TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE ROLE OF DISTRICT-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS AS WELL AS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TEAMS IN ESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

By

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

According to the UNESCO document of 1994, the fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. In the South African context inclusive education was initiated as an integral part of democratisation and transformation of the education system. Within this transformation, certain schools were identified to be established as inclusive schools. These schools should have a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of barriers to learning encountered by every learner. Teachers play one of the most influential roles in the successful establishment of inclusive schools. This study investigates the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of the District Based Support Team (DBST) as well as that of the Inclusive Education Team (IE Team) in establishing inclusive schools. The study's research methodology can be described as a basic qualitative research which is embedded within an interpretive paradigm. Purposive sampling was used to select six teachers as research participants. Two methods of data collection were used, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis was employed to analyse data. The analysis revealed that four interconnected themes emerged concerning the teachers' perspectives regarding the role of the DBST and the IE Team in establishing inclusive schools, namely their self-knowledge regarding the establishment of an inclusive school, perceptions of their role in establishing inclusive schools, the role of the DBST and IE Team as well as the assistance required by the teachers in order to improve their practice. The results suggest that teachers' outlook should be comprehensively re-orientated in relation to policy-informing documents in the South African context, as well as the policy documents that guide the establishment of inclusive schools. The DBST and the IE Team should engage in structured on-going follow-up support, which should be gradually withdrawn to enable staff to take full responsibility.

Opsomming

Volgens die UNESCO-dokument van 1994 is die fundamentele beginsel van die inklusiewe skool dat alle kinders saam moet leer, waar ook al moontlik, ongeag enige probleme of verskille wat hulle dalk het. In Suid-Afrika is inklusiewe onderwys as 'n onlosmaaklike deel van demokratisering en transformasie van die onderwysstelsel ingevoer. Binne hierdie transformasie is sekere skole aangedui om as inklusiewe skole gevestig te raak. Hierdie skole sou 'n kontinuum van ondersteuning en dienste hê wat sou pas by die kontinuum van struikelblokke tot leer wat deur elke leerder teëgekom word. Onderwysers speel een van die mees invloedryke rolle in die suksesvolle totstandkoming van inklusiewe skole. Hierdie navorsing het die persepsies van onderwysers rakende die rol van die Distriksgebaseerde Ondersteuningspan (DGOS) asook dié van die Inklusiewe Onderwysspan (IO-span) by die totstandkoming van inklusiewe skole-ondersoek. Die navorsingsmetodologie wat gebruik is, kan beskryf word as 'n basiese kwalitatiewe navorsing wat binne 'n interpretatiewe paradigma ingebed is. Doelgerigte steekproeftrekking is gebruik om ses onderwysers as navorsingsdeelnemerstekies. Twee metodes is gebruik om data in te samel: semigestruktureerde onderhoude en fokusgroeponderhoude. Voorts is kwalitatiewe inhoudsanalise aangewend om data te analiseer. Die analise het aangedui dat vier onderling verbinde temas rakende die onderwysers se perspektiewe ten opsigte van die rol van die DGOS en die IO-span by die totstandkoming van inklusiewe skole na vore gekom het, naamlik hulle selfkennis ten opsigte van die totstandkoming van 'n inklusiewe skool, persepsies van hulle rol by die totstandkoming van inklusiewe skole, die rol van die DGOS en IO-span asook die bystand wat deur die onderwysers benodig word ten einde hulle praktyk te verbeter. Die resultate dui daarop dat onderwysers se siening met betrekking tot beleidsinformerende dokumente in Suid-Afrikaanse verband asook die beleidsdokumente wat die totstandkoming van inklusiewe skole moet lei, omvattend geheroriënteer moet word. Die DGOS en die IO-span moet by gestruktureerde voortgesette opvolgondersteuning betrokke raak, wat dan geleidelik onttrek moet word om dit vir personeel moontlik te maak om volle verantwoordelikheid te aanvaar.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this mini-thesis to my late father Ngxameleni Wilson Mfuthwana and my nephew 'Koko' Mthobeli Hlaleleni. It is never easy to lose people you love, especially you Koko. But, with God, I know that you are safe. I wish you were both alive to witness and celebrate this achievement with me.

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1.1   INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

An inclusive school is a mainstream school that provides quality education for all learners by meeting the full range of learning needs in a reasonable manner (Department of Education, 2005). Inclusion acknowledges that all learners with support can learn and that all learners should have full access to and are enabled to participate using a common curriculum (Department of Education, 2014). The fundamental principle of an inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have (UNESCO, 2005).The UNESCO document known as The Salamanca Statement indicates that inclusive schools should be established, with the intention of responding to the diverse needs of their students. These schools should have a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school. Policies should constantly be revised and education continuously restructured to accommodate learners with special educational needs (Du Plessis, 2013).

According to Dyson and Forlin (1999), the significant developments internationally in the education of learners with disabilities include a commitment to creating regular schools which are capable of educating all learners. In line with this international imperative, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has identified several schools to be developed as inclusive schools. An inclusive school, according to Education White Paper 6, is a mainstream school that provides quality education for all learners by meeting the full range of learning needs in a reasonable manner (Department of Education, 2001).

"In order for inclusion to be effective, it is generally agreed that the school personnel who will be most responsible for its success, that is mainstream teachers should be receptive to the principles and demands of inclusion" (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden 2010, p.192). Teachers are considered by most studies as important in establishing inclusive schools (Razali, 2013; Anati, 2012; Swart & Pettipher, 2011). According to Pearce, Gray and Evans (2009), for teachers to be inclusive, a breadth and depth of pedagogical knowledge which was formally designated as special school education is required. Skills and knowledge required in an inclusive classroom includes the ability to identify barriers to learning, support of learners in the classroom, collaboration with other support providers, determination of the level of support needed by learners and adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners (Department of Education, 2001; Pearce et al., 2009).Teachers seem to be

struggling to meet the need for inclusive schools which requires them to be able to accommodate all learners with their diverse needs, claiming that support is insufficient. According to Avramidis et al., (2010), teachers asked for more support, resources, training and time to implement inclusive education effectively.

White Paper 6 outlined six strategies for establishing inclusive education and training (Department of Education, 2001). One of the strategies included the conversion of some special schools into resource centres and some mainstream schools into inclusive schools. As part of this transformation initiative, the WCED established Inclusive Education Teams (IE Teams) and started to provide support services to special schools that were identified as potential resource centres (Department of Education, 2001). These teams gradually moved from supporting the resource centres to supporting the schools that were identified to be established as inclusive schools. According to Razali (2013), preference in establishing inclusive schools involves the empowerment of class teachers with the knowledge, skills and support to identify the needs of students and to differentiate their instruction to respond to these needs. The role of the IE Team is to provide on-going training and classroom support to educators so that barriers to learning and teaching can be addressed (Department of Education, 2001).

In my experience as part of an IE Team, developing ordinary mainstream schools as inclusive schools is challenging. I work directly with teachers, giving support, among other things, on how to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning and support them. However, in my experience it seems as if teachers are generally reluctant to take ownership of the process of establishing inclusive schools. They have all kind of excuses as to why they are unable to do it. Some mention that including learners with barriers to learning in their classrooms will lower the academic standard of the school. The teachers seem to be overwhelmed with a lot of work, and have negative attitudes towards inclusion. Some claim that their classroom sizes make it almost impossible to be inclusive.

Teachers play one of the most influential roles in the successful implementation of inclusive education, both locally and internationally (Engelbrecht, 2006; Pearce et. al., 2009). The field of inclusive education has been studied extensively and studies show that attitudes of teachers as well as training are the aspects that need to be explored (Anati, 2012; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Avramidis et al. (2010) argued that attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education correlate with the skills that they need in order to implement inclusive education effectively. Teachers who feel competent to teach learners with barriers in their classes appear to have positive attitudes towards inclusion. Therefore, well-planned courses where practitioners have an opportunity to discuss and plan

collaboratively with teachers might change their attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2010). Although teachers in the Department of Education have received training on inclusive education, Anati (2012) contends that they were not provided with proper training on inclusive policies. All they received were unhelpful training sessions.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

I am currently working as a school counsellor in an IE Team within the WCED. The focus of the IE Team is to provide support and therapeutic intervention to the learners when necessary. However, the main purpose of the IE Team is to support teachers in the implementation of the policies on inclusive education, curriculum differentiation and alternative assessment. Teachers state that they do not know how to deal with learners who present with barriers to learning in their classrooms. In addition, the school management points out that transforming their school into an inclusive school will not produce what the Department of Education is expecting from them, which is a high pass rate. Studies conducted by Avradimis et al. (2010) and Engelbrecht (2006) show that proper training of teachers is one of the top priorities in effective implementation of inclusive education. According to Avramidis et al. (2010), teachers view children with emotional and behavioural difficulties as causing significantly greater concern than learners with other difficulties such as learning difficulties. The study conducted by Pearce et al. (2009) points out that inclusion has been reviewed in Australia and it is reported that inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools is considered challenging. Teachers in an inclusive school are expected to have personal knowledge of their learners' barriers to learning and an understanding of the impact of these barriers in all areas of development. This, according to Pearce et al. (2009), needs a vast new set of skills, such as the capacity to individualise teaching, to manage diverse teaching systems and to accommodate challenging student behaviours. However, studies show that teachers lack most of these skills (Du Plessis, 2013; Pearce et al., 2009).

"Teachers draw on each other's expertise and they support one another'' (Department of Education, 2005, p.17). The notion of inclusion requires teachers to plan collaboratively. The aim of the IE Team is to assist teachers with certain skills, such as identifying barriers to learning and addressing those barriers. Du Plessis (2013) suggests that collaborating with other support providers might give the teachers confidence in the accommodation of diversity in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to investigate how teachers think about the roles that the District Based Support Teams (DBST) as well as the Inclusive Education Teams (IE Teams) should play in supporting teachers in establishing inclusive schools.

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1   Research question

What are the teachers' perceptions regarding the role of District Based Support Teams (DBST) as well as IE Teams on the establishment of inclusive schools?

1.3.2   Research sub-questions

How do teachers perceive their own knowledge with regard to the establishment of inclusive schools?

In establishing inclusive schools, how do teachers understand their own role, as well as the roles of the DBST and IE Teams?

What assistance do teachers require from the DBST and IE Teams to help them improve their practices?

The objectives of this study are:
- To gain knowledge on how teachers perceive their own role and those of the DBST and IE Teams in establishing an inclusive school.
- To determine whom they think is responsible for what in the process.
- To help teachers to take ownership of the process.
- This will enable the DBST and IE Teams to adapt their efforts and strategies in establishing inclusive schools.

1.4   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is relevant and important to be aware of the paradigm that informs this research. A paradigm is a framework for identifying, explaining and solving problems (Naicker, 1999). For this study it is important to refer to the paradigm shift from the medical deficit model to the social ecological model as it informs this qualitative interpretive study, exploring the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of DBST and IE Teams in the establishment of inclusive schools.

According to the medical model, learning difficulties are explained solely in terms of the deficits within the child. It is a model of diagnosis and treatment. It focuses on pathology, and it deals with the specific pathology in a centred way. When applying this model to education, children with any type of difference or specific disabilities are singled out and the origin of the difference is looked for within the learner (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Some teachers seem to believe that learners with barriers to learning should be removed from mainstream schools and taken to special schools. However, this model has come under lot of criticism and a

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holistic view of the child is now demanded (Avramidis et al., 2012).According to Du Plessis (2013), a shift from the medical deficit model resulted in a change that granted all learners the fundamental right to basic education which addresses the imbalances of the past.

In the field of inclusive education it is considered important to understand the complexity of the influences, interactions and interrelationships between the individual and multiple systems that are connected to them from an overarching point of view (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Development does not happen in isolationand a school, for instance, is a system with different parts such as the staff, the learners, the curriculum and the administration (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2006). This research will examine the influence of the different parts on the microsystem of the school in establishing an inclusive school. Constant restructuring of the policies informing the establishment of inclusive schools may have an influence on how teachers perceive inclusive education. Bronfenbrenner's model is an example of a multidimensional model of human development and it has great relevance to understanding how different levels of systems in the social context interact in the process of child development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that child development happens within four nested systems. The first is the "microsystem" which constitutes a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations between individuals and the systems in which they actively participate, such as the family, the school or peers (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). A negative example might be that of a school management team that does not always support the Institutional Level Support Team (ILST) in implementing inclusive policies in the school. This is the system that should support the subsystems, and it should serve as a protective factor (Donald et al., 2006).

The second level is what Bronfenbrenner refers to as the "mesosystem". At this level the family, school and peer group interact with one another, causing adaptations in each of the systems. An example would be of the school management taking ownership of the establishment of inclusive schools and interacting with other role players. The understanding gained might help teachers to understand that, as contextual factors might hinder learning, they are considered important to the formation of collaborative relationships. "Implementing inclusion is not possible without paying attention to developing relationships between the different microsystems" (Swart & Pettipher 2011, p.14).

The "exosystem" is seen as the level that includes other systems in which the learning is not directly involved but which may influence the people who have proximal relationships within the microsystem. Examples could include the constant restructuring of education policies and documents on inclusive education, and how teachers perceive inclusive education. The last level is what Bronfenbrenner refers to as the "macrosystem". It involves dominant social

and economic structures, as well as beliefs, values and practices that influence all the other systems. Examples could include democracy, social justice, equality and freedom from discrimination. The principle of inclusion, according to Swart and Pettipher (2011), is derived from this level.

This framework is relevant to the study when the researcher wants to understand the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of District Based Support Teams (DBST), as well as the Inclusive Education Team (IE Team), in establishing inclusive schools. Teachers do not work in isolation, as schools are made up of school management, learners and parents. All these components have to work collaboratively for the successful establishment of inclusive schools. The study conducted by Engelbrecht (2006) indicates that the role of school principals in managing and bringing about change is to create a climate of collegiality and collaboration. She further states that the low morale of teachers in implementing inclusive education seems to be linked to the absence of meaningful leadership. If changes are made at the management level, other related systems that might also experience change. For example, teachers in the classroom might embrace diversity, which might be passed on to the learners. In the playgrounds learners might respect one another regardless of their differences. The curriculum might also be adapted in such a way that it accommodates all learners. The interdependence between the different parts of the school is what unites the system as a whole (Donald et al., 2006).

1.5   RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.5.1   Research paradigm and design

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) refer to paradigms as all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions namely, ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied, and what can be known about it. Epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known. Methodology specifies how the researcher may go about practically studying whatever he or she believes can be known (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

This study was approached qualitatively from within an interpretive paradigm to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the establishment of inclusive schooling. An interpretive approach aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).The researcher who works from this paradigm believes that the reality to be studied consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world (ontology).They suggest that the researcher may adopt an intersubjective epistemological

stance toward reality and use methodologies that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and the subject (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Durrheim (2006) refers to research design as a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the implementation of the research. A research programme can be designed along four dimensions: the purpose of the research, the context in which the research is taking place, the paradigm that informs the research and the techniques used to collect and analyse data.

This research took the form of a case study which involves a detailed description of a setting and its participants, accompanied by an analysis of the data for themes, patterns and issues (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The research focused on the experiences of the participants and the knowledge, will be co-constructed, based on their perspectives. The researcher was the primary means of collecting the data and analysis and an inductive strategy was followed. The aim was to work from the research question towards the new knowledge that was identified from the themes that emerged. The research methods used were selected for their coherence within the research design.

1.5.2   Population sample

Sampling refers to the selection of research participants from a whole population, and involves decisions about which people, settings, events or behaviours to observe (Terre Blanche, 2006).The sampling for this study was purposive. Eight teachers working in the school that was identified to be established as an inclusive school were selected. A criterion-based approach was used to select the participants.

The school identified for this study, was designated by the district office to be established as an inclusive school within the WCED. The reasons for this decision were that the school is close to a special school that was designated to be established as a Resource Centre and it has a good record of academic performance. The researcher works in an IE Team and this is one of the schools which the team is supporting.

