



CAPACITATION OF EDUCATORS TO HANDLE SKILLS-RELATED CHALLENGES  
OF AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN THABO  
MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT.

BY

MAKATE LERATA JAN

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

In the department of postgraduate studies: Education

Faculty of Humanities

at the

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, WELKOM CAMPUS  
FREE STATE

SUPERVISOR: Prof Makola S

CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr Ndlovu M

2025

## DECLARATION

I, **Makate Lerata Jan**, student number \_\_\_\_\_, declare that this dissertation, submitted for the qualification of Master's in Education (Inclusive Education) at Central University of Technology is my own independent work.

All the references that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that this work has not previously been submitted by me at another university or faculty for the purpose of obtaining a qualification.

2025-06-11<sup>th</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people have supported me throughout this academic journey.

- Firstly, I would like to give glory to God for His presence in guiding me every step of the way. I thank Him for the wisdom He imbued in me to continue with this research project.
- To my supervisors, Prof S Makola and Dr M Ndlovu, you have been more than supervisors to me - your patience knows no limits. I thank you for bringing light into my dark academic life by teaching me real lessons of research. I appreciate your support.
- To the Department of Education which afforded me the chance to collect data from the schools while ensuring the safety of all parties involved.
- To the principals who warmly welcomed me to their respective schools to collect data.
- To the participants of this study, thank you for your cooperation and willingness to share your experiences with me. Without you this study would have been a wishful thought, so thank you for making it all possible.
- To my wife who supported this endeavour from the very first day - I love you!
- To my Mom and Dad who have always watched over me, believed in me and supported me in every way. You are my beacons of strength, I love you!
- To my twin sister who has given me moral and emotional support. Your belief in me strengthened me throughout this journey.
- To all members of my extended family and friends, thank you for your support - God bless you all abundantly.
- To my Principal at Thuto Tsebo Full Service School, you always persuaded me to complete the journey by persistently asking me about the progress I made. Thank you for your love and support.

## ABSTRACT

Teaching learners with learning disabilities may be one of the most challenging occupations worldwide due to the multitude of responsibilities involved. The role encompasses unique Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) that require both personal and professional dedication. South Africa's mainstream schools present a pressing need to explore the capacitation of educators to handle skills-related challenges in an inclusive education learning environment. The present study investigated this phenomenon with the hope that its findings would illuminate a deeper understanding of how educators can be capacitated to function in an inclusive environment effectively. The theoretical framework that underpinned this study was Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development (SCT).

This **case** study was conducted in three mainstream schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District of Free State Province. Participants were recruited through the use of a purposive sampling technique. The study sample consisted of three principals, three educator, three SGB members and three district officials. Data were collected from interviews and document analysis. Analysis was conducted through the use of interpretative analysis. The findings of the study revealed a gap in the implementation of inclusive education - particularly at the mainstream school level - due to the lack of KSA to function effectively in an inclusive education learning environment. The study recommended, amongst others, providing educators with workshops, training, co-teaching, access to resources and the establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for educators to handle skills-related challenges in an inclusive education learning environment.

Key terms: **Capacitation; Competencies; Inclusive education; Mainstream schools; Skills related challenges**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Historical overview and background of the study	1
1.3 Problem statement	5
1.4 Research questions	6
1.5 Research objectives	7
1.6 Limitations of the study	7
1.7 Delimitations of the study	8
1.8 Theoretical framework	8
1.9 Literature review	9
1.9.1 Inclusive education competencies that educators need to possess	9
1.9.2 Skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching	10
1.9.3 Capacitation of educators to successfully implement inclusive education	11
1.9.3.1 Phase 1: Initial review and evaluation to describe success	12
1.9.3.2 Phase 2: Get educators trained and on board	12
1.9.3.3 Phase 3: Leaders should demonstrate positive values	12
1.9.4 Implementing inclusive education	13
1.10 Research methodology	13
1.10.1 Research paradigm	14
1.10.2 Research approach	14
1.10.3 Research design	15
1.10.4 Population and sampling of the study	16
1.11 Data collection	17
1.12 Ethnic considerations	17
1.13 Definition of terms	18

1.14	Chapter outlines	18
1.15	Summary	19
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW		20
2.1	Introduction	20
2.2	Theoretical framework	22
2.3	Competencies required by educators for effective teaching in inclusive education	23
2.3.1	Attitude required by educators in the implementation of inclusive education	24
2.3.1.1	Emotional self-awareness (ESA)	25
2.3.1.2	Self-regard	25
2.3.1.3	Assertiveness	26
2.3.1.4	Self-actualization	28
2.3.1.5	Empathy	28
2.3.1.6	Stress tolerance	30
2.3.1.7	Adaptability	31
2.3.1.8	Flexibility	31
2.3.1.9	Optimism	32
2.3.1.10	Happiness	33
2.3.2	Knowledge dimensions educators need to operate in an inclusive education environment	34
2.3.2.1	Inclusive education origins and principles	34
2.3.2.2	Learners rights	35
2.3.2.3	Individual differences	36
2.3.2.4	Teaching and assessing methods for inclusive classroom	37
2.4	Skills required by educators to effectively implement inclusive teaching	40
2.4.1	Classroom management skills	40
2.4.2	Positive discipline skills	41
2.4.3	Counselling skills	42
2.4.4	Communication skills	43
2.4.5	Sign language skills	44
2.4.6	Operation of braille	45
2.4.7	Lesson planning skills	45
2.5	Skills related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of	

inclusive learning and teaching	46
2.5.1    Visual impairment	47
2.5.2    Hearing impairment	48
2.5.3    Dyslexia	50
2.5.4    Spectrum of Autism	52
2.6    Strategies currently used by educators in teaching and assessing learners in an inclusive education classroom	53
2.6.1    Information Communication Technology (ICT)	53
2.6.2    Demonstration strategy	54
2.6.3    Multi-sensory approach	54
2.6.4    Observational learning approach	55
2.6.5    Group work	56
2.6.6    Assessment strategies	57
2.6.6.1    Types of Assessment	57
2.6.6.2    Assessment for learners with visual impairment (LVIs)	58
2.6.6.3    Assessment for learners with hearing-impairment (LHIs)	58
2.6.6.4    Assessment of dyslexia learners	59
2.6.6.5    Assessment of ASD learners	59
2.7    Capacitation of educators to effectively handle learners with diverse learning needs in an inclusive education classroom	60
2.7.1    Curriculum training	60
2.7.2    Team work	62
2.7.3    Professional training	62
2.8    Summary	63
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	65
3.1    Introduction	65
3.2    Research paradigm	65
3.3    Research approach	65
3.4    Research design	66
3.5    Population and sampling	67
3.6    Data collection and analysis	70
3.6.1    Data collection	70
3.6.1.1    In-depth interviews	70
3.6.1.2    Document analysis	72

3.7	Data analysis and presentation	72
3.8	Trustworthiness	73
3.8.1	Credibility	73
3.8.2	Dependability	74
3.8.3	Transferability	74
3.8.4	Conformability	74
3.9	Ethical consideration	75
3.9.1	Seeking permission	75
3.9.2	Informed consent	75
3.9.3	Anonymity and confidentiality	76
3.10	Conclusion	76
	CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION	77
4.1	Introduction	77
4.1.1	Participants biographical data	77
4.2	Data presentation	77
4.2.1	Competencies that education need for effective teaching in inclusive education environment education environments	78
4.2.2.1	The knowledge competent that is needed for effective inclusive education	78
	• Learning disorders	78
	• Learning styles	79
	• Differentiated instructional approach	80
	• Lesson planning	80
	• Classroom management	81
4.2.2	Skills needed by educators to effectively operate in an inclusive classroom	82
4.2.2.1	Sign language	82
4.2.2.2	Operate braille	83
4.2.2.3	Computer literacy	84
4.2.3	Attitudes educators need to possess in an inclusive education environment	84
4.2.3.1	Patience	84
4.2.3.2	Empathy	85

4.2.3.3	Passion	86
4.2.3.4	Respect	86
4.2.4	Challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive education	87
4.2.4.1	Inability to use sign language	87
4.2.4.2	Inability to operate braille	88
4.2.4.3	Insufficient Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM)	98
4.2.4.4	Overcrowded classrooms	89
4.2.4.5	Inability to utilise the differentiated approach in classroom management	90
4.2.5	Strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners under inclusive education classroom	90
4.2.5.1	Teaching strategies currently used by educators in teaching diverse learners	91
	• Group-guided approach	91
	• Seating arrangements	91
	• Scaffolding and straddling	92
	• Teacher-centred approach	92
	• Demonstrations	93
	• Experimental Learning	93
4.2.5.2	Teaching equipment educators need to have in place to accommodate diverse learners	94
	• Computer lab	94
	• Braille machine	95
	• Audio books	95
	• Sign language charts	95
4.2.6	Strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle learners with learning needs in inclusive classrooms	97
4.2.6.1	Workshop	97
4.2.6.2	Training	97
4.2.6.3	Professional Learning Committees	98
4.2.6.4	Mentorship programs	98
4.2.6.5.	Access to resources and information	99

