visual disability extend beyond what the curriculum covers, rendering it inadequate. This core curriculum inadequacy instead requires that learners must be taught additional skills through an expanded core curriculum. The expanded core curriculum is a framework designed to address additional skills, which may be regarded as disability-specific compensatory skills (Bjorg, 2016; Nasiforo, 2015; Johnson-Jones, 2017). On a daily basis, teachers must deal with a wide range of learners' diverse needs and the inadequate curriculum. As classroom teachers, they have to go that extra mile and teach using the expanded core curriculum, which addresses the unique, diverse needs of learners with visual disability. The use of strategies, techniques, and adapted materials that learners with visual disabilities require to access

basic education and common core curricula are referred to as disability-specific compensatory skills (Bjorg, 2016).

Sighted learners, for example, have a wealth of visual experiences throughout their lives, through which they learn concepts inadvertently or accidentally. Learners with visual disability frequently miss concepts or learn them incorrectly. These concepts must be explicitly and systematically taught by teachers to ensure that learners with visual disability learn them, because they serve as a foundation for future learning and they will be on par with other learners. Guerette (2014) argues that the way teachers can access learners is by utilizing certain types of resources, including braille reading and writing, regular print with optical devices, large print, and voice output technology.

Further, in the expanded core curriculum, learners must learn, for example, mobility and independent living skills, where they are taught unique social environment concepts, such as being able to function without depending on others, including their teachers (Allman & Lewis, 2014). Their independence will suggest some success in the implementation of inclusive education. Lastly, in the curriculum, learners are taught the use of assistive technology, which enables learners to acquire skills for using technological tools, systems and applications (Allman & Lewis, 2014). This is where the extended core curriculum becomes important for access to education for learners with visual disabilities.

However, the expanded core curriculum is not without its challenges. Bjorg (2016), for example, critiques the division of core and expanded curriculum and suggests that for curriculum delivery to be effective, the expanded core curriculum should be incorporated with the core curriculum. The expanded core curriculum goal is meant to afford equal opportunities and access to learners with visual disability. Incorporating this into the core curriculum and if taught through systematic and purposeful instruction by a qualified teacher in the field of visual disability, learners with visual disability may access and participate effectively in education. Bjorg (2016) further indicates that a suitably qualified and knowledgeable teacher can incorporate both the core and expanded curriculum to provide learners with learning opportunities. Finally, learners are taught the use of assistive technology in the curriculum, which allows them to acquire skills in using technological tools, systems, and applications (Allman & Lewis, 2014). The extent to which this occurs

or can occur in South Africa is up for debate, given the current state of teaching in South Africa (Spaull, 2015).

#### **2.4.4 Teaching and learning support material**

In South Africa, socio-economic inequalities still shape the provision of education. This is most evident in under-resourced schools, which are in rural areas and cater predominantly for black learners. Education is an essential right of every individual. Resources are, however, required to ensure the enjoyment of this right and promote teaching and learning (Tugli et al., 2013).

According to Tugli et al. (2013), resources for learners with visual disability are critical. In their study, conducted in Venda, on the challenges that learners with disabilities encountered, they found that a lack of specialised books, inadequate learner teacher support material and inappropriate equipment were the main challenges that teachers encountered. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Dakwa (2014) and Madungwe (2018) have supported this finding saying that a lack of learning and teaching support materials negatively impacted on ability of teachers to teach effectively and severely compromised the support for learners. Consequently, inadequate and insufficient teaching and learning support material and equipment often means that the implementation of inclusive education may be unrealistic and impossible (Tugli et al., 2013; Mphongoshe et al., 2015). For Mphongoshe et al. (2015), lack of required resources and proper management raises credibility questions of the implementation of inclusive education, which implies that it may not be possible to provide for learners with visual disabilities, perpetuating further exclusion, affecting their learning experiences (Mphongoshe et al., 2015).

Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2015) have pointed to challenges experienced by learners with visual disability include, for instance, lack of Braille books, tactile maps and diagrams, models, braille watches and Job Access with Speech (JAWS). JAWS is a computer screen reader programme for Microsoft Windows, which allows learners who are blind and visually disabled to read the screen with a text-to-speech output. These are essential resources for learners to access the curriculum. However, schools often have visual aids, such as charts, chalkboards and other visual materials, such as sight words on charts, which are often unhelpful to a blind learner, as learners are unable to access such visuals. Instead,

Willings (2019) and Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2015) have found that teachers in their respective studies conducted in the uMkhanyakude District in KwaZulu-Natal either resorted to explaining the content or dictating notes and activities to the blind learners. The learners in the study by Willings (2019) were required to memorise content. Thus, the biggest question was regarding the fairness of this format of learning for learners with visual disability. If anything, exposure to this kind of learning reproduces inequality and learners are set up to fail.

According to Rajasenathipathi, Arthanari and Sivakumar (2010), braille is one of the keyways in which a learner who is blind or partially blind can read or write. Without braille, learners with visual disability are deprived of access to basic education, a reality that widens the socio-economic and knowledge gap.

The South African Baseline Country Report (Department of Women, Children, and People with Disabilities, 2013a) has pointed out that there has been a delay in the distribution of Braille and large print textbooks to learners in special schools. This is due to the delays caused by the implementation of different curricula. For instance, in a very short space of time, three curricula were rolled out, namely, Outcomes-Based Education, National Curriculum Statement and now it is Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement. One can argue that constant curriculum change has exposed curriculum planners' lack of foresight, and this has impacted the development of Braille and large print textbooks, as well as their availability in schools. As a result, there has been an inadequate provision of learning support materials for learners with visual disability (Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2015). According to Nicolson (2018), government has confirmed the unavailability of Braille books and has agreed that every learner has a right and is entitled to receive a textbook for each subject by 2020. This means that since the promulgation of Education White Paper 6, learners with visual disability have not been provided with appropriate learning support materials and equipment. This implies that learners with visual disability are marginalised and excluded, depriving them of access to their constitutional rights and achieving their educational goals. It is evident, therefore, that lack of resources has been a significant barrier to both teachers and learners.

### **2.4.5 Support for teachers**

Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2014) have reported that while teachers are excited about the introduction of inclusive education, they were receiving inadequate support from district-based support teams (DBSTs). Furthermore, Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2014) also reported that officials from the Department of Education did not work with teachers in a constructive manner, but often criticised schools that were doing their best under the circumstances. They further reported that other schools had simply given up because support was not forthcoming (Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2014). In respect of the above, Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2014) recommends that staff recruitment and ongoing review of teachers' needs must be undertaken at both the school and district levels. In line with this recommendation, Donohue and Bornman (2014) has reported that there is still a significant amount of work that still needs to do to support teachers in the implementation of inclusive education.

Education White Paper 6 asserts teachers are the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001). As primary resource, teachers need training and support in order to teach learners with visual disability. However, due to the inadequate understanding of inclusive education, teachers often do not feel motivated to implement inclusive education in their classrooms, which means that learners may be deprived of their deserved access to education. All attempts to discuss teacher empowerment, school policy, reform strategies, programmes and culture must be built in a way that represents an inclusive ethos (Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2014). Given the fact that teachers are often criticised of possessing inadequate expertise to implement inclusive education.

### **2.5 Addressing barriers to learning**

In 1996, the National Committee on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) coined the concept of "barriers to learning," appointed by the Education Department in order to study the needs and provide services for specialist education and to make policy recommendations in this regard (Department of Education, 1997). The report argued that the main focus of the education system should be to address factors which have led to weaknesses in addressing

learners' diverse needs, leading to learning disruption and preventing them from accessing education (Department of Education, 1997).

Ntombela and Soobrayen (2013) posit that inclusive education requires the dedication and commitment of the education system to all learners, as it has the constitutional obligation to ensure that everyone enjoys uninhibited access to a basic education. This implies that schools should be welcoming spaces, in which teachers hold positive viewpoints and accommodate diverse educational needs of learners, and curricula should be customised and updated to meet the needs of learners. As a result, education must respond to and address learners' educational needs met (DoE, 2001).

Because learners with visual disabilities cannot observe objects and interactions, teaching a classroom with learners with visual disabilities requires significantly different teaching strategies than teaching a regular classroom. All education is built on the foundation of conceptual development. Learners must be assisted to understand basic concepts, such as spatial relationships and time. These concepts may need to be taught differently for learners with visual disability. Although the focus must be on academic development, providing a variety of personal development opportunities for learners with visual disability can have a significant impact. Learners with visual disabilities rely largely on tactile and auditory senses for effective teaching and learning. Thus, teachers must be supported to work with them learners in ways that assist them to learn. De Jager (2013) asserts for inclusive education to happen, teacher responses to learners must supportive and adaptable, and provide creative learning environments in which learners can explore, develop and grow.

### **2.5.1 Collaboration and support in the implementation of inclusive education**

According to Kapur (2018), collaboration is the process where partners share their knowledge, experience, and skills in order to achieve common goals and share resources. Collaboration is essential and must be undertaken on a regular basis (Similalo, 2017). Kapur posits that the challenges that teachers encounter may be tackled through co-teaching and planning as communities of practice. Working with and collaborating with peers could contribute to the empowerment of teachers and supporting those that are inexperienced (Kapur, 2018). Teacher clusters and communities have been used in teacher professional development programmes in South Africa to help improve classroom practice. Teachers can no longer work alone; they must collaborate to address challenges that they

are facing, as decentralising decision-making can reduce teachers' stress as they implement new curricula (Lugino, 2015).

Teachers often do not have adequate knowledge of teaching visual disabilities (Mwakyeya, 2013). There is thus a need for them to learn from each other through collaboration and coteaching. Literature suggests that teachers understand what inclusive education entails in theory, but that practising it remains a challenge (Mwakyeya, 2013). Hence, appropriate support is required to ensure that teachers can implement inclusive education effectively. For instance, a specialist teacher and a novice teacher may collaborate to teach a particular aspect of the curriculum. When teachers collaborate, they can often deliver substantive instruction that benefits learners in significant ways. This is because, when they collaborate, they can work together and devise that can benefit learners. For instance, they can support learners experiencing barriers to learning, including those with disabilities. In collaborative settings, teachers gain benefit from the experiences of working together in caring and collegial relationships. However, Rabin (2019) has argued that there is a risk that collaboration and co-teaching may not reciprocate, especially when teachers do not provide each other with constructive feedback. As such, co-teaching may be regarded as an educational reform (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017).

### **2.5.2 Pedagogical practices**

Schools must identify and address barriers to learning and ensure that they know and have understanding of the diverse needs of learners when implementing inclusive education (Dukmak, 2013). Teachers must adjust their experiences, teaching practices, curricula in order to discover and address the ways they teach this can be achieved by enhancing talents and minimising barriers to learning (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Engelbrecht et al., 2015; John & Ravenscroft, 2015). Learners with visual disability are often sent to special schools that double as resource centres, in which teachers require assistance, training and support. If this does not happen, this may have a negative impact on the teachers' abilities to teach learners with disabilities, especially those with visual disability (Similalo, 2017).

Responding to learner diversity, it is one of the most important challenges that South Africa faces. Curriculum needs be differentiated in order for teachers to meet the educational needs of learners, and, in addition to this, individual education plans (IEPs) must be

developed (Nigawaba, 2014). Differentiated learning, according to Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000), can be described as the adaptation of content, teaching and assessment methods and teaching techniques to meet the needs of learners and ensure that they learn. Agesa (2014) asserts that if teachers cannot differentiate the curriculum properly, learners may be unable to learn. Asaram (2014) has reported that there have been several curriculum orientations workshops for special schools in this regard. However, these professional teacher development activities have not yielded the desired results (Asaram, 2014).

The pedagogical practices of teachers are often influenced by their curriculum decisions about how to meet learners' needs. In this regard, curriculum differentiation becomes important. According to Fraser and Maguvhe (2008) assert that learning becomes more meaningful for learners with visual disabilities when abstract concepts are combined with concrete objects. This is of critical importance as learners cannot be taught in the same way, which means that learning should be differentiated to meet academic demands of individual learners (Hitchcock et al., 2002). Curriculum differentiation and individual education plans have also supported by Nigawaba (2014) who has claimed that curriculum, if not made accessible to learners, may present as a significant barrier to learning Therefore, it is important to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to differentiate the curriculum in order to make learning accessible to learners (Fraser & Maguvhe, 2008).

## **2.6 Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed and examined literature relevant to the focus of this study. The review included national and international literature. Literature reviewed suggests that the implementation of inclusive education has not been without challenges, which has resulted in learners with visual disability not receiving the quality of learning and teaching that they deserve. Literature also revealed that teachers' inadequate knowledge, negative attitudes and lack of resources often leads to the exclusion of learners.

The following section will present and discuss the theoretical framework through which the findings and discussions in this study will be understood.

## **2.7 Theoretical framework**

This study investigated teachers' experiences of teaching learners with a visual disability. The Practice Architectures Theory, by Kemmis (2014) was deployed as a lens to

understand the findings and discussions in this study. Figure 1 below shows the diagrammatic representation of Kemmis et al. (2014) Theory of Practice Architectures.

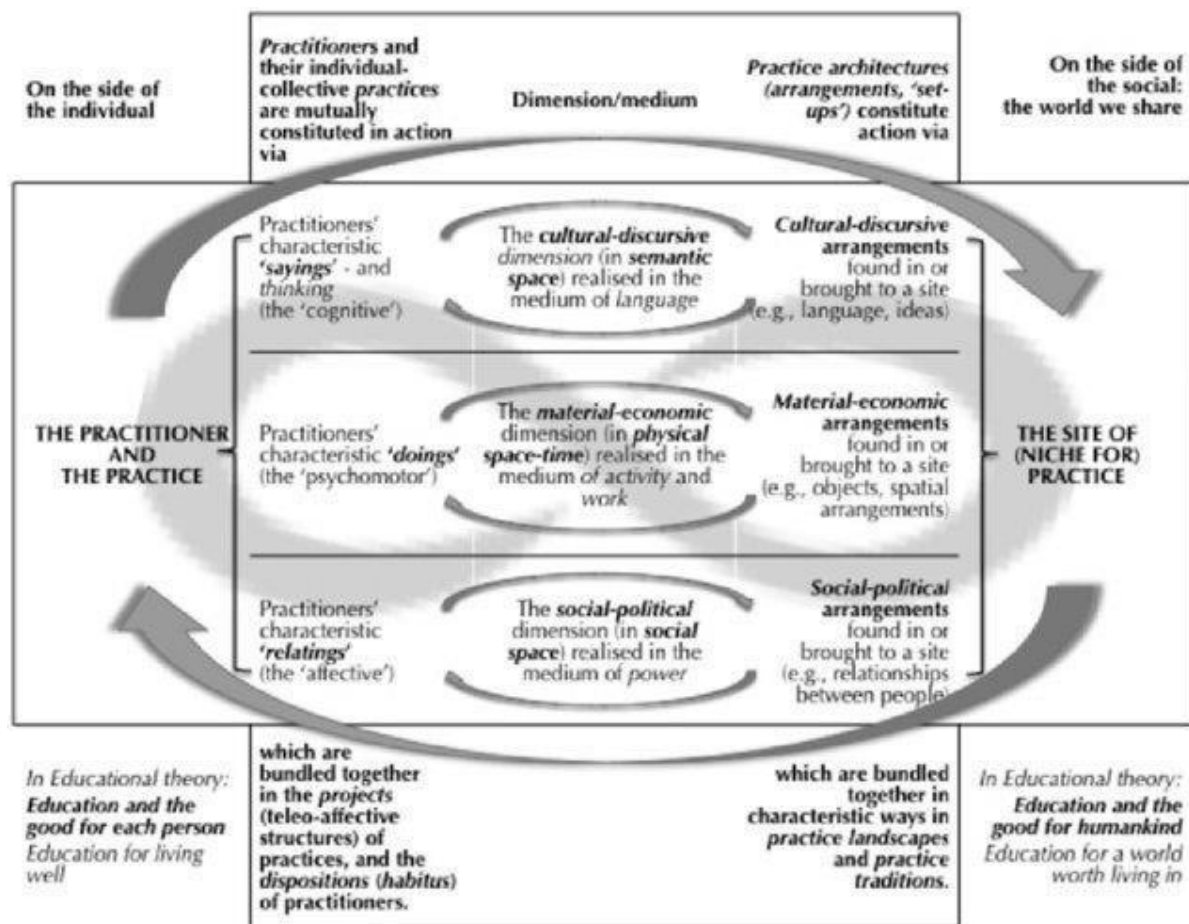


Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the Theory of Practice Architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014)

The Theory of Practice Architectures describes educational practices using the concepts of *sayings*, *doings*, and *relatings*. For example, in looking at what strategies teachers employ in the classroom, one understands that these are influenced by various factors. The *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* are influenced by the material conditions of spaces, for example, the school in the context of this study, where resources will enable the teaching and learning process to proceed successfully; cultural and social discourses surrounding disability, political arrangements evident in policy. These factors can influence how teachers experience teaching.

