Establishing inclusive schools: Teachers' perceptions of Inclusive Education Teams

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Abstract

The international debate on colonialization is gaining momentum, primarily in the Americas, Africa and Australasia. Recent incidents in South Africa, such as the #Rhodesmustfall movement and the protest over rules on black girls' hair at certain schools, have sparked renewed debates on (de-)colonisation in the education system. It has become critical that those concerned with educational transformation in a post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa consider socio-political and historic contextual factors. This is especially so in their endeavours to implement inclusive education, with its imperative to provide equal and quality education and support for all. Educational transformation in South Africa is based on systemically positioned support structures. However, these structures have their roots in countries which do not have the same socio-political history and current contextual constraints as developing countries. The focus of this research was to understand teachers' perceptions of the role Inclusive Education Teams (IETs) play in establishing an inclusive school in the Western Cape Province. For this case study, teachers were purposefully selected from an inclusive school. Data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group discussion. The findings show that, despite the in-service training provided by the IET, teachers still need continuous, contextually responsive support.

Keywords: collaboration, colonialism, contextually responsive support, District Based Support Teams (DBSTs), educational transformation, Inclusive Education Teams (IETs), inclusive schools.

Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) debates in South Africa have become entrenched in the larger debates on democratisation. The South African constitution marked a break with the post-colonial, post-apartheid socio-political dispensation which had divided people primatily on the basis of race to the advantage of the settler colonialists. The term "decolonisation" has been domesticated both internationally (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and in the current South African socio-political climate with the pursuit of social justice on all fronts. Tuck and Yang (2010) caution activists and theorists not to use the term "decolonisation" as a metaphor for social justice. However, it is important to be cognisant of the current contextual realities in South Africa. As with other countries that were colonised, South Africa still struggles to salvage the remnants of the indigenous peoples' knowledge (among other elements) in order to build and restore the country and its peoples.

IE in South Africa is inextricably entwined with building a new democracy based on social justice, specifically by eradicating exclusionism in education. It is acknowledged that IE has its roots in the discourse on disability and the justification for including those with disabilities in mainstream education (Dreyer, 2017). The understanding of IE in South Africa, however, led to a broader definition, one which includes not only those with disabilities but also those excluded on the basis of race, language, or culture (DoE, 2001). This broad understanding of IE recognises that both extrinsic (systemic) and intrinsic (disabilities) barriers can lead to exclusion. Nonetheless, the debate on IE has matured from the stage of justification to that of implementation (Dyson, 1999). Internationally, several publications discuss collaboration as part of the implementation of inclusion, such as those of Moran and Abbot (2002) and Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel and Tlale (2013). The Education Department in South Africa has opted for a systemic approach, one which would foster collaborative efforts to implement IE. Given that implementation ultimately takes place in the classroom, it is evident that teachers need to be supported. One of the functions of District-based support teams (DBSTs) and Institution-level support teams (ILSTs) (also known as School-Based Support Teams) is to train and support teachers in implementing IE within the new democratic dispensation (DoE, 2001).

In the international arena, the Incheon Declaration envisioned the implementation of IE within the Education 2030 Framework for Action. The aim was to ensure quality, equitable and effective learning outcomes for all as an integral part of the right to

education (UNESCO, 2015). A recent progress report on the sustainable development goal 4, however, found that "The lack of trained teachers and the poor condition of schools in many parts of the world are jeopardizing prospects for quality education for all. Sub-Saharan Africa has a relatively low percentage of trained teachers in pre-primary, primary and secondary education (44 per cent, 74 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively)" (United Nations, 2017).

Both internationally and locally significant developments in the education of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties need to include a commitment by teachers to create mainstream schools which are capable of educating all learners (Dyson & Forlin, 1999). At the same time, it is important that teachers are supported in the face of the myriad systemic and contextual challenges. This speaks directly to the 'the pragmatics discourse within the inclusive education movement', and thus also to implementation in the classroom (Dyson & Forlin, 1999:42; Dyson, 1999). Mitchell (2005) alludes to the fact that countries have different interpretations, philosophies and practices of IE which are embedded in a range of contexts and social-historical perspectives. It is therefore imperative that educational systems are contextually responsive to the local needs. By exploiting the favourable conditions for international knowledge exchange (through the internet, international conferences and research collaborations, scholar exchange programmes), developing countries such as South Africa too often take on structures from the wealthier countries that once colonialized them. In this globalised world it is not uncommon for a country to take on models from other countries. What is of concern is that these models or structures, if not adapted to suit the needs of the people they are intended to serve, will not be contextually relevant (Dreyer, Engelbrecht & Swart, 2012).