1.5.3   Methods of data collection

The primary method of data collection for this study was semi- structured interviews where the participants were able to talk openly about their personal experiences. This data collection method helped to clarify concepts and problems and allow for the establishment of a list of possible answers or solutions to them (Bless et al., 2006).An interview guide was developed which helped the researcher to formulate a list of questions that were to be explored in the course of an interview (Patton, 2002).

Focus group interviews followed the individual interviews. Patton (2002) states that participants in a focus group get to know each other's responses and make additional comments beyond their original responses, as they hear what other people have to say. This allowed the researcher to triangulate the data collected. Data collection methods are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.5.4   Data analysis

According to Battacherjee (2012), content analysis refers to the systematic analysis of a text in a qualitative manner. Qualitative data analysis was used to make sense of and describe the data generated during the research process. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes (Marshall & Ross, 2006). Analysis of interview transcripts and focus-group transcripts were based on an inductive approach which is meant to identify themes, sub-themes and patterns emerging in the data. Interpretive analysis was done on the transcriptions of the interviews by using the content method of analysis. The researcher generated initial codes which helped in searching for themes. Coding was used to combine themes, sub-themes and patterns that emerge. Data analysis is explained in detail in Chapter 3.

1.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers should be knowledgeable about the ethical considerations when embarking on a research project (Wester, 2011).The ethical issues that were considered throughout this study include autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence. Individual participants in the study were respected and they were provided with the ability to make their own choices about participating in the study. They participated voluntarily in the study and they were made aware that they could withdraw at any time. The research will do no harm to the participants during and after the study or will minimise it if it is unavoidable (Allan, 2008).

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the WCED and ethical clearance from the University Ethics Committee. Informed consent was elicited from the participants. The language used was precise and the research process was explained to the participants. Confidentiality was ensured by using pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participants. The raw data containing the participants' information was kept in a secured place.

1.7   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In qualitative research it is important that the researcher demonstrate how the procedures and methods used ensure the validity and reliability of the study. Validity focuses on what

the instrument measures and the significance of the results (Bless et al, 2009). The aim is allow the participants to reflect on issues from their own perspective (Patton, 2002).

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the maintenance of records of all interviews and group interviews, as well as the documenting of the process of analysis in detail (Patton, 2002). The researcher reported on the research findings, based on the perspectives of the participants. One method of increasing validity according to Patton (2002) is data triangulation. This method aims to seek evidence from a wide range of sources and compare the findings. In this study, the findings from interviews and the focus group interviews were compared.

1.8   ROLE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCHER

The purpose of the study is to explore the teachers' perspectives regarding the role of the DBST, as well as the IE Team, on the establishment of an inclusive school. The aim is not to generalise the findings but to get in-depth information from the point of view of the participants. The researcher was the main source of data collection. As the researcher works as a departmental official, participants may not answer freely and honestly to the questions – and this may limit the study. Furthermore, as the researcher is subjectively involved as a member of the IE team, it is important to be aware of and avoid "biased distortion of data to serve the researcher's vested interest and prejudices" (Patton, 2002 p. 51).

1.9   CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to explore the teachers' perspectives regarding the role of the DBDST, as well as the IE Team, in establishing inclusive schools. The researcher holds as a principle that establishing inclusive schools is an innovative idea aimed at social reconstruction, namely the building of a democratic South Africa. Successful implementation of the policy relies on collaboration between all the stakeholders involved (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

1.10   CHAPTER DIVISIONS

Chapter 1 provides the context and rationale of the study. This forms the background to the study and includes the problem statement and purpose of this research.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review relevant to answer the research questions, thus contextualising the research topic.

Chapter 3 provides the research design and methodology and covers data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter 4describes the processing, categorisation and interpretation of the collected data.

Chapter 5 concludes the study and presents recommendations based on the findings and the literature review.

CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Teachers have to contribute positively in accommodating learners who are experiencing barriers to learning in their classes. They are responsible for meeting the needs of all learners in their classes. Different countries follow various methods for starting the process of integrating children with disabilities and other barriers into mainstream classes (Singal, 2006). For instance, in Australia the first step is integration, i.e. placing learners experiencing barriers to learning in a separate facility or class within a mainstream school. Thereafter these learners are given opportunities to participate in a mainstream setting (Forlin & Chambers, 2011). The development of inclusive education in South Africa, including education for learners with barriers to learning, has followed the same pattern, as in most other countries.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of District Based Teams (DBSTs) in establishing inclusive schools. Whilst teachers are viewed as the key role players in establishing inclusive schools, they are also faced with a variety of demands arising from this role. Guidelines for Inclusive Schools expect teachers to have skills which identify the challenges faced by learners and support those learners in the classroom (Department of Education, 2010). To gain insight into the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of DBSTs, including Inclusive Education Teams (IE Teams) in establishing inclusive schools, this chapter first described the concept and context of an inclusive education, from an international as well as a national perspective. Secondly, it looked closely at the teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education and Inclusive Schools, also known as Full Service Schools (FSS) in South Africa. Although there is an interchanging use of the word Full Service Schools (FSS) and Inclusive Schools in the Department of Education (2010) document, for the purpose of this study the researcher used Inclusive Schools. Thirdly, the literature focused on the implementation of inclusive education, and thereafter the perceptions of teachers' roles in establishing inclusive schools. Lastly, the concept of inclusive education was narrowed down to the role of the DBST, as well as that of IE Teams, in establishing inclusive schools.

**2.2   UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, NATIONALLY INTER-
NATIONALLY**

To better understand the establishment of inclusive schools it is important to recognize how inclusive education is theorised and structured.

2.2.1   An international perspective on inclusive education

Inclusion has been directly advocated since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UNESCO, 2000). It has been accepted in all its phases by a number of key United Nations declarations and conventions, such as the Education for All (EFA) (Du Plessis, 2014).The widespread acceptance of EFA marked a global movement towards providing basic education to all children, youth and adults (UNESCO, 1990), and a specific proposal in the EFA document refers to the improvement of all aspects of education. Quality education for all is advocated, and, in response many countries renewed their commitment to reaching the educational goal of inclusive education (UNESCO, 2000).

UNESCO highlights the importance of systematic approaches, from "diagnosing" disability, to the careful assessment of interaction between learner and school environment. This process is viewed as providing equal access to education and making provision for certain categories of learners without excluding them (UNESCO, 2005, p. 15).

Furthermore, this document does not only target those who are excluded, but addresses principles that welcome diversity and strive for an education system where all children will benefit, recognising that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. Therefore, the education system should be designed so that it accommodates children with special educational needs (UNESCO, 2005). Learners with disabilities are in the process of gaining access to mainstream classrooms. In fact, research shows that most countries, including South Africa, have made great strides towards at least restructuring education for learners with special educational needs (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Pearce et al., 2009). For instance, children with disabilities and others defined as having special educational needs are increasingly admitted to mainstream settings, but may be withdrawn for part of the school day to receive intensive intervention programs by specialist support teachers (Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

2.2.2   Inclusion in South Africa

In the South African context, inclusive education originated as part of the process of transforming the education system, striving to be more democratic and inclusive (Nel, Muller, Hugo, Helldin, Backmann, Dwyer & Skarlind, 2011). Engelbrecht (2006) highlights the contextual factors which are the basis for the development of inclusive education. Inclusive

education is defined as a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic, and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language (Department of Education, 2001). This definition concurs with Booth and Ainscow's (2000, p. 21) definition of an inclusive school as one that includes "all activities that contribute to the capacity of a school to respond to the diversity" of its learners. The teachers' understanding of inclusive education and the role of the different stakeholders in establishing inclusive schools play an important part in this study.

2.3   TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Studies have shown that the successful implementation of inclusive education requires teachers to be very knowledgeable about inclusive education (Pearce et al., 2009; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2010; Razali, Toran, Kamaralzaman & Yasin, 2013). It is evident from the studies consulted that most of the teachers seem to have a sound knowledge of inclusive education. Teachers acknowledge inclusive education as a right, and that all learners should receive equal education, and learners with different abilities should be accommodated in the same educational setting (Deku & Akah, 2012). In fact, Forlin and Chambers (2011) found that teachers acknowledge learning together in the same classroom as a basic philosophy of inclusion, creating a sense of acceptance essential for effective educational practice in mainstream schools. However, Razali et al. (2013) found that teachers are keen to accommodate learners in their classrooms whom they can manage – and this suggests that some learners might not be that welcome.

Teachers favour the inclusion of learners whom they can manage over those learners whom they perceive to be more disruptive in the classroom (Razali et al., 2013). Therefore, the levels of support required by learners form part of the process whereby teachers accommodate them or not in their classrooms. McGhee-Richmond et al. (2013) found similar results – that learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties were seen as causing more concern and stress, and teachers appeared reluctant to accommodate them in their classrooms.

In addition to knowledge, teachers are required to be skilful in implementing inclusive education. Ocloo and Subbey (2008) found that teachers support the notion of an inclusive education policy and would like to implement it. However, the skills required to successfully implement inclusive education seemed to be insufficient. According to Razali et al. (2013) teachers need to have an understanding of inclusive education, which involves an awareness of the type and the extent of disabilities experienced by learners. Teachers

highlighted their concern and understanding of learning deficits, and the way they impact on the learner, as well as the ways in which teachers can change their teaching strategies to support them. However, other teachers demonstrated a lack of knowledge on how to support learners who experience barriers to learning in an inclusive classroom. In fact, these teachers admitted that they were not sure about how to administer the inclusive programs conducted for such learners. A lack of the skills to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning in the mainstream classroom seem to be linked to the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education (Avramidis et al., 2010).

Attitudes play a huge role in the implementation of inclusive education. A study done by Avramidis et al. (2010), found that negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with difficulties in the mainstream classrooms exist for various reasons. According to Ocloo and Subbey (2008), insufficient resources, and a lack of provision of generic support and training services lead to the rejection of learners with barriers to learning by the teachers. These researchers noted that some classroom teachers believe that including learners with barriers in the classroom deprives other learners of time that might have been spent with the other learners. In fact, these teachers argue that their time is being "wasted", yet they are expected to produce good results. Thus, levels of confidence and knowledge were found to be linked to the teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning (Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

2.4   TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 2005) defines an inclusive school as one which can "accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote and nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, and children from disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups"(p.6). An important aspect of inclusive education, as mentioned earlier, is that it shifts the tendency to blame the learner for the learning difficulties that he/she may experience, and redirects the focus to the interaction between the learner and his/her environment.

A mainstream school which adopts inclusive education values accepts the principle which no longer requires a learner to 'fit in' to the school setting. This approach requires the school to make changes in order to 'fit' the learner, address the barriers to learning and recognise the strengths of the child. An inclusive school provides quality education to all by allowing for and encouraging full participation by all the learners (Department of Education, 2005). The aim of inclusion is to prepare learners to become productive, responsible and non-

discriminatory members of a democratic society. Consequently, they become fully part of the community in which they live, not just physically, but also spiritually, emotionally, and socially (UNESCO, 2005).

Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (Department of Education, 2001) expects individual teachers to have the skills or expertise to identify barriers to learning. In addition, they are expected to support learners in the classroom and collaborate with other support providers. This helps to determine the levels of support needed by learners and to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. As noted earlier, the insufficiency of training to enable teachers to effectively include learners with barriers in mainstream classes has been cited as an impediment to establishing more inclusive classrooms. Engelbrecht (2006) adds that establishing democratic leadership policies and practices are found to be challenging.

Schools are more inclined to include students with minor and mild disabilities than students with more severe intellectual, emotional and behavioural disabilities (Avramidis et al., 2013; Anati, 2012; McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013). Anati (2012) points out that the participating schools in their study used a continuum of educational placements, ranging from the highly integrated setting of the general classroom to the highly segregated setting where instruction is delivered in special education classrooms and resource rooms. In fact, teachers in the above study believed in the importance of maintaining separate settings, based on the students' academic performance and based on the severity of students' disabilities. This is in line with Education White Paper 6, which states that the learners who are integrated into mainstream classrooms are those who need a low to moderate level of support. Those learners who need a high level of support should receive that in special schools (Department of Education, 2001).

Anati (2012) notes that teachers in the United Arab Emirates agreed that integrated learning is a positive step towards the future of special education. These teachers highlighted the employment of a team of specialised professionals to deal with inclusive education issues. Thus, they did not associate themselves with the forerunners in integrated learning, and rely strongly on experts such as school counsellors, special teachers and doctors, revealing dependence on exclusionary practices. Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel and Tlale (2013) contend that this raises the question as to whether teachers really do understand their role within an inclusive education system when learners who experience barriers to learning need support.

Similarly, Singal (2006) states that in a study on the understanding of inclusive education, teachers had faith in the assessment of the children to determine their IQ before they could

be accepted at their schools. Here, the level of support is determined by the needs of each learner placed in a mainstream school according to the Department of Education (2014), instead of seeing the learners as part of a collaborative collective. This denies the fact that support and collaboration between all the systems and subsystems within the school, as well as the outside agencies involved with the learners, are very important. If the school does not have a culture of collaboration it will eventually affect the learners tremendously (Donald, 2010). For instance, learner assessment might be affected.

On the issue of assessment, Pearce et al. (2009) note that inclusive teachers in general have been found to understand that pedagogy was linked to assessment, This thesis is, of course, arguing for the contrary: "Instead of relying on assessment methods such as essays and tests, inclusive teachers offered trialled and negotiated a range of methods to give every student the opportunity to demonstrate a successful learning'' (p.110). Similarly, Janney and Snell (2000) suggest that students who do not write but can read some words could be provided with printed labels to place in appropriate spaces on the worksheet, thus focusing on lesson content. For instance, a learner who struggles with the tasks that need writing should be given a chance to answer orally.

One critical skill that is also needed in an inclusive classroom, as perceived by teachers, is the notion of drawing up an Individual Support Plan (ISP).Pearce et al. (2009) state that individualisation – which some term the use of many different routes – has been pointed out as a necessity in an inclusive classroom. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011), learners who are experiencing barriers to learning at some stage will require some degree of individualised plan. This plan assesses the learner to determine what he or she has already mastered, so that learning support strategies and methods can be chosen accordingly (p. 84). Supporting children with barriers to learning involves many struggles and challenges. Some teachers may have difficulty in understanding the concept of individualisation, and attention needs to be given to training teachers how to develop an ISP.

2.5   IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Implementing inclusive education involves a joint responsibility between parents, teachers, District Based Support Teams (DBSTs) and the community (Du Plessis, 2013). Unless every part of the education system adapts to integrate the values of inclusion, inclusive education will not become a reality. This is in line with Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model that highlights how each system is interconnected with and dependent on other systems. Each individual system must be addressed so that the reciprocal influences of the systems can be positive, contributing to the growth and change of the system as a whole.

2.5.1   National level

Since a democratic dispensation was introduced in South Africa, the country has been in the process of social, political, economic and educational transformation, aimed at developing a more inclusive society (Du Plessis, 2013; Swart & Pettipher, 2011). South African educational policies promoting inclusion were formulated n the light of this view, influenced by the adoption of the South African Constitution which legally ensured the basic human rights of all its people. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa includes the Bill of Rights, which establishes that all South Africans, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, culture or language, will have access to basic education and to educational institutions (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

In addition, the South African Schools Act 1996 (No.84 of 1996) seeks to address this transformation process, and makes provision for all schools to be inclusive by stating that public schools may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public school. Furthermore, the South African Schools Act stipulates that no learners will be denied access to public schools or discriminated against in any way. In building the capacity of these schools, special emphasis will be placed on establishing inclusive education, according to the South African School's Act. This includes flexibility in teaching and the provision of education. Therefore, policy development has received a lot of attention and reflects the commitment of the South African government to addressing the diversity in the learner population. In this regard, the National Department of Education is responsible for the formulation of policies, which is done in collaboration with other role players involved in education (Department of Education, 2001). One such policy is that provision should be for a continuum of support, so that learners who require a high level of support would be supported in the special school, with those who require a moderate level of support receiving it, while those who require a low level of support would be supported in the mainstream of the school.

At the beginning of 1997 the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa (Quality Education for All, 1997).The report of this commission stressed the need for a paradigm shift concerning learners with special needs, with a systemic approach in identifying and addressing barriers to learning (Engelbrecht,2006). According to the Department of Education (2001, p. 18), the most prominent barriers in South Africa, as identified by the Commission, are the following:

- Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences.