According to Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018) and Muthukrishna (2019), this theory is particularly useful in explaining inclusive education and the practices of teachers

working in a variety of settings, such as full-service schools and special schools serving as resource centres. According to Aspfors (2012, p. 36), Kemmis and Carr (1986) argue that practice is primarily an action or "what teachers prepare in meeting everyday work and needs confronting them" in order to carry out their professional vocation. Aspfors (2012, p. 36) goes on to say that practice happens with people, in this case, teachers and learners. Practice is an action that relates to the material as well as ethical matters. For example, for a teacher who teaches learners with visual disability, being unsuitably qualified and being unable to differentiate and adapt the curriculum, constitutes an ethical injustice, as learners cannot access learning opportunities. Practice takes place in the context of partnerships rather than in isolation. Practice, according to Trede and Smith (2013), includes awareness, realistic and critical comprehension, social and emotional capacity, and accommodating imaginative output in order to meet all needs.

According to Kemmis (2012), 'sayings', 'doings', and 'relatings', are embedded in practice architectures, which are influenced by various forms of cultural-discursive arrangements. "Practice architectures give meaning to practices," (Muthukrishna, 2019, p. 4). As practice architectures, the three spaces or arrangements described above 'hang together' (Hemming, Kemmis & Reupert, 2013; Kemmis 2012). The theory of practice architectures can be used to evaluate what happens in schools when teachers meet and collaborate to plan their work in order to meet the needs of learners, and how these *sayings*, *doings*, and *relatings* influence the results or outcomes.

Firstly, practice architectures give meaning to practices through *sayings*, *doings* and *thinkings* to express themselves in the medium of language. Teachers use language metaphors, expressions, conceptualisations, and concepts in the semantic space to describe what happens in their practice (Hemmings, Kemmis & Reupert, 2013). Regarding the sayings for this study, the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability, it could be the knowledge that teachers have for the policy of inclusive education that is then used by teachers to describe what they do or cannot do in their classroom for learners with visual disability. However, Muthukrishna (2019) contends that what is contained in policy and articulated by teachers is influenced by social, political, and pedagogical discourses, as well as understandings that teachers may acquire from professional bodies such as disability organisations and teacher unions. Thus, saying is not a neutral term.

According to the human rights discourse that underpins Education White Paper 6, requires teachers to conceptualize, think, and understand in specific ways in order to bring about equality and prevent oppression of learners with disabilities, It's a discussion that's heavily influenced by social justice concerns. Contextual realities shaped by dominant, exclusionary, and oppressive understandings of disability, such as those found in the medical model or the deficit thinking model, can, however, influence how teachers conceptualize, think, and understand disability (Salamon et al., 2016; Muthukrishna, 2019). This can then have an impact on their classroom practices, which is crucial to comprehending the inequality or lack of diversity that learners may face, which may or may not allow them to participate. Salamon et al. (2016) argue that deep-seated and entrenched beliefs about, a disability that has become normalised and taken for granted, can either allow or inhibit teachers' practices. While working in early childhood education, these researchers demonstrate how, for example, discourses that frame children as vulnerable, needy, but also as having agency in different spaces, can be found.

Secondly, architectures of practice also help individuals to understand *doings* or the daily work that teachers engage with in building an inclusive classroom that accommodates learners with visual disability. These are ways of *doing* or teachers' practices within the stipulated time. The success of the *doings*, however, relies on the availability of resources or the material-economic factors that Kemmis (2012) indicated influences practices. Empirical research, as seen in the literature review, shows, for example, the lack of braille facilities or large print textbooks (Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, 2013a; Nicolson, 2018). The availability or lack of resources prevents teachers from carrying out their professional functions, that is the *doings*. Concerning my study, this translates to the availability of resources, funds, infrastructure, teacher development in order for classes to be conducive to learning (Department of Education, 2013b).

The availability of material and human resources will influence the extent to which teachers of learners with visual disabilities are capable of providing learners with access to opportunities, and thus success. For learners, their fundamental right to education or access will not be met, as the material-economic arrangements are absent, and this will reinforce the inequality that they experience. Moreover, Maguvhe (2015) and Yalo et al. (2012) have shown that a lack of teacher training, support, skills and knowledge prevent teachers from

meeting the needs of learners who have a particular visual loss. These prevent teachers from fulfilling their tasks and responsibilities of teaching. This is evident in teachers' inability to adapt the expanded core curriculum, or when teachers are unable to differentiate learning methodologies to accommodate learners who may have multiple disabilities. Policy imperatives found in Education White Paper 6, coupled with discourses around disability, also prevent teachers from '*doing*' their work. This is compounded by the paperwork that teachers are required to do to meet curriculum demands or the lack of resources all form complex arrangements that determine the agency of teachers and shape the practice of teachers (Salamon et al., 2016).

Finally, Aspfors (2012) claims that practices are social by nature. Relationships are critical to teachers' and learners' success and their participation in school. Muthukrishna (2019) posits that, however, that schools are also power-laden spaces, with hierarchical relationships between, school stakeholders. Collaboration between all stakeholders in the educational context is essential. They are all connected, and the school's success is entirely dependent on collaboration. Teachers have a relationship with the learners they teach in the classroom, and learners have a relationship with their teachers (Aspfors, 2012). The extent to which, for example, stereotypes around the intelligence of disabled learners will determine or influence the kinds of relationships that exist.

Discourses of inclusion are hampered as a result of the social-political environment that surrounds stereotypes, which can limit how teachers and learners interact with one another and, to some extent, determine the extent to which learner needs are met. As previously stated, research has revealed that there are odd relationships between teachers and learners, and often learners with disability often face exclusion, marginalization, and alienation. The importance of social inclusion cannot be overstated. According to Engelbrecht (2006), the goal of inclusion is to prepare all learners to be productive members of a democratic society and to be fully integrated into their community, not just physically, but also spiritually, emotionally, and socially. It's important to remember that successfully integrating learners with special needs into regular classrooms necessitates a variety of attitude shifts, because simply having learners in the classroom does not guarantee their participation in class and school activities, or their sense of belonging. Quite often, questions arise about the silenced

or marginalised voices of teachers and the lack of power that they experience in being unable to find the necessary support for them to provide learners with quality education.

Muthukrishna's (2019) study of three African contexts has revealed the importance of relationships in promoting inclusive schools. Her study found that, in South Africa, partnerships with farmers and businesses that surrounded the community promoted inclusion. Not only did the partnership yield income, but it also promoted quality teaching and learning, as schools used the funds from these partnerships to buy much needed teaching resources. Her study also showed how teachers negotiated various factors that showed their sense of agency. Teachers, for example, initiated their own staff development programmes in the full-service schools, because they recognised that there were teachers who had knowledge and skills that could be used to develop others. Muthukrishna (2019) alluded to the disjuncture between policy and practice. Participants argued that for inclusive education initiatives to be active, and if change is to occur, there must be political will. Her study also revealed how using the three intersecting factors of *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* can enable one to interrogate the extent to which teachers can truly engage in promoting and living out inclusive education practices that are socially just and democratic (Muthukrishna, 2019).

The theory of practice architectures is useful to examine the site-based local conditions that influence what happens when the teachers in this study get together to collaborate, as well as how specific *sayings*, *doings*, and *relatings* influence these happenings, and how particular *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* influence these happenings. To be successful in their pedagogical practice, teachers must network and engage with other professionals to discuss, for example, instructional strategies and anything else that will benefit the learner with a disability and help them adapt in ways that will be useful in the future (Kapur, 2018). These modifications are likely to transform school sites for equitable participation, regardless of the severity of a disability. It is up to teachers, as change agents, to ensure quality and equality without jeopardizing curriculum access (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2013). Regarding my study, when analysing teachers' narratives and perspectives, one can identify exclusionary and inclusionary factors that influence teaching and learning, and how, through their pedagogical practices for effective teaching and learning, they can negotiate the exclusionary factors.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined empirical research, which provided insights into teachers' experiences of teaching learners with learning disability. Largely, the literature reveals that teachers' experiences are exclusionary, with teachers implicated in being unable to meet the needs of learners. The theory that underpins the study, namely that of Practice Architectures, provided an understanding of the *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings*, that occur in teachers' practices and that influence their practices. This analysis highlighted how different material-economic, cultural-discursive and social-political arrangements influenced what practices were possible in pursuit of the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in an inclusive school.

The following chapter presents and discusses the methodological and design considerations that I made to respond to the key research questions of the research study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological and design decisions that were made in order to answer the study's key research questions. To do this, I firstly discuss the critical research paradigm, which serves as the study's framework. This is followed by a discussion of how narrative inquiry allowed me to highlight how participants made sense of their experiences through telling their stories. The various data collection methods and techniques used to generate the data are covered in this discussion. I then go on to describe and explain the procedures used in the data analysis. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the study's trustworthiness, design limitations, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research paradigm**

Paradigms, according to Neuman (2007, p. 41) are “assumption[s], beliefs, models of doing research and techniques of data gathering and analysis.” As a result, paradigms serve as points of view that influence the research's rationale and bind the researcher to specific data collection, observation, and interpretation techniques. Thus, paradigms are crucial to research design because they influence both the nature of the research question to be investigated and the manner in which the phenomenon will be investigated (Neuman, 2007). This study's objective seeks to understand the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability. This perspective suggests that teachers' understandings are influenced by broader factors.

The critical paradigm is used to frame this research. The critical paradigm acknowledges that there is no objective truth (Creswell, 2014). Instead, “truth or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities of our world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). The manner in which we engage with the world is different for individuals and one can indicate then that it is a subjective experience that is shaped by multiple realities (Denzin, 2010). My view is that our thought patterns are as a product of our experience and what we are exposed to do, and it is this that we consider to be our ‘truth’. It follows then that there is no such thing as objective reality. Rather, “fact or sense emerges from our interaction with the facts of our universe” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). This enables us to evaluate

the world around us in the way we want to. Except under the same or identical situations, people will often create different interpretations. As a result, there are many truths. This is the position that this thesis takes when attempting to understand the lives of the teachers. Given the fact that the aim of the research was to learn more about teacher experiences, their stories are understood from their subjective standpoints and, therefore, there are multiple truths in their stories and voices.

The critical paradigm also addresses social inequalities, inequalities and power differentials. As a researcher, through the critical paradigm, I could gain a deeper understanding of power differentials that exist within the teachers' working environment, the various ways in which the school, policy and practices empower and disempower them. Furthermore, power relationships were embedded in their pedagogical practices, their relationship with parents, the high expectations stakeholders had of them, and even the social discourses around appropriate experiences to teach learners with visual disabilities. This was an eye-opener for me as HOD and instigated me to reflect on my expectations of teachers, having to teach without adequate resources and sufficient support. This enabled me to reflect on power differentials between myself and the teachers and to find ways to better understand and support teachers. The critical paradigm has a commitment to the participants' empowerment. This study examined teachers' agency to navigate exclusionary factors and the role they could play in promoting inclusion and thus effective teaching, in addition to their experiences of teaching learners with visual disabilities. Through their narratives, they could reflect on their teaching and empowered themselves in rethinking their pedagogical practices.

My ontological positioning is influenced by the Theory of Practice Architectures, which is about the *sayings*, *doings*, and *relatings* that shape participants' commitments to attempting to make a change in learners' lives. In this study, I could see the various ways in which teachers were trying to level the playing fields of achievement, in which learners with visual disability were expected to compete with learners without disabilities. This enabled a more holistic picture to emerge of the realities that teachers experienced daily, as well as the expectations that surrounded their work. Practises are, thus, influenced by curriculum, other school policies, pre-existing ideas and relations that exist between the Department of Education, principal, learners, other staff members and parents.

Teachers are acknowledged as having a voice or being critical of inclusive education, especially for learners with visual disabilities, means that one sees that there is a need of equal access to education, irrespective of what kind of disability there is. It is empirical to prepare future teachers to be vocal about educational systems that marginalise and exclude learners with disabilities in order to continue improvements in education outcomes for all learners in the context of critical learning (Carrington et al., 2015). Teachers' narratives provided participants with a platform to share their personal experiences, feelings and insights in their daily practices and thus their voices to be recognised and heard.

### **3.3 Methodological style**

To gather and analyse data, the current study used a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research allows a research to investigate the experiences, behaviours, emotions and thoughts of participants in a natural setting (Rahman, 2017). Qualitative researchers highlight the social facts, the closeness of the researcher to the subject and situations, and constraints that inherent in the investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability are the focus of this study. Here, personal and social contexts are included (Terre Blanche et al., 2001). The qualitative approach was regarded as appropriate for capturing teacher's voices for the reasons that I will outline below. Within the qualitative tradition, participants could share their personal stories and provide rich narrative of the experiences and perspectives of teaching learners with visual disability. The recount of their experiences was then interpreted by the researcher. In this way, I was able to gain an understanding of their social and contextual realities, which are different from other teachers (Cobbold, 2015). This may provide the foundations for future qualitative study. Holloway (1997) asserts that subjective narrative data and human experience is important to the researcher. However, this can only be achieved through the immersion of the researcher, which I found to be the case for this study.

Burns (2000) notes that because contexts are specific to a particular location, which is their natural setting and in a particular time, for a researcher like me, the intention is not to generalise findings to other contexts. Findings for this study, for instance, provide insights into the context and participants' narratives for this study. Natural settings are used for qualitative research for the reason that they generate rich, contextual data. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that studying phenomena in their natural settings enables

researchers to make meaning of the events that occur and the meanings that people assign to their experiences in that context. This means that qualitative researchers study phenomena as they are in their social worlds (Johnson & Christensen, 2008); However, it is important to note that researchers are also part of that context.

The qualitative approach is an open-ended approach that can be adapted and changed during the research process to improve the quality of the data and insights obtained (Talbot, 1995). Qualitative research enables researchers to gather data using a range of methods (Cohen et al., 2007). This study is a qualitative narrative inquiry. In this study, a qualitative technique was used to obtain rich descriptive data of teachers' perspectives and experiences of teaching learners with visual disability. Its focus is on understanding the "human being through richly textured experiences and reflections about those experiences" (Jackson, Drummond & Camara, 2007, p. 22). For this study, teachers were observed teaching in their classrooms, their daily workspaces. An inductive approach to investigation was used to analyse observations, which started with a set of observations and then seeking patterns in the data.

### **3.4 Research approach: Narrative inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is a method of collecting data through storytelling for research purposes (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This study deployed narrative inquiry as a methodology to understand the experiences of participants who were teaching learners with visual disability. This methodological approach emphasises the importance of capturing and reporting the voices of participants. These are stories of the participants' personal experiences, which I sought to understand in respect of their influence on their approach and behaviours towards to their teaching and their learners. Webster and Mertova (2007) assert that the object of narrative inquiry is to capture the whole story, unlike other methods that seek to communicate understandings of studied subjects at certain points. For this study, narrative inquiry was used to probe for experiences of the participants of teaching learners with visual disability, including factors and elements that may have been inclusionary or exclusionary (Malinen et al., 2013). For this study, the narrative inquiry provided me with a glimpse into what the participants' experiences of their world meant to them (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Furthermore, narrative inquiry enabled me to probe into how participants understood their world, based on how they constructed, and

reconstructed understandings of their personal and social experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, for this study, the narrative enquiry then became the participants' story of their experiences in respect of the key research questions. For this study, the participants' narratives were generated using semi-structured interviews and observation.