The implementation of IE poses major challenges to educational systems around the world, in both developing and developed countries. UNESCO (2017) urges countries to ensure that "inclusion and equity are [the] overarching principles that […] guide all [their] educational policies, plans and practices". IE forms an integral part of the democratisation and transformation of the education system in South Africa. In the 25th year since the first democratic elections it has become critical that this transformation of the education system should reflect a decolonising character. Adopting a systemic approach to implementing IE within a framework of social justice would support this.

In establishing inclusive schools and converting special schools into resource centres, DBSTs were appointed in all education districts. The primary aim of these teams is to provide systemic support for all teachers, helping to strengthen the skills needed to cope with diversity in their classes (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). They help the teachers with the development of inclusive learning programmes, curriculum differentiation, alternative assessment strategies, the use of assistive devices, etc. (DoE, 2001). The support is thus focused on dealing with the challenges related to multi-level classrooms, ensuring effective teaching and learning within an inclusive education system (Wilderman & Nomdo, 2007).

The initial short-term steps in the plan to implement IE involved the conversion nationally of 30 primary schools to inclusive schools (DoE, 2001). In 2014 there were 147 full-service/inclusive schools in the Western Cape Province, with 1420 learners with disabilities enrolled (DoBE, 2015). The Department of Education (DoE) (2009) uses the terms 'Inclusive School' and 'Full Service School' interchangeably. In this article, however, the term 'Inclusive School' is used. The DoE (2009:7) presents a five-pronged definition of an inclusive school, summarised as a mainstream school that will "provide quality education to all". Eventually the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (2016) envisions that "all ordinary public schools receive training and incrementally be developed into full-service/inclusive schools that will be able to support learners with mild to moderate special educational needs".

Research has found that few schools in South Africa have adequate access to support services from the DBST (Nel,et.al, 2013). However, the WCED expanded support for schools through Inclusive Education outreach teams (IETs) based at Special School Resource Centres, supporting both inclusive schools and ordinary mainstream schools (Education Update, 2017; WCED, 2016). These IETs were formed in response to the contextual needs in the inclusive schools. Each IET is comprised of a school counsellor, a learning support teacher and a therapist (occupational or speech therapist).

The WCED guidelines for the operation of IETs coincide with those of the DBSTs. Compared to the DBSTs, however, they have fewer schools, which they support on a weekly basis (Mfuthwana, 2016). In the Metropole East Education District, where this study was conducted, the job description of these teams was as follows:

- IET assists the ILST with the development of Individual Support Plans (ISP) for resource class learners at the Inclusive school.
- Assists with the development of a Care Plan and Exit Plan for resource class learners.
- Assists in early identification of learners who experience barriers to learning, as well as providing support.
- Contributes to the development of preventative, curative and developmental support programmes to learners to reduce barriers.
- Assists resource class learners with career orientation and vocational guidance.
- Assists with the development of networks within the community for possible work-related placements (WCED, 2010).

Despite numerous initiatives offering formal systemic support aimed at promoting the policies on IE, research in South Africa has found that teachers still experience the implementation of inclusive practices in their classrooms as stressful (Dreyer, 2014; Nel et al., 2013). 65% of mainstream primary school teachers have no formal qualification that would enable them to address learning barriers, and their perceived levels of competence to provide high-level support to learners in their classes are quite low at 38% (Dreyer, 2017). It is imperative that teachers are skilled and receive sustained, contextually responsive support, as they play an essential role in the successful implementation of IE (Engelbrecht, 2006; Pearce, Gray & Evans, 2009). The role played by systemic support structures, such as the DBST and the IET, should be to significantly develop mainstream primary schools as inclusive schools.