4.3	Discussion of findings	100
4.3.1	Participants understanding of the inclusive education	100
4.3.2	Competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments	101
4.6.2.1	Knowledge competent that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environment	101
	• Learning disorder	102
	• Learning styles	102
	• Differentiated instructional approach	103
	• Lesson planning	104
	• Classroom management	104
4.3.2.2	Attitude educators need to possess in an inclusive education environment	105
	• Empathy	105
	• Patience	106
	• Respect	106
4.3.2.3	Skills needed by educators to effectively operate in an inclusive classroom environment	107
	• Sign language	107
	• Operate braille	108
	• Computer literacy	108
4.3.3	Skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching	109
4.3.4	Strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners under inclusive education classrooms	110
4.3.5	Capacitating educators to effectively handle learners with diverse learning needs (LSEN) in inclusive classrooms	111
4.3.5.1	Training	111
4.3.5.2	Co-teaching	112
4.3.5.3	Professional Learning Communities (PLC)	112
4.7	Conclusion	113
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		114
5.1	Introduction	114

5.1.1	Research questions	114
5.1.2	Research objectives	114
5.2	Summary	115
5.3	Contribution of the study	116
5.3.1	Contribution to knowledge	116
5.3.2	Contribution to practise	117
5.3.3	Contribution to policy	117
5.4	Recommendations	118
5.5	Conclusions	119
	LIST OF REFERENCES	121
	LIST OF APPENDICIES	134

## LIST OF TABLES

4.1.1	Participants biographical data	78
-------	--------------------------------	----

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: University of Ethical Clearance	134
Appendix B: Department of Education Permission Letter	136
Appendix C: Letter requesting permission from the school principal	137
Appendix D: Informed Consent Forms	139
Appendix E: Foromo ya tumello	140
Appendix F: Interview schedule for principals	141
Appendix G: Interview schedule for educators	143
Appendix H: Interview schedule for SGB members	145
Appendix I: Interview schedule for District Officials	147
Appendix J: Editorial letter	149

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

ADHS	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorders
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
AU	African Union
CA	Continuous Assessment
DBST	District Based Support Team
DoE	Department of Education
EI	Emotional Intelligence
ELL	English Language Learner
ESA	Emotional Self-Awareness
EWP6	Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, 2001
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INDS	White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy for South Africa
KSA	Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes
LHI	Learners with Hearing Impairment
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
LVI	Learners with Visual Impairment
NCESS	National Committee on Special Education Services
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
PLC	Professional Learning Community
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SASA	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SBST	School Based Support Team
SCT	Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SES	Special Education Specialist
SGB	School Governing Body
SIAS	Screening Identification Assessment and Support
SMT	School Management Team
UN	United Nations

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation  
WHO World Health Organisation  
ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on South African schools current inclusive education era, the study seeks to investigate skills that educators must to acquire to adequately handle learners with different learning barriers. The study also explores strategies which are currently used by educators in teaching these learners within a regular set-up. In this chapter, the researcher presents the historical background of the study alongside the problem statement. Research objectives and questions as well as limitations and delimitations of the study are also articulated. Existing literature is reviewed to guide the research objectives of the study. Finally, the research methodology is outlined and justified.

### 1.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Moriña (2017), one way to understand Inclusive education is as an educational orientation that suggests schools where all students are welcomed, can participate, and are valued equally as members. Inclusive education is premised upon the belief and the practice of enhancing the learning experiences and the participation of all learners in the same educational setting. It is viewed as 'work in progress' and as a thinking and value system that opposes exclusionary practices (Ainscow, 2020). Inclusive education is also regarded as a fundamental human right and the foundation for a just and democratic society (Sijuola & Davidova, 2022). Values and practices of inclusion have been introduced into the agendas, policies, and teaching and learning of universities (Moriña, 2017). In the field of elementary and secondary education, there is much that still needs to be done to achieve full inclusion (Anastasiadou, 2016). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights mandates education as a human right that was ratified by the World Declaration on Education for All (1990 as cited in Moriña, 2017).

The special education system often segregates learners with disabilities from their typical peers, through a system that teaches them separately from learners without disabilities. Importantly, there is no segregation learners in inclusion, therefore inclusive education in regular classrooms is better than segregating learners, which

only encourages discrimination of learners based on disabilities instead of affording them equal opportunities in teaching and learning (Hornby, 2010).

Push towards inclusive education in all parts of the world became stronger towards the last part of the 20th century. Over 300 participants from 92 governments and 25 international organizations gathered in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994 to work towards the goal of Education for All by reflecting on the fundamental policy changes needed to foster the inclusive approach towards educating children, that is to give all children the opportunity and right to be a part of the education system over special educational needs (Bhroin & King, 2020). The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action were endorsed by the Conference. Bhroin, et al, (2020) emphasised that the primary intention of the Salamanca conference was to advance education as a fundamental human right for all, in striving for a more inclusive education. Following the adoption of the human rights charter, all schools were encouraged to have inclusive learning in which all learners, including those with learning challenges and other barriers to learning, enjoyed equitable opportunities.

There has been abundant evidence in other parts of the world of difficulties in the fleshing out of the inclusive education system (Ainscow, 2020). In the same line, a study undertaken in Portugal by Chen, Huang, Liu, & Wang, (2022) has reported a lack of resources and skills to be the most significant factor among educators in supporting learners with disabilities. Thus, a study in Sri Lanka showed that the absence of (special) knowledge and training has been found to be a disincentive for general education educators to accommodate learners with disabilities, special education needs, or barriers to learning in their classrooms (referred to as LSEN learners) (Chen, et al, 2022).

In Africa, research on inclusive education was carried out. In Cameroon Kart, & Kart, (2021) also indicated that teachers experience resource constraints, lack of training, and stress and anxiety when working with and teaching their students with disabilities. According to reports, the lean towards inclusion in the history of the introduction to inclusion in education in Ghana seems to have encountered a tough ride with obstacles at the LSB that have influenced the interpretation and practice of it (Mprah et al., 2016). It was also observed that teachers lacked the competencies to fully

comprehend what inclusive education was in the classroom, as they reported that they were not well-equipped to effectively teach children with disabilities (Agbenyega, 2007; Anthony, 2011; Gregorius, 2016; Kuyini et al., 2016; Mprah et al., 2016; Ocloo & Subbeya, 2008; Opoku et al., 2016). Kuyini and Desai (2007) and Mamah et al. (2011) also found the absence of the appropriate training of teachers to be a fundamental impediment to teaching LSEN.

South Africa is a member of the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). South Africa was characterised by discrimination and inequality as a result of the apartheid government prior to 1994 (Phiri, 2021). Nevertheless, Mnguni (2017) highlighted that after 1994 in South Africa, the government has been engaged in a major development of an education system that would ensure access to basic education of an acceptable level to all the citizens of the Republic irrespective of their position. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (1995), amended in 2005 (the constitution), has addressed the welfare of children in the context of their basic human rights on how they ought to be brought up, treated, and managed. Section 9 of the Constitution (1996 as amended in 2005) reads:

Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit from the law. It guarantees the right of every person not to be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, based on race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, age, ethnic or social origins, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language.

Mnguni (2017) added that in October 1996, the South African Ministry of Education set up two bodies, namely, the National Commission for Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). Their mandate was to investigate and advise on all aspects of the provision of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa (Department of Education [DoE], 1997). They also had to research and seek broad input from a wide range of parties on how to make recommendations and advise the MEC on how to meet the needs of a variety of learners (DoE, 1997). Their key findings (including many) were that educator readiness is critical in making inclusive education work. They similarly reported that a lack of knowledge and skills regarding inclusive education and teaching methods for supporting those learners with barriers to learning

in a regular classroom was the biggest limitation in the practice of inclusive education (Mnguni, 2017).

South Africa has developed several policies that underpin inclusion in society and have thus led to inclusion in education. These include the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education 2001 (EWP6), and the Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011. This is in line with the Salamanca Statement (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 1994), which proposed that all schools should accommodate all children. The EWP6 champions the establishment of three types of schools, namely mainstream, full-service, and special schools, in which provision is progressively made available for all types of educational needs that may hinder learners' learning progress. The focus of this study is on full-service schools, where all learners are taught in a regular classroom set-up regardless of their barriers to learning. SASA (1996) required that every South African child must be afforded free quality education regardless of their differences and no learner must be discriminated against. EWP6, in response to learner diversity, outlined barriers to learning. These included: i) learners who have difficulty in reading and writing; ii) learners with hearing impairments (LHIs); iii) those with visual impairments (LVIs) and coordination problems; iv) learners who require assistive media and materials such as braille, etc. It further suggested ways in which educators can help these learners and described the kind of assessment, class arrangement, and lesson planning appropriate for LSEN.

A curriculum differentiation approach was adopted to implement inclusive education in South Africa (Mnguni, 2017). Phiri (2021) asserted that the approach attempted to abolish the barriers associated with inclusive education by offering the needed support to disadvantaged groups and technical support where required. A guideline for responding to learner diversity in the classroom was introduced. The guidelines were intended to provide educators, principals, subject advisors, administrators, school governors, and other personnel with strategies on how to respond to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum.

Despite the aforementioned efforts undertaken to successfully implement inclusive education in South Africa, educators have experienced infinite challenges in managing

classrooms and handling learners under inclusive classroom set-ups (Toyin et al, 2020). Concerningly, it has been noted this researcher that the level of humiliation LSEN experience at the hands of so-called children and the adult community in schools is on the increase. It has been observed that educators and other stakeholders remain unclear about the nature and objectives of inclusive education. This misunderstanding in the inclusive classroom set-up leads to the undertaking of a range of inappropriate strategies that do not benefit learners' diverse educational needs. Lack of motivation on the part of educators as a result of the workload associated with lesson planning, preparing and delivering instruction to LSEN is further compounded by a lack of appropriate resources to manage these learners. Inclusive education comes with a demand for a shift in classroom records documentation and management. Sadly, most educators have not been adequately equipped to cope with these technical demands (Mnguni, 2017).