Narrative inquiry also enables particular kinds of relationships to form. Using semi-structured interviews allowed trust and openness to be created in the sharing of participants' encounters. Within this context, the imbalances in power relationships were, to a certain degree, moderated as the participants' stories claimed centre stage, elevating the participants to participate as co-constructors of knowledge in the research study. My assumption is that participants held some power and autonomy to reveal what they were willing to or even to reconstruct their memories to provide reconstructed realities. However, whatever the case may have been, my responsibility was to accept the narratives as they are, as representing what the participants regarded as their truth. Semi-structured interviews and observations thus provided the most appropriate platforms for foregrounding and elevating the participants' voices and stores.

In telling their stories through interviews, participants also shared their pedagogical practices, in a sort of self-reflexive way. Semi-structured interviews presented them with a device to reflect on why they practised in the way that they did, what barriers and opportunities existed, how they navigated them, and why. The participants' reflections were, therefore, broader as they looked at systemic factors that influenced their abilities and opportunities to teach. This study draws attention to inclusionary and exclusionary factors and how the participants mitigated them, through their agency and control over their work.

### **3.5 Context of the study**

This study was conducted in a school with learners with visual disability in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Umhlathuzana District. Clandinin, Pushor and Orr (2007) emphasise that in any inquiry attempting to understand participants' lives, place and social context is important. In this section, therefore, I provide insights into the context of the participants in respect of their workspace. In qualitative research, as Payne and Williams (2011) have

proposed, the site of a research study can be chosen for its accessibility and appropriateness for investigating a particular research phenomenon.

For this study, the research site was chosen because it is a special school as a resource centre (SSRC), whose responsibility is to provide for learners who require levels of support that are high and to offer other schools outreach services. This school catered for learners with visual disabilities, physical disabilities, multi-disabilities. The school offered the national curriculum which is the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The staff component comprises of the School Management Team (SMT), therapists, social worker, teachers and teacher aids. The staff at the school is composed of individuals from various racial groups, according to the South African classification. The school is organised into three phases, namely, Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase. However, the school also has a Skills Section, which provides a route for learners who are not academically oriented. Each class has between 12-15 learners, obviously with different educational needs.

The school is experiencing severe staff shortages in respect of both teaching and nonteaching staff, such as class aids. Many of the teachers at the schools are not literate in either elementary or contracted Braille, although the school has enrolled learners with visual disability. However, this is not surprising as teachers who are appointed to schools like this one seldom have any specialist knowledge or skills for teaching learners with visual disability. Actually, what is worse is that the Departments of Education also does not provide sufficient training for teachers, who are then forced to teach themselves the skills required to ensure learners have access to education. For teachers in this school, there have been very few training workshops on Braille provided by the Department of Education.

The challenges that the school is experiencing relate to a lack of resources to meet the needs of the learners as well as clear policy guidance for teachers, resulting in difficulties in the implementation of Education White Paper 6. However, the school is dedicated to fostering character development, individuality and to enabling learners to succeed worldwide, despite the challenges.

### **3.6 Selecting the participants**

Purposive sampling was used. Cohen and Morrison (2007) defines purposive sampling as a deliberate process in which participants are chosen for specific purpose. This means that in the instance of purposive sampling, it is important to select participants who have certain characteristics or criteria that qualify them as relevant for the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This is in line with what Creswell (2008) has advised that when a sampling method is chosen, the researcher must consider the purpose of the research. Therefore, for this study, the participants selected were teachers teaching learners with visual disability. The teachers selected were from a special school as a resource centre. The school served learners with visual disability. It was important for the school to be a school that has enrolled learners with a visual disability, as it would provide a context in which teachers could share experiences of teaching learners with visual disability.

Ahead of time, I met with teachers who met the criteria and shared with them my intentions regarding the research I was about to embark on. I explained to them that the intention of the study was to understand their experiences of teaching learners with visual disability. In navigating power relationships, I was aware of the issues of power, in which I had to separate my roles as their HOD and a researcher undertaking a research study to understand their experiences. I explained that in respect of the study, my role as their researcher would take centre stage and that I would not be acting as their HOD any way during the course of the study. I also assured them that, whatever was discussed with me as a researcher would not be used for my work as their HOD.

However, navigating this tension was difficult at the beginning, but our relationship and trust gradually grew as they realised what my intentions were in respect of the study. This assisted in ensuring that they felt like 'equals' and that their voices were valued (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). However, in order to ensure that this relationship was sustained, I kept on re-assuring them. Furthermore, the fact that they realised that I depended on them for the success of this study in some way somewhat moderated power dynamics between the participants and me. However, I am alert to the fact that the extent to which the participants could relate to me as a researcher only may not be a true reflection of how we related and may have influenced the research process in some way.

This study purposefully selected seven (7) teachers who willingly agreed to participate. The participants who volunteered to participate in the study were all females. This was because all Post Level I teachers working at the school are females. Only the Deputy Principal and Principal are male. The teachers had different periods of teaching at a special school, especially teaching learners with visual disability. Teachers who volunteered were from the Intermediate and Senior Phase, that is, Grade 4-7), and one teacher who was teaching Grade R. However, they had at some point in their teaching taught the grades and were the most knowledgeable about the phenomenon of study.

### **3.7 Methods of data collection**

According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), data collection methods are used to generate data on the feelings, motivations, attitudes, accomplishments and experiences of individuals. For this study, the intention was to understand the experiences teachers of teaching learners with visual disability. Two data collection methods were used for this study, namely, semi-structured interview and observation. The methods were used to complement each other thereby strengthening the rigour and credibility of the data.

#### **3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews**

The primary source of data for this research study was semi-structured interviews, in which the interviewer and participants engaged in an informal conversation guided by a set of questions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). The semi-structured interview for this study included both closed-ended and open-ended questions (Gall & Borg, 2007). According to Maree (2007), The use of an interview enabled two-way communication. The interview enabled the researcher to communicate freely with participants, allowing them to express their feelings (Berg, 1995; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed for additional and probing questions to be asked, where necessary.

It was critical for me in order to get quick answers like "yes" or "no," as well as detailed explanations to include both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Each interview lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. In conducting the interview, I flexibly followed the schedule of questions to ensure that I covered all the themes that were critical for responding to the key research questions. For participants, semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their opinions, feelings, beliefs, insights, attitudes and experiences freely, without constant interferences from me.

### **3.7.2 Conducting the interviews**

An interview schedule was developed as a tool for data collection. Before the interview session, participants were informed that they could speak in the language with which they were most comfortable. The interviews were held in a quiet place with minimal distractions. In order to have the data captured more effectively, interviews were recorded after the participants had provided consent. At times, there were disturbances, especially when learners came to see their teachers or report particular issues. When those disturbances occurred, we would pause the recording and attend to them and resume thereafter. This meant that some interviews took approximately an hour to finish. At the end of every interview, recordings were played back for participants' approval.

The interviews were conducted in English, but participants sometimes used code-switching, especially where they felt they could not sufficiently express themselves in English. This means that some parts of the interview were in isiZulu, while others were in English. The recording of the interview made it easier for me to listen attentively, note elements of body language and take notes on issues that could not be captured through audio-recording. The recordings made it possible for me to generate a verbatim transcript of each interview. Through the interviews, teachers shared their experiences, perceptions, emotions and thoughts about inclusive education and teaching learners with visual disability. Most of the information gathered was thoughtful, meaningful and eye-opening for me as a researcher and a member of management. The interviews thus enabled me to obtain a deeper understanding of the participants' as individuals and their experiences. There were some challenges in respect of time, as the whole process from the preparation of the interview, arranging meeting times, disturbances, interpretation of responses took a great deal of time.

### **3.7.3 Observations**

In order to obtain first-hand information, the processes teachers engaged in teaching learners with visual disability, observations provided an important tool for collecting this kind of data. Observations were conducted during the lesson, which means that they were conducted when teachers were teaching. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 79) observation is “the systematic description of events and behaviours, in the social setting

chosen for study”. In the case of this study, I gathered data about the educational environment, which included learning styles, learner participation and use of different learning and teaching resources. The use of the observation was intended to triangulate data from the semi-structured interviews. This assisted me to understand the reality of teaching learners with visual disability for the participants.

The use of an observation provided me with rich data about how teachers taught learners with visual disability, the challenges they experienced, what was working and how the participants adapted to their situations. For this study, I took the role of a non-participant observer. I observed as a non-participant observer, without actively participating in what was going on. The use of observations afforded me an opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from a naturally occurring social setting (Cohen et al., 2011). This assisted me to gain useful insights into the participants’ situations (Cohen et al., 2011).

An observation schedule was used to guide and focus the observation process. I took notes of the arrangement of learners’ desks, how the teacher introduced the lesson, how they adapted content, how they interacted with the learners and so on. Photographs were also taken of important events. The observation duration depended on the length of the teacher's lesson. Through observations I could observe, for example, how teachers adapted their teaching to accommodate learners. The observations were conducted in line with protocols for containing the spread of COVID-19. With COVID-19 protocols, observations happened when class sizes were significantly reduced due to the fact that a significant number of learners had not returned.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

The objective of qualitative data analysis is the transformation of raw data through search, evaluation, recognition, coding, exploration and description of patterns, trends, themes and categories. In the research process, data analysis is an important stage. The raw data collected from the field do not have much meaning in its original form. The data analysis process involved the understanding of text and image data in this study (Creswell, 2003). Analysis of data began immediately after the first data set was gathered (Cohen et al., 2007).

Once interviews and observations had been completed, I began the process of transcribing the gathered data verbatim. The process of transcribing the data involved transforming interview notes and audio-text into texts (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). During the process of transcribing the data, I translated where participants had used isiZulu. In order to ensure that participants' voices were captured accurately, I requested critical friends to go through the transcriptions to ensure that the translations were a correct reflection of the audio recordings.

In order to familiarise myself with the gathered data, I immersed myself in the data, repeatedly reading the transcriptions, a phenomenon Nieuwenhuis (2007) refers to as immersion. Whilst I was reading the transcribed data, I began to see patterns and meanings. The process of reading and rereading data helped me to understand the data. I then undertook a process of coding and categorising emerging patterns. Coding was carried out through using different coloured highlighters, which were useful for showing patterns and links across the data from each participant. I then used labels to mark what I noticed in the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These were then collated into categories. The advantage of this method was that it automatically grouped the data enabling thematic analysis.

To form themes, all this required linking, selected words, phrases, sentences, and entire paragraphs to form themes without distorting the meaning of the participants' own voices (Petrie, 2012).

I looked at how the themes supported the data and the overarching theoretical perspective at this point. I then identified themes which provided insights into the key research questions. Photographs taken during observation were numbered, organised, documented and included in the coding, categories and finally themes. The second interview was also coded and analysed in the same way, so I could see the themes across the two data collection methods. Moving back and forth through the coded and categorised photographs and interview transcripts repeatedly verified the final analysis of the patterns and meanings that emerged from the data. The themes began to emerge as a result of this.

### **3.9 Trustworthiness of the study**

In qualitative research, credibility refers to the researcher's ability to accurately represent the realities of the research participants. Several techniques, according to Creswell (2007), can be used to ensure credibility in a research study. For example, triangulation of data, methods, and theories, as well as bias control through reflexivity, peer review, and member checking. In this study, interview transcriptions were given to the participants who checked whether their responses had been captured accurately. Participants made changes and make additions, which I later incorporated. In this study, I firstly conducted interviews, then observed teachers and then followed up with an interview. This was useful for corroborating or cross-referencing of the data to strengthen credibility and trustworthiness (Cohen et al., 2007).

Member-checking was affected when transcriptions were given to the participants for verification. My supervisor also checked data to ensure that there were no issues that could undermine trustworthiness. This was important because, as a member of the school management, participants could have said whatever they thought I wanted to hear. Furthermore, reflexivity was very important in the study. Thus, I constantly reflected on my own biases and tried to moderate this through incorporating notes that I had entered in my research journal and notebook.

Finally, according to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), trustworthiness can be established by reporting findings honestly and using direct quotes from research participants' narratives. The research participants' narratives were used verbatim for this study. It must be noted that in keeping with the critical paradigm and narrative inquiry, truthfulness was not what I was aiming for, as I understood that this was a representation of their subjective realities and therefore their truths. As indicated earlier, participants were allowed to code-switch, when they felt they needed to. Qualitative research literature encourages the use of the language that participants understand during data collection (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

In a qualitative study, the notion of dependability is achieved through rich and sufficiently detailed description of the processes followed in the study. Two studies conducted at the same site, for example, may produce different results but still be dependable if both represent what is happening in that context at that time. As a result, the extent to which the

study can be replicated accounts for its dependability (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). In this study, the details of the research process are hoped to enhance the dependability of the research.

Confirmability is an alternative of the concept objectivity used in quantitative research studies, which represents the extent to which the research is free of bias in the procedures and interpretation of the results (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, from the perspective of this study, as Bryman (2004) has pointed out, I hold that it is difficult to ensure complete objectivity in social research. In order to strengthen confirmability for this study, I subjected it to the critical eye of the postgraduate cohort of critical friends, who provided critical feedback on various aspects of the study.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

Partington (2003) asserts that the notion of ethics is derived from the Greek term 'ethos', a notion which provides a researcher with the guidelines on what constitutes ethical conduct in research. For Bryman (2004), ethical considerations are an integral part of research works. Research ethics are critical for the protection, respect, and upholding of research participants' rights, as well as for developing a sense of trust with them and promoting the research's integrity (Israel & Hay, 2006). Specific measures have been put in place to ensure research ethics. Firstly, I requested ethical clearance the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee. This was followed by permission to conduct research from KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Permission was also sought from the principal of the school at which the research study was going to be conducted.

The nature, purpose and focus of the study was shared with the participants, after which they were requested to participate in the study. After agreeing to participate in the study, participants were given consent forms to formalise their consent. The participants were told that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could leave at any time if they no longer felt comfortable. Participants were also told that they had the option of refusing to answer any questions with which they were uncomfortable (Creswell, 2009). In addition, participants were kept up to date on every step of the process in which they were involved.

Non-maleficence, according to Cohen et al. (2018), refers to causing no harm to participants. For this study, I ensured this by keeping an open eye to instances that held potential harm for the participants and ensure that necessary safeguards were put in place. As a mechanism for protecting participants, I used pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the participants (Cohen et al., 2018). Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). For this study, participants, the school or other potential identifiers were kept remain anonymous through pseudonyms. In addition, all the information that could identify them was kept secret (Cohen et al., 2018). Pseudonyms were decided by the participants themselves.

Participants were informed that the information they shared would be used for purposes of the study only. In respect of beneficence, this research was conducted for the purpose of bringing about positive change in society. This was accomplished through the foregrounding of the participants' voices (Cohen et al., 2018). That is, participants were placed at the centre of the study through narrative stories shared by them, as well as by providing a platform for their voices to be heard and their stories to be told.

Autonomy and power are considered during the research process, where autonomy can be achieved by involving the participants in the research, for example, by allowing the participants an opportunity to verify transcriptions in order for them to verify their accuracy. As a result, I shared the transcriptions with the participants in order to ensure that what was produced accurately reflected what they intended to say. Participants adapted and made the necessary changes, where necessary, which were then incorporated.

In addition, the data collected from participants was securely kept in a locked cupboard and electronic data was password protected. The data will be kept for five years in line with University policy.

### **3.11 Limitations of the study**

Due to the small sample of this study, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to teachers in other settings. In other words, assumptions cannot be made that the findings are representative of other school settings in which the study has not been conducted. However, it is important to point out that it was not the intention of this study to generalise

findings. The intention was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of specific teachers on their experiences of teaching learners with visual disability.