Systemic implementation of Inclusive Education

Internationally there is a strong move to address the challenges of implementing inclusive education and systemically providing support. This approach challenges those inflexible educational organizational systems which fail to respond with significant insight to all learners' needs (Dreyer, 2008). Decades after the declarations and conventions accepted by many countries, they still struggle to implement policies on IE effectively and systematically within the system.

Nonetheless, the South African response to educational restructuring embraces this systemic approach. Structures have been established at national, provincial, district and school levels. Various conceptual and operational guidelines have been published to support the systemic introduction of IE. One of these is the guidelines for the establishment of full service/inclusive schools (DoE, 2005). Systemic support is also provided at the different levels needed, i.e. 1. Low-intensive support in ordinary mainstream schools; 2. Moderate support in full-service/inclusive schools; and 3. High-intensive educational support that will continue to be provided in special schools/resource centres.

Despite all these efforts, the DoBE (2015:6&7) has identified a number of challenges which have delayed the development of an inclusive education system in South Africa. Among these is the need for "effective and ongoing support to be given to schools on how to address barriers to learning through measures of early intervention including remediation".

Positioning teachers in inclusive schools

It is internationally acknowledged that teachers play a significant role in establishing welcoming, inclusive learning environments. It is further accepted that their understanding of inclusive education, their attitudes towards it, as well as their pedagogical knowledge and skills impact largely on their practices (Dreyer, 2017; Shevlin, Winter & Flynn, 2013). Traditionally, mainstream teachers were not trained to address barriers to learning, but the transition towards IE has obliged them to accept the full spectrum of learners in their mainstream classes. Not surprisingly, therefore, research indicates that, due to teachers' lack of the skills needed to practise inclusive pedagogies in their classrooms, policy implementation is not effectively done (Nel et al., 2013).

According to the literature, many teachers do appear to have a sound knowledge of IE (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2010; Pearce et al., 2009; Razali, Toran, Kamaralzaman & Yamin, 2013). The teachers in these studies agreed that integrating learners with special needs in the mainstream classroom was only the first step towards inclusion (Anati, 2012). They highlighted the need for a team of specialised professionals to deal with issues of IE. This might suggest that they still tended to rely strongly on experts and to hold onto exclusionary practices. In light of this, Nel et al. (2013) raised the question of whether teachers really do understand

their role in an IE system when faced with learners who encounter barriers to learning and need support. On the flipside, it could also be claimed that teachers realise that they cannot do this alone, which further adds to their frustrations. It stands to reason that in order to implement IE successfully, teachers must be adequately trained and receive ongoing support. Razali et al. (2013) concur that in establishing inclusive schools, class teachers need to be empowered with knowledge, skills and support, allowing them to identify the needs of students and apply the methodologies and strategies to respond to these needs.

Peters (2004) states that improving the skills teachers need to implement IE is a developmental process. It requires much more than one-off workshops and other in-service training activities. In order to ensure sustainability it is imperative that teachers receive continuous support, giving them the confidence to address the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning. Research indicates that the current poor implementation of IE in South Africa is closely related to a general lack of support and resources, inadequately trained teachers, and large numbers of learners in classrooms, as well as limited support services (Donohue & Bornman 2014; Makhalamele & Nel 2015). These findings are not unique to South Africa, but echo the World Bank Report (Peters, 2004) on the state of inclusion in the countries in the global South.

Inclusive school

UNESCO (2005) defines an inclusive school as one which can accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. A mainstream school which adopts the values of inclusive education accepts the principle that a learner is no longer required to 'fit in' to the school setting. Instead, the school is required to make changes in order to 'fit' the learner, address the barriers to learning and participation, and recognise the strengths of each child (DoE, 2005).

In line with the UNESCO imperative, the DoE (2009) defines an inclusive school as one which has the capacity to respond to diversity by providing education appropriate to the individual needs of learners, irrespective of disability, differences in learning style, or of social difficulties. Each teacher should have a repertoire of methods to support both curriculum and institutional transformation. Additional support should also be available to both learners and teachers. The DoE (2001)

acknowledges the importance of improving the skills and knowledge of teachers and developing new ones in order to achieve the goal of an inclusive education and training system. The DoE (2001:19) therefore prioritises the "orientation to and training in new roles focusing on multi-level classroom instruction, co-operative learning, problem solving and the development of learners' strengths and competencies rather than focusing on their shortcomings".