It is against this background therefore, that this study seeks to establish the competencies educators require to effectively manage teaching and learning activities in inclusive education settings. In addition, the study proposes strategies with educators can be capacitated for effective functioning.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Inclusive education is an educational approach which allows learners irrespective of background, ability or need to participate in schooling whilst being treated as valuable school members (Morina, 2017). Many educators globally still struggle to teach all learners according to their learning abilities. Furthermore, Akhtar (2013) argued that educators are often ill-trained or unsupported when teaching LSEN making these children among the most marginalised in terms of educational opportunity and attainment.

Research conducted by Toyin et al, (2020) in South Africa's Amathole District reveals that learners performed at an average of 28% in languages and 30% in mathematics in Grade 6. This result was credited to educators' attitudes towards LSEN, as well as poorly adopted teaching strategies and assessment strategies that were inappropriate for these learners. Some of the issues included educators' i) inability to cope with LSEN; ii) poor identification of LSEN; iii) insufficient training and challenges with

curriculum adaptation; iv) insufficient support; v) inadequate knowledge; vi) time constraints and vii) heavy workloads (Toyin, et al, 2020).

An important reason for the unsuccessful execution of inclusive education was a knowledge and skills deficit among educators in supporting LSEN. This finding was in conformity with Delubom, Marongwe & Buka, (2020) studies. From their investigation, they found that the only action that teachers could take would be to adjust the seating patterns that they use. This was one of the main reasons why so many LSEN continued to be outside the school or to be excluded from the learning experience inside school.

This research takes existing knowledge about the implementation of inclusive education and goes further to include skills-based challenges surrounding its implementation (Mnguni, 2017). The researcher is motivated to identify appropriate teaching strategies, lesson preparations, the management of the classroom, identification, and recording of LSEN children. For Vision 2030 to breathe life into the global movement to include all learners, educators need to uptake the change and transformation within the education system as they are seen as key change agents in the implementation of such (Mnguni, 2017), as well as the “keystone of the educational arch” (Braun & Clark, 2013).

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to answer one main research question, namely:

*How can educators be capacitated to handle the skills-related challenges of an inclusive education learning environment?*

The study further sought to answer the following sub-research questions:

- 1.4.1 What competencies do educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments?
- 1.4.2 What skills-related challenges are encountered by educators in the implementation of inclusive education?
- 1.4.3 Which teaching strategies are currently used by educators in inclusive classroom settings? and

1.4.4 What strategies can be adopted by educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms?

## 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study pursued the following the following objectives:

1.5.1 To establish competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments;

1.5.2 To identify skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching;

1.5.3 To explore strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners in inclusive education classrooms; and

1.5.4 To propose strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms.

## 1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations of a study refer to flaws or shortcomings the researcher might encounter during the study (Phiri, 2021). This study has some speculated limitations and weaknesses. Firstly, the study could have been hampered by time constraints. The researcher is a full-time employee of DoE in the Free State Province, who has to fulfill work obligations, family duties and student responsibilities. This may have affected his quality of work and the time they could dedicated to data collection and analysis. In response to this limitation, the researcher applied for study leave to have sufficient time to gather information and data. Secondly, the study may further have been hampered by financial constraints that could limit the number of data collection instruments produced and transport costs associated with data collection and production of the study. To address this limitation, the researcher used organised work transport for data collection. Finally, the researcher gathered data before exams and during school holidays as per agreement with the DoE in the Free State to ensure enough time for data collection and analysis.

## 1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Delimitations are the boundaries the researcher places on a topic. The study was conducted in three randomly selected primary schools from Thabo Mofutsanyana District only (DC19) in The Free State. The research has collected perceptions of the skill needs of teachers in this region with regard to the realization of inclusive education. Consultations were limited only to educators, HODs, principals, SGBs, and district officials at the selected schools.

## **1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Lev Vygotsky (1978) Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development (SCT) will guide this study.

Vygotsky's theory of human learning (Sociocultural theory) emphasized learning as a social process and the role of original human intelligence in society (culture) (1978, cited in Woolfolk, 2013). The theoretical constructivist framework of Vygotsky (1987/1978) emphasized that interactions among people play a key role in the development of CMC skills. Under this theory, "social cognitive development takes place through the guided learning of social interactions in the zone of proximal development (ZPD)" as children create knowledge" (Woolfolk 2013: 11). This theory also underpins this study in that the learning environment is the basis for the experiences of educators as they implement inclusive education, and the views of these educators are founded in the centrality of the teaching and learning setting for LSEN. In the light of Vygotsky's theory, educators are described as the 'more knowledgeable others', so it is the educators' knowledge and type of environment the child is exposed to in the ZPD that matters in the realization of inclusive education.

Educators' experiences are also influenced by the level of support they receive from those who are more knowledgeable. In such an instance, teachers would need to seek information from the DoE, stakeholders, or non-governmental organisations about the implementation of inclusive education. Teachers are human beings who know more than the students in their classrooms. This means that, to some extent, their degree of knowledge, understanding, etc., concerning inclusive education can influence the diversity of learners that is learning from them. Durojaiye (1976:320, as cited in Phiri, 2021) postulated that learning occurs when competent educators guide the child in the structured activities through which the child learns and understands his or her world. Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) understand the teaching that is

given to them, and in doing so, construct a sound knowledge of which they will, in time, be able to use to solve problems for themselves and independently.

## **1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review related to the study is given in this section. The sub-section discusses the history of inclusive education globally and in South Africa; inclusive education and human rights in South Africa, as well as some findings from research conducted in the past that were of relevance to this study. The sub-theme also delves into the problems that educators experience with the practice of inclusive education. The chapter takes up some theories that promoted the transition from one education system to the existing one.

### **1.9.1 Inclusive education competencies that educators need to possess**

Competencies are the abilities, expertise, and character traits that make an educator successful (Alechina et al, 2013). The professional ability of the educator to work with LSEN is a crucial component in the success of inclusive education. Donohue and Bornman (2014) have investigated educators' perspectives, readiness, and procedures for inclusive education's beneficial outcomes. When it comes to inclusive education, educators need to think conceptually differently, understand the social and personal value of their work with LSEN, and be willing to accept responsibility for the calibre of the outcomes they produce (Molakeng, 2019). According to Molakeng (2019), the competency approach offered the most effective and scientifically validated instructional pedagogies, formats, and strategies for enhancing educators' capacity to deal with LSEN.

Inclusive education is a product of teachers' characteristics. Teachers play a decisive role in implementing the policy of inclusion, so their affectivity is significantly significant for the sake of inclusive education (Norwich, 1994; Shade & Stewart, 2001; World Health Organisation [WHO], 2011).

The successful development of inclusive education may be influenced by numerous factors. Furthermore, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education has made it clear that teachers cannot work inclusively if they do not have the requisite Knowledge, skills and attitude (Borg et al., 2011).

Thus the competence of educators is associated with their attitudes towards LSEN (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; de Boer et al., 2011). According to Movkebeieva et al, (2013), educators must be technologically literate to provide effective inclusive education in conventional classroom settings, particularly when there are sensory impairments among Learners. According to Movkebeieva et al. (2013), educators must learn communication skills to effectively use a variety of pedagogical interactions. Creating and managing a supportive learning environment in a classroom with a variety of learners requires 'construction skills' alongside construction-designing skills. These include knowing how to create lesson plans and how to forecast and assess the needs of different learners in a diverse classroom.

Despite all efforts, there is still an issue with discrimination is still rife for LSEN. Constitution brought about a notable transformation in the educational system since it forbids discrimination against individuals based on their characteristics (Mnguni, 2017). However, educators must embrace the changes and advancements happening in the educational system to inspire truly inclusive education (Daniels, 2010). All learners have the potential to learn, and they each have unique requirements that must be supported to do so. Therefore, educators must have the appropriate change attitudes, practices, and teaching methods to accommodate the differing needs. Educators must also respect and appreciate the distinctions among learners, including those resulting from race, culture, class, language, handicap, or health (DoE, 2001, p. 16).

### **1.9.2 Skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching**

The inclusion of LSEN in regular classroom settings is seen by educators as difficult and demanding (Grossoehme, 2014). Strain and uncertainty have developed from the need of work with several support staff, and some educators believe that integrating LSEN into regular classes has added to their workload (Smith, 2016). Educators were concerned about non-disabled peers' lack of tolerance for such learners and about the potential effects that inclusive environments' dynamics may have on the academic development of non-disabled learners (Smith, 2016).

According to research, educators in the mainstream were concerned about addressing the unique needs of LSEN and about the possibility that such learners will face social

embarrassment in inclusive environment (Bradshaw, 2015). Less was developed in terms of operational constituent skills and instructional organisation among educators (Muego, 2016). Muego, (2016) study found that no strategic skills were developed in the educators to enable them to design and implement a process of co-educating children with sensory impairment and children with normal development. Furthermore, there was: no development of the ability to create a constructive inclusive educational environment, and a lack of skills to use educational resources that helped LSEN in a regular classroom to create learning-friendly learning environments. The educators lacked the in-depth understanding and abilities necessary to handle the social and emotional issues that come along with inclusive education (Murphy, 2014).