Secondly, the researcher was unable to complete data collection on time, as schooling was interrupted by the global outbreak of the COVID-19. Schools closed at the time when I was about to commence with data collection. Once schools reopened, learners did not attend, and many were absent. Thus, the conclusions I am making in respect of observations may paint a different picture to when there was full attendance of learners. Having said that, however, lessons continued with those learners who did attend school and many of the learners with visual disability were there. COVID-19 protocols of social distancing prevented close contact and may have influenced what would usually occur under circumstances in which these protocols are not necessary. In addition, teacher's emotions and concerns about the COVID-19 could also have played a part in they responded to particular events and situations.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented the methodological and design decisions that I made in attempt to respond to the study's key research questions. Thus, I discussed the study's data collection methods, as well as issues of trustworthiness, the study's limitations, and, finally, ethical considerations made to ensure the respect, upholding, and protection of the participants' rights.

The findings of the study will be presented and discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed methodology and design of the research study. In this chapter, I present, analyse and discuss the findings of the study. Again, I use Kemmis' Practice Architectures Theory to understand teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability, as well as how they negotiate inclusionary and exclusionary factors. I foreground the participants' voices in the description of the themes, in sync with the critical paradigm in which the study is located.

The themes I present here were in response to the following research question:

- What are teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability in an inclusive school?
- What are the inclusionary and exclusionary factors that influence teaching and learning?
- How do teachers negotiate these factors?

This chapter has two sections. Section 4.2 of the first section answers the first and second key research questions. On the broad theme: *Normative discourses on inclusive education*, I analyse teachers' understandings of inclusive education, their attitudes and how this influenced their practice. Thereafter, I discuss the factors, which influence the participants' teaching experiences, which constitutes the second broad theme. Various sub-themes, which provide insights into the factors, which are both inclusionary and exclusionary, that influence teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability are also discussed.

Second section of the thesis, I discuss the various ways in which the participants negotiated the exclusionary factors that they encountered, which responds to the third key research question. The theme: *Teaching strategies adopted by teachers* take this discussion further.

## 4.2 Normative discourses of inclusive education

In this section, I provide the participants' normative understandings of inclusive education and the influence this had on their teaching practice.

### 4.2.1 Policy discourses on inclusive education: *"I am guided by policy"*

This section discusses participants' understandings of inclusive education and how they positioned themselves within particular discourses. The Salamanca Statement asserts that the most effective way of developing inclusive schools is to recognise inclusion as a critical policy underpinning education (UNESCO, 1994). Participants in this study embraced the concept of inclusive education on a theoretical level, but they struggled to teach learners with visual disabilities in practice. Sharon's response, when asked about the implementation of inclusive policies in their classrooms and schools, was in sync with what other participants had had reported:

Sharon: *"I am familiar with White Paper 6: Special Needs Education and SIAS. Most of the time, I am guided by policy. As a school, we try up to a certain level"*.

Some participants extended their understandings, reporting that inclusive education was a good practice as it ensured that learners with visual disability had access to the same educational opportunities as their peers. This concurs with findings by Bailey et al. (2015), who pointed out that, in principle, inclusive education was a desirable practice, as illustrated in the participants' excerpts below.

Joy: *"Yes, without policy, we would be teaching what we like. The exam is similar; in order to accommodate all learners, we have to adapt to what policy says"*.

Shaun: *"As a teacher, I try my best to implement inclusive education where I can accommodate all learners' needs in the classrooms. I modify the curriculum according to the learners' needs. Yes, it about differentiation and adaptation in the curriculum. We include learners according to their*

*different levels of vision (blind, learners with low vision and the sighted learners) and their learning abilities. The school uses the policy”.*

Purity: *“I am aware of the policies that guide us in terms of inclusion, but sometimes it is hard to follow something that was done without your needs taken into consideration. As a result, what I do in class, I am not always sure of and confident that I am on the right path”.*

Sharon: *“Differentiated planning helps me to place learners and provide enrichment or proper remediation, which clearly states which level a particular learner is at and is therefore assessed accordingly. All learners are accommodated according to their individual learning needs. Multi-level teaching approach help me with individualisation. By so doing I accommodate all learners in my classroom”.*

Shaun, Purity and Sharon had some understanding of inclusive policy, as they reported that they used policies as *“guides on how to practice inclusion”*. Joy, on the other hand, believed that the policy did not only provide guidance, but also set parameters in respect of what teachers had to do: *“Without the policy, we would be teaching whatever we wanted”*. The narratives point to the fact that the participants’ focus was more policy than practice. Purity and Sharon reported that their school followed the policy. Sharon believed in differentiated planning, as was of the view that it assisted her to remediate properly. Her teaching approach could be regarded as multi-level, as it sought to accommodate the individual educational needs of learners. For these participants, Education White Paper 6 serves as a guide for what they and their school must use to position and signify themselves as a school committed to providing for their learners educationally. This suggests that the policy provided a guide for how the participants had to implement inclusive education. This is in sync with what UNESCO (1994) has pointed about policy, that it is essentially a guide on implementing inclusive education.

What the data above also reveals is that participants had some understanding of inclusive education. This could be discerned from the *‘sayings’* that they use (Kemmis, 2012). Sharon says inclusive education is *about “special needs education and SIAS”*. For Shaun,

it is about the need to “*accommodate all learners' needs in the classroom*”. This shapes and positions what she is doing, the ‘*doings*’ as indicated by Kemmis (2012). Salomon and Rönnerman (2013) argues that ‘*sayings*’ constitute cultural-discursive configurations of educational practice, which are transmitted as the knowledge and language acquired and used by teachers. For this study, the participants’ ‘*sayings*’ are shaped by inclusive education discourses and reinforced in the inclusive education policy. Kemmis (2012) argues that such knowledge is pervasive and influential and prefigures practice.

For this reason, Shaun translates the *sayings* into *doings* and decides to adapt and differentiate the curriculum in order to accommodate all her learners. Kemmis (2012) contends that particular influences shape individuals. Shaun extends this to include her vision or framing of the learners that she must accommodate in her teaching, showing awareness of their different levels and abilities. This suggests that participants possessed a shared understanding of the ‘*sayings*’ which shaped their practice. As suggested by Salomon et al. (2016), inclusive education had silent narratives that positioned participants whose responsibility was to teach in ways that accommodate learners’ educational needs. Modifying the curriculum in order to accommodate learners was intended to respond to ‘learners’ educational needs. Thus, in this study, it could be argued that the participants were positioned in ways that prefigured their responses to the teaching of learners who are visually disabled. Often the power of these ‘*sayings*’ sought to or influenced their ‘*doings*’ or practices. Teachers, such as Shaun, where she did not have prior knowledge, used her discretion to include learners with visual disability.

However, this positioning by discourse of inclusive education resulted in Purity being unsure or not “*confident that I am on the right path*”. Her uncertainty about her path causes her to lose confidence in her work. In this regard, Darling-Hammond (2016) argues that in order to successfully implement reforms in schools and improve practice, teachers' confidence and competence must be built. Thus, what is happening to Purity is not unexpected. In fact, it is in line with Donohue and Bornman’s (2014) argument that in South Africa the lack of clarity in the policy and the vague guidelines provided to teachers, is one of the barriers to effective implementation of inclusive education.

#### **4.2.2 Attitudes towards inclusive education: “I do not see disability; I see learners”**

Participants’ attitudes towards inclusive education differed and were largely shaped by the challenges working conditions that they experienced. This is in sync with what Subban and Sharma (2005) has pointed out that teachers’ attitudes and beliefs depending on of factors, including their experiences. Negash (2017) posits that positive attitude generates the positivity that is required to implement policy. The excerpts from participants’ narratives below point to this fact:

*Sharon: “My attitude towards inclusive education is great. I do not see disability. I see learners similar to those in a “normal” or mainstream school it is just that their sight is affected. The attitude sometimes comes from being exposed to the challenges experienced when I teach something when I am unable to convey knowledge to learners with visual disability. But I then as a teacher I have to find means, skills and knowledge of how to teach them differently. Inclusive education provides learners the chance to have quality education in an inclusive setting. It is also their rights, you know. It is important for us to respect them, so we have them here. We like to teach them”.*

*Thembi: “School context is the main influencing factor contributing to the change of attitude towards teaching learners with visual disability.... upon discovering this new world and the understanding that irrespective of the disability, learners need love and opportunity to learn. Coming to terms with all this realisation made me to embrace them”.*

*Shaun: “Teachers teaching learners with visual disability are positive towards inclusive education as they have vast experience of teaching the blind learners. However, teachers teaching other learners do not have the experience of teaching the blind learners and are sceptical of ever teaching a classroom with learners with visual disability. I think that negative attitude will have an effect in their interaction with learners. If they were compelled to teach them, they were unlikely to provide for these learners with positive inclusionary environment”.*

Purity: *“Although people have different personalities, generally the attitude is positive here at school. Mostly from embracing the working environment, the love and caring for the learners. This result in learners developing trust then the energy becomes positive and learners are eager to learn and this making it easy for them to confide in you”*.

Joy: *“Although our attitudes as teachers are generally positive but other teachers in the school have negative attitude and are refusing to teach learners with visual disability in their classrooms. I think it is better to be upfront and say you cannot manage rather than pretending and say you can teach. As these disadvantages learners because what happens is just a physical inclusion as learners are left behind and not included in classroom activity because of a lack of know how”*.

Sharon, Thembi and Purity’s words suggest a positive attitude towards inclusive education. Sharon sees her learners in the same way that she sees other learners, except that they are blind. Only when she is attempting to transmit knowledge and she fails, then out of desperation her attitude changes. Donahue and Bornman (2015) assert that lack of support impedes effective teaching and learning and leads to frustration for and development of negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities by teachers. However, Purity also reflects on her behaviour, causing her to take a decision to look for ways to ensure her learners access to quality education. In this regard, Purity’s understanding is located within dominant discourses or *sayings* of inclusive education. Purity and Thembi embrace humanistic discourses or *sayings* of love, trust and positivity, which they believe, as argued by Kemmis (2014), could lead to improved relationships or *relatings* with their learners.

Both Shaun and Joy further stated that the culture of inclusion in their school could not discourage other teachers at the school to continuing with accommodating segregated classroom placements, in which they resist having learners with visual disability in their classes. For her, this strengthens and consolidates negative attitudes towards the teaching of learners with visual disability, entrenches itself as a key constituent of their *doings*. This means that, within this context, teachers are *“unlikely to provide for these learners”* and ensure that they are included. This concurs with what Nel, Muller and Rheeders (2011) has

argued that a lack of knowledge and confidence can be attributed to the negative attitude of teachers. That is, teachers' sentiments, beliefs, values and professional competence tend to influence their teaching practice and management strategies, and thus negatively influence learning.

### **4.3 Factors that influence teaching experiences within the classroom**

This section addresses the first and second key research questions, which focused on teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability and inclusionary and exclusionary factors that influenced their experiences. Data reveals that the participants' experiences were negatively impacted, as there were many exclusionary factors, which influenced their experiences. Thus, the first and second question responses have been weaved together in the following section.

For this study, participants reported experiencing a range of challenges, which influenced their teaching practice. These ranged from inadequate experience and qualifications for teaching learners with visual disability, curriculum adaptation to accommodate learners with visual disability, lack of professional development opportunities, large class sizes, time constraints and lack of access to appropriate resources.

#### **4.3.1 Continuing professional teacher development: “*I should have been trained...*”**

Most teachers who participated in the current study reported that they had not been trained to teach learners with a visual disability. Below are some of the experiences of continuing teacher professional development that the participants reported:

*Thembi: “I do not have proper training to teach blind learners which is a challenge on its own. The management does not regard a teacher as the subject matter expert hence they allocate subjects without considering teacher’s specialisations. There is no induction you are just given the subjects and learners to teach. You then have to organise the material by asking others who have been teaching the subject before. You initially learn with learners as you are firstly introduced to the subject for the first time. This lowers the level of performance of a teacher and the standard of learners’ performance.*

*Hence the learners' results drop. But because our education system has also lowered the standards, as there are subjects that allow 35% as a pass".*

*Sharon: "I think I should have been trained before I got employment at this school. I mean... trained to know how to adapt, differentiate curriculum and teach learners with visual disability in an inclusive setting and to make sure that all learners are successfully accommodated. I just think if I was trained, I could have been a better teacher, I could have been more resourceful and successful in my class. When I am supposed to teach something, I am not sure of the feeling I have overwhelmed me, and I become anxious and desperate for the knowledge to enable me to be more effective".*

*Linda: "Teaching learners with visual disability without training becomes very experimental. I must learn to read and write Braille so that I can mark work, I become a lifelong learner because every time when I encounter challenges I seek help from my colleagues or I try on my own to solve the matter at hand. This makes me work beyond my professional teaching experience and knowledge as I have to do an on-going research to improve my teaching skills in order to cater for the needs of each learner".*

*Shaun: "I was not trained to teach learners with visual disabilities. Even in Teacher Training Colleges when I trained as a teacher there was no professional teachers' qualification speciality on inclusive education and teaching learners with visual disability nor a detailed or routinely implemented policy on training teachers in Braille. Without the training in inclusive education will be challenging. I was fortunate to come to a school which had an excellent Braille teacher who introduced me to the basics of writing and reading Braille. This has helped immensely even though I was not able to learn contraction as she left the school a couple of months of working there but I am confident to say I am now able to teach and read braille".*

*Joy: "Lack of training and braille knowledge did not prevent me from being a life-long learner. I go all out of my way to acquire knowledge. The*

*experience I get exposes me to new knowledge and new understanding. I am on the quest of improving my teaching skills in order to cater for the needs of each learner according to their abilities. I can confidently say I see improvement and my level of confidence is improving”.*

These participants present important understandings of the various contextual and institutional factors, which influence how they experienced the teaching of learners with a visual disability. Firstly, the participants report that they were not trained to teach learners with disability and that even at “*teacher training colleges*”, their training did not include inclusive education. Secondly, the participants report that, once appointed, they also did not receive training on how to teach learners with visual disability: “*I do not have proper training to teach blind learners*”.

This lack of training had severe consequences on their ability to be effective. Linda and Shaun, for example, pointed to a lack of knowledge regarding Braille, in which a lack of knowledge and training results in the practice of inclusive education becoming a challenge. Sharon regards the cumulative effects of a lack of proper training, as with training she “*could have been a better teacher ... could have been resourceful and successful*” in her class. This is in sync with Kemmis’ (2008) argument that teachers are made and come by particular practices and architectures within their contexts. This had consequences for Sharon’s emotional well-being in which she sometimes becomes “*overwhelmed*”, “*anxious*” and “*desperate*” in her efforts to become more effective in her teaching.

A recent study by Greaves (2020) has revealed that teaching learners with disabilities often impacts on teachers’ emotions and practices. It is for this reason that Kebbi and Al-Hroub (2018) have pointed to the necessity of in-service training and support for teachers. In this instance, Sharon’s practices or *doings* relate to her actions or becoming (Kemmis, 2014). Sharon is unable to execute her duties properly because she is constrained by lack of access to professional development opportunities for teachers who teach learners like those that she teaches. The lack of training and the situation where teachers are subjected to working without having been properly prepared has severely negative consequences for access to education for learners (Muthukrishna, 2019).

However, the teachers' narratives also reveal an understanding of institutional practices, which further disempowers teachers. Thembi, for example, points to members of management who do not consider where the expertise of teachers lie and, instead, allocate subjects for teachers to teach. Thembi, in particular, feels further disempowered by the fact her school does not have an induction programme for new teachers. Thus, often learning about the teaching of learners with visual disability happens on the job, together with learners. Thembi, like Sharon, acknowledged that their lack of knowledge and training had adverse effects on the education of their learners. Negash (2017) and Ralejoe (2016) have argued that a lack of training has severe consequences for teachers' abilities to implement inclusive education. Despite the lack of training and professional development at school level, Linda and Sharon had found ways to negotiate this lack of professional development. Sharon was, however, concerned about how she would meet the educational needs of her learners. She further reported a sense of despair and anxiety, while she worried about how she could provide for her learners' needs. However, the awareness that she had not been equipped meet the educational needs of her learners was a concern for her, as it meant that she was failing in her duties as a special education teacher. Linda shared how she had taught herself to teach her, describing herself as a "go getter". For instance, she had taken a decision to take control of her professional development and empower herself to teach her learners. This suggests that she did not wait for help to come to her; she went out there and found help, which means that she sometimes had to resolve her challenges herself.