In line with the systemic approach to implementing IE, the newly established IETs in the WCED are designed to offer systemic support through teacher development, instead of through learner-level interventions. Working systemically requires working together (collaboratively). Collaboration has been recognised as heightening the competency of all teachers and leading to successful inclusion efforts (Nel et al., 2013). Collaboration between the IET and teachers is thus essential for the inclusion of those learners who experience barriers to learning and to participating in mainstream classrooms.

The focus of this paper is thus on examining teachers' perceptions of the role of the IET as a collaborative partner in implementing IE.

Research Design and Methodology

A qualitative case study design was used in this study. The methodology was thus embedded in an interpretive paradigm. An interpretive approach aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings which lie behind social actions (Terre Blanche, 2006). The rationale for this was that the participants would be able to provide rich data on their experiences and their expectations of the role of the IET at their school.

Research population and participants

One school was purposefully selected for this case study. It was one of six (6) mainstream primary schools that are supported by the IETs in the vicinity of the special school resource centre (SSRC). Purposeful convenient sampling was used to identify the participants. This was a convenient sample, since the IETs have established a good working relationship in the school. Eight teachers were chosen using criterion-based selection. The criteria were that they 1) were teachers at the identified inclusive school, 2) were willing to give details about their personal perceptions relating to the establishment of an inclusive school, and 3) were willing to provide details about their qualifications as well as their experiences. It was

believed that they would be able to offer rich perspectives, based on their experiences as teachers at this particular school. However, two (2) of the eight (8) teachers did not return the letter of consent. Thus, six (6) teachers participated in this case study.

All the participants reported that they had received no formal training in inclusive education. Of the six teachers, one was male, teaching in the senior phase, and was a Head of Department. The other five were females teaching from grade R up to grade 6. Their experiences ranged from 10 years to 22 years. Table 1 below presents a short summary of the participants in this study. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identity. They also understood that they could withdraw at any stage.

Table 1 Description of participants

Participants	Age	Years teaching experience	Grades taught	Formal education in IE
Lungiswa*	41	13	R	Workshops
Nosicelo*	51	19	2-7	No training
Vuma*	43	13	4-7	No training
Wendy*	52	22	2	No training
Maji*	42	7	4-7	Scanty training
Nuzuko*	45	15	4-7	No training

Data collection

Data were collected through both semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group discussion. These methods are favoured by researchers working in an interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The interviews were conducted at the school in isi-Xhosa, which was the mother tongue of the participants, then translated verbatim.

semi-structured individual interviews

The primary method of data collection for this study was semi-structured individual interviews. An interview guide was developed which helped the researcher to formulate a list of questions to be explored in the course of the interviews (Patton, 2002). The questions focused on eliciting the teachers' perceptions of IE, how they

understood both their own role and that of the IET in establishing an inclusive school. A total of six interviews were carried out and recorded with permission from the participants. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one hour.

focus group discussion

Although all eight teachers were invited to join in the focus group discussion, only six participated. The same questions asked at the individual interviews were used to inform and guide the focus group discussion. This allowed for a deeper probing of the issues which emerged from the individual interviews. The participants heard each other's responses and were able to make comments beyond their original responses (Patton, 2002). The focus group discussion was recorded with the permission from the participants and lasted about one hour.

Data analysis

Qualitative content analysis was used to systematically analyse data. The data of the individual interviews as well as the focus group discussion were manually transcribed verbatim. A process of coding and categorisation was then carried out. Coding involves the labelling of data so as to give meaning to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this study this was achieved by finding regularities and patterns within the data and writing codes to represent the topics and patterns covered. These codes were reduced and categorized according to their nature. Themes relating to the research topic emerged from these categories.