In addition, Alechina (2013) claimed that educators are unable to differentiate curriculum and instructional strategies and thus unable to instruct LVIs and LHIs, particularly in a regular classroom setting. According to Smith's (2016) research, para-professional staff's assistance in supporting the schools' efforts to create an equal educational system for all learners causes educators the most concern. According to studies on educators' assessment proficiency (Brookhart, 2011), there was a large gap between educators' assessment practices and assessment theory, policy, and professional standards. Brookhart (2011) also found that, educators were challenged when to differentiating curricula, particularly when working with learners who have sensory impairments in a typical classroom setting. Educators were unable to integrate the curriculum in such a typical classroom or even manage varied classrooms.

### **1.9.3 Capacitation of educators to successfully implement inclusive education**

Some research has shown that inclusive education was successfully implemented in classrooms and schools (Spady, 2014). This study will focus on the three implementation areas namely: educators, school management, and school structure and culture. Phase-by-phase summaries of the literature are provided below.

#### ***Phase 1: Initial review and evaluation to describe success***

Almost all the key academic works on implementing inclusive education mentioned the first stage helping schools identify their difficulties, assets, resources, value frameworks, stakeholders, and where to find data and evidence (Grossoehme, 2014). For instance, the UNESCO-IBE (2016) resource pack provided a framework for school review, and the Index for Inclusion (2016) resource pack provided a Planning

Framework to enable school evaluation for inclusion. The SWIFT Centre (2018), a significant hub for inclusive school-wide transformation, has resources to support activities at the school level such as Design Planning, Resource Mapping, Data Practices, Forming Teams, and Priority Setting.

### ***Phase 2: Get educators trained and on board***

A common perception among educators is that inclusive education is something they are expected to implement without adequate support or resources, turning it into a top-down burden rather than a collaborative process (Grossoehme, 2014). Therefore, it is essential for educators to possess the knowledge and abilities necessary to design inclusive classrooms, and for school administration to provide an inclusive and creative atmosphere that will enable educators to succeed. Typically, continued professional development and one-time workshops were used to train educators in inclusive education practices. In their study on inclusive education, Valeeva (2015) verified that to enhance implementation, a system of specialised training, retraining, and professional development of educator-specialists is required. Educators must be proficient in classroom management strategies, how to teach LVIs, and how to create lessons for various learners in a conventional classroom for this to be implemented successfully. Additionally, there is mounting evidence that participants in short-term, "parachute" trainings have minimal systemic impact (Gluckman, 2015).

### ***Phase 3: Leaders should demonstrate positive values***

The role of the School Management Team (SMT) is crucial for the implementation of inclusive education. Typically, the most diverse and high-quality schools are those with managers who inspire with a vision and have inclusive ideals, drive, autonomy, and faith in the faculty (Gluckman, 2015).

#### **1.9.4 Implementing inclusive education**

According to some estimates, developing an inclusive education system is a major problem that nations all around the world must overcome (Dyson, 2013). The idea that schools must endeavour to accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, and other problems guides inclusive education (Dyson & Millward, 2016). Dyson (2013) continues by saying that it is important to respect learners' learning styles and that instruction should be "tailored to

the needs of the learner rather than the learner being fitted into an established set of expectations”.

Implementing inclusive education means creating a variety of teaching strategies to accept and integrate learners with unique needs. This is based on unique perceptions of special needs and the focus on the school's structure and culture (Dyson & Millward, 2016). The process of reorganising the schools in response to the inclusion of learners must be committed to and held accountable by the institutions. According to Hay (2015), for inclusive education to be implemented successfully, the school must provide high-quality education and support services.

As per Asmal & James' (2017) argument, a school should "accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic, or other problems". Therefore, i) children with disabilities and giftedness, ii) from the street and the working class, iii) from rural or nomadic communities, iv) from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities, and v) from other underprivileged or marginalised areas and groups should all be accommodated. These inclusive schools according (Fulcher, 2018), "must recognise and respond to the varied needs of their learners, accommodating both different learning styles and ensuring that all learners receive a quality education through appropriate curricula, organisational structures, teaching strategies, resource use, and partnerships with their communities".

## **1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study's research paradigm, design and approach are all discussed in this section. The section also describes the population and sampling used to conduct the research.

### **1.10.1 Research paradigm**

A paradigm refers to the shared beliefs and values of a research community about ontological, epistemological, and methodological issues. A paradigm is a concept or mental model that shapes and organizes the way people in a particular research community think about their field of study (Grossoehme, 2014). The research paradigm utilized in this study is interpretivism. The interpretive perspective enables the researcher to interpret to make sense of humans and agency behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2013, p. 26) and the meaning is that the interaction between participants and the researcher makes sense. In this way, this

implies that the aim of the study is to gather qualitative data in the language about the problems experienced by educators with the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching (ILT) in Thabo Mofutsanyane District. An interpretivist research paradigm has helped the researcher to provide an understanding of how educators can solve problems they encounter in implementing an inclusive approach to teaching and learning within the district. Importantly, a researcher typically works within one paradigm, and the researcher brings to the problem a certain way of observing or interpreting or collecting data to arrive at a solution (Maxwell, 2013).

### **1.10.2 Research approach**

Authors like Cairney and St Denny (2015) considered the research approach as a scheme and methodology that accommodates how one manoeuvres from the general presumptions to the specific research methodologies to gather, analyze, and interpret data. According to the scholars, the research approach is determined by the nature of a problem issue or problem solving and in the way of analyzing data or reasoning.

Qualitative dimensions enable the researcher to interpret reality through his understanding of individual experiences. According to Waters (2017), the qualitative approach could be a method to assist the researcher in comprehending the experiences of humans.

The use of an interpretivist paradigm of qualitative research is seen as fitting for this study as it allows the rich collection of participant perspectives. It also contains information related to participant behavior, needs, wants, and routines. This is problematic for a qualitative researcher, as it is the way in which the participants understand the research issue that they deem most important (Merten, 2014). The tremendous strength of qualitative research is its quest to get closer to what's real. Moving closer towards 'the real' informant in the case study signifies the extent to which the researcher will gain some insight into how the real, as experienced, occurs for the participants. Therefore, the author has searched for approaches that teachers can use in the realization of inclusive education.

This is achieved by discussing with the participants their experiences, views, and social circumstances (Cairney & St Denny, 2015). So a qualitative design will allow the researcher to understand the natural setting of learners and educators. A

qualitative research design includes some forms of inquiry such as phenomenology, narratives, ethnographies, and case studies (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative practice will be of value (Creswell, 2013) in collecting data that gained some insights. However, one disadvantage of qualitative research is its long time span and expensive cost (Behr & MacMillan, 2019). That being said, advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. For instance, one advantage of qualitative research is the freedom that the participants have to reply, given the context and rationality (Losifides, 2011). Consequently, the researcher attempted to explore how inclusive education could be applied in the classroom.

### **1.10.3 Research Design**

The research design refers to the strategy that a researcher adopts to integrate the different components of the study in a logical and coherent way, which in turn ensures that a researcher will effectively address the research problem. It is the recipe for collecting, measuring, and analyzing information or data.

Research design and methods: The study was designed as a case study using selected Thabo Mofutsanyane District schools. According to Chau and Witcher (2014), a case study was defined as the systematic inquiry into an event or a series of related phenomena; it was expected that the object of the case study phenomenon be well understood. White (2010) further defines the case study research as a role of empirical investigation that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. A case study opens up the potential for giving a voice to the powerless or voiceless (e.g., socially excluded groups).

### **1.10.4 Population and sampling of the study**

#### **1.10.4.1 Population**

McMillian and Schumacher (2015) described a population as an aggregate or total of all the objects, subjects, or members that fit a certain set of criteria. The study is aimed at three educators who are members of the School-Based Support Team (SBST), three educational managers (principals), three officials from the district who are part of the District-Based Support Team (DBST), and three SGB Chairpersons for schools

in DC19. Three schools took part in the study. According to the respondents and their knowledge and experience, they have given their opinion about how they perceive inclusive education in mainstream schools. Therefore, the big question they've had is, "What is it that would have to happen for inclusive education to be achievable in all schools?"

#### **1.10.4.2 Sampling**

A sample was defined as the segment of a larger group of individuals, objects, or items about which information is collected for measurement purposes (Fielding et al., 2013). Kumar (2011) describes sampling as a technique wherein a small number of people is selected from a larger population to serve as the basis for comparison or estimation with regard to the commonness of an unknown piece of information, situation, or outcome concerning the larger group. So, sampling is simply a sample from the population being studied.

Both the sample and instance of case study research is determined following what is called purposive sampling. According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling, judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a non-probability type of sampling where researchers base their selection of dimensions of the population to sample on their judgments about the population, the settings, and the people. All schools so selected are categorized as full-service schools by the DoE in the Free State. In this manner, the research can collect information from teachers who have precise and experiential experiences in implementing inclusive education in regular classrooms. Some good sampling has helped the researcher focus on the three easy-to-reach schools. Again, three principals, and three SBST committees, DBST, and SGB members were selected as the participants in the study.

### **1.11 DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection is the gathering of information on targeted variables in an established system, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate the results (Maxwell, 2013). Data are obtained through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. This data is processed and analysed through data coding, unitising, categorising and emergence of themes, which will become the findings of the study. Maree (2015) asserted that semi-structured questions are direct, allow for consistency

within the interview, assist the researcher obtaining many responses to the set questions and allow for detailed responses. They are very useful in situations where in-depth information is needed or little is known about the topic.