This lack of training for teachers who want to teach learners with visual disability will probably compromise efforts to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education, as Moralle (2016) has argued. However, in this study, participants, such as Linda, showed agency too, standing up and addressing the challenges that were making it difficult for them to provide access to education for their learners. According to the findings of this study participants revealed that they were experiencing severe lack of professional development opportunities.

#### **4.3.2 Support from the Department: "...they knew nothing about teaching blind learners"**

Participants were also concerned about the Department of Education's lack of support and monitoring of schools, particularly the District-Based Support Team (DBST) Because

schools and teachers rely on DBST for support, this compromises the effective implementation of inclusive education. Regarding Department of Education support, the following was shared by the participants:

Shaun: *“I think the district-based support team (DBST) must seriously visit the school, which they do not. The one time they visited just after the District official was appointed, they asked from us how were coping as they knew nothing about the learning and teaching of Blind learners”*.

Purity: *“The Department of Education is not supportive enough and really we do not know whether what we do is right or wrong. We wish that they could offer on-going support and the reason being that as teachers leave the system and new ones are employed.” Others leave the system because of the inefficiencies”*.

Thembi: *“There is not much support from the school or the department of education. Both the government and the private sector, Associations for The Blind. They need to play a special role to improve the level of education of the learners with visual disability, it is about time that someone stands up for the rights of learners with visual disability”*.

Sharon: *“On day-to-day activities there is no direct and official support, so one seeks assistance from a particular person who can be of good help. No one teaches you how to teach a blind learner, the map skills or how to make pneumatic and hydraulic systems, or any other topic. In 2018, there has been Government initiative of Braille workshops but from my perspective I can say that this initiative was a failure. Whatever is planned it is not sustainable. It seems as if it is rushed, last minute decisions before financial year end. Why I am saying this is because the timing of these capacity building workshop is always a last-minute thing and it grabs whoever is available at the time. Mind you this is just Braille literacy and has nothing to do with curriculum. The Department of Education invited ten teachers and teacher aids from our school to the Braille Literacy programme which aimed at upskilling teachers.*

*Yet, when the teachers had been called to further their Braille studies the management decided to send only three teachers. You can see here level one had more than that were trained but the following year there are only three. No monitoring done and it the end of it. If you were lucky to be trained no one will do any follow up”.*

*Shaun: “Teacher support is needed with regards to teaching and learning of the learners with visual disability. It is really a shame that we suffer alone, and we are expected do miracles for our learners with no guidance at all. Our school is a resource centre by name only”.*

Shaun, Purity, Thembi and Sharon claimed that district officials had inadequate knowledge of the teaching of learners with visually disability. Shaun emphasised the importance of ongoing support and capacity building to ensure that, as teachers, they are not well-equipped to teach learners with visual disability. Thembi even wished for intervention by stakeholders for the provision of training to teachers so that they could teach learners with visual disability. Sharon was concerned that the Department of Education was not supporting the school in its efforts to include learners with visual disabilities. Shaun expressed a view that her school was a resource centre only by name. From her perspective, her school had not been adequately resourced to serve as a resource centre, providing outreach services to other schools. Unfortunately, these practices are supposed to 'hang together' in order to foreshadow and define the school practices (Kemmis, 2012). Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2014) have reported that support to schools and teachers from DBSTs is often inadequate. However, Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2014) argue, instead of providing support, officials often criticise teachers for their attempts.

#### **4.3.3 Access to resources: “*We as teachers are in distress...*”**

Participants believed that adequate access to learning and teaching support materials was crucial for ensuring access to education for learners with visual disability. Participants reported on their experiences as follows:

*Sharon: “With the changing curriculum the department has not provided any braille nor enlarged printed books. Even if we want to use the old books, the content and subjects have changed. One word for what is happening in*

*our school is that we as teachers are in distress and we have to go an extra mile to source and improvise for learning to happen”.*

Linda: *“When I started working here at the school twenty-three years ago, a Blind and Deaf school migrated all their learners with visual disability and teachers to our school with all the resources that school had and left the Deaf wing behind. That is how our school acquired the resources for the Learners with visual disability. This was before curriculum reform in 1989, OBE, NCS, RNCS AND CAPS. We as a school we believed content is the same and we were continued using what we had, old syllabus books”.*

Teresa: *“The department has recently bought Braille books however they are few. There are so many setbacks about books. The images in books do not make sense especially to someone who had never seen the objects drawn in the picture. However, the activities are mostly based on those images. Blind people use fingers to read. As the book is often used the dots become flat which makes it to be unreadable”.*

Participants’ narratives above point to the prevailing social inequality. For Sharon and Linda, the Department of Education has made significant changes to the curriculum, ranging from Outcomes-Based Education through to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. However, they reported that the Department of Education had failed to provide teachers and learners with the appropriate learning and teaching support materials: *‘braille nor enlarged printed books.’* This suggests that, while the Department of Education legislates the curriculum to be taught, it fails to provide the means for learners to access learning, posing challenges for teachers and their learners with visual disabilities. This relationship or *‘relatings’* is unequal, where learners, teachers and schools for learners with disability were devalued, *‘othered’* and rendered invisible. This is reflective of what Muthukrishna (2019) has argued, that schooling is a power-laden space.

In this instance, Department of Education’s practices or *doings* are reflective of the values, norms, beliefs and discourses reproducing the dominant constructions of disability. In order for success and participation to occur in a school, there must be collaboration with this key role player, but in this case, it was absent. This then in turn influences the extent

to which teachers are successful in their practice or *doings*. Without these, these ultimately hinder their practice (Mahon et al., 2017). Without or with inadequate resources, equal learning opportunities for learners with visual disability are impossible. According to Mphongoshe et al. (2015), the lack of required resources and proper management raises credibility concerns about the implementation of inclusive education. As a result, it is clear that biggest barrier is a lack of resources for both teachers and learners. Participants reported that what scared them most was the severe lack of resources, which they thought was a sign of impending failure.

However, Teresa, Linda and Sharon endeavoured to negotiate these and show their agency: “*before curriculum reform in 1989*”, and they questioned their usability for the present context, where even the “*images in books do not make sense*” or when Braille books have become “*flat and unreadable*” and even if the “*content and subjects have change*” they made the decision to continue to use the “*old syllabus books*”. Again, even within the context of this study, the Department of Education's support materials that is lacking left teachers in distress (Fish-Hogson & Khumalo, 2014). However, participants also displayed agency by going “*an extra mile to source and improvise for learning to happen*”.

However, their continuous battle about resources where teachers are expected to accomplish more while working with fewer resources (Kaupa, 2020). This has the potential to lead to stress, exhaustion, negative thoughts, temper outbursts and demotivation.

Below are some of the challenges that participants encountered with learning and teaching support materials:

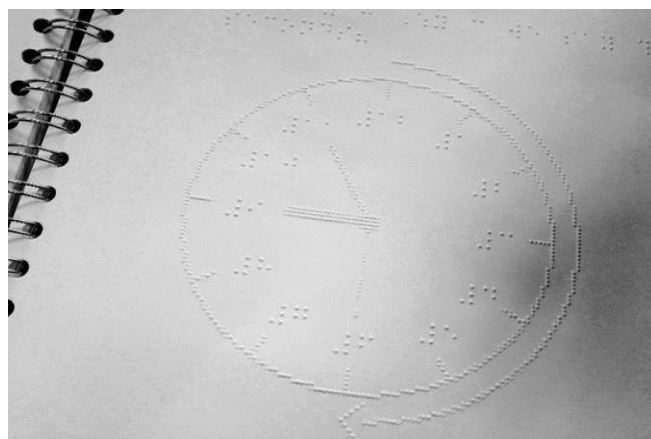


Figure 2: Tactile watch

Thembi: “As a mathematics teacher, I dictate some sections of the curriculum but for lengthy activities I braille for them, I also bring tangible objects and tactile diagrams for learning experience. The downside of tactile resources is that with time raised braille dots flattens. What I learned here at school is that you must never stack or put anything that might press dots on top of the books because dot fade”.



Figure 3: Braille clock

During observations, learners were taught to manipulate the watch (Lesson observation: February 2020). The provision of educational within an inclusive setting requires significant amount of effort on the part of teachers in respect of adapting instruction to ensure learners with visual disability are learning. The findings of the observations of the lessons concur with findings from Nigawaba (2014), which revealed excessive amounts of work that teachers had to do in their efforts to adapt resources.

Data generated from observation (February 2020) revealed that for teachers, these tactile resources, for example, graphics were precious and vital for the teachers. They could convert visual graphics, such as maps, drawings and so on into tactile graphics. They then labelled them and wrote descriptions of them in Braille for the learners “*I bring tactile diagrams for learning*”. They did this repeatedly, especially when the dots became “*flat*” or “*fade[d]*”, through learners constantly reading it. Tactile graphics assist where a real object is unavailable for touching because, as Herzberg and Rosenblum (2014) assert, when learning material is inconsistent it can affect learners’ ability to access and understand the graphics. However, both Sharon and Linda questioned the usefulness of tactile objects,

especially when it came to the teaching of mapwork, which they both found to be particularly challenging.

During a lesson observation (February 2020), one of the participants, a Geography teacher, was observed teaching mapwork. During the lesson, I noticed that tactile graphics were not exact replicas of the original visual documents and did not contain sufficient detail. When teachers were asked about the effectiveness of the available resources, the teachers responded:

*Sharon: "I want to re-iterate that it is challenging to teach a blind learner when books are too visual. In most subject books have diagrams, drawings, maps, and pictures that most content is based on. In Geography, maps in tactile format have very little details. The Braille books do not do justice either as the drawings are meaningless to a learner with visual disability".*

*Linda: "Teaching Geography to the learners with visual disability is challenging when it comes to mapwork especially as we are only having the tactile Globe with just continents, oceans and equator. There are no provincial nor local maps available. When teaching activities like coordinates, the globe is not detailed enough. I then teach all other things without any map at hand, meaning that it would be just abstract knowledge." Geography resources mostly are exclusionary as they do not cater for the learners with visual disability".*

While there were tactile maps, for Sharon and Linda, they were less specific and did not assist them with their teaching. Given the fact that Geography resources were insufficient, Sharon had decided to make her own tactile maps instead, trying to provide more details on the content that she wanted to teach. This demonstrated her agency and commitment to ensuring that her learners learned. The result was that in that lesson, learners could find continents, because they had different textures and labelled oceans in braille. This ensured that learners had access to the key knowledge in geography. Having a tactile stimulus also helped with conceptual development. Gual et al. (2011) found that 3D printing could be a

useful teaching technique for making tactile maps and was important for schools for learners with visual disability.

However, for Linda, resources for Geography were exclusionary and often learners could not learn important knowledge about, for example, “*co-ordinates*”, because the tactile globe “*is not detailed enough*”. Instead, Linda taught concepts without resources, resulting in learners not learning important concepts in mapwork and the knowledge becoming too abstract and meaningless for learners. According to Zebehazy and Wilton (2014), both braille and print graphics designers must create graphics that allow learners to find information quickly and accurately. For this study, this was not the case.



1

Figure 4: Tactile World Map



Figure 5: Tactile Globe

For the participants, the implementation of the curriculum was “...*a barrier to a visually disabled learner...*”, Theresa makes the point below:

*“Curriculum developers did not have a blind learner in their minds. It is understood that the learners with visual disability cannot be denied*

*knowledge and skills acquisition, they also should be catered for by being a proper learning opportunity. Nevertheless, the curriculum developers are supposed to develop other skills to cater for the blind learner. I want to reiterate that it is impossible to teach a blind learner map skill in Geography, making pneumatics and hydraulics in Technology and so forth”.*

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<sup>1</sup> Tactile maps are physical representations of geographic data. Tactile maps are particularly helpful in providing blind or visually disabled individuals with an understanding of the layout of physical spaces

The preconditions of appropriate learning and teaching support materials for learners with visual disabilities shaped and instigated certain ‘doings’ in the teachers’ practice. Instead of the curriculum and resources being a source of empowerment, these instead had become one that marginalising and disempowers both learners and teachers, as curriculum designers did not “*have blind learners in mind*”. Despite the efforts of teachers to improvise, there were times where they could not teach; thus resulting in an unequal access to learning for learners. This is similar to what has been found by Madungwe (2018) who found that a lack of resources for mathematics denied learners of access to the curriculum.

#### **4.3.4 Class size: “*Big classes are not always difficult to manage*”**

Findings revealed that class sizes impacted teaching methods used by the participants. Participants reported that large class sizes impacted on teaching and learning:

*Purity: “Due to bigger numbers in my classroom and varied learner needs, I sometimes find it hard to reach out to everyone to do activities within the stipulated time, I sometimes struggle give them individual attention.” When I attend to them individually, I usually omit some sections, or I teach half of what was meant to be taught on that particular day and I leave the rest for my following period or after school. When I reflect after the lesson, I always put it down my reasons for not finishing. The problem with leaving work unfinished, I never cover the curriculum”.*

Thembi: *“Large number of learners with different disability and support needs, affect my teaching, more especially when I have to differentiate my teaching. At times I fail to accommodate everyone in my classroom I then feel anxious because of the load. It really becomes unbearable to have a heterogeneous classroom where every learner tries hard to do his or her bit so they can pass at the end of the year”*.

Linda: *“Big classrooms are not always difficult to manage; I make it a point that I do case studies for each learner at the beginning of the year by discussing them with previous teachers so that I understand them better. I then screen and identify those who experience barriers to learning in their classrooms, this is just to check what is their strength and weaknesses are so that I’ll be able to work with them according to their needs. As a teacher I do not always win as activities differ and have different levels of complexity. When I experience this, I also leave some work unfinished with the hope of finishing other times”*.

Sharon: *“What I notice with large numbers is that learners tend to be mischievous if they are not occupied. When I do group work, I make sure that I give an instruction first of what each group should do. Sometimes they listen and do as they are told and sometimes give me hard time. With big numbers calls for good management skills like, managing physical environment, establishment of classroom routines, establishment of classroom rules, implementation of time management and keeping with classroom administration”*.

Teresa: *“One visually disabled learner equates to five learners, (1:5) and the categorised as having high needs of support. When I teach mathematics, I work one-on-one. Fortunately for the mathematics it has more periods than other subject. My periods are either double or triple period and that works for me. Unlike other subjects where there is only one period in a day”*.

Teresa drew direct inferences to learner-teacher ratio, in which one learner with a visual disability “equates to five learners”, because of the high level of needs and support. This influenced participants’ workloads, because not all the learners required the same level of support. There were discipline-related issues, which was a direct result of the classroom size for Sharon, and often her learners “*give her a hard time*”, whilst she was busy with other groups. This is in sync with what Qasim and Arif (2014) have found that overcrowded classrooms may lead to poor learner behaviour. Thembi’s inability to differentiate her lessons led to emotional upheaval. Thembi blamed herself for being unable to accommodate all her learners’ educational needs.

According to Agesa (2014), inadequate implementation of differentiation often results in poor learner performance. The negative emotions of being anxious and finding expectations unbearable confirmed the power associated with emotions and were central to the teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 2003). Her inability to get it right and her subsequent use of the word “*fail*” suggests extreme discontent with herself. This may suggest that she was blaming herself rather than the system that was constraining her ability to teach her learners so that they could “*pass at the end of the year*”. She thus internalised her guilt. The subsequent emotional uncertainty she was experiences suggested a discrepancy between her expectations and policy. Managing large classes often leads to exhaustion, which may compromise the quality of teaching (Kaupa, 2020).

Whilst Thembi experienced large classes as being problematic, other participants, such as Linda and Tessa and Sharon, could successfully negotiate this. Sharon, for example, had learned how to manage the challenge and established parameters regarding the behaviour of her learners. Linda had decided to learn more about her learners. Aspfors (2012) regards these practices as relating to learners in order for them to be successful. Learning about her learners and their specific needs through ‘*case studies*’ and talking to their previous teachers, Linda’s conduct pointed to the importance of relationships. Linda acknowledged that success was not always possible, especially regarding curriculum differentiation. Linda pointed to this as one of the reasons she could not complete the syllabus. From this, it can be discerned how issues of classroom size, differentiation and resources all ‘hung together’ to generate specific working conditions for the participants. For the most part, participants negotiated these challenges successfully. However, sometimes they found it

difficult, which resulted in emotional labour (Zembylas, 2003). Zembylas, (2006) cited in Greaves (2020) has pointed out that teachers' experience emotional labour when teachers encounter issues that impact on their self-esteem.