Results

Three broad themes were identified as they emerged during the qualitative content analysis. The themes and sub-themes are given in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Themes and sub-themes

	THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1	Establishing inclusive schools	▪ Top-down approach ▪ Training
2	Role of mainstream school teacher in establishing inclusive schools	▪ Support each other ▪ Need to differentiate curriculum

			Individual support
3	Role of IETs in establishing inclusive schools	▪	Follow-up and classroom support
		▪	IET based at school
		▪	Strengthen ILST

Establishment of an inclusive school

Generally the participants in this study perceived the school as being unsuitable for development into an inclusive school. Their rationale focused on insufficient material and human resources as major challenges. A further factor they noted was that "*the department looks at the pass rate; it [the school] is compared to other schools that are not inclusive. It was not supposed to be like [that] because we have learners with challenges, you see?*" This correlation of teacher effectiveness with learner academic outcome is seemingly in conflict with policy on IE. The participants' apprehension about being identified as an inclusive school stemmed also from their concern about the low pass rate at the school and the teacher-learner ratio. Class sizes varied between 45 and 50 learners. This situation was exacerbated by curriculum advisers who reportedly "*do not understand the concept of inclusivity. It is clear from their expectations that curriculum advisors are still operating according to the medical model and exclusionary practices.*"

top-down approach

The responses revealed that the teachers had not been consulted when their school was chosen to be developed as an inclusive school. According to them, they were simply told that the school was now an inclusive school. The following are some of their verbatim responses, transcribed from the focus group discussion:

> *This school is said to be an inclusive, the department just said so without coming to us and ask whether we want. Now when we are complaining about these learners, they say we must remember that we are an inclusive school.*
> *The department must consult with us first before the implementation of the policy. It must stop to make decisions for us, because the policies are implemented by us.*

training

In their responses, the participants seemed to have a sound knowledge of IE. However, some expressed uncertainty about their reported lack of skills in working with learners who experienced barriers to learning. All the participants agreed that there was a desperate need for training. They had attended a few workshops on IE, but claimed that these were not enough, as seen in the responses below:

> *The bottom line is training that is needed. The department have not actually given us guidance in what they want to be implemented. This brought a lot of confusion and frustration. For instance, I hear people talking about this school as inclusive. I don't have much knowledge about that. How can I then establish an inclusive school?*

> *Well, the IETs must give us intensive workshops, training teachers on how to handle barriers to learning. Secondly, they must train the teachers on how to do intervention strategies, and lastly they must enrol teachers to do remedial education, perhaps in one of the recognised institutions.*

The participants also linked the issue of training to both the teacher-learner ratio and the need for support, as seen in the following statements:

> *We have different kids with different problems. They need more attention from you and sometimes you don't reach to all of them because the class is full.*

> *I think the learners with barriers to learning need an intensive intervention program. If they can organise an assistant teacher for each class, I am sure we can get a chance to see to these learners. At the moment with our big numbers in class, I don't see this school as suitable to be an inclusive school. While you are busy with your lowest group, they are chasing each other and making noise.*

Role of mainstream school teacher in establishing inclusive schools
support each other

According to the participants, collaboration is the first step towards accommodating learners who experience barriers to learning in an inclusive school. However, they focused mainly on challenging behaviour, as seen in their responses below:

> *Sometimes I go to the teacher whom I think is experienced and ask for assistance. Perhaps I can also learn something from him or her.*

I think if I was trained in this thing, I would have been working with these kids with confidence. Now I ask my colleagues for help. They sometimes give some advice on how to handle certain cases. For instance, the boys with behaviour problems, there are teachers who know how to handle them. So I go and ask.

It was clear that the participants saw collaboration as one way of reducing the pressure on themselves as teachers, particularly when they were faced with challenging behaviour. They acknowledged that certain teachers in the school had specific skills in dealing with learners.

need to differentiate the curriculum

All the participants felt that curriculum differentiation should be mandatory for an inclusive school. The following verbatim transcripts are representative of the efforts they made in order to help those who struggled:

I am differentiating my work because I know that there are those that are in the middle. Some are very slow. So you try and work on their different levels.

We try to give them work, if we see that they are not coping with the work you gave the whole class, you try to give work from the previous grade.