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- An inflexible curriculum.

- Inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching.

- Inappropriate communication.

- Inaccessible and unsafe built environments.

- Inappropriate and inadequate support services.

- Inadequate policies and legislation.

- The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents.

- Inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators.

The findings and recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS informed the final policy document on inclusive education, namely Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). This policy document was a sign that there had been a turning-point in thinking about education within South Africa. Daniels (2010, p. 635) argues that "It is a shift within a learner or deficit special needs model to a greater focus on barriers to learning and development, a system change or a social justice model". This shift required an education system that will accommodate all learners, with their diverse needs, under one education system. Therefore, the White Paper 6 was designed to transform the South African educational system by building integrated systems for all learners that eliminate the differences between special and ordinary schools. The policy asserts that in order to make inclusive education a reality there needs to be a conceptual shift regarding the provision of support for learners who are experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education 2001).The recommendations in this policy document highlight the level of support needed by each learner, in contrast to the issue of placement of learners. This support is to be provided, based on the need of each learner. For instance, learners who require low-intensity support will receive support in mainstream schools, and learners who require a moderate level of support will receive that in inclusive schools. Meanwhile, those learners who require more specialized and intensive support will receive that in special schools (Department of Education 2001).

Another important proposal made by the Department of Education (2001) relates to the need for change in the general education system, so that learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early. Therefore, an appropriate support system will be provided (Department of Education, 2014).

Table 2.1: The levels of support, as stipulated in the SIAS document, are as follows

Low	Moderate	High
Specialist support	**Specialist support**	**Specialist support**
Provision of any specialist intervention from either other teachers within the school or surrounding schools, ILST or from the school's network stake- holders.	Transversal teams based at circuits and /or district level will monitor and support the implementation of inclusive education through support groups, meetings, telephonic consultations and site visits.	Access to a range of support specialists required on a daily or weekly basis and to be available fulltime on site.

(Department of Education, 2014; pp. 14-17)

According to the Screening, Identification and Support Strategy (SIAS), as indicated in Table 2.1 above, provision for a continuum of support is based on three levels of support. To fulfil the goal of supporting the learners' needs, based on what they require, the Department of Basic Education (2011) has introduced the Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom. This document is one of the strategies that have been initiated to drive the implementation of inclusive education policies. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (2014) provides guidelines on early identification and support, and it determines the nature and level of support required by learners, as well as the identification of the best learning sites for support.

The SIAS document acknowledges the fact that every learner can learn and that all children and youth need support. It also acknowledges and respects the differences between learners, despite their different characteristics and learning needs, as set out in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). It is within this framework that the major philosophical shifts for the entire education system were proposed.

One of the first strategies in the implementation of inclusive education is national advocacy and information sharing. In support of that, three provinces were piloted by the National Department of Education to implement inclusive education. The Department of Education (2002) points out those teachers were trained and supported in their classrooms, capacity-building workshops were held and the material was developed. These measures included workshops on attitudinal change, new and improved levels of skills among teachers and the provision of information about the new policy. These form part of the move towards inclusive education and include various strategies, such as collaborative work in the training courses. However, over a decade after the introduction of Education White Paper 6 (Department of

Education, 2001), most learners with barriers to learning who attend school are still in separate "special" schools for learners with disabilities (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

According to Donohue and Bornman (2014), when Education White Paper 6 was first published in 2001, South Africa appeared to be following the international trend toward inclusion, but subsequent policy implementation has made little progress over the past decade. Researchers found that teachers were not provided with sufficient support in implementing the policy (Dreyer, 2014; Du Plessis, 2013). Donohue and Bornman (2014, p. 10) came to the conclusion that the implementation of inclusive education is at an apparent standstill as a result of ambiguity about the means through which inclusive education can be achieved.

2.5.2   At provincial level

The next educational level to be addressed is the provincial level. Provinces in South Africa are divided into several educational districts. Each district has to appoint a District Based Support Team (DBST) responsible for the management of inclusive education within the district (Department of Education, 2001).

The Department of Education (2005) acknowledges that countrywide there are some districts that currently have no meaningful support provision. This situation exists predominantly in rural and historically disadvantaged areas. Nel et al. (2013) note that there are few schools that have access to support services from a District Level. However, in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) where the current study was conducted, the support services operate differently, as compared to other provinces. The DBST is established in each district, with two/three IE Teams per district, depending on the need.

The DBST's are based at the District Offices. They consist of learning support advisors, therapists, psychologists and special needs specialists, as well as other health and welfare professionals employed by the Department of Education (Education Department, 2001). In addition to these specialists, administrative experts, curriculum specialists, institutional development specialists and specialist support personnel and teachers also form part of the team.

These teams' primary aim is to provide systemic support for all the teachers who need it, helping to strengthen the skills of teachers in coping with more diverse classes (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Education White Paper 6 highlights the purpose of DBST as: "To support all learners, *teachers* and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs are met". This is done by focusing on the teaching and learning strategies that will benefit all

learners, and on the adaptation of support systems (Department of Education, 2001). However, Schoeman (2012) in Nel et al. (2013), argue that the DBSTs are not adequately skilled in providing such support.

As mentioned earlier, a legislative mandate requires school districts to educate learners with barriers to learning in mainstream schools, to the maximum appropriate extent (Patterson, Syverud & Seabrooks-Blackmore, 2008). Therefore, one of the roles of the DBST is to develop teaching skills in curriculum differentiation, alternative assessment strategies, the use of assistive devices and the use of the SIAS document, as well as developing learner support programmes (Department of Education, 2001). This process may entail several meetings to ensure that the majority of the school's staff is engaged in planning and thus is more likely to assume ownership of the proposed changes (Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). According to Makhalemele and Nel (2015), DBSTs still need more training on the implementation of inclusive policies.

The Inclusive Education Teams (IE Teams) were formed in response to the establishment of inclusive schools. These teams consist of a school counsellor, and a learning support teacher, as well as a therapist (occupational or speech therapist). They were to start providing support services to special schools that were converted into resource centres (Department of Education, 2001).In addition; they have to provide specialist support to the surrounding schools. Each province had to draw up a working document for the IE Teams.

In the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) the guidelines of these teams follow those of the DBST, and they have fewer schools compared to the DBST which they support on a weekly basis. School counsellors provide psycho-educational and psychotherapeutic/counselling support within a whole school context to teachers, parents, and learners through Institutional Level Support Teams (ILST's) (Daniels, 2010).Therapists provide therapeutic support and classroom intervention. Learning support teachers provide support by means of group work with the special focus to Literacy and Numeracy.

IE Teams have to work in a multidisciplinary fashion. Multidisciplinary collaboration implies that professionals from different disciplines and perspectives each contribute their own unique perspective and information, while maintaining independence within the group. According Nel et al. (2013), this collaborative approach is in line with the medical model, where the individualistic intervention style is used. A consultation rather than a collaboration process between professional, teachers and parents is still applied (Dreyer, 2014).

2.5.3   At school level

One of the strategies for the implementation of inclusive education was the establishment of ILSTs at school level. These teams consist of a learning support teacher, referring teacher, member of the school management team, coordinator, representatives from the behaviour committee and the social committee, as well as a member from the Literacy and Numeracy committee. The primary focus of these teams is to coordinate learner and teacher support (Department of Education, 2001). They are to provide support by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and institutional needs. The provincial education departments provided schools with guidelines for the implementation of these support teams (Western Cape Education Department, 2003). According to Nel et al. (2013) these teams should liaise with the DBSTs and other relevant support providers, such as health professionals. Apart from the roles mentioned above, Nel et al. (2013) notes that these teams are also responsible for focusing on the in-service training of teachers, as well as planning emergency strategies.

The ILSTs are supported by the DBST. According to the Department of Education (2001), the district support teams must provide a full range of educational support services, such as the professional development of curricula, as well as assessment procedures, to these ILSTs (Department of Education, 2001).This transformation requires the school management teams to change their traditional role regarding the learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. This requires the teachers and management of mainstream schools to refer learners with learning barriers to special schools, regardless of how serious the barrier is. Thus, the systemic approach requires the teachers to determine the nature and level of support required by the learners before taking any decisions. Therefore, the role of the school management team is important in establishing inclusive schools.

2.5.4   Role of the principal and the school management team (SMT)

School principals are responsible for everything the staff does and every document that is issued by the school (Shani & Koss, 2015). Swart and Pettipher (2011) and Dreyer (2014) suggest that school principals should recognise their responsibility to set the tone of the school and help the school as a whole to become and maintain a supportive and caring community. Research has shown that successful inclusion depends largely on the attitudes and actions of the school principals, as they create the school's culture and have the ability to challenge or support inclusion (Donohue and Bornman, 2014; Pearce et al., 2009).The culture of the school is difficult to address, but it is crucial for inclusion. A school culture may be defined as the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates. According to Waldron and McLeskey (2010) in order to change a school culture and create a

more inclusive school, principals must question their beliefs about teaching and learning of learners who struggle to learn, This can be done by engaging in a collaborative process that results in new values, beliefs, norms and preferred behaviours. It is of the utmost importance that teachers, parents and learners work together as a whole school community to establish an inclusive school. Ryan (2010) suggests that the school principal should gather information from these stakeholders on how they want their inclusive school to look. Once that has been achieved, the school principal, as leader of the institution, has the responsibility of hiring professionals whom he believes will embrace inclusive ideas and answer the questions that arise (Granados & Kruse, 2011). The principals should work together with the other stakeholders to design inclusive programs. For instance, the principal in the above study initiated various committees, councils, and programs that he believed would make it possible for learners, parents and teachers to become meaningfully and interactively involved in the operation and activities of the school (Ryan, 2010).

One issue that came from the studies points to the fact that the inclusion initiative may potentially be in conflict with policy initiatives that aim to identify teacher effectiveness and teaching quality in terms of learners' academic achievement (McGhie-Richmond et al., 2009).Research shows that children with barriers to learning are often seen as the exception and that the mainstream school is not always seen as the place for them by some school principals (Avradimis et al., 2006; Van De Putte & VanSchauwer, 2013). Usually it takes time for the school to decide whether to accept the child as a member of the school, and this is still viewed as contradictory by some teachers, who mention that they are expected to produce high pass rates yet they are expected to admit learners with challenges to their classes. Van De Putte and De Schauwer (2013) argue that the way in which learners with barriers to learning are viewed determines the way in which they can be dealt with.

Apart from the leadership styles of the school principals, Anati (2012) found that training was the main concern among teachers. According to Anati (2012) teachers reported a lack of confidence and unpreparedness for teaching in inclusive classrooms. These teachers pointed out that all they had received were sketchy training sessions, which did not necessarily prepare them to teach in inclusive settings. Principals should maximise performance by reconsidering resource allocations whilst trying to maintain consistency. This could be done by applying a redefinition of the cultural context of the organisation and the development of an intentional design (Granados & Kruse, 2011). Principals should target funding sources that provide the school with more resources to ensure that all learners have an opportunity for success. For instance, programs that help learners experiencing behavioural and academic problems can be organised (Shani & Koss, 2015). As mentioned

earlier, one of the roles of school principals in inclusive schools is to offer support to the staff. Mentoring is an effective way to promote quality in the school as an organisation; therefore principals should encourage teachers to explore ways in which they could help each other. However, research shows that the leadership styles of principals show little collaboration with teachers. Teachers identify the role of the school principal as being conservative and authoritarian and thus the morale of the staff is low – which seems to be directly linked to the absence of meaningful leadership in the school (Granados & Kruse, 2011). Engelbrecht (2006) substantiate this when she states that the role of principals in managing and bringing about change should create a climate of support and collaboration. This was clear when teachers demonstrated low morale in implementing inclusive education, and this seemed to be linked to the absence of meaningful leadership (Engelbrecht, 2006).

2.5.5   Role of teachers

2.5.5.1   The traditional role

Prior to the introduction of the new policy on inclusive education, the teachers and management of mainstream schools often referred learners with learning barriers to special schools. This was done regardless of how serious the barrier was or if it could have been addressed in a mainstream school (Nel et al., 2011). Children with any type of difference, or more specifically disability, were singled out and the origin of the difference was looked for within the learner. Implied in this was a belief system that saw learners who experienced barriers to learning as 'ineducable'. Therefore, these learners were referred to special placements, and many learners who need profound support were not even offered places (Forlin & Chambers 2011). Engelbrecht (2006) points out that this specialist view of children had the effect of legitimizing exclusionary practices. In addition, it created the belief system among teachers that teaching learners with barriers to learning was beyond their area of expertise.

Within this medical model, schools "were divided between those which served the needs of 'ordinary' learners in ordinary classes, and those which focused on providing trainees with 'special' skills to teach in specialized settings" (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p. 6).Having been trained in a medical model, many teachers do not feel prepared for the changes in their practice, in that they are afraid of extra work and lack of cooperation from parents (Van De Putte & De Schauwer, 2013). Donohue (2014) in explaining the issue of the implementation of inclusive education argues that a large section of the South African teacher workforce is over 50 years of age, so reorienting teachers to new ways is challenging. Teachers feel insecure about not knowing enough or not knowing how to act. The role of the mainstream

teacher has changed from transferring knowledge to practising learner-centred teaching (Department of Education, 2001).

2.5.5.2 Changing role of teachers

Although traditionally mainstream teachers are not trained to teach learners who experience barriers to learning, this transition requires them to accept these learners into their mainstream classes (Dreyer, 2013). Class teachers are now held responsible for meeting the needs of all students within their classes, and are having to take a more positive role in modifying the curriculum to meet their students' diverse needs (Forlin & Chambers 2011).

The Department of Education (2001) states that in implementing change it is important to start small, by empowering teachers so that they can be vocal advocates for inclusive practices. This means that the teachers should be empowered to create a safe, friendly and welcoming school climate for learners as well as parents, such that it fosters collaboration and inclusivity. Swart and Pettipher (2011) note that in order for inclusive education to be successful, teachers need time, ongoing support and in-service training. Therefore, Nel et al. (2013) assert that teachers taught for many years in a historically divided system where the notion of shared responsibilities was not consciously implemented and encouraged.

2.5.5.3 Collaboration

Another important aspect in the process of implementing inclusive education is the collaboration of all the systems in the lives and learning of learners. Collaboration has been recognised as a skill that heightens the competency of all teachers and it leads to successful inclusion efforts Nel et al. (2013).Friend and Cook (as cited in Swart & Pettipher, 2011) define collaboration as a "a style of direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work together towards a common goal" (2011, p. 21). For instance, an IE Team and the teachers are responsible for the successful inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms. Therefore, this team together with the teachers should be given time to plan together (Department of Education, 2001).

2.5.5.3.1 Collaboration between mainstream teachers and IE Teams

Collaboration between IE Teams and teachers is important. However, professionals in these teams are seen by teachers as solely responsible for moving learners from mainstream schools to the special schools or schools of skills. Thus Dreyer (2014) contends that most support services are still rendered within the old exclusionary paradigm and this according to Dreyer is not supportive of inclusive education.

As part of collaboration, classroom-based support is considered important in establishing an inclusive school. This support, according to Janney and Snell (2000)requires individualized adaptations or differentiation of the curriculum to enable the learners to gain skills and knowledge according to their age and abilities. Pearce et al. (2009) also found that teachers did not teach the same content every year, but continually adjusted their teaching in response to their learners. However, this group of teachers acknowledged that individualisation was not a simple task, particularly if teachers have a limited range of pedagogical strategies (p.110). Thus, according to the Department of Education (2001), the DBSTs of which IE Teams form part should assist teachers in institutions in creating flexibility in their teaching methods and in the assessment of learning. Individualised support is therefore considered significant for ensuring that learners access and make progress in the general curriculum while receiving the individualised instruction and support needed to be successful.

Research conducted by Pearce et al. (2009) points out that certain skills and knowledge needed by teachers includes knowledge of the curriculum and of pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge enabled inclusive teachers to establish subject-related goals, break tasks into steps, differentiate their teaching and have a broad range of strategies to teach their subjects. Therefore, learning support should commence on the level where the learner is, pedagogically speaking. For instance, if the learner struggles to understand the content, content from a lower level could be selected until the learner experiences success (p.84). In fact, it is important to consider that content needs to be relevant to society as a whole, as well as the individual.