#### **4.4 Teaching strategies adopted by teachers**

This section addresses the second and third key research questions. Therefore, in this section, I discuss the various ways in which participants practised inclusion as they negotiated exclusionary factors that they experienced. Teachers of learners with visual disability must devise strategies to address exclusionary factors they encounter. Hick et al. (2009) underlines the fact that teachers' understanding of inclusion must shape their pedagogical strategies, with a view to eventually promoting inclusive education. The findings presented below reveal how teachers made a difference in the learning lives of learners with visual disability. Teachers' '*sayings*' and '*doings*' and '*relatings*' enacted positioned participants as the primary agents in the implementation of inclusive education.

Data presented here suggests that learners with visual disability can be included in the classroom and can access learning. However, this can only when a teacher is willing and capable of doing it. The teachers who participated in this study were vocal advocates of the '*sayings*' and '*doings*' for inclusive practices.

##### **4.4.1 Developing inclusive spaces: “*One size does not fit all*”**

The narratives below reveal the importance of including all learners in order to ensure access to education for all. Data in this study revealed that participants adopted various inclusive teaching strategies to meet their learners' diverse needs. Teachers who participated in this study used individual education programmes (IEPs) and the expanded core curriculum to increase opportunities for their learners to learn. Regarding the above, participants had the following to say:

Purity: *“I find it important to use The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) which is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by learners with disabilities due to their unique disability-specific needs. ECC is a framework for assessing learners, planning, and for providing instruction”.*

Linda: *“In order for me to be able to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning in my classroom, I do multi-level teaching approach, which is a challenge. This is where I individualise my teaching to accommodate the different learner cognitive levels, thus, as a teacher I make sure that all learners in the classrooms participate. We as teachers negotiate by adapting teaching material to learner such as enlarged copies for the visually disabled. For those who are total blind at times I omit doing that task as they are unable to view the picture and participate. When I plan my lesson, I have an understanding that one size does not fit all. Generally, everyone at the school is aware that our learners need, and abilities differ hence teaching is supposed to be differentiated. I make sure that in my planning I consider each learners’ needs and how I intend to close the gap that may be created as I try deliver the lesson. Since it is easy for learners with visual disability to see and access any medium of teaching. What I do, after teaching and assessment, I reflect on how learners attained skills and knowledge that I intended to deliver. That gives me an opportunity to correct my previous faults and improve me on my planning the lessons that will follow. When doing my preparation, work is chunked to more manageable portions. I do this so that there will be more time for individualised attention”*.

Shaun: *“I omit those activities that will not be inclusive to my blind learners. I haven’t achieved what is expected of me by the document. It means they do not get knowledge, skills, and values that other learners in their grade get. I feel sad.... Yes, it is important because one deals with learners with different needs according to their disabilities. Consequently, it is essential that I deliberate the possible learning barriers of each learner as per their disabilities as it is not easy to teach inclusive education, but one has to be mentally prepared. Yes, as my learners are different, and their disability requires that I individualize my teaching. Some learners will finish their work much faster than others; some are too slow, and some need one-on-one assistance. Those working fast will be given extra work and those who are slow their work will be subdivided as well as those needing one on one assistance will be given more time”*.

Thembi: “*When I plan my lessons, I cater for multiple intelligences, ensuring that everyone’s strength will be demonstrated. I also attend to learners individually to confirm that everyone conceptualises correctly and follows instructions of the assessment activity correctly. I improvise to meet all the needs of the learners*”.

Here the participants’ narratives reveal the *doings* of teachers and their relationships with learners. Borg (1987) pointed out that observational processes are essential in enabling individuals to collect information about their world. This means that learners with a visual disability are often deprived of opportunities to study specific aspects of their world, especially if sight is emphasised as the primary sense. What became evident in the observation (July 2020) was the adequate amount of time and effort teachers spent with their learners. To achieve an inclusive classroom, Linda and Shaun had to be mindful of the diversity in their classrooms.

For this study, participants were influenced by the discourses or *sayings* of inclusive education and tended to individualise their learners’ needs. Participants also used the expanded core curriculum to accommodate the unique disability-specific needs of learners with visual disability. The transformation of their practices involved transformations in how they related to their learners and how they made decisions to transform their practices. This about their relationships or ‘*relatings*’ that they had with their learners, where deep knowledge of their learners needs required them to action multi-level teaching and differentiate learning to cater for all learners’ different cognitive levels.

Thembi, for example, planned for multiple intelligences pointing to their strengths and not their weakness. Thembi viewed her learners as individuals who had the ability and capability to negate deficit discourses of disability (UNESCO, 2016). For Shaun, her decisions were part of a deliberative process. Thus, she weighed all the possible strategies she could, not only for the learners, but for herself as well, so that they could be academically prepared. Sharon supported her learners using one-on-one strategies and paced her work according to learners’ needs. Sharon further ensured that learning opportunities were available for learners, who worked quickly by giving them “*extra work*”.

Linda took what Sharon had said a step further, not teaching activities that she believed would exclude blind learners or by chunking work into manageable units. For this study, their understandings of the *sayings* that surround their practices within an inclusive school also caused them to recognise the oppression that their learners faced. Being rendered invisible by a curriculum that did not cater for them. This forced a particular kind of *doing* or *action*, which was to make deliberative choices to challenge this inequality. However, Linda was in a double bind for choosing to leave out some aspects of the curriculum, she knew that learners could not access the required knowledge, skills and values. This affected her emotionally, as she felt sad because she could not meet all the learning needs of her learners.

From their narratives, it was evident that the participants understood that their practices and beliefs were more than just the transmission of knowledge, skills and values (Kemmis, 2007); it was also about critically understanding the various factors that influenced what they could and could not do. Moreover, they responded to the learners' rights to access quality and worthwhile education. Thus, the need of adapting to learners' needs as proposed by their orientation to the social rights discourse was evident. In this study, participants displayed agency and a commitment for social change and transformation, ensuring all appropriate supports systems were in place to assist learners to negotiate barriers to learning that that they were experiencing. In doing so, teaching was recognised as a complex practice.



Figure 6: Linda working with a group of learners, calling them individually to the table to work with them.

#### 4.4.2 Adapting and differentiating curriculum: “*I select activities that accommodate learners*”

Hitchcock et al. (2002) assert that learners cannot all be taught in the same way, as their educational needs and learning styles are diverse. This was evident during the observations when participants were interacting with learners using different teaching aids and methods. Using abstract concepts, together with concrete objects, made learning experiences pleasurable for learners with visual disability. Below is the discussion of Thembi’s attempts to adapt and differentiate the curriculum for learners in a science lesson (Lesson observation: (March 2020).

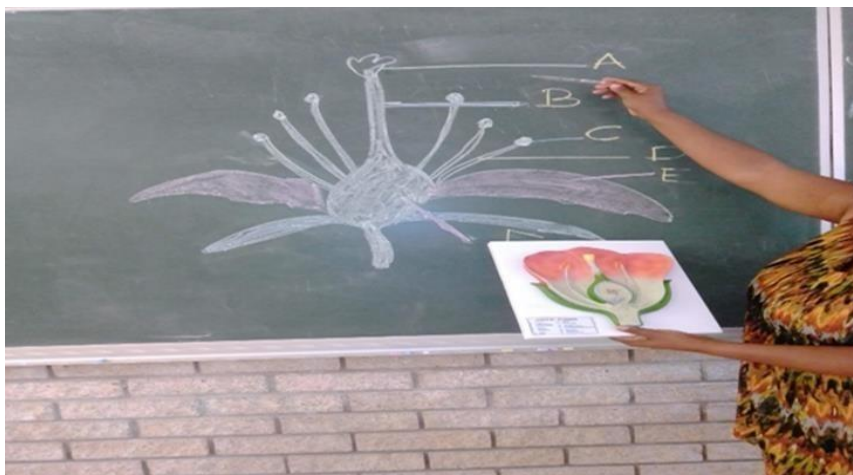


Figure 7: Thembi using the chalkboard to show/ teach learners the different parts of a flower



Figure 8: Parts of a flower in tactile Braille format to accommodate diversity

Thembi: “*To make sure that there is equal access, I present Parts of a flower in different formats to accommodate everyone in class. I draw on the board for the sighted learners to see. I provide a Tactile Model for Braille users.*”

*However, a tactile flower on a braille paper it is explored by learners using their fingers, it is flat with just raised dots and it sometimes confuses some learners. to minimise confusion, I use it together with a 3-D model which help learners to manipulate the model and they learn effectively. Not all the subjects have models, for other subjects I have to go an extra mile to source something for learners ahead of time for the lesson, as a teacher I plan thoroughly”.*

Thembi used flowers in different formats to include all her learners in the learning experiences. Thembi pointed out that her teaching was more effective if her learners’ needs were met. In this instance, Thembi sought to ensure equitable access for her learners. Thus, she adapted her lessons and teaching activities to accommodate learners with visual disabilities as well as all the other learners. It is argued that the most significant barrier to learning is the curriculum. This can be attributed to various aspects of the curriculum, namely the content, language, methods of teaching, teaching pace and the time allocations, teaching and learning support material and assessment (Department of Education, 2001, p. 19).

In line with the above, in responding to her learners' needs, Thembi reflected on her practice and was aware that sometimes the tactile module was ineffective. This provided her learners with access as they could not manipulate the model. Through the process of touching and feeling, she was displaying her agency by learning to ‘read’ her learners, curriculum and content and effecting adaptations to accommodate her learners. This finding is contrary to findings by Fraser and Maguvhe (2008) who found that teachers often did not have skills to adapt the curriculum and other teaching resources to accommodate learners with visual disability.

Teachers tried various ways to adapt and differentiate the curriculum content:

*Joy: “I do not only rely on Braille books, but I use other learning and teaching resources like concrete objects as Braille books often do not do justice to the learners. Printers transcribing print to braille, produce braille books with all pictures omitted. It does not make sense to a totally blind person because the instruction of task or activity is based on the omitted*

*visual. As CAPS books are mostly source based, your role as a teacher requires of you to paint the picture or describe of a missing visual in order for a learner to be able to participate and engage to that task”.*

*Shaun: “I have to adapt and teach according to my learners’ individual needs. Some learners with visual disability with low vision have to be seated in front as their sight is limited. When I teach learners with visual disability who are totally blind, I have to attend to them individually as most books, worksheets and books omit pictures. I have to be there to assist and clarify things. I use mostly adapted learning materials. I use CAPS Curriculum however I modify the curriculum according to the learners’ needs. The most difficult part is when the learners are expected to make things for project purposes some of the things, they have to make are complicated even for the sighted learners such as the “Jaws of life” and “crane” for Technology assessment”.*

*Thembi: “I make sure that Braille users have correct Brailled material since my subject Creative Arts is more practical and has no book. I braille the theory part just for learners to have notes, the partial sighted have enlarged copies and for learners who cannot read print I braille their copies”.*

*Teresa: “There is no explicit instruction on modifying the curriculum to cater to the blind learners. As a result, I select activities that I think accommodate learners with visual disability”.*

*Purity: “I select activities that accommodate learners with visual disability. I also allow learners to do projects such as Mini-Pats for Technology in groups and mix learners according to their strengths and weaknesses”.*

All the participants above displayed agency by devising strategies to accommodate their learners. Joy pointed to an important aspect, which pointed to structural inequality, evident where books printed into Braille, leave out pictures and that the result was content that ‘does not make sense to a totally blind person’. This pointed to the broader political and social influences that Kemmis (2012) referred to and that reinforced and

reproduced the discourse of learners with visual disability as devalued. For this study, the role of the participants was to contribute to addressing structural barriers. In this instance, the *doings* of the teachers such as “*paint[ing] a picture*”, “*describe the missing visual*”, “*use enlarged copies*”, “*use mini-pats*” to ensure that learners accessed the curriculum.

Shaun raised a concern that the projects that learners must complete in terms of the curriculum were “*complicated even for sighted learners*”. This institutional discrimination was evident in the inability of the Department of Education to provide appropriate learning and teaching support material reinforced discourses of disability as deficient. Instead, in this study, learners were viewed as a problem and it was up to them and their teachers to adapt the curriculum. This concurs with what Fish-Hogson and Khumalo (2015) who posit that school curriculum was not designed with learners with disabilities in mind.

Further, Teresa reported that inequality was evident even in schools where all the resources had been provided, as there were no professional development activities to support participants on how to modify the curriculum to cater for learners who have visual disability. Instead, the participants were left to fend for themselves. Without the required knowledge, expertise and skills, participants were still expected to accommodate learners in their teaching, without support from the officials. Thus, teachers who were participants in this study have therefore taken the challenge of modifying and adapting the curriculum to the needs of learners. This is in keeping with Kuyini and Desai’s (2007) argument that it is important that teachers modifying the curriculum to accommodate the needs of learners. Shaun, for example, did taken for granted things, such as ensuring that learners with visual disability sat close to the board, clarifying and adapting information to ensure learners learned. Thembi changed Braille material so that learners could access Creative Arts as they had no textbooks suitable for learners with visual disabilities.

#### **4.4.3 Peer learning: “*No learner is left behind*”**

Peer learning, according to Wessel (2015), is an educational practice in which learners collaborate with one another to achieve educational objectives. Peer learning can be regarded as an aspect of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning, according to Van Wyk (2007), is “an effective teaching approach in which small groups of learners of varying levels of skill use a range of learning experiences to enhance their comprehension of a

topic” (p. 315). Peer learning was used by the participants as a strategy for supporting their learners:

Sharon: *“The learners are fascinated as they learn to do things that they never thought they will be able to do. The buddy system is used such as learners are paired according to their abilities, e.g. partial sighted learners are paired with the sighted learner having other disability and the blind learner. This creates the accompaniment and peer relationship in a group. For example, a sighted learner has sight and give the picture of what they need to do to his peers, but he does not have motor skills. He then gives instructions to the blind learner whose hands are properly working. The partial sighted learner then collect material needed. The tasks are performed according to one’s ability. However, there are those who are lazy and want to be free riders. By so doing, the process of learning does take place, no learner is left behind, and they are validated by other learners. The learner does not only benefit knowledge, participation and skills as per the lesson objective but also gain interpersonal skills such as being a team player, self-esteem, empathy and caring for others”.*

Sharon’s narrative above reveals the nature of *relatings* and the development of particular kinds of relationships that learners required. Participants provided opportunities for learners to work together in peer learning contexts. Even though there were some learners who were lazy, learning still took place, as every learner had something to contribute, irrespective of ability. This contributed positively as learners began to feel valued and the positive classroom environment made them realise that they had the ability to achieve and do things they *“never thought they will be able to do”*. Sharon further pointed out that learners had increased self-esteem as a result of peer validation and increased participation in lessons. Learners who participated in peer tutoring developed the required skills. Below, participants described the ways in which they made learning opportunities available for learners:

Linda: *“Weak learners are mixed with strong learners. The sighted are mixed with the partially sighted and blind. The strategy of mixed abilities, blind learners paired with partially sighted learners. The teacher uses her*

*discretion which will fit to the lesson objectives. There are those learners who are always willing to help even if they are not tasked. They take upon themselves to see that everyone gets help they need”.*

Shaun: *“I make sure that I mix learners with vision with learners with no vision where they use their visual strength. The sighted become the eyes of learners with visual disability. They can explain what they see or what they are supposed to do, especially the visual text. This peer interaction helps all learners to socialize better and accept each other. As a teacher I try not overburden helpers, I make sure that activities are broken into smaller chunks to avoid learners to be overwhelmed by the amount of work. Different learners respond in different ways, others become overwhelmed and others can learn from their peers. In all the situations, I always keep an eye on how best each can be assisted. In my classroom I have a teacher aid who is also there for learners”.*

Shaun and Linda’s narratives reveal that they provided support to learners such that they could take initiative and help their peers. Participants used paired and group work to accommodate and support learners to ensure that they could learn. Sharon, for example, understood that chunking was important and was constantly looking out for learners’ wellbeing. This informed her *doings* or practices as to then knowing how each could be assisted. In addition, and most importantly, Sharon also ensured that the amount of work assigned to learners was not excessive. This was important in ensuring that, as Sharon points out, no learner was left behind.