## **1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics are morals defined by an individual or group. This is the issue of ethics because people need to know what the way of the future is and, more specifically, what they must know about who that: researchers have an ethical duty to look after their EN26 participants (Molakeng, 2019). Ethics are set by stakeholders in advance and offer an acceptable consensus on how participants can be treated (codes of morality) (Creswell, 2012). Molakeng (2012) also referred to Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999) stating that, "Participants must be volunteering and informed. This included a full, non-ethical and transparent explanation of their tasks." The researcher ensures such that respondents are aware of what the research is exploring, and it may form part of the act. We all have to expect everyone to be honest and that places where the school may be falling short will be uncomfortable. Thus, participants have been advised that they may withdraw from the study at any time. This is due to participants' experience with LSEN, and through naming obstacles hindering the fruition of an inclusive education, contribute to the enhancement of LSEN education provided with specific relation to the learners' needs. At the end of the study, the researcher wishes to share results and recommendations with schools and other education stakeholders.

## **1.13 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

### **1.13.1 Inclusive education**

Inclusive education refers to the full inclusion of learners with special educational needs into mainstream schools (Mogashoa, 2019). This does not mean superficially accommodating learners with disabilities in separate classrooms within mainstream settings, but fully including them in mainstream classrooms (Bantjes, Swartz, Conchar & Derman, 2015). According to EWP6 (DOE, 2001), learners who experience mild to moderate disabilities ought to be accommodated within mainstream education and provided with adequate support.

### **1.13.2 Learners with special educational needs**

Learners with special educational needs are often referred to as “learning-disabled individuals” or “learners with learning disabilities” (Mogashoa, 2019). For the purpose of this study learners with special educational needs are typically categorised in terms of difficulties in reading, writing or mathematics and are usually diagnosed during the school-going years (American Psychological Association, 2013).

### **1.13.3 Capacitation**

In inclusive education, capacitation broadly refers the process of making educators capable, qualified or competent to effectively implement inclusive education in mainstream schools (Spady, 2014). Mokhampanyane (2024), further stated capacitating educators for inclusive education in South Africa involves providing comprehensive training that addresses skills gaps in curriculum differentiation, adapting teaching methods, and using a variety of materials

## **1.14 CHAPTER OUTLINES**

The study consists of five chapters

### **Chapter 1 – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

This chapter discussed the background to the study, statement of the problem that was linked to the information presented in the background to the study, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, the theoretical framework, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, definitions of terms and chapter outlines.

### **Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW**

Chapter two has discussed the literature that is relevant to this study’s topic of research, to establish what other researcher views are.

### **Chapter 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter has presented a detailed discussion of the research methodology, research paradigm, research approach, research design, data collection, trustworthiness of the study as well as ethical considerations.

### **Chapter 4 - DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter has presented the data and how it was analysed. It has also discussed the study's findings, substantiated by literature.

## Chapter 5- SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 has presented the summary of findings and recommendations implementation and further research on the same or related topic of research.

### 1.15 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the following subtopics: the introduction and background to the study, statement of the problem, the main research questions, objectives of the study, theoretical framework, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, literature review, research methodology, trustworthiness, data collection and ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents literature related to the main purpose of the study. The chapter opens with a discussion of the theoretical foundations. In a literature review, the chapter provides an overview of literature on competencies of teachers who are willing to incorporate inclusion in day-to-day classroom. This chapter also explores the present-day teaching methodologies and approaches taken up by teachers in inclusive classroom environments. It highlights some of the skill-related challenges experienced by educators in the implementation of ITL and ways in which capacity building of educators on how to handle LSEN in ITL can be achieved. Last, it concludes with the main points of discussion.

The South African inclusive educational system was influenced by a resolution of the Salamanca Conference in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). South Africa was committed to the trend for quality and equality in education for all through the implementation of

inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). Particularly SC in South Africa is designed for all school-going children to have access to schools offering quality education (Buthelezi & Mawila, 2024).

The past 20 years also witness a drastic change in the South African education system (Kempen & Steyn, 2016). Prior to 1994, it was typical for differences in privilege and status in education to emerge, as learners were split up by both racial and disability groups, as institutionalized by the apartheid system (DoE, 2001). It was at this time that Black and White students could not study in the same schools (Bozalek et al., 2012). In addition, learners with disabilities were often not enrolled in schools with non-disabled learners (Khumalo & Hodgson, 2017; Mutanga, 2017). In other words, White and Black learners with disabilities or without learning problems did not share schools and all learners with disabilities were barred from normal schools. This in effect means that black learners with disabilities were discriminated against twice because they were excluded from mainstream schooling, but also had no access to the wealth of resources which white schools had for white learners (Khumalo & Hodgson, 2017). Special schools, which black learners attended, were in most instances under-resourced and had poor infrastructure (Mutanga, 2017). In stark contradiction to such facts of life for Black learners with disabilities, mainly White schools serving White learners benefited from the bulk of the educational resources (Matabane, 2022). Exclusions of many South African learners with disabilities from the mainstream have occurred. This successfully reinforced the stereotype of people with disabilities as imperfect, helpless beings. The process of inclusion began to emerge as a concern, even before the advent of Government of National Unity in 1994 (Tshifura, 2012). This year signified the start of monumental changes in education within the South African context as the country was placed under the leadership of a new democratic dispensation (Meier et al., 2012). Buell, Hallam, et al., 2010 Several new policies were formulated in responding to the inequalities existing between special and regular education. One of these policies became EWP6's most widely recognised white paper, EWP6 "Building an Inclusive Education and Training System" (2001). This EWP6 implied a revolution at all levels in the education with the following statement (DoE, 2001):. The change sought to include all learners in education by placing them in education institutions that catered for all their educational needs (DoE, 2001).

In 1995, the South African Federal Council of Disability has also called for the establishment of a unitary education system for South Africa. It contended that LSEN should be entitled to equal access to education across each level within one inclusive education system which accommodates the diversity of learners. This will involve not only accepting that there are different styles/rates of learning, as well as different languages (e.g., in the case of Deaf learners where the first language is sign language) but ensuring quality education for all. This would be done toward relevant curricula, organizational set-up, technical approaches and materials, utilization, and relationship with communities (Masakona, 2022).

The SASA of 1996 also underscored this; it was expressed that education for LSEN which is reasonably practicable must be offered at ordinary schools. This would create an education that was available and virtually tailored to everyone. Education is a right and it shall be the obligation of the state to make widespread elementary education available to all citizens. This encourages the development of education for all learners and calls for the development of effective programmes to give staff and support providers the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to respond to learners. The SASA is of the view that the provision of a meaningful and effective South African education should be arranged in such a manner so as to ensure that all can have access to a single inclusive education system capable of responding to the needs of diversity (Masakona, 2022).

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of human development argues that learning occurs through social interaction and is shaped by culture, language and collaboration with others. The theory emphasises the role of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), a person with greater expertise who guides the learner, and highlights the importance of language as the primary tool for thinking and meaning making (Weiten, 2018). Central to his theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which represents the gap between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with appropriate support (Woolfolk, 2016). This support is provided through scaffolding, a process where the MKO offers structured assistance such as cues, prompts, modelling or explanations that enables the learner to accomplish tasks that would otherwise be beyond their current ability (Weiten, 2018). As the learner becomes more competent,

the scaffolding is gradually removed, allowing for independent mastery. Vygotsky maintains that development is culturally embedded, and that learning is most effective when such scaffolded social guidance helps the learner progress through the ZPD toward independence (Weiten, 2018).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provides a powerful lens for understanding and enhancing inclusive education, making it directly relevant to the study's objectives. His theory emphasises that learning is a socially mediated process shaped by culture, interaction and language, with the educator playing the role of the MKO who guides learners toward higher levels of understanding (Mwamwenda, 2004). In inclusive classrooms, where learners present diverse abilities and barriers, the educator's ability to scaffold learning becomes even more critical. This connection supports the study's first objective of establishing the competencies educators need, because Vygotsky highlights that effective teaching relies on an educator's capacity to use language purposefully, adapt to learners' cultural and developmental contexts, and provide structured guidance within each learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It also relates to the second objective, as skills-related challenges such as difficulties with differentiation, communication, or understanding learning styles and disorders can interfere with an educator's ability to function as an effective MKO. In this way, Vygotsky's theory helps to explain why certain competencies are essential and why certain challenges hinder inclusive teaching.

In addition, the study's exploration of existing and proposed strategies for inclusive education aligns strongly with Vygotsky's principles of scaffolding, collaborative learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy. The third objective, which focuses on identifying current strategies used in inclusive classrooms, links to Vygotsky's view that learning improves when educators intentionally design supportive interactions, use appropriate mediating tools and encourage peer collaboration as a form of shared knowledge construction. Similarly, the fourth objective, proposing strategies to capacitate educators for effective LSEN support is grounded in Vygotsky's emphasis on equipping MKOs with the knowledge and tools necessary to assist learners as they progress through their ZPD. By drawing on Vygotsky's ideas, the study can justify why educators need training in differentiated instruction, assistive communication methods, cultural sensitivity and adaptive scaffolding techniques. Overall, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory reinforces the importance of developing competent, reflective and

well-supported educators who can create inclusive learning environments where all learners, regardless of their barriers, are guided toward meaningful participation and academic growth.