A curriculum view which is systemic in nature is based on the assumption that any learner may experience difficulties in school (Department of Education, 2001). This document therefore suggests that the curriculum should be adapted in such a way as to respond to all learners in a class. The issue of curriculum differentiation is fundamental to the implementation of inclusive education (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde, 2012). The Department of Education (2011) provides practical guidance to school managers and teachers on planning and teaching to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners.

The Department of Education (2001) also asserts that in order to make inclusive education a reality, there needs to be a conceptual shift regarding the provision of support for learners who experience barriers to learning. In reaching this conclusion, the Department produced two major supporting documents: SIAS and The Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum. Curriculum differentiation is the key to responding to the needs of learners with diverse learning needs and styles (Department of

Education, 2011). Learners' backgrounds, ability levels as well as interests must be taken into consideration when differentiating the curriculum.

The policy further states that strategies and components of curriculum differentiation may be seen by teachers as complex and overwhelming, but it is nevertheless important to take the first step. However, Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue that teachers cannot be expected to accomplish the task of tailoring the curriculum to suit each learner's particular needs and pace if learning is not thoroughly detailed. The Department of Education (2011), the guidelines (2011) for responding to diversity refer to learner diversity as recognising that learners are unique in their own way. For the purpose of this study, this definition of learner diversity will be used.

Donald et al. (2010) notes that inclusion relies on respect for diversity at all levels of education. Therefore, we need to accommodate all learners, whatever their background, ability or circumstances. Therefore, there has to be flexibility in the curriculum in relation to the needs of the learners with barriers to learning. In addition, adaptations need to be made for individual learners concerning ability and learning style. Apart from the flexibility of the curriculum, knowing the learner and their characteristics are considered vital in an inclusive classroom (Pearce et al., 2009). The above study suggests that teachers should seek to know their learners better by collecting information, such as what they know, what they can do and what their interests are.This will help the teachers to look at the syllabus and focus on where and how the teacher might present the work in relation to where learners are at the moment. It is suggested that teachers use the learners' profile, as well as input from previous teachers, to gather information that can assist them in understanding the learner. Therefore, ideally, inclusive teachers will also use their knowledge of their learners to assist in developing their own strengths. Knowledge of the learners gives the teachers the capacity to offer them different pathways to success (Pearce et al., 2009).

2.5.5.3.2 *Collaboration between mainstream and special schoolteachers*

To increase the academic performance of all learners in the mainstream classroom, mainstream and special schoolteachers must collaborate to pool their expertise. Swart and Pettipher (2011) suggest that teachers can also draw on neighbouring schools, district offices and other education institutions such as special schools and universities. The Department of Education (2005) states in the Guideline to ensure quality education and support to special schools resource centres that the inclusive education model depends strongly on resource centres to offer support to inclusive schools. However, this policy document highlights that resource centres themselves must be strengthened so that they

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offer quality education in stimulating ways to their own learners, before they can offer support to other schools.

For instance, the special schoolteacher with expertise in working with children with autism must collaborate with his/her colleague who is an expert in teaching beginning reading (Eisenman, Pleet, Wandry & McGinely, 2011). In contrast to this, McGhnie-Richmond et al. (2009) contend that the inclusion initiative may be potentially in conflict with the policy initiatives that aim to identify teacher effectiveness and teaching quality in terms of learner academic outcome. They may be faced with the demand to meet the teaching quality of objectives by raising class averages in learner achievement.

A common response to the challenge of including all students in mainstream education has been to promote collaboration between content experts in general education and pedagogical experts in special education (Eisenman et al., 2011). The primary responsibilities of the special schoolteachers are to provide specialised professional support and resources to inclusive schools and mainstream schools, with regard to early identification, curriculum assessment and instruction modification (Department of Education, 2005). They also have a responsibility for direct services in the form of frequent, brief coaching of students with Individual Support Plans (ISPs), as well as preparing learners who have disabilities for possible inclusion in mainstream schools. Nel and Makhalemele (2015) assert that teachers of the special schools as resource centres should be incorporated into the DBSTs.

As mentioned earlier, collaborative teaming among teachers is crucial when implementing inclusive practices at an institution. Janney and Snell (2000) point out that this collaborative teaming can begin with only broad ideas about how they will share their responsibilities and what sort of adaptations learners will need. The preferred option of collaboration, according to researchers, is a transdisciplinary collaborative approach (Dreyer, 2014; Nel et al., 2013).This approach requires stakeholders to operate interactively as a group, on an equal level, sharing expertise and supporting one another.

2.5.5.3.3 Collaboration between mainstream and learning support teachers
The major focus of support rendered by learning support teachers was the withdrawal intervention model, working with individuals or small groups of learners in a separate classroom (Forlin & Chambers 2011). However, with the implementation of inclusive education this role has had to change. The rationale for the learning support model implemented in the Western Cape is that it facilitates participation, inclusiveness and flexibility (Dreyer, 2014).It is argued that mainstream teachers, as well as learning support

teachers, should work collaboratively. In this collaboration, the learning support teacher works with the learner within the mainstream education setting, while the mainstream teacher teaches the rest of the class (Shani & Koss 2015).

Confidence levels of mainstream teachers regarding the provision of support to struggling learners improve as a result of this collaboration (Gross & White, 2003). According to Gross and White (2003), managing learning support as part of the whole school-improvement plan has the advantage. Dreyer (2014) adds that the whole school systemic approach in the provision of learning support in schools explicitly implies that traditional roles of both mainstream teachers and those of the learning support teachers have to change. In order to systemically provide the best possible support to all learners in a school, collaboration becomes essential.

The research shows that there is not much that has been done regarding the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (Du Plessis, 2013; Dreyer, 2014; Donohue & Bornman 2014). All these strategies are still on paper and none of them has been implemented in full. The gap between the policy and implementation of inclusive education is considered to be cause for concern. For instance, Dreyer (2014) argues that in South Africa, specifically, up to 70% of children of school-going age are out of school, despite compulsory school attendance for all children between 7 and 15 years of age. Most learners with disabilities who attend school are still in separate "special" schools for learners with disabilities. Medical perspectives still appear to be evident among teachers, whereby the barrier to learning continues to be seen as a deficit within the learner (Nel et al., 2013).

The poor implementation of inclusive education in South Africa is said to be linked 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). Research shows that a critical point for the success of inclusive education is the competence of teachers and their attitudes towards inclusion (Du Plessis, 2013; Anati, 2012; Van De Putte & De Schauwer, 2013).

In addition, inclusive education is very broadly defined. Therefore, teachers still tend to refer to children who experience barriers to learning as children who have disabilities or are cognitively challenged. According to Brady and Woolfson (2008), teachers with a higher sense of efficacy acknowledge that barriers to learning are systemic in nature, and have a greater belief in their profession. They were consequently more accepting of ownership for the support of learners who experience barriers to learning. Most of the teachers who work

at special schools have a high self-efficacy towards inclusion, compared to mainstream teachers (Brady & Woolfson 2008).

According to Donohue and Bornman (2014), currently the implementation of an inclusive education policy is at an apparent standstill as a result of ambiguity about the means through which the goals of inclusive education can be achieved. The National Department of Education must take the first steps to initiate progress on inclusive education (Du Plessis, 2013). When addressing school-level barriers to implementation, the Department of Education must determine the extent to which teachers are prepared to educate a diverse body of learners within one classroom (Shani & Koss 2015). In addition, teachers need to receive comprehensive training programmes in areas where they lack skills. Du Plessis (2013) suggests that these training programmes can be supplemented with specialised support teams that have the capacity to enter the classroom and provide teachers with the hands-on training and practical skills they need to address learners' barriers to learning. Donohue and Bornman (2014) argue that the National Department of Education was not committed to the implementation of the inclusive education policy and tried to delegate their responsibilities to others. The very same study found that school officials reported having received no support or funding from the Department of Education to help sustain any progress they had made in the implementation of some of the broad strategies mentioned in White Paper 6. Research shows that implementing inclusive education in South Africa is a pen-and-paper practice (Dreyer, 2014; Du Plessis, 2013). Training programmes that educate teachers on how to accommodate and teach learners with disabilities are generally a week or two long, but teachers report that although these brief training programmes are helpful, they are insufficient (Donohue & Bornman 2014).Consequently, training of teachers in the mainstream and full service schools is said to be once–off or short term programmes, with fewer that ten sessions for management and staff on issues of support (nature and strategies), awareness programmes and policy implementation (Department of Education, 2014). This document highlights the importance of intensive training for teachers in the special schools where learners require a high level of support.

Dreyer (2014) asserts that training should focus on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners, and implementing inclusive education requires a restructuring of the entire education system (Swart & Pettipher 2011). Unless every part of the education system adjusts to include the values of inclusion, inclusive education will not become a reality. This is in line with Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model that highlights how each system is interconnected and dependent on the other systems. To change the whole school to be inclusive, it is essential that a "whole child" approach to

learning support is followed (Nel et al., (2013). Each individual system must be addressed so that influences of the systems can all be positive. For instance, if teachers in the classroom are to accommodate learners with different learning needs, other systems within the school, such as the management of the school, children and parents have to recognise and respond to diversity.

Professional development is viewed by scholars as crucial in establishing inclusive schools. Both Ryan (2010) and Granados & Kruse (2011) note that the district-inclusive policy should be infused into the school, making sure that all the stakeholders involved in the school understand the various issues of inclusion and where they stand. Waldron and McLeskey (2010) argue that the traditional forms of professional development – where teachers receive short-term professional development workshops with little or no attention to follow up support – are viewed as a very difficult process. This type of professional development relates to the teacher as a passive recipient of information, rather than an active decision-maker. According to Waldron and McLeskey (2010) professional development consists of describing and demonstrating for teachers' practices that have been proven effective by research.

The development of inclusive education and inclusive schools was explored, nationally and internationally. Teachers are the key role-players in implementing inclusive education policy, and the role of school management and that of the teachers in implementing inclusive schools was also explored. Paradigm shifts that were required in order for the change to take root were also presented. The theory of Bronfenbrenner was presented as an underlying theoretical framework for understanding the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of DBSTs in establishing inclusive schools. In the next chapter, the research design for the study will be presented, including the research method, sampling strategy, data collection methods as well as methods of data analysis.

2.6   CONCLUSION

In this chapter perceptions of teachers regarding the role of the DBST and IE Team in establishing inclusive schools was explored. A framework for inclusive education was presented, looking at the international developments and in South Africa. Their perception regarding their own role and other stake holders was also explored. The next chapter provides the research design and methodology and covers data collection and analysis procedures.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' perceptions regarding the role of DBST as well as IE Teams in establishing inclusive schools. To be able to understand and interpret teachers' perceptions, this study adopts qualitative research methods. Policies are constantly being revised and education is continuously being restructured to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning (Du Plessis, 2013). It seems that teachers still have mixed views as to whether learners experiencing barriers to learning should be accommodated in mainstream schools or not. This study endeavours to make a contribution to the topic of inclusive education where all learners are included in the mainstream setting, regardless of their learning difficulties. The previous chapter presented a comprehensive review of the literature on this topic. This chapter presents the methodology that directed the study and illustrates the selected research design. A discussion of the data collection methods as well as the analysis procedures that were used is presented in this chapter. The limitations, delimitations and assumptions, as well as the ethical considerations, are also described.

3.2   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that guide this study were formulated in Chapter 1. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of DBST, as well as IE Teams, in establishing inclusive schools. This research study has therefore focused on answering the following main research question:

What are teachers' perceptions regarding the role of DBST as well as IE Teams in establishing inclusive schools?

Sub-questions:

1. How do teachers perceive their knowledge with regard to the establishment of an inclusive school?
2. In establishing an inclusive school, how do teachers understand their own role and that of the DBST, including the IE Team?
3. What assistance do teachers require from the DBST as well as the IE Team, to help them improve their practices?

A detailed discussion on the research process and design implemented to respond these questions will now follow.

3.3   RESEARCH PARADIGM

As discussed in Chapter 1, a paradigm is a system of interrelated practice and thinking that defines for researchers the nature of their enquiry within three dimensions namely, ontology, epistemology and methodology (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2006). The interrelatedness of these dimensions means that the responses given in any question, taken in any order, limit how the others may be answered (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that the ontological dimension specifies the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what can be known about it. For example, if a "real" world can be assumed, then what can become known about it is how things really are and how things can work. The epistemological dimension refers to the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known. If for example, a "real" reality is assumed then the posture of the researcher must be one of objective detachment or value-free in order to be able to discover how things really are and how things work. How the researcher can go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known is what is referred to as the methodological dimension. For example, a "real" reality pursued by an objective inquirer requires control of possible confounding factors, whether the methods are qualitative or quantitative. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study is approached qualitatively from within an interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is characterized by a concern for the individual. The main aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Researchers within this paradigm aim to obtain a viewpoint of the participants as opposed to that of the researcher directly involved (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. The interpretive paradigm can be also called the "anti-positivist" paradigm because it was developed as a reaction to positivism (Mack, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007). The anti-positivist approach argues that the social world can be understood only from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated. It emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning, thus it is sometimes referred to as constructivism. One of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between researcher and participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories. The goal of the research, according to Creswell (2007), is to rely as much as possible on the participants' view of the situation. Therefore, the researcher's intention is to make sense of the meanings others have about the world. Mack (2010) states that the interpretive paradigm was heavily influenced by hermeneutics and phenomenology. Hermeneutics is the study of meaning and

interpretation in historical contexts (Mack, 2010). The meaning-making cyclical process is the basis on which the interpretive paradigm was established (Mack, 2010). Another strong influence is the philosophical movement of phenomenology. A phenomenologist advocates the need to consider human beings' subjective interpretations, their perceptions of the world as our starting-point in understanding social phenomena (Mack, 2010). The role of the researcher in the interpretive paradigm is to understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants (Cohen et al., 2007). Interpretivism's main principle is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside; rather it should be observed form the inside through the direct experience of people.

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the implementation of the research (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 2006). A research design is developed according to the dimensions of the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigm informing the research, the context within which the research is carried out and the research techniques employed to collect and analyze data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2006).The purpose of this research namely, understanding the teachers' perceptions regarding the role of DBSTs and that of the IE Teams on the establishment of inclusive schools as well as the context of the study, has informed the interpretive paradigm within which the study is carried out.

The research design and purpose of the current study are to gain an insight into teachers' perceptions regarding the role of DBST as well as IE Teams in the establishment of inclusive schools. The issue will be approached through an interpretive paradigm. The school identified to be investigated is an inclusive school. There are 24 standard classes and a prefabricated classroom which is used as a unit class where learners who require a moderate level of support are supported. Neighbouring schools that have learners who require this kind of support refer the learners to this school. The deputy principal of this school coordinates the ILST, while the school principal forms part of the team. This school is situated in the disadvantaged community, where most of the households live on a government grant. There is a high rate of unemployment and crime is rife in this neighbourhood.

This study is designed as a case study, a process which has become an accepted vehicle for conducting research in a variety of disciplines. Bergen and White (2000) argue that the meaning behind the term is not always made clear by researchers, and this has given rise to a number of assumptions which are open to challenge, and to questions about the

robustness of the method. For the purpose of this study, it can be defined as the intensive analysis of a small number of units where the researcher's goal is to understand a larger class of similar units (Gerring, 2006). The role of the chosen case is to serve as representative of a larger population. In this case, the larger population is the schools in the district that were identified to be developed as inclusive schools. This case study relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data converging in a triangulated fashion and benefiting from prior theoretical propositions to guide data collection analysis (Bergen & White 2000).

Yin (2008) distinguishes between the single and the multiple case study designs. Within these two types of case study designs there can be a holistic (single) unit of analysis or embedded (multiple) units of analysis. For the purpose of this study, the single case study design with embedded units of analysis was followed to explore the teachers' perceptions regarding the role of DBST and IE Teams on the establishment of inclusive schools. Yin (2008) states that this type of case study design enables the researcher to explore the case while considering the influence of the various members.