#### **4.4.4 Collaboration and networking: “As a teacher, I do not know it all”**

Teachers and parents should collaborate in the implementation provision of education. When teachers participate in collaborative relationships, they learn important aspects of their work in order to ensure that their learners learn (Hemmings, Kemmis & Reupert, 2013). The following excerpts pointed to how participants collaborated with other to ensure that their learners learned:

Sharon: *“Yes, I do collaborate with other teachers. It is very useful because we discuss different teaching strategies as per curriculum and put different opinion on implementations, the results are always best”*.

Shaun: *“Collaborating with other teachers eases the stress during the times of desperateness. As a teacher I do not know it all. We often come up with working strategies as you know that there is not much one can achieve when working in isolation, we really need each other. This coming together even boosts our confidence”*.

Linda: *“We do subject specialization across our section. Each teacher has three or more subject to teach. As I mentioned before that our school management (SMT) does not believe in specialization, subsequently teaching one subject for years is not guaranteed. One always has one or two subjects she is teaching for the first time. Collaboration becomes the solution as one always contact other teachers for help, share teaching aids and to plan together in general. By so doing we are also able to discuss learners and their needs. Teachers arrange for lesson delivery to the learners”*.

Collaboration, according to the participants, was helpful, because it enabled them to deliberate and come up with pedagogical strategies to assist their learners to learn. Teaching and learning, according to Pantic and Florian (2015), require collaboration and efficient teaching methods. In their narratives, Shaun and Linda stated that as teachers, they found collaboration and network beneficial in reducing hopelessness when dealing with learners with diverse learning needs. Cancio (2018) contends that one of the key benefits of a network of colleagues is that it helps teachers to manage stress and to realise that their difficulties can be resolved. Both Shaun and Linda reported that working alone was often ineffective and that sharing her workload with others *“boosts her confidence”*. These collaborative networks had the added benefits and provided participants with the required support. Participants also shared teaching aids and ways of delivering lessons to learners. This means took control of their professional ways and responsibility for creating, delivering, monitoring and evaluating instruction. For this study, networks enabled

teachers to offer learners opportunities for learning through different approaches of teaching and learning (Florian, 2012).

#### **4.4.5 Teachers' perspectives on parental involvement: “*We only see them when they bring learners...*”**

This section presents the findings regarding teachers' experiences and perspective on the role of the parents of their learners and their involvement in their learners' education. Aspors (2012) asserts that *relatings* are social practices. In this instance, parent-teacher relationships depended on solid partnerships. However, narratives from participants provided some insights into the difficulties experienced regarding parental involvement.

Purity: “*Parents play an important role in the education of their learner. A learner that has parents who play a role in their education performs at a much better level as well as takes interest in doing their work and behaving well. The school is not inclusionary as teacher do not have a relationship with the parents but rather with the management. Teachers are not allowed to communicate with parents. If I have any issue with any learner, I tell the social worker and she cascade my concern*”.

Sharon: “*Parents are part and parcel of the school as they have representation in the governing body. Some parents are from far and they seldom come to school. They leave everything to teachers to care for their children and maintain a distant stance and choose not to get involved in school affairs. Most of our learners are coming from poor backgrounds. Those parents seldom come to school because they cannot afford travelling fee. Those parents often use transport that is provided by the Department of Health. Parents struggle even to pay school fees; we only see them when they bring learners to school at the beginning of the year and when there is an urgent need for them to come to school*”.

Thembi: “*Our school policy is not inclusionary; teachers-parent direct communication is not allowed. It is the social worker or the HOD who can*

*have the direct contact with parents and when it is medical related it will become the matter of the on-site medical staff. I as a teacher I see it as important for us as teachers to have that teacher-parents' relationship. Because most of the time the matter at hand becomes distorted".*

*Shaun: "As I mentioned before that parental involvement is very minimal. Learners stay at the school's boarding facility and their homes are all over KwaZulu-Natal. Most of them only see parents at the end of each term. Engaging a parent in a learner's education is quite difficult. In most cases parents are involved when they have to reprimand a learner because of his behaviour." "Even though parents may like to assist during holidays they might not have assistive devices needed such as Perkins Braille. Some of them are Braille illiterate. Their knowledge is limited on how to teach a blind learner except for the lucky ones who come from families where parents had vision problem who might be blind and have a Braille machine and are braille literate".*

*Linda: "Some of the parents just do not show any compassion for their learners since they think it is a taboo or is a curse having such learners around them, so they rely on their teachers to take care of their learners. On the other hand, other parents become overprotective, defensive of any of their children wrongdoing as they are very special to them as a result, they do everything for them, limiting their independence. They don't want them to do things on their own".*

*Thembi: "We are told that assistive devices for blind people are very expensive. Let's assume that the blind learner struggles with schoolwork at school, should a parent wish to help during holidays at home they devices are the property of the school learners are not allowed to take them home. The only way of getting help at home is when the parents dictate to them and they memorise whatever the parent tells them".*

Participants referred to the importance of parental involvement. This supports the finding by Bantwini and Feza (2017) and Adams et al. (2016) have pointed out that parental

involvement is related to academic performance. However, the extent of parental involvement is often impacted by several factors. Purity and Thembi, for example, understood that parents had a vital role to play in supporting the education of their children through helping them with basic tasks such as “*doing homework and teaching them about behaviour*”. However, Purity and Thembi also reported that their school was exclusionary, as it was not open for to developing relationships with parents. For them, the main reason was that the only contact parents had with the school was through their school management team, as teachers “*are not allowed to communicate with parents or when it is medically related*”. This suggests that there was a deliberate distancing by the school. If this continues, it is likely to have severe consequences for the school, teachers and learners.

Sharon pointed to other important issues that prevented parents from being actively involved, namely, long distances from the school and poverty. For Sharon, the school viewed parents in particular ways and that this was often based on a separation of home and school. This present the idea that the school knows best as to how to care for their children and there was a disjuncture between the school and the parents who “*choose not to get involved in school affairs*”. However, the choice was restricted as parents were unwillingly to make this choice. Their choices were often limited by poverty. The only time parents came to the school was when there was something urgent about their child. This suggests that there was no collaboration between home and school and parents’ ideas and inputs were often unwelcome.

On the other hand, parents themselves often distanced themselves from their children, because of cultural stereotypes about disability, in which disability was regarded as “*taboo or ... a curse*”. Thus, participants reported that parents preferred to marginalise their children and isolate themselves from them. That is, participants speculated that they left them at the school in order to forget them. On the other extreme, some parents were overly protective to their children to the extent that they prevented them from becoming independent.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

I have presented and discussed the findings of this study in this chapter. A lack of teacher preparation was mentioned as an obstacle to participation by the participants. The inadequate interpretation of inclusive education policies was a major obstacle to the

implementation of inclusive education. Various factors that influenced teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability were also presented. In this instance, data revealed that participants had both positive and negative experiences of teaching learners with visual disability, although negative experiences seemed to dominate. Participants' experiences were also influenced by their own ability to be the kinds of teachers required by their learners. This was compounded by the lack of support as well as resources that impacted on their pedagogical practices. Participants, however, often positioned themselves in powerful ways acting as supporters of learners. In this regard, they developed strategies to ensure that access to learning was ensured for their learners.

The next chapter provide concluding comments to the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **REFLECTIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I presented, analysed and discussed data and findings of the study in respect of that the experiences of teachers of teaching learners with visual disability. Findings revealed that participants had various experiences, which had an influence on their teaching. In this chapter, I present reflections on the appropriateness of the methodology, theory and methods of data collection used in this study. I then discuss the key findings in relation to the key research questions that underpinned this study. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations that were evident in the study as well as provide recommendations for future research. Lastly, I provide concluding thoughts to the study.

#### **5.2 Purpose and significance of the study findings**

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability. Findings of this study contributed to the body of knowledge about the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability. In particular, the inclusionary and exclusionary factors that determined how teachers could practise their teaching was key. Teachers, as positioned as change agents, who had agency to negotiate factors, which were barriers that they encountered.

Despite being faced with various structurally determined factors, participants found ways to ensure that learning and teaching occurred. The study foregrounded the voices of teachers and, in so doing, raised awareness of how, despite the school being a resource centre, still encountered barriers that made it difficult for the teachers to accommodate their learners. However, teachers in this study, experienced exclusionary factors as complex and difficult, while they could sometimes develop appropriate strategies. This worked to the benefit of learners with visual disability. This research study also provided teachers with the platform to enable their voices to be heard, in which they shared their struggles, concerns and successes in the implementation of inclusive education. It is hoped that, through the research process, participants could reflect on their thinking and practice and continue to be committed to developing ensuring access to education for their learners.

The study sought to respond to the three key research questions, which were:

- What are the teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability in an inclusive school?
- What are the inclusionary and exclusionary factors that influence teaching and learning?
- How do teachers negotiate these factors?

The significance of this study is that it highlighted the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability. One assumes that when teachers are in special schools as resource centres, they will be able to accommodate learners with various educational needs. However, findings of this study revealed that this was not always true. Instead, teachers who participated in this study, like all teachers in South Africa, were consistently faced with exclusionary barriers (Luning, 2015). As argued in this study, there is limited research on the experiences of teachers teaching learners with visual disability. Findings of this study suggest that more research is required in this area, especially if the various ways in which teachers have to devise strategies to ensure learners have access to the curriculum is revealed. The study is also significant in that it revealed the various ways in which teachers are working towards change.

### **5.3 Reflections on theoretical framework and methodological issues**

In this section, I review and evaluate the theoretical framework and the methodology that was used in this research study.

The Practice Architectures Theory by Kemmis (2012) served as the theoretical framework for this research. This theory enabled an understanding of not only how teachers made sense of their practice and influences; but also how contextual and situated factors influenced their abilities to carry out their practices. The Theory of Practice Architectures uses the concepts of *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* to describe educational practices. *Sayings* refer to the level of discourse or normative understandings, *doings* to the level of action and work, and *relatings* to socio-political dependencies. The Theory of Practice Architectures is especially helpful in explaining inclusive education and the practices of teachers in various types of schooling settings (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018;

Muthukrishna, 2019). Using these three concepts, I could explore how teachers were influenced by the social rights discourse, as well as the inclusive education discourses that informed their practices. Various socio-political factors, such as the failure to provide adequate training and support to teachers to teach learners with visual disability effectively reinforced the lack of value accorded to learners with visual disability. Lack of appropriate resources influenced teachers' *doings* in that they used their power to challenge the barriers to ensure that their learners were not adversely affected.

The study is based on a critical paradigm, in which multiple realities shape subjective realities (Denzin, 2010). This is a viewpoint that posits that subjective realities are influenced by justice, power disparities, oppression and the attainment of emancipation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). As a researcher this paradigm enabled me to obtain a deeper understanding of power differentials that exist within the participants working environment and how this was both a source of empowerment and disempowerment and influenced their pedagogical practices. Relationships with parents were imbued with power and often prevented teachers from developing a relationship with them. Through the research process, participants could reflect on their practices and see the various factors that affected how they could continue with teaching and learning. It is hoped that with this self-reflective process, teachers could, firstly, recognise inequality and, secondly, work towards becoming change agents for their learners.

The qualitative approach and narrative inquiry proved appropriate and effective for the purposes of this study. Qualitative research also emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002). The focus of this study was on obtaining in-depth understandings of experiences of teachers of teaching learners with visual disability and how their realities were influenced by various factors, such as workload and emotional uncertainty were enabled. These factors, in turn, were influenced by the broader social, economic, political and cultural context. This was accomplished by using qualitative research. In which I could access in-depth data. Furthermore, I was able to listen to participants' narratives voices as they shared their experiences of teaching learners with visual disability. These challenges were felt on an emotional level, and they could only be accessed through qualitative narrative inquiry.

Qualitative research also emphasizes the intimate relationship between the researcher and participants. This was enabled through the relationship of trust that was established and by the methodological choices I made with regards to how data was produced. In this instance, the voices of participants were centralised and the manner in which they experienced their situational barriers was respected and valued (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) The researcher and the participants in this study acknowledged that the context has had an impact on them. Giving them back their interviews ensured that their voices and stories heard were authentic (Conle, 2000).

Narrative inquiry is a holistic, naturalistic approach that uses storytelling to help participants make sense of their experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). The methodology used in this study was narrative inquiry, which was used to collect participants' experiences of teaching learners with visual disabilities. This methodological approach emphasises the importance of capturing and reporting the voices of participants. These are stories of their personal experiences of teaching learners with visual disability and the various ways in which they attempted to improve their approach to teaching and learning. Webster and Mertova (2007) assert that narrative inquiry aims at capturing the whole story, unlike other methods that communicate understandings of studied subjects at certain points. Narrative inquiry used to elicit experiences and encounters from participants' teaching experiences of teaching learners with visual disability.

Purposive sampling was used where deliberate choices were made about the suitability of participants for the study, in order for appropriate data to be generated (Maree, 2007). Sampling decisions were, therefore, made only for the purpose of gathering data that was required for this study, who were teachers teaching learners with visual disability. Two data collection methods were used for this study, namely, semi-structured interviews and observations. These two methods of data collection served to validate what participants provided in their interviews with what I observed. Going back to re-interviewing them and filling in gaps enabled me to get to the teachers' experiences when interacting with learners (Sarason & Holzman, 1999).

#### **5.4 Summary of the findings of the study**

The key findings of the study are summarised in this section. The study comprised three main themes.

Findings in the first theme revealed that teachers were influenced by normative discourses that underpin inclusive education. These discourses or *sayings* evident in policy as well as which shaped who the teachers were, which in turn shaped their practices. Participants responded in two ways. Some participants used the inclusive education policy as a means to accommodate learners' needs. Other participants had perfunctory understandings of inclusive education and when they could not understand how to manage their teaching lives, they lost focus, leaving them to question their abilities to teach learners with visual disability. This could largely be attributed to the vagueness of the policy. This uncertainty caused teachers to develop certain attitudes. Teachers' attitudes were shaped by the institutional mechanisms and the working conditions that they encountered. Institutional challenges evident in a lack of consultation or issues surrounding subject allocated induced negative attitudes in the participants. However, participants also understood that positivity generated and enabled better learning opportunities for their learners.

The second broad theme captured the experiences of teachers and responds to the first and second objectives of the study. Findings revealed that participants' experiences were mostly negative. Some of the key challenges that they experienced was a lack of professional knowledge. This was largely because participants did not have the required skills because they were not trained to teach learners with visual disability. These are systemic impediments. However, these have severe consequences for learners. Not knowing how to teach learners effectively, meant that participants could not structure their pedagogy so learners could access quality education. There were also measures within the schools that prevented teachers from developing themselves, which included a lack of induction processes and being forced to teach subjects they had no expertise in, which disempowered them in significant ways.

Schools are power laden spaces, where practices reflect dominant values, norms and beliefs about disability. For this study, this was evident in the inability by the Department of

Education, curriculum planners and policy makers to fully understand the needs of learners with visual disability. Participants pointed to the consistent lack of learning resources to assist learners access education. Inability to provide adequate and proper resources meant that learners and teachers were set up for failure.

However, some teachers challenged these forms of exclusion finding ways to develop material that would allow learners to access the curriculum. Although this was often difficult teachers found ways to ensure this developing tactile maps for example in geography that teachers complained was especially difficult as it required more visual aids. The curriculum itself was also another barrier about which teachers argued was not designed with learners with visual disability in mind. Classroom management was also problematic, especially when faced with large numbers and where individualised planning and learning had to occur. Participants experienced uncertainty and self-doubt about their abilities and capabilities. Knowing that they were essential to learners learning, being unsuccessful because of factors outside of their control was difficult for the participants to handle. Participants understood that the people most affected by these barriers their learners.