## **2.3 COMPETENCIES REQUIRED BY EDUCATORS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT**

According to Molakeng (2019), competence refers to the capacity to apply or employ the group of related KSA necessary to carry out essential job functions or activities in a certain working environment. Competency approach provides the most effective and scientifically supported teaching pedagogies, formats, and approaches for preparing educators to work with LSEN (Molakeng, 2019). Molakeng (2019), further referred to inclusive education as allowing all learners to access and gain equal opportunities for education and learning. Educators are expected to accommodate learners in increasingly diversifying classroom set-ups; thus their success depends on their ability to deal with diversification (Phiri, 2021). Educators frequently worry about the inclusion of LSEN in their regular classes because they feel unprepared. This study therefore focuses on aspects of inclusive education's successful implementation.

### **2.3.1 Attitudes required by educators in the implementation of inclusive Education**

The term attitude refers to “an individual’s viewpoint or disposition towards a particular object or person (Timo, 2020). According to the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2010) advocated that in order to be effective in inclusive environments, figures of authority within inclusive classrooms should possess a select set of values and attitudes, as well as knowledge, skill, and understanding (Van Steen & Wilson, 2020). Educators’ teaching competences are associated with their attitudes towards LSEN (Van Steen et al, 2020). In order to shed light on the correlation between educator characteristics and inclusive education, a review of the research literature on educators’ attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education is necessary in this subsection.

The notion of inclusive education has developed and been debated from a special education point of view in most countries during the past few decades. However, interpretations of inclusive education from a special education perspective are

supported by certain comments of MGE: i) inclusive education arose as an alternative to special education/integrated education, ii) it has arisen as a rights-based approach to children with barriers to learning, and iii) the concept is promoted by organizations should be educating LSEN. Talking about or enacting inclusive education is difficult without the contribution of the area of special education as a discipline. As such, the research understanding and perception of the notion of inclusive education may be tricky for researchers (Alassaf, 2025).

Besides the challenges emanating from the definition of inclusive education, other obstacles are; stigma and discrimination, non-availability of child-friendly curriculum, lack of resources, untrained teachers, lack of support system, negative parental attitudes, and non-multidisciplinary orientation (Alassaf, 2025). Among these factors, teacher competencies and their attitudes are seen as the crucial ones since, at the end of the day, teachers have to teach SNE in their class and actually practice the inclusive education principles (Avramidis & Norwich, 2020). It was also reported that teachers worldwide are not competent and motivated to do inclusive education. The next sub-theme emphasizes the appropriate affirmative attitudes that educators need to inculcate to ensure successful inclusive education.

### **2.3.1.1 Emotional Self-awareness (ESA)**

Emotional self-awareness (ESA) is the capacity to recognise, label, and understand one's own emotions. ESA considers it as important to have knowledge of whom is holding what feeling and why, as well as about what is causing those feelings (Rajendran, Athira, Elavarasi, 2020). Gold and Roth (1993, p. 141 as quoted in Richardson & Shupe, 2013) described self-awareness as a process of being in contact with feelings and behaviors. The individual who knows how they're feeling is self-motivated to reach the things they want. According to Rajendran, et al, (2020), self-determination refers to knowing oneself, one's strengths and limitations, needs, and desires well enough to analyze options and goals, and to establish a clear vision of one's future (as cited in Michali, 2014). Autonomous people select goals by identifying and defining their needs and acting in the direction of gratifying those needs. Wehmeyer et al. (1996) found that the self-determined individual would exhibit self-governing behavior with a self-organizing personality that was psychologically empowered and always seeking self-realization (cited in Michali, 2014).

**Sabrina & Sansrisna (2017)** believed that an enriched sense of self among educators is a bidirectional procedure. On the one hand, this is based on a more precise view of how learners modify their emotional system and their behavior. On the other hand, it addresses the effect of educators on learners. The significance of self-awareness in teachers of LSEN was also highlighted by **Schonert-Reichl & Kimberly, (2017)**. Though the educators are seldom influenced by the misbehavior of the students, it is the students' misbehavior that affects the worst in the teachers. **Sabrina & Sansirisa (2017)** discovered that educators who practice inclusive education believe that their self-reflection and awareness contributed to their ability to practice inclusion despite the behavior of the learners with whom they work.

### **2.3.1.2 Self-Regard**

Self-regard is defined as "...capacity to look inward and accurately perceive, understand, and accept oneself" (Bar-On, 2013). Self-regard is the faculty of seeing oneself as one is and, in the proper sense, of respecting oneself. In essence, self-acceptance is the way to learn to accept one's assets/liabilities, strengths/weaknesses, and limitations/possibilities in life. Bar-On (2013) held that those who do not value themselves do have personal inadequacy and inferiority, which might lead to frustration, depressive mood, and inability to perform personal goals and enjoying life. It was inferred by (Jorfi et al., 2010) that one would have high personal conception if one has high self-regard.

Persons with low self-esteem see themselves as insignificant and worse off, causing them to experience negative affect (Sabrina, et al, 2017). The same authors studied self-esteem is a great relationship with communication, particularly the efficacy of communication (Jorfi et al., 2010).

Article from Robert (2018), said that educators play a crucial role in developing a corresponding sense of dignity of self in learners. The high esteem educator is confident, calm, and respectful of the learners. Moreover, they appear to be flexible, open to new ideas, and seem to be able to effect a transform in learners not only through systematic activities but also through the creation of caring relationships between the attainments and learners (Leminen, 2002).

In addition, Robert (2018) reported the findings of Chapman (1988); Hattie and Marsh (1997); Rothman and Cosden (1993); Ulvinen (1998). Leminen (2002) confirmed a strong correlation between a learner's self-concept and his or her academic achievement. These findings underscored the importance of developing the self-concept of a learner. In addition to this, the writer observed that the students who indicated difficulty in learning at school oftentimes have low self-esteem. Furthermore, educators' self-esteem levels can shape the growth of high self-esteem in each student.

### **2.3.1.3 Assertiveness**

Assertiveness is “a mastery of expression that is defined as the ability to both effectively and constructively style a statement of our own rights and feelings, and at the same time to hear and respect the rights and feelings of others on our right to express ours” (Bar-On, 2013). Three basic elements comprise assertiveness (Bar-on, 2013): it is our ability to express our emotions, our ability to express beliefs or opinions and our ability to assert our rights, to not be disturbed by, or taken advantage of by others. A person with an assertive personality is generally able to communicate feelings, both positive and negative, decline demands, take responsibility, admit to shortcomings and claim a person's rights (Vagos & Pereira, 2010). Furthermore, Milovanovi, et al, (2016) observed that assertiveness constitutes a sense of security in communication, hard and unequivocal refusal of unjustified requests, adequate refusal, clearly expression of his views, independent decision-making with respect for others, openness and sincerity with others and listen to, understand and praise others.

In light of this, one can speculate that assertiveness is desirable for classroom control. In order to establish a positive learning climate, teachers should pay attention to i) management of social scenarios in the classroom, ii) management of the learners' behavior and iii) organization of the group's work (Milovanovi et al., 2016) for which teacher's assertiveness is necessary. This will enable them to persevere with their endeavor to respond appropriately to unseemly learner behavior with feelings of security, controllability and perceived ability, as well as the desire to come to a resolution (Edwards, 2005, in Milovanovi et al., 2016). Milovanovi et al. (2016) reported that educators' assertiveness decreases social anxiety and stress and raises their self-

respect. Also, Aliakbari and Bozorgmanesh (2015) found a positive correlation between assertive characteristics of the teacher and students' achievement.

Moreover, the limits to educative assertiveness also depend on an educator having—or not having—'bargaining power' with administrators and decision-makers (Bar-On, 2013). This forceful aspect then becomes essential for teachers to raise their voices as dialogue partners when they cooperate with their environment. Likewise, group cohesion was affected by the self-assertiveness and hetero-assertiveness attributes in the educators as revealed by the study conducted by Martínez, Justicia, and Fernández (2006). The study found that the directiveness of teachers had a beneficial impact on learners' social competence and notably on learners prone to manipulating others or using them as tools.

#### **2.3.1.4 Self-actualisation**

Goal setting and goal striving are understood as self-actualization, where "an individual's capacity to set personal goals, and the motivation to attain these goals as a determinant of the validation of one's potentiality" (Bar-On, 2013). Bar-On (2013) suggested that this could allow an individual the opportunity to realize their potential, to develop competencies, and to use skills to the optimum level. Bearing in mind the characteristics where acceptance, realism, problem-centering, spontaneity, autonomy, and solitude (Jena and Dorji, 2016) are, so far, completely attained in oneself-actualization process, these are vital for an educator practicing inclusive education. The quote from Raphael and Varghese (2014) emphasized that self-actualized educators would more likely ensure efficacy in an inclusive profession. This gives a strong case for a self-actualized teacher in inclusive education.

Andrew (2011) argued that self-actualization of teachers would lead to practicing reflection in the classroom. Through such teaching practice, teachers would be given the opportunities to rethink their practice in as much as they would be developing their consciousness of what they were doing, would be able to understand it, to challenge it, to change it, and to develop beyond it. Reconsideration of teaching practices can also assist in determining what is right for any particular situation, in the moment, and

to make such decisions on the spur of the moment. Reflective teaching practice in an inclusive classroom has become one effective strategy for teachers to be successful in the teaching-learning process. Likewise, it is possible to recall the importance of self-actualization according to Abraham Maslow (1970). For example, act upon self is self-discipline, utilization is self-knowledge, self-awareness or self-understanding, and self-governance or self-direction. It defines the manner in which an individual is perfectible through nurturing good in oneself and then aiding others (Maslow, 1970).