The case study is thus an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or a social unit such as an individual, group, institution, or community (Merriam, 2002).In this case it refers to the teachers as part of the identified school. The unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, is what characterizes a case study.

3.5   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology helps us to understand the process we follow when conducting research (Cohen et al., 2007). The aim of methodology is to describe approaches, kinds and paradigms of research. Mack (2010) states that the main principle is that research can never be objectively observed from the outside: rather, it should be observed from the inside, through the direct experience of the people concerned. Therefore, researchers in this interpretive paradigm seek to understand rather than explain.

3.5.1   Participants and sampling

The group of participants in qualitative research, as mentioned by Merriam (2002), is usually small, non-random and purposeful. The qualitative enquiry seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants, thus it is important to select a sample from which most can be learned. A sample, according to Merriam (2009), refers to a strategically and systematically identified group of people or events that meet the criterion of representation for a particular study.

Purposeful sampling was therefore employed to identify the participants. Purposive sampling is one of the most common forms used when conducting qualitative research and is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriman, 2009, p. 77). Eight (8) teachers were chosen using criterion-based selection. However, two (2) of the eight (8) teachers did not return the letter of consent. Thus, six (6) teachers participated in this study. According to Creswell (2007), criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon. Participants in this study were selected in accordance with the following criteria:

1. They are teachers of the school that was identified to be established as an inclusive school in the Metro East Education District.
2. They are willing to give details about their personal perceptions relating to the establishment of an inclusive school.
3. They are willing to give details about their experiences in establishing this school as an inclusive school.

The teachers participating in this study were expected to establish the school as an inclusive school in collaboration with the IE Team. Due to the fact that learners identified as requiring moderate levels of support are referred to this school, understanding the increasing demands on teachers to be able to teach in an inclusive classroom may prove to be valuable to this study. It may also be possible that these teachers have a deeper understanding of the challenges associated with the establishment of an inclusive school. Therefore, their experiences in establishing an inclusive school are believed to be important.

3.5.2   Data collection

Data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions (Creswell, 2007). For the purpose of this study semi-structured individual interviews, as well as focus group interviews, were used to collect data. These data collection methods are said to be favoured by researchers working within an interpretive paradigm. These methods according to Terre Blanche et al. (2006), allow the researcher to build an understanding of the phenomenon through observing particular instances of the phenomenon as they emerge in specific contexts.

3.5.2.1   Semi-structured interviews

Merriam (2002) mentions that a semi-structured interview is where a researcher has one topic to explore, where the questions and their order are predetermined. The semi-structured interview contains a mix of more or less structured questions. The largest part of the

interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of questions is determined ahead of time.

Data for the study was collected through semi-structured individual interviews and the use of an interview guide (Addendum C). This was identified as a principal data collection method in case study research done by Gerring (2006). According to Patton (2002), the main purpose of interviewing is to enter into the participants' perspective to find out how they interpret the issues under discussion. As the focus of the study was on the perceptions of teachers, the interviews allowed them to recall and reflect upon their emotions and thoughts. Thus, interviewing was an appropriate and relevant technique for this study.

As mentioned earlier, the main questions as well as the issues to be explored were planned, but the wording and the order of questions were not prearranged. An interview guide that contained questions and important issues was developed to guide the interviews. The researcher conducted all the interviews in this study. To promote privacy, participants were interviewed at a mutually agreed time and location. Before commencing with the interviews, participants had to sign a letter of consent. Throughout the interviews, the researcher used verbal and non-verbal probes that focused on the participants' experiences (Patton, 2002). The researcher also clarified with participants any ambiguity in their description, so that they were understood correctly. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour. The interviews were conducted and transcribed into isiXhosa, and then translated into English. This was done because teachers felt that if participants used English (their second language); they would not be able to give their views comfortably. It was important that they felt comfortable when giving their responses.

3.5.2.2   *Focus group interviews*

A focus group interview has been described as an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic (Patton, 2002). In this case, a group of six teachers participated in the focus group interview. Questions that were used in individual interviews were posed and the participants were asked to reflect on these. Participants got to hear each other's responses and were able to make additional comments, beyond their original responses, as they heard what other people had to say (Patton, 2002). The researcher was conducting and facilitating the focus group interview. Throughout the interview, participants gave each other time to talk. The duration of the focus group interview ranged between 45 minutes and an hour. This interview was also conducted in isiXhosa and translated into English.

3.5.3   Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of separating aggregated texts into smaller segments of meaning for close consideration, reflection, and interpretation (Patton, 2002). The aim of data analysis is to transform information into an answer to the original research question (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). In an effort to make sense of the data collected, the researcher used content analysis. According to (Battacherjee, 2012), content analysis refers to the systematic analysis of a text in a qualitative manner.

All the interview data were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Data analysis begins with data coding. Coding is the process of labelling data so as to give meaning to it (Battacherjee, 2012). In this study this was achieved by means of finding regularities and patterns within the data and writing codes to present the topics and patterns covered. The codes were reduced and categorized according to their nature, to help establish coding categories. Themes related to the research topic emerged from the categories. Data analysis was also conducted in the same way with the focus group interviews.

Analysis was conducted through the processes of data reduction, as well as arrangement and display of data, in order to discern patterns and themes in the data. According to Creswell (2007), the objective of data reduction is to reduce the data without significant loss of information. Conclusions were drawn from the meaning derived from the data, assessing their implications and verifying the data by revisiting and cross-checking it for themes and patterns (Huberman & Miles, 2005; Merriam, 2009). This study therefore focused on content analysis. Coding was used to combine themes, ideas and categories in order to interpret the data. When analyzing the collected information, discrepant data emerged –data that did not support or may challenge the emerging patterns within the study. When such data appeared, it was recorded, analyzed and coded as discrepant data, in order to increase the credibility of the results reported. A search for alternative explanations and a consideration of what discrepant data tells the researcher about emerging conclusions, can add greater validity to a qualitative study (Huberman & Miles 2005).

3.6   CREDIBILITY AND RELIABILITY

Merriam (2009) emphasizes the importance of gaining valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner while conducting qualitative research. The terms "reliability" and "validity" are relevant to quantitative research, but less so to qualitative research, due to its subjective nature. According to Bless, Higson–Smith and Sithole (2013), the emphasis is on the understanding of a certain phenomenon within the complexity of its natural context. By

contrast, terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability are often used in qualitative research regarding the trustworthiness of such research (Merriam, 2009).

Credibility acknowledges that reality is subjective and that there are many perspectives which influence it. Credibility therefore seeks to convince that the findings depict the truth of the reality under study (Bless et al., 2013). Credibility attempts to establish the truth of the findings, based on the research design, interviews and context.

Dependability deals with core issues, such as ensuring that the way in which a study is conducted is consistent across time, researchers and analysis techniques (Morrow, 2005). Dependability demands that the researcher thoroughly describe and precisely follow a clear and thoughtful research strategy (Bless et al., 2013). Other strategies implemented to ensure the dependability of this study are triangulation, reflexivity and the use of audit trial (Merriam, 2009).

Transferability can be compared to external validity, since it refers to the extent to which results apply to other or similar situations (Bless et al., 2013). Merriam (2009) identifies strategies to promote the transferability of research findings, including using thick or rich descriptions of data and the use of maximum variation in the sample population.

Confirmability is similar to replicability, and it requires that the other researchers are able to obtain similar findings by following similar research processes in a similar context (Bless et al., 2013). It is based on the perspective that the integrity of findings lies in data and that the researcher must adequately tie together data and analytical process findings, in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings (Morrow, 2005).

Merriam (2009) describes triangulation as a manner of increasing a study's credibility by using "multiple methods, measures, researchers, and perspectives". Triangulation can therefore be used to promote the credibility, dependability and confirmability of the research.

Triangulation has been achieved in this research through methods of triangulation of sources (Patton, 2002). Two methods were used during the data collection process; these include semi-structured interviews as well as focus group interviews. The researcher was able to triangulate data from different sources namely, six teachers from the school that was identified to be established as an inclusive school.

Merriam (2009) describes the audit trial as an account of decisions and descriptions of the research process, with a particular focus on data collection and analysis. Chapters 3 and 4 of this study, which describe the research process and data analysis methods, act as an

audit trial for the research. Data is presented in the form of quotations, and addenda are attached to demonstrate the processes that were followed. The audit trial therefore refers to the detailed chronology of research activities and processes, influences on the data collection and analysis, emerging themes, categories and analytical memos (Morrow, 2005). The reliability of the study was, furthermore, ensured by using more than one method for data collection and continuously checking for the validity of the data throughout the research process. A continuous process of testing between themes, sub-themes and data was followed.

3.7   DELIMITATIONS AND KEY ASSUMPTIONS

This study has focused only on the perspectives of teachers regarding the role of DBSTs, as well as IE Teams, on the establishment of inclusive schools. It therefore does not include the role of other district officials e.g. curriculum advisors or circuit managers. This study was conducted in the form of a case study on eight teachers and can thus not be generalized to the wider population. However, the data from this study might be valuable to IE Teams in the establishment of inclusive schools. None-the-less, the goal of this study was not to make generalizations about the participants' perspectives but to understand how the participants view the role of the DBST, as well as IE Teams, in establishing inclusive schools. Falk and Guenther (2010) caution that qualitative research is not done for the purpose of generalization, but there are plenty of reasons to apply it. To mention a few, qualitative research is used to produce evidence based on the exploration of specific contexts and particular individuals. It is therefore expected that the readers will see similar situations and judge the relevance of the information produced according to their own circumstances.

3.8   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission was granted to perform this study by the Research Ethics Committee of Human Research (Humanities) of Stellenbosch University (Addendum A). The participants voluntarily participated in the research and were aware of their freedom to withdraw from the research at any time (Allan, 2008). The research participants were thoroughly informed of the nature of the research and the steps in the research process. The participants also have the right to anonymity in any presentation or publication that may be based on this research (Allan, 2008).

After acceptance into the study, the participants were asked to review and sign a consent form (Addendum B), prior to participating in the interviews. The study only accepted participants who signed the consent form. Anonymity was guaranteed in that no individual responses were linked to a specific participant. The participants were given pseudonyms

that were known to the researcher and were not revealed to any third parties. Raw data containing participants' personal details was securely stored. The researcher only carried out procedures which she was competent to conduct.

All participants in the study were treated ethically according to the principle of beneficence. In other words, participants were treated with a high standard of respect and consideration. All the information was treated with the strictest confidentiality.

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to substantiate the use of qualitative methodology to study the question: What are the perspectives of teachers regarding the role of DBST as well as IE Teams in establishing an inclusive school? The school identified was to be established as an inclusive school within the WCED. Eight teachers were purposively selected from this school to participate in the study. As mentioned earlier, six teachers signed the consent form. Included in this chapter was a discussion of the data collection methods, the analysis procedures, the study's limitations, delimitations and assumptions, as well as the ethical considerations regarding the research participants. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study obtained, using qualitative methods of data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This study has employed qualitative research strategies. Six of the eight participants invited agreed to take part in the semi-structured interviews. Participants shared their perspectives with regard to the role of the DBST as well as the IE Team in establishing inclusive schools. The researcher also conducted and facilitated a focus group interview. This chapter presents the findings and outcomes of the study's data analysis in a manner that addresses the research question: What are the teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the DBST, as well as the IE Team, in establishing inclusive schools? This data will be presented and discussed according to the themes and sub-themes identified during the process of qualitative content analysis. In the discussion these findings are interpreted in terms of existing literature in answering the research question.

4.2   RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study has been grounded within Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological framework, and therefore the interpretation of the findings and discussion of the research findings will be structured within this perspective. This section of Chapter 4 focuses on placing the research findings into the context of literature and the theoretical framework. The recommendations of this study have, after reflection, consequently been presented in Chapter 5. Before presenting a discussion of the research findings, it is vital to revisit the problem statement which guided the study within the context of its theoretical framework. The research aimed to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of DBST as well as the IE Teams in establishing inclusive schools. The purpose was to gain knowledge on how teachers view their role and that of the DBST as well as IE Teams in establishing inclusive schools and determining who they think is responsible and in what way.

Analysis of data yielded important themes pertaining to teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the DBST in establishing inclusive schools. This qualitative content analysis identified four themes with subsequent sub-themes. The four themes identified were:

   a) The self-knowledge of teachers regarding the establishment of an inclusive school.
   b) Teachers' perceptions of their own role in establishing inclusive schools

c) Teachers' perceptions of the roles of the DBST and the IE Team in establishing inclusive schools.

d) Assistance required by the teachers from the DBST as well as IE Team in order to improve their practices.

The four identified themes reflect the subjective realities of the teachers involved in the study and their perspectives regarding the role of the DBST and IE Team in establishing inclusive schools. The data presented in the following sections is taken from the two sources of data generated during the data collection process namely, the semi-structured interviews as well as the focus group interviews.

4.2.1   The participants

Table 4.1 below, presents a short description of the participants in this study.

Table 4.1: Description of the participants

Participants	Age	Teaching experience	Grades	Formal education in teaching learners with barriers to learning
Lungiswa*	41	13	R	Workshops
Nosicelo*	51	19	2	No training
Vuma*	43	13	4-7	No training
Wendy*	52	22	2	No training
Maji*	42	7	4-7	Scanty training
Nozuko*	45	15	4-7	No training

Names are changed for confidentiality purposes

Most of the participants in this study are between 40 and 49 years of age. They teach classes between grade R and grade 7. Most of them have over ten years of teaching experience. None of the participants has received formal training to teach learners that present with barriers to learning.

4.2.2   Data sources

The data sources are presented in Table 4.2. When data is presented in this section, the source will be indicated by the codes used in Table 4.2. Pseudonyms and codes are used to ensure anonymity. [A summary of the themes and sub-themes identified during analysis of the data gathered in this study is presented in Table 4.3.]

Table 4.2: Data sources

Participants	Data source	
Participant 1 Lungiswa*: (P1)	Interview 1: (I1)	Focus group interview 1: (F1)
Participant 2 Nosicelo*: (P2)	Interview 2: (I2)	Focus group interview 2: (F2)
Participant 3 Vuma*: (P3)	Interview 3: (I3)	Focus group interview 3: (F3)
Participant 4 Wendy*: (P4)	Interview 4: (I4)	Focus group interview 4: (F4)
Participant 5 Maji*: (P5)	Interview 5: (I5)	Focus group interview 5: (F5)
Participant 6 Nozuko*: (P6)	Interview 6: (I6)	Focus group interview 6: (F6)

Table 4.3: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
1. The self-knowledge of teachers regarding the establishment of an inclusive school.	Teachers' knowledge regarding the concept of inclusive education. Understanding the suitability of the school under study to be established as an inclusive school.
2. Teachers' perceptions of their own role in establishing inclusive schools.	Teachers supporting one another when they work with learners experiencing barriers to learning. Giving these learners individual attention. Differentiating the curriculum so that it accommodates all learners with their diverse needs.
3. Teachers' perceptions of the DBST and the IE Team's role in establishing inclusive schools.	Train teachers in order to establish inclusive schools successfully. Teaching strategies that can be used to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning.
4. Assistance required by the teachers from the DBST as well as IE Team in order to improve their practices.	Strengthening of the ILST. Classroom and follow-up support. Support services personnel based at the school.

4.2.3   Presentation of the themes

The findings collected and analysed will be presented and discussed within the themes and sub-themes identified.