The final theme responded to the final objective of the study and provided details of the various ways in which teachers attempted to negotiate the exclusionary factors they encountered. Teachers developed a multitude of teaching strategies to ensure that their learners were provided with quality education. Teachers used their understandings of what an inclusive and supportive classroom should look like, to meet their learners' educational needs. This involved knowing who their learners were and what their specific needs were and how these had to be accommodated. Participants, for example, recognised the fact that their learners required alternative methods of teaching for them to learn. For this, participants deployed accommodative pedagogical means as well as curriculum adaptation and differentiation.

Participants used concrete materials (models and tactile media) in a way of accommodating learners. These proved to be key elements when making pedagogical decisions about how to ensure their learners were included. Accommodative pedagogical practices served to ensure that the curriculum catered for their learners and the accommodative practices challenged the deficit understandings of learners. Participants' knowledge of their learners,

as well as their unconscious socialisation of social rights discourses, ensured the learners abilities were taken in account in these various ways. Participants positioned themselves agents of change in their efforts to ensure that their learners were learning.

Participants reported that their colleagues were often their sources of support, as they could work collaboratively with them. They could, for example, together devise strategies to accommodate learners' diverse needs. This had an additional benefit in that it helped teachers release stress by sharing feelings and workloads. Participants' practice, such as peer learning, increased class participation and helped to reduce their workload. Parental involvement was a sore point for teachers. Instead of developing positive teacher-parent relationships, participants could not develop relationships with parents, due to their institutional practice of only allowing members of their school management to communicate with parents. This was a source of discontent for the participants. However, despite this, their school management preferred a distant form of relationship with the parents.

### **5.5 Implications of the study**

This study has implications for education in general, professional development for teachers and the provision of critical resources needed for learners with visual disability. This study aimed at providing insights into understanding of teachers' experiences with the hope that knowledge gained would provide ways in which learners with visual disability can be successfully included. Findings of this study have implications for curriculum developers as well as the Department of Education as to how to implement effective interventions, aids and programmes, from which teachers can benefit. The findings of the study revealed certain practices and challenges in the application of teaching methods and strategies, namely, a lack of resources and inadequate support.

Findings of the study revealed and confirmed that the inequalities that are experienced by schools still prevents teachers and learners from teaching and learning effectively. The findings highlight the need for effective professional development programmes for teachers and more importantly on how to ensure that learners with visual disabilities have access to learning opportunities. Practical adaptive methods can be used as shown in this study, such as differentiating the curriculum. The study also highlighted the need for

professional development for subject advisors. If they are capacitated with the required knowledge this will ultimately enable them to challenge the invisibility that surrounds disabilities and marginalises learners with disabilities.

This study revealed that resources are essential in the learning of learners with visual disability. When there is a failure to provide appropriate resources for learners, such as braille and textbooks, it reproduces the inequality that learners face. It is thus imperative that the Department of Education provide essential resources without which the goals of inclusive education and the rights of learners will not be met. The findings of the study also revealed the need for teacher emotional support. Teachers in this study felt demoralised, demotivated and had developed negative attitude towards their work, which could lead to increased stress and burnout. Schools, including school management, must implement supportive ways of assisting teachers to cope with various challenges relating to the teaching of learners with disability. This suggests that there may be a need for counselling services for teachers. The Department of Education should conduct a review of its school support systems, as well as the professional development and teacher training on inclusive education.

Special schools as resource centres must be equipped with skilled, competent teachers who can render support and serve as resource teachers to teachers in other schools. Resource school can only be effectively functional if resources for this purpose are made available and teachers are equipped to perform these functions.

### **5.6 Limitations of the study**

This study involved teachers in one school and in one circuit. Only seven (7) teachers participated in this study, which were from Grades R, 6 and 7 agreed, and they also met the criteria of having taught or of teaching a class with learners with visual disability. The limitation, here, however, was that the study's findings cannot be generalized beyond the school, as this was a small sample. This study still yielded expected results because teachers could share their past experience of the grades that did not participate in the study. Findings are however relevant to this one school.

Data collection could not take place in the time that I had planned, as there was early school closure and delayed school opening due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Furthermore, the remaining observations could only be conducted when permission from the University was obtained. However, lessons that were observed in September 2020 as compared to the lessons observed pre-COVID period, might not have been a true reflection of a normal school day as many learners were absent. This might have had an effect on the findings of this study. Transcriptions of data were returned to the participants to for verification of the accuracy of their responses. This was done several times, as there were gaps that constantly needed to be filled. It is possible that I could have collected far richer, more in-depth data, if data was collected through my initial data collection methods of focus groups and without the interference of COVID-19.

Interviewing participants was at times problematic. This was mainly experienced when conducting follow-up interviews. I had initially planned to use the Zoom to discuss what I had observed, as well as the gaps that existed in their initial interview. However, participants could not use Zoom, and this forced me to use telephonic interviews. At the beginning of the research, I was supposed to have conducted focus group interviews. However, COVID-19 prevented this from happening. That was also another reason why a second telephonic interview had to be conducted. Telephonic interviews were costly as I had to buy data for the participants. At times, recording of the interview was inaudible and resulted in another follow-up. This meant that time was lost, and additional costs were incurred.

A further limitation of this study involved me as the researcher who worked at the same school in my capacity as Head of Department. Although I made attempts to be unbiased and ethically responsible, not trying to influence the outcomes, participants may not have responded freely and openly to the questions. I also had to constantly reflect on the research process and compile a research journal. My supervisor and masters' cohort were critical friends and attempted to ensure that bias did not creep in.

## **5.7 Recommendations for future research**

The findings of the research gathered data throughout the study, revealed that there are a number of areas around this topic that might have to be researched further. The following are recommendations for further research:

- A lot was said in relation to the minimal support the DBST given to the school. A research on the principals' perceptions of the role of DBST in supporting inclusive education, development and strengthening of efficiency and competency in teachers teaching learners with visual disability, can be considered.
- Further, parents are more invested in seeing their children succeed and thriving in life and this puts the parent in a critical position. Participants revealed that minimal parental involvement happened in their school. A research on parental involvement in the learning journey of a learner with visual disability who are from disadvantaged backgrounds are crucial. Researching parents will give an insight of their expectations, emotions, struggles, social aspects and their coping mechanisms in parenting a child with a disability and why it seemed that they did not care about their children's education.
- Lastly a research that will review the impact of inclusive education in the underprivileged schools for learners with visual disability. This research will enable the voices of the under-privileged to be heard.

## **5.8 Concluding thoughts**

This study has focused on teachers' experiences of teaching learners with visual disability. As a teacher myself with lived experiences, I feel policies should be reviewed so as to improve education for learners with visual disability. The study revealed that officials in the sector are not yet ready to implement, support and monitor inclusive education; they still lack holistic understanding of inclusive education. For inclusive education to work effectively, it requires advocacy, communication, training and support. I feel that teachers as change agents, there is a need to put their voices out there to advocate for change. In this study, it is disheartening, disempowering and professionally marginalising to see the demands put on teachers' shoulders without any support, monitoring and recognition. The

pinch has been felt in schools as work intensified, paperwork and demands on teachers have increased, without empathetic concerns of social justice.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Permission to conduct research



education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1909

Mrs BBN Dladla  
PO Box 546  
Cato Ridge  
3680

Dear Mrs Dladla

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“EXPLORING TEACHERS EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING LEARNERS WITH VISUAL DISABILITY: NARRATIVES OF 7 TEACHERS”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 26 August 2019 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Pinetown District



Dr. EV Nzama  
Head of Department: Education  
Date: 29 August 2019

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DBE\_KZN... Instagram: kzn\_education... Youtube: kzndoe

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

**Appendix B: Informed consent letter to gatekeepers**

PO Box 546  
CATO RIDGE  
3680  
Date .....

Dear Sir/ Madam

**Re: Request for permission to do a research at ...**

I am Beryl Busisiwe Ntombenhle Dladla who is currently a learner at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg doing a research for The Master’s Degree in Education for Social Justice in 2019.

I hereby wish to apply for a permission to conduct a research at ..... School in Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. Participants on this research study will be seven teachers, teaching the Blind and Partially sighted learners from Grade 1 to Grade 7. My research topic is, “Exploring the experiences of teaching learners with visual disability: Narratives of 7 teachers”. The aim of this research study is to find teachers’ experiences of working with learners with visual disability. Secondly, to uncover inclusionary and exclusionary factors/ things that influence or impact on teaching and learning and lastly to find out how they navigate these factors.

This research study will involve semi-structured interviews and focus group with all seven participants.

The information obtained will be treated with strictest confidentiality and will be used for this research purposes only. Participation is voluntary, participants can withdraw from the study at any time if they wish to and the names of participants will not be disclosed.

This research study is aimed at contributing to the body of knowledge by sharing teachers’ experiences of teaching learners with visual disability and to provide other researchers with information in this area. It is hoped that this research reveals current pedagogical practices for review to benefit teachers and learners. To provide information that might help curriculum designers.

I \_\_\_\_\_, the Principal have read and understood the contents of this document. I hereby grant \_\_\_\_\_ permission to conduct research in the school.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My contact details are : **BBN Dladla**  
Cell number : **0832327010**  
Home Number : **031 7822815**

Email Address : [berylbusi@gmail.com](mailto:berylbusi@gmail.com)

My Supervisor's contact details : **Dr Melanie Martin**

Cell Number : **083 651 4564**

Office Number : **033 260 6189**

Email : [martinm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:martinm@ukzn.ac.za)

## Appendix C: Informed consent letter to participants

PO Box 546  
CATO RIDGE 3680  
Date.....

Dear Colleagues

I am Beryl Busisiwe Ntombenhle Dladla who is currently a learner at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg doing a research for The Master's Degree in Education for Social Justice in 2019.

I would like to thank you for volunteering in this research / your kind assistance with this research being undertaken in your school which will involve Grade 1-7 teachers.

My research topic is "Exploring the experiences of teaching learners with visual disability: Narratives of 7 teachers".

The research project will involve semi-structured interviews and focus group.

Before commencing with any data collection exercise, I will first explain how I intend to go about with the research.

I would like to thank you for your participation in this research.

I hope that the information obtained from this research will be of benefit to teachers working with learners with visual disability and other stakeholders.

Maintenance of confidentiality will be highly respected regarding participants who would have contributed to this research.

Should you be willing to participate in this research kindly indicate with a tick on the relevant box and then sign this letter as a declaration of your consent.

My contact details are:

BBN Dladla  
Cell number : 0832327010  
Home Number : 031 7822815  
Email Address : [berylbusi@gmail.com](mailto:berylbusi@gmail.com)

My Supervisor's contact details:

Dr Melanie Martin  
Cell Number : 083 651 4564  
Office Number : **033 260 6189**  
Email : [martinm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:martinm@ukzn.ac.za)

Yours faithfully

Mrs. BBN Dladla

**DECLARATION**

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 study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time, should I so desire. I hereby provide consent to audio-record my interview and focus group discussion

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording of interviews		

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

## **Appendix D: In-depth Interview questions**

**The interview guide will be based on these research questions that will guide the study.**

1. What are the teacher's experiences of teaching learners with visual disability in an inclusive school?
2. What are the inclusionary and exclusionary factors that influence teaching and learning?
3. How do teachers negotiate these factors?

### **General questions**

1. What is your name?
2. What is your home language?
3. What are your academic qualifications?

### **Teaching experience**

1. Briefly tell me about your school.
2. What is your role in the school?
3. In which grade, phase and subjects are you teaching?
4. How many learners are in your classroom? What disabilities are they?
5. For how long have you worked in the school and how do you feel about working here?
6. Did you receive any formal education in teaching learners who are visually disabled? (tertiary level or workshops) - probe
7. Please tell about your normal day with your learners with visual disability in an inclusive class.
8. How do you practise inclusivity in your classroom?
9. Are you familiar with education policies that inform inclusion? Please elaborate.
10. How do you make sure that all learners needs are met?
11. In your opinion, do you think including learners with visual disability in the same classroom with other learners with vision relatively have an effect on their education?

### **Inclusionary and exclusionary factors**

1. What curriculum do you follow when teaching a class with learners with visual

disability?

2. Is the curriculum clear on what you are expected to teach (clarity of purpose)?
3. How do you adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of learners with visual disability in inclusive classroom?
4. Are there any guidelines on how you should adapt, modify and differentiate? – probe
5. Tell me more about the Learning and teaching material (LTSM) you are using in your classroom? Are they accessible to all learners? if “not” how do you make sure that your objectives are achieved?
6. Elaborate on any other resources/ Aides in the school that help you to enhance your teaching? How do they help you and your learners?
7. What resources/ Aides are needed in the and in your opinion who do you think should provide them?
8. Do you experience any specific challenge in your teaching?
9. Do you experience any challenges associated with assessment of special educational needs of learners with visual disability in an inclusive classroom? – probe
10. What are positive effects of teaching learners with visual disability in an inclusive classroom?

### **How teachers negotiate inclusionary and exclusionary factors**

1. How do you make sure that all learners are included?
2. Do you Individualize your Education Plan (IEP)? If “Yes” How is it important?
3. Do you co-teach in your school? If “Yes” How does it help you as a teacher?
4. What other information would you like to add concerning inclusive education and visual disability?
5. Where do you seek support?

Thank you for your participation.

### Appendix E: Observation Schedule

<b>School:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Class:</b>	<b>Time:</b>
<b>Teacher Name:</b>	<b>Grade:</b>
<b>Observer:</b>	

Teacher's Experiences of Teaching Learners with visual disability.			
ITEMS		COMMENTS	
<b>1. Classroom setting.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What adjustment has been done in class setting to accommodate visually disabled learners?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does sitting arrangement has any impact on learning?</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Class aide/ Teacher aide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is her role in class and during the lesson?</li> </ul>		
			Y
			N
<b>3. Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there tactile learning material? (Braille books, Raised Diagrams, models).</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What has been provided for learners with low vision? (Enlarged notes/ books)</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there assistive devices, and are they?</li> </ul>		
<b>4. Learner-teacher interaction and learner participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are all learners given a chance to participate in the activity?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the teacher using verbal description of visual aids?</li> </ul>		
<b>5. Adaptation of learner material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is learner's material adapted?</li> </ul>		
<b>6. Evidence of IEP (Individualized Education Plan)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is learning individualized?</li> </ul>		
<b>7. Teacher attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is teacher attitude towards learners and does it have an impact on learning?</li> </ul>		
<b>8. Learning environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the learning environment appropriate to learning?</li> </ul>		

<b>9. Inclusivity</b>	•	Are learners with visual disability included? / equally participated in class	
<b>10. Teaching strategies</b>	•	Explaining of visuals	
	•	Clear oral instruction	
	•	Tactile learning experience	
	•	Learners addressed by their names	
	•	Additional time to complete work	
	•	Buddied learners	
<b>11. Discipline</b>	•	How is learner's behaviour?	
<b>12. Outcomes achieved</b>	•	Teacher's reflection	
<b>13. Other issues within the classroom</b>			

**Summary:**

**Thank you Signature of the observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Certificate from Language Editor

# Ntwintwi

Proofreading and Editing Solutions

Date: 17 July 2021

### CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis bearing the provisional title ***Exploring teachers experiences of teaching learners with visual disability: Narratives of seven teachers***, to be submitted by **Beryl Busisiwe Ntombenhle Dladla** has been edited for language correctness and spelling, consistency style, formatting, accuracy, logical flow, coherence, transitioning, readability and completeness of the list of references and cited authors, by Ntwintwi Proofreading and Editing Solutions. Neither the research content and substance nor the author's intentions were altered in any way during the editing process.

Ntwintwi guarantees the quality of English language in this dissertation, provided our editor's changes are accepted and further changes made to the thesis are checked by our editor.

Yours sincerely,



**JABULANI NGCOBO**

**NTWINTWI PROOFREADING AND EDITING SOLUTIONS**

**DATE:** 04 June 2021

## Appendix G: Originality Report

### Final turnitin submission

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>10</b> %	<b>6</b> %	<b>2</b> %	<b>6</b> %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

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<b>6</b>	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<b>&lt;1</b> %
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