In general they believed that they were working according to what the department expected them to do, even though they did not always find the process easy.

individual support

In the individual interviews, all the participants agreed that learners with barriers to learning, when given individual attention, would benefit from the lesson. However, there seemed to some challenges with supporting these learners individually. This is shown by the following response:

When you identified this learner, I take her intervention book and let her work from my table. I give the rest of the class work to do, and I work with that learner according to her pace. I find this difficult because we have big numbers in our classes.

I work in the Intermediate Phase. We are told to have an intervention book. I take those learners that are struggling and try to work with them individually. I don't do that more often, I must say. You see, I am in the Intermediate Phase

and we change periods. I don't see the time in forty minutes to accommodate these learners.

I group my learners and their work is not going to be the same. Those that are struggling, I give them work that is at their level.

According to the participants, the IET expected them to provide individual support. Similar studies concur that in order for the learners to acquire new skills and knowledge appropriate to their ages and abilities, as required in an inclusive classroom, the curriculum has to be individualised (Pearce et al., 2009). However, this is not a simple task, particularly when contextual constraints, such as large classes and the teachers' limited range of pedagogical strategies, are taken into account.

Furthermore, it seems that teachers in the Intermediate Phase in this study found it difficult to support learners with barriers to learning because of the set timetable, where learners moved from class to class when changing periods.

Role of the Inclusive Education Team in establishing inclusive schools

Follow-up and classroom support

All the participants agreed that the IET should follow up after training and provide hands-on, in-class support, as is clear from the following transcripts of the individual interviews:

What they tell us in these trainings is not practical. When you get to your classroom, you struggle alone. They must come and show us in front of the learners.

The IET must come to my class and sit here. They must observe me half of the period, and next half they can show me how to do it. If they can be hands-on I will be happy.

The critical need for classroom-based support was clearly articulated by the participants in this study. The importance of practical demonstrations after the training is validated by several studies which found classroom support to be crucial in establishing inclusive schools (Dalton, Mckenzie & Kahonde, 2012; Pearce et al., 2009).

Based at an inclusive school

The teachers in this study suggested that support personnel should be based at their school. They did not express much confidence in the ILST at their school. According to them, it was "just a program within the school, with members who were not sure of what to do". They suggested that the IET should be based at the school in order to help them consistently, as seen in the opinion expressed below:

We have an IET that comes to our school once per week. That is not enough. If we talk about the DBST in general, they only come once per term. For example, you have a burning issue that needs a social worker. When you call the district you are told that the social worker is fully booked. Since they say we are an inclusive school, we are supposed to have those people here. The IET must work full-time at our school. At the moment I don't think they are hands-on with us as a school.

strengthen ILST

The participants emphasised that the ILST in this particular school was not functioning well. They felt that the members of the ILST were not skilled enough to fully support them. According to them, the ILST provided a space for teachers to complain about the learners, but did not address the problems. They suggested that it was part of the role of the IET to strengthen the ILST so that it could deal with the challenges adequately, as noted in the response below:

Well, there is an ILST, once they found out that the learner cannot cope, they refer them to the district. Even the ILST is composed of teachers who do not have any specialisation. If the IET can be based at our school, it will be easy to strengthen our ILST.

Discussion

According to Sium, Desai and Ritskes (2012: iii), the "history of colonialization is one of displacement and replacement". The majority of South Africa's indigenous peoples still find themselves in abject poverty, not only dispossessed of land but also marginalised into invisibility in all spheres of mainstream society. As early as 1966, Cabral stated that decolonisation is not just about liberating (decolonising) the mind. It is about the "fight for material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives

go forward, to guarantee the future for their children" (Sium et al., 2012). Equal opportunities for quality education and support are regarded as an important vehicle for achieving this ideal in the context of post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa.

As part of the national initiatives to establish an inclusive education system in South Africa, both DBSTs and ILSTs were instituted to give systemic support to all schools. The mandate of these structures is to systemically and systematically provide training and support to schools. However, research has shown that DBSTs do not succeed in providing the much needed support to schools and teachers, while in many cases the ILST is dysfunctional. The ILST consists of full-time teachers who serve on the team in addition to their already heavy workload, and many of them do not have any training in the provision of support for learning disabilities.