4.2.3.1   Theme 1: The self-knowledge of teachers regarding the establishment of an inclusive school

a)   *Sub-theme 1.1: Teachers' knowledge regarding the concept of inclusive education*
In their responses, participants in this study seemed to have a sound knowledge of inclusive education. However, some teachers expressed their concern with the limited knowledge they have regarding the concept of inclusive education. These teachers reported that they were not exposed to any policies that informed the establishment of inclusive schools. Those who had an understanding of the policy articulated that the policy was not clear in terms of accommodating the learners who experienced barriers to learning. The following are some of their verbatim transcribed responses:

> *"Well when you talk about inclusive education, you are talking about catering for all learners with the same curriculum whereby you give the learners work according to their pace. That means you teach according to their pace" (P3-I3).*

> *"Inclusive education means that we admit all learners especially those with barriers, they are the ones we really have to admit" (P2-I2).*

> *"WP6 says we need to include every child, whether the child has a problem in learning or not. You need to accommodate every child. We need to support other schools as well when they are experiencing problems" (P6-I6).*

> *"I don't want to lie to you. I am not sure what needs to be done, what kids are we supposed to take. Some learners are transferred to our school while they remove others. I really don't understand this inclusivity" (P1-I1).*

> *"Inclusive education I think are these kids who have barriers a lot and they cannot do anything on their own. They end up going to the school of skills. I don't know any policy of inclusive education" (P4-I4).*

> *"Very little information I have about inclusive education, I still need training. Nothing I know with regards to the policy of inclusion" (P5-I5).*

They all articulated that the training they received was not enough to equip them to develop their school as an inclusive school. According to these participants, due to lack of training, they have little information regarding inclusive education. This makes it difficult for these teachers to establish their school as an inclusive school. It was found that all of the participants in this study lacked a comprehensive knowledge base of inclusive education.

b)   *Sub-theme1.2: Understanding the suitability of the school under study to be established as an inclusive school*

All six participants who participated in this study have the perception that this school is not suitable for establishment as an inclusive school. These teachers articulated that they were not consulted when the school under study was identified to be established as an inclusive school. Their apprehension regarding identification as an inclusive school stems from their concerns regarding the pass rate of the school. The teacher–learner ratio was also highlighted. Each teacher has between 45 and 50 learners in the classroom. The participants' responses to this sub-theme provide an insight into their real experiences:

> *"This school is said to be inclusive, we were just told that. The department just said we are an inclusive school without coming to us and ask whether we want. Now when we start complaining about these learners, they say we must remember that we are an inclusive school" (P2-I2).*

> *"On the other hand when the department looks at the pass rate, it is compared to the other schools that are not inclusive. It was not supposed to be like that because we have learners with challenges you see? They even say these learners are coming from their same area, forgetting that the neighbouring schools they comparing us with are not inclusive schools like our school" (P2-F2).*

> *"The department must consult with us first before the implementation of the policy. It must stop to make decisions for us, because these policies are implemented by us. They come with theory and when it comes to the classroom you are left alone to implement. We have different kids with different learning problems. They need more attention from you and sometimes you don't reach to all of them because the class is full" (P4-I4).*

> *"In our classes we do have one or two learners with barriers. Now we are told that we must accept learners from other schools who also have barriers. We have our own challenges already and if we are given more learners with barriers that means extra work and extra care should be given. This is too much for us; I don't think it was a good idea to make our school inclusive. Unfortunately the department decided on that" (P6-I6).*

"I think the learners with barriers need an intensive intervention programs. I don't see us as teachers capable of dealing with these learners, let alone bringing more from the other schools. As a person I thought when they say our school is an inclusive school, there will be a side of these learners that we see are really struggling. Then skills section is opened for them and they get support in those skills, instead of being transferred to special schools" (P1-I1)

"If they can organise an assistant teachers 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 inclusive school. While you are busy with your lowest group, they are chasing each other and making noise" (P5-I5).

"I think WP6 is just the law that is protecting these learners in that, the education system must be catered in such a way that it accommodates them. Teachers are not comfortable with this policy" (P3-I3).

All six participants reported that the Department of Education was supposed to consult with them first before identifying their school to be established as an inclusive school. These teachers articulated that they need to be part of the decision-making process, as they will be the ones who will be engaged in the proposed changes. Their perception regarding the pass rate is that their school was not supposed to be compared to other schools in that respect.

Although the school was identified as an inclusive school, it seems as if the curriculum advisors, who are part of the DBST, do not understand the concept of inclusivity. It is clear from their expectations that the curriculum advisors are still operating according to the medical model and exclusionary practices. This team questions the attitude to the pass rate of the schools, and teachers are under pressure to perform according to an uncertain target. Some responses are:

"We are expected to produce results forgetting that we have learners with barriers to learning" (P3-F3).

"The Curriculum Advisors jump on our throats, asking why we have a high failure rate. They do not consider that we are an inclusive school as the DBST says. This is confusing really" (P1-F1).

Successful implementation of inclusive education requires teachers to be knowledgeable about inclusive education (Pearce et al., 2009; Forlin & Chambers 2011; Razali et al., 2013). According to UNESCO (2005), a mainstream school which adopts inclusive education values is required to make changes in order to 'fit' and address the barriers to learning, as

well as the strengths of the child. Participants in this study reported inclusive schools as schools that accommodate all learners in the classroom, regardless of their challenges. By contrast, these respondents refer to learners experiencing barriers to learning as learners who have disabilities or are cognitively challenged.

Regarding the suitability of the school to be established as an inclusive school, teachers who participated in this study perceived the school to be not suitable. These teachers highlighted insufficient material and human resources as the major challenge. This correlates with Ocloo and Subey's (2008) argument that insufficient resources and a lack of provision of generic support and general support services leads to teachers rejecting learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Participants in this study articulated that the school has been identified to be established as an inclusive school, yet they have to produce a high pass rate. This correlates with McGhinnie-Richmond et al's. (2009) argument that the inclusion initiative may be potentially in conflict with the policy initiatives that aim to identify teacher effectiveness and teaching quality in terms of learner academic outcome.

4.2.3.2 *Theme 2: Teachers' perceptions of their own role in establishing inclusive schools*

Three roles were identified within this theme by the teachers who participated in this study. Firstly, teachers must be are aware that they can ask for support from their fellow colleagues when confronted with a learner who is experiencing barriers to learning. Secondly, working with these learners individually should be the accepted role of the teachers in an inclusive school. Lastly, the curriculum has to be differentiated in order to accommodate the diverse needs of the learners. These will be discussed under the appropriate sub-themes.

a)   *Sub-theme 2.1: Teachers supporting one another when they work with learners experiencing barriers to learning*

All six teachers who participated in this study reported their awareness of what is supposed to happen in an inclusive school. One important aspect, collaboration among colleagues as the first step towards accommodating learners experiencing barriers to learning, is highlighted throughout.

> *"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, and that collaboration between the teachers I think can also work" (P1-I1).*

> *"Everything starts with the teacher because you are the one who is sitting with this learner. When you are confronted with the problem, try to understand it and listen to the child. This learner might be struggling with school work because they*

have problem at home. If you can't find the problem ask from your fellow colleagues for help, some learners are afraid of their teachers. Perhaps they will open up to other teachers" (P5-I5).

"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" (P4-I4).

"I am really not sure what are we supposed to be doing with these kids. What I do is I ask other teachers how they handle certain problems. For instance the boys with behaviour problems, there are teachers who know how to handle them. So I go and ask" (P6-I6).

"You know what I do; I teach them the concept as requested by the department. We are told that in Grade 2 for example, that we must teach 5 consonants per week. In the meantime this child is still struggling to write his name. How is he going to be able to learn those 5 consonants? I go to the Grade R or 1 class and ask for support there" (P2-I2).

"The only thing I do is to ask [a teacher] work from a lower grade. It works for some children and for others it doesn't. Other learners laugh at them if they see that they are doing work from the lower grade. They start calling them names" (P3-I3).

These teachers are of the perception that working together and supporting each other does work for some learners. They find collaboration as one way of reducing the pressure on themselves as teachers when they are faced with learners with barriers to learning. For instance, when it comes to learners with behaviour challenges, teachers in this study agreed that sometimes by just listening to the learner and creating a welcoming atmosphere, learners feel better. These teachers acknowledge that certain teachers have those skills; therefore they refer the learners to those teachers.

"Teachers must dedicate their time in working with these children. When the other teachers ask me, I tell them how I do in my class. I tell them that all the kids are unique. We must accept all the kids" (P5-F5).

"When colleagues ask me, I tell them that in my classroom we only have one parent. I preach that we are the children of one parent and we become one family in that way. Children will not discriminate against each other because of the problems they have" (P2-F2).

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b) *Sub-theme 2.2: Working with learners that present with barriers to learning on an individual basis*

All participants in this study indicated that learners with barriers to learning might benefit from the lesson when given individual attention. However, there seemed to be a challenge with regard to supporting these learners individually. This was shown by the following responses:

"In an inclusive classroom as I think learners are not the same, others have problems. From my experience, learners with barriers to learning are doing well in Maths but not with language, they don't move [improve]. In that class I give each learner individual attention, although it does not always work" (P4-I4).

"When you identified this learner, you remove [her] from the group. 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" (P1-I1).

"We do have afternoon classes. We try and work with them individually. The curriculum is too fast for these learners. You will find out when the term ends, you did not finish the work of the term" (P5-I5).

"Those who are struggling with school work need one-on-one [support], of which there is not enough time for that. Most of the times we just do [something] for the department to see that we are on par" (P5-F5).

"What we usually do is that, we teach a particular topic to the whole class. You will find out that some learners are left behind. I use their intervention book whereby I teach the same content to see whether there will be an improvement when I work on a one-on-one basis with them" (P3-I3).

"It's very difficult to do, especially because we have to change periods. I don't see the time in forty-minutes to accommodate these learners" (P3-F3).

"I give my whole class work to do after I have introduced the concept to all of them. My lowest group, I will take them one by one. Some of them will understand but at their own pace" (P2-I2).

"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

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we change periods. There is not always enough time to work on that intervention book" (P3-I3).

All the teachers who participated in this study highlighted that they have an intervention book which they use when working individually with the learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Their commitment to working with them individually is time-consuming. They expressed that they don't have enough time to make that kind of intervention. These teachers responded that some learners benefit from the one-on-one approach.

c)   *Sub-theme 2.3: Differentiation*

All six participants in this study agreed that the curriculum has to be differentiated in order to accommodate learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. These teachers articulated that curriculum differentiation is the mandate for an inclusive school. They mentioned that they were working according to what the department expected them to do, even though they were not always finding the process easy.

> *"Their work won't be the same as others. I differentiate. For instance, my learners are in grade 2 and some of them are performing at a grade 1 level" (P2-I2).*

> *"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" (P6-I6).*

> *"We try to give them work, if we see that they are not coping with the work you give the whole class, you try to give work from the previous grade" (P5-I5).*

> *"I have three groups in my class and we are told by the department to group them. So my lowest group, I give them work that is on their level" (P1-I1).*

> *"We are expected to do intervention by the department. So I do intervention in my class. For instance, I teach grade 7. I am expected to do activities that are lower than that grade. That means I must look for activities from grade 6 or 5" (P3-I3).*

> *"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" (P4-I4).*

Data collection and analysis revealed that teachers are at the forefront in establishing inclusive schools. These teachers seem to be aware of what their role in the process is.

Teachers view inclusive education as composed of learners with different abilities, yet these learners should be accommodated in the same education setting (Deku & Ackah 2012). Implementing inclusive education involves the joint responsibility of teachers, parents and the DBST, as well as the community (Du Plessis, 2013). Unless every part of the education system adapts to integrate the values of inclusion, establishing inclusive schools will not become a reality. This is in line with Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model that highlights how each system is interconnected with and dependent on other systems. Therefore, the teachers will be mutually influenced by the cooperation of the DBST, as they are also part of the education system.

All six teachers who participated in this study reported their awareness of what ought to happen in an inclusive school. Collaboration among teachers within the school was reported as the first step towards accommodating learners who experience barriers to learning. By collaborating with fellow colleagues, it is likely that teachers will not suffer in silence. According to the Department of Education (2001) collaboration is crucial as teachers draw on each other's expertise and they support one another. This correlates with Swart and Pettipher's (2011) study, stating that teachers, parents, education support professionals as well as learners should handle the challenges of establishing inclusive schools together. Teachers furthermore highlighted that they ask for assistance from the colleagues whom they think are experienced and from those who are willing to assist. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011), collaboration takes place when two co-equal parties voluntarily engage in shared decision-making as they work together towards a common goal.

The participants in this study furthermore revealed that in establishing an inclusive school it is important to support learners who are experiencing barriers to learning on an individual basis. This, according to these teachers, is the requirement from the DBST. Similar studies have also found that in order for the learners to learn skills and knowledge according to their age and abilities as required in an inclusive classroom, the curriculum has to be individualised (Janney & Snell 2000; Pearce et al., 2009). These findings are of concern, as these researchers argue that individualisation is not a simple task, particularly if teachers have a limited range of pedagogical strategies. Poor planning by the department of education seems to be linked to the challenges experienced by the teachers in supporting learners who are struggling on an individual basis. This correlates with Donohue and Bornman's (2014) argument that the implementation of inclusive education is at an apparent standstill as a result of unclear guidelines.

These participants reported that the curriculum should be differentiated in order to support learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. The Department of Education (2011)

states that curriculum differentiation involves processes of modification, change, adaptation and the varying of teaching methods and strategies. This correlates with Pearce et al's. (2009) argument that if the learner struggles to understand the content, content from the lower level should be selected until the learners experience success.

Participants in this study articulated that they do not always differentiate the curriculum due to their lack of skills. According to Donohue and Bornman (2014), teachers cannot be expected to accomplish the task of tailoring the curriculum to suit each learner's particular needs and pace if learning in an inclusive classroom is not thoroughly detailed. The Department of Education (2011) acknowledges that strategies and components of curriculum differentiation may be seen by the teachers as complex and overwhelming. However, this policy highlights that it is important to take the first step.

4.2.3.3 Theme 3: Training that teachers require in order to establish an inclusive school successfully

Participants in this study spoke about their uncertainty in establishing this school as an inclusive school due to the lack of comprehensive knowledge of inclusive education. The teachers reported a lack of skills in working with learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. All participants expressed a desperate need for training. They have attended a few workshops on inclusive education; however, they claim that those workshops were not enough. Their responses are expressed under the following sub-theme:

a) *Sub-theme 3.1: Lack of a comprehensive knowledge on inclusive education*

"Well the district must give us intensive workshops, training the teachers on how to handle the 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" (P3-I3).

"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 to the teachers" (P3-F3).

"If the teachers can be well trained, I think they can play a huge role in making this school inclusive" (P1-I1).

"The department must provide in-service training on how we establish this school to be inclusive. I need to be trained again on the policy of inclusive education" (P5-I5).

"We are not qualified to deal with all these problems adequately let alone successfully" (P5-F5).

"Teachers are willing to accommodate all the learners who experience barriers to learning; challenge is we don't know how" (P6-I6).

"The system is failing our learners. Before the department introduced OBE, we did not have many problems. They must bring the old systems back because that is what really worked. We use to drill the children and they grasped the concept" (P2-F2).

"The big thing is to train the teachers. 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" (P4-I4)?

b)   *Sub-theme 3.2: Lack of skills to teach in a diverse classroom*

Participants expressed their concern regarding their lack of the skills required to teach learners with different learning needs. Although they have tried to use inclusive strategies in their classrooms to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning such as curriculum differentiation, teachers reported that they were not comfortable. They highlighted that in their training as teachers they were only prepared to teach learners in mainstream classes.

"They say we must work with learners who have problems. Whereas we don't have a knowledge or a know how to deal with them" (P2-I2).

"We are not qualified to do the job. We are causing more damage than good because we are not qualified to do this" (P2-F2).

"The problem is that, we are expected to teach the kids with problems although we never received any remedial education. Remedial education is a specialisation on its own. So we were never trained on that" (P5-I5).

"The scary part of it is that, teachers are being pushed into doing something they are not qualified for. I wanted to be a teacher not a person who actually works with learners with barriers to learning" (P1-F1).

"The department must train us and give us practical examples and material if possible to work with these learners" (P4-I4).

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"If they want us to establish this school as an inclusive school, teachers must be trained on how to teach learners with barriers to learning. You cannot expect teachers to automatically teach learners who have barriers to learning. WP 6 does not address the problem. How can you implement the policy if you are not sure? Definitely you experience some problems" (P3-I3).

"We received few workshops regarding inclusive education but that was not enough. If they say other schools must transfer their kids to us, how are we supposed to handle them? How must we help those neighbouring schools if we are not fully equipped?"(P6-I6).

"Workshops do not go deep. You will come back and try to do what you were told but you struggle" (P1-I1).