### **2.3.1.5 Empathy**

This 2015 interpersonal sub-is factor described as the skill of being sensitive and understanding toward the way other people feel (Bar-On, 2013). Partridge (2018) expressed that “Empathy is a key way that we value diversity.” Being empathetic is being obsessed with the thoughts and feelings of other people, pretending to be them, to think like them. Similarly, as suggested by Bar-On-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004), empathy is essentially tuning in to the other person's mindset and feelings, whatever these may be (quoted in Stojiljković, et al. 2012). According to Amoriello, (2017) educators need to foster the attitude of empathy in order to have positive interpersonal relationships among learners. They further added that empathic teaching is about caring and taking the perspective of learners, and it includes both cognitive and affective domains. Empathy perspective in educational staff provides knowledge of students' feelings, but also the acceptance of their differences (Amoriello, 2017).

For educators, empathy is a passion to listen, know, and support students, including conveying information. Stojiljković et al. (2012) emphasized that emotional stability and empathic sensitivity of teachers are the key factors to shaping the general atmosphere in the classroom. Stojiljković et al., Gendolla, A., & Silvestrini, N. (2012) also expounded that educators' empathetic attitude would have learners experiencing pleasure, feeling free, adopted, involved, respected, and understood. They concluded that empathy in teachers will facilitate their effective role performance. Similarly, Parchomiuk (2018) observed that empathy in teachers has generated more positive models towards persons with disabilities.

Parchomiuk (2018) documented that people with higher levels of empathy:

- Are more open to getting acquainted with members of the other group (the disabled), including their capabilities and limitations,
- Show greater sensitivity (the ability to empathise with and show compassion);
- Are more able to understand others, and
- Are more willing to work for others, that may:
  - Reduce the tendency to form stereotypes and prejudices,
  - Reduce negative feelings in relationships with persons with disabilities and their negative assessment, increase positive feelings and assessments;
  - Foster the formation of positive expectations towards disabled people; and
  - Increase the power of motivation to make contact with disabled people.

### **2.3.1.6      *Stress tolerance***

Stress tolerance, as features of the emotion-related perimeter, is defined as “the extent to which a person seems to be well-equipped to deal with the stresses of life” and is “an ability to effectively and constructively manage their emotions” and “whatever is reminiscent of tactical problem-solving designed to arrive at an immediate remedy when faced with a stressful problem or situation” (Bar-On, 2013). Fundamentally, stress tolerance can weather and respond to negative experiences and stressful situations without becoming overwhelmed by proactively and effectively coping with stress (Bar-On, 2013). This is something that, according to Bar-On (2013), is an indicator of emotional-social intelligence, which is what allows people to confront rather than avoid difficulty. It allows managing the environment in order to enhance situations that will relieve anxiety and tension.

Dealing with and handling different kinds of stress necessitate a high level of stress tolerance; this mechanism makes educators competent enough to acknowledge the hindrances in teaching. Developing an IEP or teaming with others supports tolerating stress which is an essential concept for inclusive education. Brackenreed (2011) determined that the top coping mechanisms that could be used to combat the stress created by the inclusion classroom are:

- Maintaining a sense of humor;

- Drawing on past experiences;
- Developing and having a plan and sticking to the plan;
- Looking on the bright side;
- Developing interests outside of school;
- Engaging in physical activities; and
- Discussing the situation with colleagues.

Similarly, Pickering (2008) distills how educators distress. This involves prioritizing, long-term lesson planning, skim reading, and reduction in extra-curricular, working with others to share resources and delegate workloads.

### **2.3.1.7      *Adaptability***

This meta-factor of emotional-social intelligence comprises reality testing, flexibility and problem-solving. Collie and Martin (2016) stated that adaptability is highly relevant to educators as teaching involves responding to and managing constant change and uncertainty, Collie and Martin (2016) further highlighted that teachers must adapt themselves to:

- Respond to students by adjusting lesson pacing, adapting activities,  
or seeking out new resources to better illustrates main points;
- Respond to unexpected classroom management situations by keeping emotions in check as they arise and thinking of alternative ways to solve problems;
- Interact with new colleagues, parents and students;
- Adjust teaching plans according to societal demands; and
- Integrate new knowledge from professional learning into teaching practice.

Thus, adaptability is defined as being able to effectively adapt and respond to these new changing or uncertain situations and events by modifying one's thinking, behaviour and emotions (Collie & Martin, 2016). Their research concluded that

educators with higher adaptability tended to show higher rates of well-being, work commitment and learners' success.

### **2.3.1.8 Flexibility**

This is the capacity to modify and regulate one's moods, thoughts, and behaviors in the face of novel or ever-changing conditions, such as the individual's general adaptation to new, unpredictable, or dynamic experiences (Bar-On, 2013). For their students, especially in inclusive classrooms, the teacher must respond to change with flexibility. The inability to adapt reveals the inflexibility in their behavior that will undermine the competence of the teacher. Some students can have limitations that can impede their teaching and learning journey in an inclusive environment. The equity-oriented consideration here is the promotion of an inclusive practice principle to prevent anything that might diminish a learner's engagement with learning. This can be facilitated by offering various paths to learning without lowering appropriate requirements. Such alternatives can be provided to the learners by the teachers in a transparent, fair, and equitable way as flexibility, diversity, and options. Educators should attend to the needs via technology, multiple teaching strategies, as well as choice and flexibility within the assessment expectations.

In inclusive settings, teachers should actively offer a flexible curriculum framework, flexible hours, and a flexible place of learning. They must, however, also demonstrate flexible attitudes/values that promote acceptance of cultural diversity in learners. Where the principle that guides inclusive education does not uphold segregation by educators, they should also be at liberty to be able to give one-on-one personal attention and provide special education to the individual who needs it (Collie & Martin, 2016).

### **2.3.1.9 Optimism**

Optimism is characterized as having an affirmative and hopeful disposition towards life in the presence of adversity (Bar-On, 2013). Hoy et al. (2006) conceptualized teacher academic optimism as a positive conviction in their ability to influence student achievement, resilience to failure, and in the parents and students that might be relied upon to collaboratively work to better student achievement which, in turn, shapes their instruction. Bar-On (2013) described how meaningful optimism is also related to being

self-propelled, a characteristic essential for everyone striving for a particular goal (Bar-On, 2013). Moberg (2003) pointed out that professionals who feel secure in their professional competencies and who have a good experience of inclusion are more positive towards inclusion. One respondent articulated that the concept of academic optimism is an extension of this inclusive education factor, and for the purpose of this study, academic optimism is referred to as the “beliefs of [educators] that are prevalent when we believe [we] can teach a student and does not include factors beyond this scope (teachers' personal beliefs that they can teach, that students can learn and that parents will support the teachers in fostering learning)” (Beard, et al., 2010, p.106).

A study by Hoy et al. (2006) emphasized that educators and other stakeholders should possess academic optimism since it has a positive influence on the learners' performance. Pajares (1996) also suggests that optimistic teachers' attention to the positive attributes of the learner, classroom, schools, and communities.

Ekeh and Njoku (2014) found that academic optimism was high in inclusive schools. Furthermore, students have high academic motivation and emotional competence at inclusive schools.

Pedagogical optimism towards inclusive education Educators had an optimistic attitude towards including disabled learners in mainstream schools, which might have influenced their reality positively.

#### **2.3.1.10 Happiness**

According to Bar-On (2013), happiness is the capability to be satisfied with self, with others, and with life in general. It's about being satisfied with oneself, what one does, and taking pleasure in it. Happiness, as the self-motivation to self-actualisation, does not feature as one of the main constituents of emotional-social intelligence, but serves as a fuel to other components of emotional-social intelligence. This aspect could serve to enhance motivation and may help motivate oneself. Without that feeling, someone feels discontent and dissatisfaction (Bar-On, 2013). Bar-On (2013) explanation was that happiness serves two fundamental functions in human performance, namely, the motivational and barometric functions.

The first aids performance by inspiring and invigorating; the second informs how well an individual has performed and can result in a sense of well-being overall. “Happiness

is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence,” quoted the philosopher Aristotle (as cited in Meleisea, 2016). Positive psychology, also known as “the science of happiness,” has identified a range of character strengths that contribute to happiness, for example, creativity, perseverance, kindness, and teamwork, among others (Meleisea, 2016). Budiyanto et al. (2018), revealed the significance of Suka, as a culturally mediated inherent element of Indonesian inclusive pedagogy. Researchers with whom teachers worked regarded the happiness-learning nexus as part of (inclusive) classroom teaching. Trained educators applied two terms to happiness: Senang and Suka; the former is a general term for individualised happiness or the happiness originating from an inner aspect, and the latter, networked emotion, which belongs to the category of social interaction (Budiyanto et al., 2018).

Budiyanto et al. (2018) also noted that this happiness was not considered predatory, but directly associated with appropriate behaviour within the successful inclusive classroom. Bullough (2011) pointed out the importance of hope and happiness on school improvement based on that, in order to prevent disillusionment, one must:

*“...to build hope and maximise teacher happiness necessitates work conditions that enhance agency and pathways and, importantly, encourage engagement and invite and inspire self-transcendence. Educators need to be encouraged to do what they believe is best for learners and build on their strengths”*

It is important to one that such an effort is not solely in the hands of educators. However, such a eudemonic atmosphere can be productive in a classroom.