In line with this systemic approach, the WCED has additionally introduced IETs to provide more focused and contextually responsive support to those schools chosen to become inclusive schools. While the DBST only "visit the school once a term", the IET have to visit the school on a weekly basis. It can be inferred from the job description of the IET in this education district that they have the responsibility to train and support mainstream teachers, the resource class teachers and the ILST.

As the school in this case study was to be developed as an inclusive school, the teachers expected that they would be given sufficient support from the IET assigned to them. It was clear from the findings, however, that both the support and the training from the IET were inadequate and that they needed ongoing, hands-on help and follow-up on implementation, in addition to the training sessions. The participants' call for continuous support arose from their fear that they were not adequately trained and skilled to provide "specialised" support to those learners who experienced barriers to learning (Dreyer, 2017; Nel et.al, 2013).

Despite the notion that inclusion has a global agenda, it is accepted that localised, contextual factors brought about by the socio-political history of countries like South Africa favoured the colonialists to the disadvantage of the indigenous peoples. South Africa continues to be characterised by great inequalities, with contexts comparable to those of both developed and developing countries (Dreyer, 2008). The school in this case study represented the latter. With an average age of 46 years, these teachers had received their training in an apartheid era in which people of colour did not need to have a matric (grade 12) qualification in order to be trained as teachers. Given this socio-political and contextual background, the

teachers' self-perceived incompetence (Dreyer, 2017) and insecurities need to be appreciated as authentic.

Nevertheless, the participants agreed in principle with the goal of establishing inclusive schools. They were also aware of the role they would have to play in the process, in differentiating the curriculum, offering individualised support, and collaborating with other teachers. They admitted to a lack of confidence in doing this, basing it on contextual factors such as the large classes, inadequate material and human resources, little or no support from the DBST and ILST, and inadequate training. This data is supported by findings on the lack of support to learners who are eligible for high levels of support (Dreyer, 2017). These contextual factors ultimately seem to culminate in teachers being overwhelmed by this "mammoth" task. It is important that these factors be considered if IETs are to provide contextually responsive and sustained support to schools. While it is acknowledged that teachers are expected to be the first to provide pedagogically sound inclusive classroom practices, the participants in this study reiterated the dire need for support in their quest to successfully establish inclusive practices and pedagogy in the school. Most of the respondents emphasized the need for classroom-based support, such as class assistants. Indeed, several studies have pointed out that classroom support is crucial in establishing inclusive schools (Dalton et al., 2012; Pearce et al., 2009).

It is clear that strengthening the skills of teachers is not in itself enough to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education. Additionally, the participants called for a sustained support structure in the form of an IET based full-time at their school. In many wealthier countries the setting up of inclusive schools is accompanied by a support team at the school to whose services the teachers have regular access. However, this is a "luxury" which a developing country such as South Africa at present cannot afford. Research (Makhalemele & Nel, 2015) has shown that many schools in South Africa have to do their best with the limited human and material resources available. However, this does not diminish the need for contextually responsive support from the IET to teachers, even if they are to serve several schools. Teachers need sustained and context-appropriate support.

Conclusion

From the literature reviewed and the responses of the participants in this case study it is clear that developing countries such as South Africa still struggle to transform their education systems effectively. This is largely due to the fact that structures for implementation of IE, adopted from wealthier developed countries, are perpetuating the colonialization of the education system by taking no account of the local contextual factors brought on in the first place by colonialism and apartheid legislation. The findings from this research come from a single case study, and it is acknowledged that more research needs to be done on a wider scale. However, the conclusion that teachers need to be supported in order to implement inclusive pedagogical principles in class, and to do this need adequate material and human resources, is corroborated by both national and international literature.

While a systemic approach to implementing IE across the country is essential, it must be acknowledged that workshops and in-service training alone are not enough to support teachers. It is similarly imperative that historical, socio-political and current contextual constraints are taken into account in South Africa, a developing country still struggling with an enormous burden of inequality.

Although the IETs provide more focused and contextualised support, there is still a gap between training and implementation. Contextually responsive support is thus required in order to develop sustainable pedagogical practices which can confidently be used by all teachers in their pursuit of inclusive education.

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