All the participants' perceptions in this study were that the training that was given was not enough. These participants expressed the viewthat comprehensive training should be given to all teachers in an inclusive school.

Participants in this study are of the belief that the Department of Education should train teachers before the implementation of its policies. These teachers argue that they were introduced to the concept of inclusion through scanty training sessions which they claim that were a waste of time, compared with what is expected of them. This correlates with Anati's (2012) argument that training that was rendered to the teachers did not prepare them to teach in an inclusive setting.

It is likely that teachers would like to take ownership in establishing an inclusive school should they receive intensive training. This correlates with the findings by Granados and Kruse (2011) and Ryan (2010), which state that the district inclusive policy should be infused into the school, making sure that all the stakeholders involved in the school understand the various issues of inclusion and where they stand. This is also in line with Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model that highlights how each system is interconnected and dependent on other systems. Therefore, to change the whole school system to being inclusive, each individual system must be addressed so that the joint influence of the systems can be positive.

Participants in this study reported a sound knowledge of their role in establishing inclusive schooling. For instance, these participants highlighted the use of individualisation as a strategy to accommodate learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. However, these teachers reported their self-perceived incompetency in this role. This correlates with Pearce

et al's. (2009) study which argues that teachers need skills to be able to differentiate the curriculum or develop an individual support plan. According to Dreyer (2014), training should focus on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners.

4.2.3.4 *Theme 4: Assistance required by the teachers from the DBST and IE Teams in order to improve their practices*

Participants in this study felt unanimously that in order for this school to be developed as an inclusive school, in-depth support from the DBST and the IE Team were essential. They were of the view that the ILST was not skilled enough to fully support them. These teachers articulated that support personnel should be based at their school, and that the DBST should give them back-up in terms of hands-on and follow-up support.

a)   Sub-theme 4.1: Support programs that are available at school

Teachers perceived the ILST as just a support program within the school, with members who were not sure what to do. These teachers articulated that the ILST provides a space for teachers to complain about the learners but they are not addressing the problems. Participants in this study require the DBST to assist the ILST in dealing with the cases they encounter in the school.

> *"Teachers who are in the ILST are the representative of the whole school. Each Grade is represented but none of them have the skills to work with learners with barriers to learning. These teachers need to be supported by the DBST to work with these problems. In most cases our ILST works with social problems. Even then they just refer the case as it is to the district social worker. As a teacher I don't get a feedback or told how to deal with the learner. Teachers will send problems such as the child is slow in class, we don't get any support" (P5-I5).*

> *"ILST is not functional. There is not always time to meet to discuss these cases. Sometimes teachers do not refer the cases due to the difficulty in dealing with the paper work, therefore there is no use to meet if there is nothing to discuss. If they do meet the case is referred straight to the district. You as a teacher you don't get feedback or any other kind of support. The DBST must strengthen this team by coming to sit in their meetings and discuss the cases referred to the team" (P5-F5).*

> *"I used to be a member of the ILST. There were subcommittees of numeracy and literacy and they used to talk about what must be done for the learners who have barriers. But you realised that these subcommittees will only leave it there. No support really that goes to the teacher" (P1-I1).*

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"In that team we have different sub-committees. For instance we have behaviour committee; there is no structure as to what do we do as a team with a child with behaviour problem. If the district can bring the relevant people to tell work with the cases together, for instance the behaviour person" (PI-F1).

"We don't have any clear support at the school for such learners. As a result every day we are experiencing problems. Some of these learners have a problem with behaviour, perhaps they fight after they fought you don't know what to do as a teacher. We do have an ILST. I am really not sure what is happening in that team. All I know they do have their meetings once a month" (P6-I6).

"The ILST can only work once it is part of the system that is working. At the moment it is just an area for teachers to complain about the learners. They are not addressing the problem. The district must help us here" (P6-F6).

"Except that there is an IE Team that supports us? There is nothing else" (P2-I2).

"Yes we do have a committee, ILST. I don't know when they give support to us. All I know is you refer a child to them; they simply refer them to a social worker or a psychologist. You don't get any feedback or support" (P4-I4).

"They are complaining and telling each other why it can't work; therefore the case must be referred to the district and only to the social worker. That is the only person I always hear the cases are referred to, I don't know about the other people in the support services" (P4-F4).

"Well there is an ILST, once they find out the learner cannot cope, they refer them to the district. Even the ILST is composed of the teachers who do not have remedial education. Only one teacher in that committee has remedial education. So I will say the ILST is not functional. The department must help us. We only follow that procedure because the department says so" (P3-I3).

"We were told that the school must have an ILST and each phase must be represented. Nobody has remedial education there" (P3-F3).

An ILST is the "backbone" of the school in terms of support to establish an inclusive school and supporting learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. According to the participants, this team has to be strengthened so that it can deal with the challenges adequately. Currently they do not seem to be qualified to support teachers in providing appropriate support to learners, and they focus mainly on social problems. From the above,

it also seems that the teachers would want more support from the DBST, although they have support from the IE Team that is based at the local resource centre.

b)   *Sub-theme 4.2: Classroom and follow-up support*

Participants in this study articulated a desperate need for support in the classroom. All participants further expressed that after training the DBST should come to the school and show them practically how to establish this school as inclusive. They insisted that the DBST should not just give a workshop and make follow-up visits after a long time. Participants expect the DBST to provide hands-on in-class support, as evident from the following transcripts:

> *"The DBST must come to my class and sit here. They must observe me the 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 and they must come visit us once per week as they say we are an inclusive school" (P1-I1).*

> *"Show me how to do it in class not just training me to implement the policy. They must constantly remind us" ((P4-I4).*

> *"The DBST must be available at all times. They must come to school and spend time with the learner who has a barrier, solve the problem and put him back in the mainstream class" (P4-F4).*

> *"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" (P2-I2).*

> *"They do not equip us in these workshops. Sometimes you just find that it is waste of time. When they visit, they just want to ask lot of questions. The district must come to our classes and show us. Their visits must not be once per term as it happens at the moment" (P3-I3).*

> *"When the DBST visits us they always target the learners who are struggling. When they don't get what they expected about these learners, they write negative reports forgetting that they come once or sometimes twice per term. They must come more often and go to the classes to show us how to do intervention in the class of 50 learners" (P6-I6).*

> *"Since the district says we are an inclusive school, they are supposed to be everyday with us. Taking us through the process" (P6-F6).*

> *"Support in the form of hands on will be sufficient for me. If the DBST can just take one learner and work with him or her for the whole term to see what miracle will they make" (P5-I5).*

Teachers are concerned with the feedback they receive after the DBST has visited their classes for monitoring. These teachers require the district to be hands-on and show them how to work with the learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers furthermore claim that for the school under study to be developed as an inclusive school, there ought to be better collaboration between the DBST and the teachers.

c)   *Sub-theme 4.2: Support services for personnel based at the school*

The DBSTs are mandated by Education White Paper 6 support for the establishment of inclusive schools. The perceptions of participants in this studyare that support personnel should be based at their school. This team should be available on a daily basis, so that when they experience a problem they can refer to the team immediately.

> *"We have an IE Team 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" (P2-I2).*

> *"The IE Team must work full time at our school.At the moment I don't think they are hands on with us as a school" (P6-I6).*

> *"Most of the kids are raised by their grandparents. If this school can be prepared to be an inclusive school, I think there are a lot of kids that can benefit. The school must have a social worker on site" (P1-I1).*

> *"I think we need teacher aids. We can't reach to all of them. Individual attention is difficult. When I sit with the learner who is struggling, the teacher aid will monitor the whole class" (P5-I5).*

> *"If they want this school to be inclusive, it means the burden of class teaching will be a problem. When they are busy with those who are struggling who is going to look after the whole class? If the department can have extra staff and this staff must be trained on remedial education" (P3-I3).*

> *"We are supposed to have psychologist stationed here. We want people from the district who are qualified" (P4-I4).*

All the teachers who participated in this study perceived a lack of support in the form of human resources. There is a concern that they wait too long to get support personnel from the district.

Despite the efforts made by the Department of Education to establish inclusive schools so that learners who are experiencing barriers to learning can be accommodated, teachers seemed to be frustrated with this initiative. Whilst teachers are to be the driving force in establishing inclusive schools, they do not feel adequately prepared to do so. According to the participants in this study they have not received intensive training on inclusive education.

Researchers found that teachers are not provided with sufficient support in implementing inclusive education (Dreyer, 2014; Du Plessis, 2013 and Donohue & Bornman 2014). According to the Department of Education (2001), the primary aim of the DBST is to support all learners, teachers and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs are met. Teachers who participated in this study highlighted that the ILST of that school was not functioning; therefore, the DBST should assist in strengthening the team. This expectation is in line with the Department of Education's (2001) policy which states that the DBST must provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these ILST.

The teacher participants in this study unanimously agreed on the importance of classroom-based support. Several studies have pointed out that classroom support is crucial in establishing inclusive schools (Janney & Snell 2000; Pearce et al., 2009 and Dalton et al., 2014). According to the Department of Education (2001), the primary aim of the DBST is to provide systemic support for all teachers who need it. Donohue and Bornman (2014) add that this systemic support helps to strengthen the skills of teachers in coping with more diverse classes.

All the participants in this study articulated that a lack of the skills for teaching in a diverse classroom is a challenge. They pointed out that teaching a diverse group of learners requires skilful teachers who are thoroughly trained. Therefore, they suggested that the IE Team should be at their school on a daily basis. According to the Department of Education (2001), the DBST of which the IE Team is part, should assist teachers at institutions in creating flexible teaching methods. However, the WCED requires the IE Teams to support the schools identified in establishing inclusive schools on a weekly basis.

4.3 CONCLUSION

According to the data in this chapter, teachers' perceptions are that establishing inclusive schools is a positive step towards including all learners in a single education system. However, although the inclusive school under study receives focused training by the IE Team, teachers still don't take ownership of the implementation process. It can be anticipated that the more the DBST and IE Teams give teachers structured on-going follow-up support, the more effective their role will be in establishing an inclusive school.

In addition, from the professional background of the participants it is evident that they were not trained to teach learners who present with barriers to learning. It is therefore concluded that teachers need intensive training on how to develop an inclusive school. Chapter 5 presents some concluding remarks and recommendations, as well as commenting on the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In the Western Cape Education Department some schools were identified to be established as inclusive schools. DBST and IE Teams were established to perform the duty of supporting teachers to establish inclusive schools.

The aim and desired outcome of inclusive education is to include all learners under one education system wherever possible, regardless of what differences and difficulties they may have. Learners that present with barriers to learning can learn given the appropriate support. The paradigm shift from the medical model to the social ecological model has informed this qualitative interpretive study.

In this research, the researcher has undertaken to explore the teachers' perspective regarding the role of the DBST as well as the IE Team in establishing inclusive schools. Teachers are seen as the primary implementers of inclusion at schools. The researcher has consequently conducted semi-structured individual interviews, as well as focus group interviews, with teachers who are working at the school under study to gain insights on their perceptions.

To be able to understand, describe, and interpret the teachers' perspective, a basic qualitative study founded on the interpretive paradigm was used to approach the following research question: What are teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the DBST as well as IE Team in establishing inclusive schools? The specific aims of this study were to determine:

- How do teachers perceive their knowledge with regard to the establishment of an inclusive school?
- In establishing inclusive schools, how do teachers understand their own role and that of the DBST?
- What assistance do teachers require from the DBST to help them improve their practices?

In this chapter, concluding remarks about this qualitative study will be discussed and recommendations will be made. The limitations of the study will furthermore be discussed and possible future research suggested.

5.2   CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study, the data indicated that teachers' perceptions regarding the role of DBST as well as IE Team in establishing inclusive schools can be divided into four themes which frequently interact with one another. The themes are:

- Teachers' own knowledge regarding the establishment of an inclusive school. Their knowledge influences three other contexts namely
- Teachers' perceptions of their own role in establishing inclusive schools.
- Teachers' perceptions of the DBST and the IE Team's role in establishing inclusive schools.
- Assistance required from the DBST as well as IE Team in order to improve their practices.

These sub-themes were identified and discussed accordingly in Chapter 4. The data collected from this study were mapped against the literature. Flowing from this are some recommendations towards enhancing the establishment of inclusive schools

Through this research, it was discovered that although teachers are at the forefront in establishing inclusive schools, the DBST as well as the IE Teams must take the lead in supporting teachers. For all the participants in this study, the DBST is perceived as not giving enough support to teachers. These teachers seem to be aware of their intended role in the process, for instance, differentiating the curriculum, individualised support, and collaborating with other teachers. However, participants reported a lack confidence in doing this task, blaming the insufficient training they received in working with learners who experience barriers to learning. Lack of preparedness regarding the establishment of an inclusive school resulted in the teachers not taking ownership of the process. It seems, therefore, that the participants' own training background still influences them to view learners who experience barriers to learning through deficit lenses, and therefore they prefer rather to refer them to special schools.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, it is apparent that there is a gap between policy and the implementation. Participants perceive policy-makers as not in touch with the reality of educational conditions in schools. In addition, the term "inclusive education" seems to be understood to mean integrating only learners who have disabilities in the mainstream schools. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers be re-orientated on policy-informing documents in the South African context, as well as the policy documents that guide the establishment of inclusive schools comprehensively.

Despite the focused training received from the IE Team, participants in this study seem to lack a sense of ownership. In order to develop this, it is suggested that the IE team engage in structured on-going follow-up support. This should be gradually withdrawn, to enable the staff to take responsibility.

In addition, trans-disciplinary collaboration is essential. Participants may not perceive the establishment of an inclusive school as overwhelming, as they currently seem to do, if they have the opportunity of being involved in the decision-making process, particularly when it comes to the support of learners who experience barriers to learning. This highlights the important roles of the different support personnel and their collaboration with teachers, empowering them in developing inclusive schools. The suggestion here is thus that teachers are acknowledged as equal partners in the decision-making processes.

The ILST is the backbone of the school in terms of support. Learners who experience barriers to learning must be supported and the school must ensure that all learners have access to support, enabling them to achieve their optimal potential. It is vital that the members of the school management team take a lead in driving this team forward. The suggestion is that representatives of the DBST and the IE Team attend meetings of this team and provide input during case discussions.

5.4   POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

Information gathered from this study may assist in better collaboration between the participants and the DBST and IE Teams, and may assist in developing a sense of ownership among the participants. The findings of this study may also assist the IE Team in planning for the establishment of inclusive schools in the future. The recommendations presented through this study may also assist the teachers to exert positive efforts towards taking ownership, supporting and promoting the greatest possible trans-disciplinary collaboration with the IE Team and the DBST. This may empower teachers to support learners who present with barriers to learning with confidence.

5.5   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was narrow due to the sample size. Although case study research is mostly characterised by a smaller sample size, an increase in the sample size would possibly have promoted the transferability of the research findings.

Another limitation is related to the language used. Participants suggested that it is better to use their mother tongue because English is their second language. They mentioned that they were more comfortable with their mother tongue, and the researcher had to translate

what they were saying into English. There is thus always the possibility that some of the significance of this data might have become lost in translation.

A further limitation of this study involves the researcher, who works as a Departmental official. Although the researcher made an effort to be unbiased and ethically responsible, not trying to influence the outcomes, participants may not have answered freely and openly to the questions.

This research focused on the perspectives of teachers regarding the role of the DBST, as well as the IE Team, in establishing inclusive schools, and therefore used data collection methods which aimed to gain insight into their perceptions. The researcher acknowledges that perceptions are influenced by many factors both intrinsic and extrinsic which are not the focus of this study. The use of additional methods may have improved the research findings. For instance, the use of observation may have been useful in order to provide additional data regarding how teachers support learners who experience barriers to learning in their classrooms.

5.6   SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The sample was drawn from only one school, which was identified to be established as an inclusive school, and a research study that involved a demographically more diverse sample might have generated richer data. Therefore further research could include participants from other inclusive schools within the WCED.

While participants in this study highlighted the importance of collaboration when working with learners who present with barriers to learning, it may be significant to explore the perceptions of the school management team (SMT) regarding their role in establishing inclusive schools.

The research has shown that although the school was identified to be established as an inclusive school, curriculum advisors who form part of the DBST seemed not to understand the concept of inclusivity. Further studies exploring perceptions of district officials on the effectiveness of inclusion may shed more light on the teachers' experiences regarding the establishment of inclusive schools.

This research has shown that intensive training is necessary to provide participants with the necessary skills to establish an inclusive school. It would be interesting to explore the experiences of success or failure in establishing an inclusive school after its exposure to training.

5.7   CONCLUSION

Although the Department of Education provides policies and policy informing documents that guide the establishment of inclusive schools, there is a gap between policy and implementation. Participants in this research study agree in principle with the goals of establishing inclusive schools, but they highlighted their unpreparedness to work with a diverse group of learners within one classroom – and the teacher-learner ratio hinders the progress of such individualised support. Therefore more support, in terms of human resources and human resource development, is required.

Teachers could take ownership of the establishment of inclusive schools and make the inclusive education policies a reality should they receive comprehensive training programmes in areas where they lack the relevant skills. These training programmes should be followed by structured on-going follow-up support. IE Teams have the capacity to enter classrooms therefore they should provide teachers with the practical skills they need to support learners who experience barriers to learning. A trans-disciplinary collaboration between teachers and the DBST, as well as the IE Team, is necessary.

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ADDENDUM A: APPROVAL NOTICE

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
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Approval Notice
New Application

14-May-2014
Mfuthwana, Thembeka T

Proposal #: DESC/Mfuthwana/May2014/19
Title: Teachers' perspectives on the establishment of an inclusive school: a case study.

Dear Ms Thembeka Mfuthwana,

Your **New Application** received on **08-May-2014**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **13-May-2014 -12-May-2015**

General comments:
The researcher is reminded to submit copies of institutional permission letters to the DESC as soon as they have been obtained.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**DESC/Mfuthwana/May2014/19**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218089183.

Included Documents:
Permission letters_ application
Interview schedule
Research proposal
DESC application
REC application form
DESC recommendation letter
Informed consent form

Sincerely,

Clarissa GRAHAM
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1.Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2.Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.

3.Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4.Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period.** Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5.Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6.Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouch within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch Universtiy Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7.Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8.Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9.Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10.On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

ADDENDUM B: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

<u>STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY</u>

Teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the District Based Support Team as well as Inclusive Education Team in establishing inclusive schools

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by ThembekaMfuthwana, Masters' student from the Educational Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University. The results will contribute to the thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an educator in the school that was identified to be established as an inclusive school. It was a purposive sample, meaning participants were selected from the list of educators. Every third educator in the list was selected.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is designed to gain knowledge on how teachers view their role and that of the District Based Support Team, as well as the Inclusive Education Team, in establishing inclusive schools.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I shall ask you to take part by doing the following:

1. Individual interview

You will be asked to participate in an individual interview that will be audio-taped. It should take more or less 30 minutes of your time.

2. Focus group interview

You will also be asked to participate in the focus group interview, where we shall discuss as a group the same questions that were posed in the interview. It should also take 30 minutes of your time.

Location

We shall work in the staff room at a convenient time for you.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Participation in this study will not cause you discomfort or harm in any way.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

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Participation in this study will not benefit you directly or cause you discomfort in any way. It might enable the District Based Support Teams, of, which the Inclusive Education Team forms part, to adapt their efforts and strategies in establishing inclusive schools.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive any payment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and which can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a password protected computer, and data will be kept safely in a locked cabinet by the researcher.

The thesis will be made available to the participants for scrutiny. Copies of the thesis will be made available to the participants if they request it.If activities are to be audio- or videotaped, participants will have access to the transcriptions to review whether the data is authentic.

Any background information that will make identification possible will not be included in any academic paper or public documents. With regard to interviews and focus groups conducted, participants will have access to the transcripts to review whether the data is authentic. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the anonymity of the participants.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not.If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Ms ThembekaMfuthwana at tmfuthwana@gmail.com/ 0834296743, the principal researcher or Dr Lorna Dreyer, the supervisor at lornadreyer@sun.ac.za/ 021 8083502.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty.You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms MaléneFouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to meby Ms ThembekaMfuthwana in English and I amin command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated for me.I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to mysatisfaction.

I hereby voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Subject/Participant

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____   _____

Signature of Subject/   **Date**
Participant or Legal Representative

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ and/or [his/her] representative _____. *[H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

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_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   **Date**

ADDENDUM C: INTERVIEW GUIDE: SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

Title: Teachers' perceptions regarding the role of the District-Based Support Team as well as Inclusive Education Team in establishing inclusive schools.

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

- How do teachers perceive their knowledge with regard to the establishment of an inclusive school?

- In establishing an inclusive school, how do teachers understand their own role and the role of the inclusive education team?

- What assistance do teachers require from the inclusive education team to help them improve their practices?

Interview guide:

- General information

- What is your name and how old are you?

- How many years have you been teaching in this district? In this school?

- Can you talk a little bit about your experience in teaching learners with barriers to learning?

- In which phase and grade are you teaching?

- Did you receive any formal education in teaching learners with barriers to learning (tertiary level and workshops)?

- What is your knowledge with regard to the establishment of an inclusive school?

- What is your knowledge about the concept of inclusive education?

- What education policies inform the establishment of inclusive schools?

- This school was identified to be established as an inclusive school. What does that mean?

- Do you think your school is suitable to be established as an inclusive school and why?

- In establishing an inclusive school how do teachers understand their role and the role of the inclusive education team?

- What is the role of the teachers in establishing this school as an inclusive school?

- What is the role of the inclusive education team in establishing an inclusive school?

- How do you practise inclusivity in your classroom?

- What assistance do teachers require from the inclusive education team to help them improve their practices?

- What is your school like in terms of the support for learners experiencing barriers to learning?

- Can you comment on the curriculum, comparative to all the learners in your class? (Does it accommodate all the learners?)

- Do you have anything specialto accommodate learners with barriers to learning in your class?

- How is the support programme at your school managed?

ADDENDUM D: PORTION OF THE TRANSLATED TRANSCRIPTION FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Sihle	Can you talk a little bit about your experience of teaching learners who experience barriers to learning?
Lungi	I teach in the mainstream classroom and then you will find that in class of about forty learners, there will be five or six learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. And you realise that it is a headache to the teachers because most of the teacher didn't do remedial teaching.
Sihle	Ok
Lungi	And then you are expected to do intervention in the class. Say for instance you have a grade 7 class, and you must do activities that are lower than the grade. That means you must check activities for grade 5 for grade 4, and then if the child doesn't perform you need to refer. To the ILST. And then after the child has been referred to the ILST now they do their own testing and then they require the intervention book from you thereafter assessing the situation they recommend that the learner must be referred to the psychologist at the district and then the district will take it from there. Then the psychologist will refer the learner to a school of skills
Sihle	Oh!
Lungi	But the problem is sometimes the learners in the class are not 14 years yet to qualify for the school of skills; they are expected to be in that class until they are 14. That is the problem that we experience. You will find out that we must sit with that child. If for instance the child experience barriers in grade 4, that child must stay in the mainstream curriculum, suffering in the class and he is not benefiting in the class. And the other problem that I have experienced is that if let's say they are in the foundation Phase, they need to fail once. Even if they are not ready to go to the intermediate phase, but they must be pushed to the intermediate phase just because of age.
Sihle	Yes!
Lungi	So you will find that the learner doesn't cope even in the foundation phase and he is pushed to the intermediated phase just because he has failed in the foundation phase. Not you add more learning areas to the three they do in the foundation phase. So by adding these learning areas you are making it more difficult to that child. So the system

	is not benefiting the learners because they say the learners must failonce in a phase.
Sihle	Mhmm!
Lungi	That is a big problem andeven if they go to intermediate phase they are not ready. The same criterion is used in all the phases. So once they reach the senior phase there is total confusion and they become frustrated in class and they misbehave, even some of the learners in class tease these learners. And when they are referred to the school of skills to them is as if they are referred as non-functional or stupid. They don't like that.
Sihle	Yes! Yes!
Lungi	So that is the experience that I have. On the other side CAPS curriculum has a content that needs to be covered at a certain time. It does not accommodate these learners; the content that you need to cover won't be finished on time because they are very slow. We are always behind.
Sihle	Based on what you just mentioned Lungi would you argue that some of the barriers we experience are caused by the curriculum or the system?
Lungi	Well I will say the system, if we can do away with this thing of saying the child must fail once in a phase I think we can see some improvement. And this system of age cohort.
Sihle	Yes, this then also leads to the behaviour that we are seeing in the senior phase.
Lungi	Definitely. Definitely
Sihle	Because this child is not coping in the mainstream classroom. Ok and then now which grade are you teaching Lungi?
Lungi	I am teaching grade 6 7.
Sihle	Ok did you receive any formal education in teaching learners with barriers to learning, perhaps at tertiary level or workshops?
Lungi	That is the other problem that we are experiencing, we are expected to teach those learners although we never received any remedial education. Remedial education is a specialisation on its own. So were never trained on that.
Sihle	Ok, and now that you are in the field of work are there any workshops that introduced

	you to working with learners who experience barriers to learning?
Lungi	Well they will only ask us to do intervention where they say that you must just lower the content and you must cover the same content. Maybe let say if you are teaching fractions and you suppose to add those fractions so you must just teach them addition of fractions on a grade 5 level. Although the child is in Grade 6 of which that is the problem because the question paper is set and they are expected to do everything there. That is the only information that we were given on how to do intervention, otherwise to cater or to address barriers we...We are not trained in that.
Sihle	Ok. And this information that you just gave me was in the form of a workshop? Perhaps? How long does it take do you get it every week, month quarter, year or once per year. How often do you get your workshops?
Lungi	Very scarce, they are very scarce. You will find out maybe in your teaching career you will get that workshop maybe once.
Sihle	Oh! So it is not something that you get more often. I just want to check now on your knowledge regarding the establishment of an inclusive school. What is your knowledge on the concept of inclusive education?
Lungi	Well when you talking about inclusive education you are talking about the catering for all learners with the same curriculum whereby you give the learners according to their pace. That means whatever you teach you teach according to their pace.
Sihle	Mhmm!
Lungi	So if they say maybe the school must be an inclusive school, it means now that teachers must be trained on how to teach learners with barriers. So you cannot expect the teachers to automatically be able to teach learners with barriers to learning. So WP 6 says that the learners in the classroom must be catered for even if you set a question paper you must try to accommodate those learners.
Sihle	Yes!
Lungi	But still even WP6 does not address this problem because even if you can implement WP6 you will struggle because you are not trained on how to teach those learners. If you give them a question paper, they write the whole thing over. So even if they want our school to be an inclusive school, teachers must be trained on how teach learners who have challenges.

Sihle	I hear you highlight WP6 my following question was to ask you what education policies inform the establishment of inclusive schools?
Lungi	I think it is WP 6. That is the one that I know of unless they have the latest one.
Sihle	Ok, If I must ask from the comment that you made earlier on that WP6 says that we need to accommodate these kids. Would you argue then saying that WP6 is just the policy and then the implementation is not the same thing that happens in the classroom? Or can WP6 be implemented successfully in the classrooms?
Lungi	I think WP6 is just a law that is protecting those learners. That the schooling, the education must be catered in such a way that it accommodate them, But now with the implementation, it is difficult to implement WP6. It means that teachers must cater for those learners if they are not comfortable it will difficult for them to implement. So if WP6 can be accompanied by the training of the teacherson remedial education I think WP6 can be a success.
Sihle	Ok! Thank you. And then the next question is this school was identified to be established as an inclusive school. What does that mean?
Lungi	Well they said this school is supposed to be an inclusive school, so that it can be able to assist learners that are transferred here from the neighbouring schools and the teachers around on how to do intervention. But the problem that I have if the say the school is an inclusive school the staff that is there is being trained to assist those schools around. So if the government, the first thing that they need to do is to train those teachers on remedial education and how to do intervention.
Sihle	Yes! Yes!
Lungi	On how to work with kids with barriers so that if the neighbouring schools come for assistance it is easy for us to assist them, but now the teachers are not trained it is just a name that it is an inclusive school.
Sihle	Ok! So they don't have much information that they can offer to the other schools. And then do you think your school is suitable to be established as an inclusive school?
Lungi	We were not given a choice. We were just told that our school is an inclusive school without coming to us and explain. If teachers can get intensive training, I can say yes it is a suitable school that is where the neighbouring schools can benefit.

Sihle	Ok! I am looking now at the role of teachers, how they understand their roles and that of the district and IE Team. First question is what you think is the role of the teachers in establishing this school as an inclusive school?
Lungi	The role of the teachers, if let say our school is an inclusive school, it means the role of the teachers is to assist other teachers in the neighbouring schools, work with learners who has barriers. How will they assist those teachers now the teacher may also visit those schools and then come with the practical examples on how to assist those teachers but only if they are trained.
Sihle	So the bottom line is the training that is needed and the support that can be given to those teachers.
Lungi	If they want to make it an inclusive school it means the burden of class teaching will be a problem. When they go and help outside who is going to look at their classrooms. If the department can have extra staff at our school and then that extra staff can be trained on remedial education as well as those teachers in the class.
Sihle	Mh! What do you think then is the role of the district and IE Teams in establishing this school to be inclusive?
Lungi	Well firstly the role of the district is to have intensive workshops. Teaching the teachers on how to handle the barriers to learning. Secondly, how to do intervention strategies. Thirdly, enrol the teachers to do remedial education may be one of the recognised institutions.
Sihle	If you talk about the training of teachers will you perhaps suggest that teachers be sent to a year course or something like that?
Lungi	That is the problem we experiencing, when the department is introducing the new curriculum. The training is perhaps two days. Whereas when you train for a teacher you train for three years so if they can open a teacher training college and then recruit teachers perhaps from the inclusive schools for the whole year to have remedial education. Then the schools will be effective.
Sihle	So will argue then that the teachers that we have now are the teachers that were just introduced to the concept of inclusive education?
Lungi	Yes! If you are registered at the college you are only trained to teach the normal

	learners. There was no such thing like inclusive education in the training we received.
Sihle	Ok and then in your classroom now as a teacher how do you practise inclusivity?
Lungi	It's very difficult especially that we have to change the periods. So because of the time it is difficult. What we usually do is that if we teach particular topics we give them work to do. We write that work and then you check the performance in the whole class, maybe failed the whole class. And we do the corrections that are the first thing that we need to do as teachers, to make sure that we do corrections. And then after doing corrections you need to give them that task again so as to make sure that the whole class has improved the performance. You will find out maybe some of the learners are left behind; I use an intervention book whereby I check the same content and I give it to them so that I can see if they can be any improvement.
Sihle	When you lower the work for them?
Lungi	Yes! After that even if I find that ok still they are struggling although the work is in grade 4/grade 3 level, so I refer them to the ILST.
Sihle	My last question Lungi will be around the assistance that teachers require from the district. I think you touched on that. What is your school like in terms of support programmes to help you to support these learners?
Lungi	Well there is an ILST, once they find out the learner cannot cope they refer them to the district. Even the ILST it is composed of the teachers and those teachers don't have remedial education. Only one teacher in that committee has remedial education. So I will say even the ILST is not the functional. We only follow that procedure because the department says so.
Sihle	So as a person what kind of support would you wish to receive?
Lungi	Well the first support that we need is people who understand, we need a radical training on remedial education. That is the main tool. And the support.

*Names changed for confidentiality purposes

ADDENDUM E: DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

Language Editing

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that I have checked and edited the use of language in this thesis by **Thembeka Mfuthwana.**

Title of thesis:
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE ROLE OF DISTRICT-BASEDSUPPORT TEAMS, AS WELL AS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TEAMS, INESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

....
Ralph Goodman (DLitt)

16 February 2016

ADDENDUM F: DECLARARION OF TECHNICAL FORMATTING

To whom it may concern

This letter serves as confirmation that I, Lize Vorster, performed the technical formatting of Thembeka Mfuthwana's thesis entitled: Teachers' perceptions regarding the role of district-based support teams as well as inclusive education teams in establishing inclusive schools. Technical formatting entails complying with the Stellenbosch University's technical requirements for theses.

Yours sincerely

Lize Vorster
Language Practitioner

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