### **2.3.2 Knowledge dimensions educators need to operate in an inclusive education environment**

According to Chibwe & Mulenga, (2021), knowledge is referred to as understanding gained through learning or experience. To include students with disabilities, educators must understand the disability. Knowledge about disability types may facilitate inclusion and influence the future of inclusion and the quality of education received by LSEN (Doyi, 2023). Previous studies also suggested that knowledge is important in deciding on the relevant teaching method which may be group-specific and effective (Doyi, 2023).

### **2.3.2.1 Inclusive education origins and principles**

In South Africa, the EWP6 policy paper is presented as “providing a framework to create an inclusive education and training system” (Landsberg et al., 2005). EWP6 strives to eliminate discrimination with regard to the education system and promotes the establishment of an education system that caters to all children, including those with disabilities (DoE, 2001). To discuss the object and implementation of EWP6, one must take into account the fundamentals of such laws and regulations. The first principle pertains to human rights and social justice for all learners. All students have the right to quality education, equal opportunities, and human dignity. The other principle is participation and social inclusion, where all children have the right to participate and be included in society and educational programmes. The third principle is equal access to an inclusive general system and access to the curriculum. The fourth principle is that of correcting past imbalances and injustices in educational opportunities and access. The fifth principle defines education as grounded in community sensitivity. Inclusive education is based on the principle of a workable system, which is cost-effective and sustainable (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2013).

### **2.3.2.2 Learner’s rights**

The Constitution (RSA, 1996), set the tone for access to education for all learners, including LSEN. Section 29 (1) (a) of the Constitution highlights that, “everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education” (RSA, 1996, p. 12). The South African Government thus carries the responsibility to ensure that education is available for all (RSA, 1996; DoE, 2001). Although the Constitution laid the foundation for equal access to education for all, other policies cemented this initiative and introduced the formalised push towards inclusive education. These policies included, amongst others, the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS), (DoE, 1997a) and the EWP6 “*Building an Inclusive Education System*” (DoE, 2001). These policies were implemented to improve educational provision for South Africa LSEN. A discussion on these policies follows below.

The first policy that is mentioned is the INDS (DoE, 1997a). In the INDS the rights of persons with disabilities received proper redress. The document outlined aims to integrate individuals with disabilities into society by including them in their social, political and educational structures (DoE, 2001). The INDS further highlighted the fact

that the exclusion of LSEN from the public system was caused by then apartheid Government. According to the INDS, addressing individuals with disabilities as an integral part of decision-making processes would emphasise their fundamental right to access resources on an equal basis as other members of society (DoE, 1997a). The integration of individuals with disabilities into the inclusive education system would increase their opportunities to participate in decision-making processes and policymaking. However, the INDS was only adopted as a White Paper and never became legally binding Act.

After the INDS, the EWP6's *"Building an Inclusive Education and Training System"* was released in 2001. The White Paper aimed to support an inclusive education and training system. It outlined goals to create an accessible and barrier-free educational system that would meet the needs of learners, including those with LSEN (Human Rights Watch, 2015). One of the objectives of the EWP6 was to uncover and minimise barriers to learning to enable all learners to access education in a regular classroom. This would give each learner the support required to overcome limitations resulting from inaccessible educational environments (DOE, 2001; McKenzie, et al, 2018). According to the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), South Africa's education system needed restructuring. The previous ways of teaching in segregated environments were not conducive to an equal and discrimination-free society. The goal of restructuring was to build open and lifelong environments that would accommodate the needs of all learners in a barrier-free, inclusive environment.

SASA in support of the Constitution (section 29) regulates and provides a uniform system for the governing of all schools in South Africa. It is based on the premise that the country required a new national system for schools to redress the past injustices in education and support provision, to provide high-quality education (SASA, 1996, p. 1). SASA further stated that all public schools must admit learners and serve their educational needs in any form, regardless of their colour, race, gender and what form of disability the learner has (RSA, 1996). One of the main key features of this Act is the assertion of equal rights to access basic quality education for all learners without being discriminated against in any form. It also stated that learners should not be denied admission to any school on any of the grounds. This was an important step in the country's attempt to redress past injustices.

### **2.3.2.3 Individual differences**

In order to accommodate learners with disabilities, teachers need to be informed about the disability. A number of studies have been conducted in the area of teachers' knowledge of the disability, for example:

- Communication disorders including speech and language disorders (Sadler 2015),
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Ghanizadeh, et al., 2016),
- Epilepsy (Bishop & Boag 2016),
- Perceptual disabilities or developmental appliances (Kirby, et al., 2015)
- Learning-disabilities-specific or Learning-disabilities-general (Kirby, et al., 2015),
- Dyslexia (Carvalhais, 2006; Carvalhais & da Silva, 2010),
- Intellectual disabilities and challenging behaviours such as emotions and behaviours disorders (Gable et al., 2011) and
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) (McCabe, 2008).

Information about type of disability can assist inclusion in both the prospects for inclusion and the quality of education impact Learn support in barriers to learning of LSEN (Barned, et al., 2011). Prior studies also indicate that knowledge is useful for choosing the appropriate teaching method that can be specific and efficient for a group.

The present work investigates educators' awareness regarding four such 'hidden' disabilities in the regular primary and secondary classrooms in India's (ADHD, dyslexia, slow learners and ASD). These invisible disabilities can be seen in normal classrooms, but the knowledge of the educators in this regard is limited (Saravanabhavan & Saravanabhavan, 2010). Therefore, these learners are usually neglected by academics. Indeed, they are placed together under the general classification of having 'learning disablement' (Saravanabhavan & Saravanabhavan, 2010). There have been other researches done with regard to regular school teachers' understanding of these disabilities. Additionally, they established that there is awareness of learning difficulties among educators (c.f. Perold, et al., 2010 for ADHD;

York et al., 1999 for ID and ASD). They have long-term academic problems which are ignored in a crowded classroom. "These children have been in trouble academically for years." (Saravanabhavan & Saravanabhavan, 2010). These students with disabilities are perceived to be involved in regular schools because of their non-infected appearance. However, their hidden disabilities need to be taken into account by the teachers in order to help them make better educational gains.

#### **2.3.2.4 Teaching and assessment methods for an inclusive classroom**

The importance of appropriate teaching strategies for students with learning disabilities has been seen as a crucial factor (Rasooli & DeLuca 2024). Some of the teaching strategies are specific to a particular condition, i.e., ID (Rae et al., 2011), dyslexia (Carvalho & da Silva, 2010), ADHD (Ghanizadeh et al., 2006), or ASD (Goodman & Williams, 2007; McCabe, 2008). The average teacher needs to know the common problems of LSEN and the basic teaching methods that can be applied in a given context. However, there is a knowledge void that can potentially lead educators to be apprehensive in managing these learners (Rasooli, et al, 2024).

Differentiated instruction is a way for teachers to plan instruction and provide students with the teaching that they need. It is an educational model that uses various teaching methods in a given classroom to meet the diverse perspectives, needs, characters, and experiences of individual learners (Monteiro, Mata & Santos, (2021). Differentiated Instruction is inquiry-oriented, interest-based, student-centered, and activity-rich (Chamberlin et al., 2012). When we view the average classroom as a group of learners with diverse needs in terms of ability level, readiness, and interests, then it's safe to assume that teachers who do not differentiate instruction teach very few of their learners (Monteiro, et al, 2021).

The use of differentiated instruction enables teachers to cater for differences among individual pupils in diverse ability groups in one classroom (Smit et al., 2012). In addition, differentiation indicates that teachers might be able to design lessons in ways that appeal to more than one learner interest to stimulate greater learner interest and test scores (Fitzgerald & Lauria, 2016).

In the current study, 'teaching methods' is taken to represent all available methods for the educator. Florian (2006) provides us with a broad categorization of teaching

approaches for an inclusive educator under the headings ‘differentiated instruction’ (e.g., modifying or differentiating what is to be taught, pacing of instruction, the use of a wide range of instructional materials other than textbooks), ‘cooperative learning’ (e.g., collaborative groups, pairing students, peer tutoring, scaffolding), and classroom management (e.g., adapting the physical environment of the room, using visual supports and structure). The latter broader themes describe the various teaching methods suitable for LSEN in mainstream classes and they served as a framework for the measurement of their cognitive characteristics. It is also maintained that the adapted teaching approach provided adequate support not only for LSEN; but also strengthened learning in non-special needs learners. For this reason, these methods are referred to as inclusive teaching.

Modifying assessment and testing accommodations is also an alternative way to respond to the special needs and learning improvement of pupils in one class. Examples of so-called modified assessment characteristics are extra time, overlooking certain types of errors, taking oral instead of written tests, learning in an environment different from the classroom, enlarged test pages, different test duration, the use of dictionaries or other support material. A second shift in modification of assessment in inclusive settings is employing peer- and self-assessment processes in place of teacher grading practices. Teachers can “opt to allow extended time, provide breaks, not use timed assignments, remind learners of the time and passage of time, and shift the emphasis from timing by other means” (Mady, 2018).

Teacher efficacy in teaching methods was similarly essential to effective inclusive practice. Requisite teaching skills were the capacity to adapt tasks for students, devise classroom activities with all students in mind, apply a range of instructional strategies proficiently, modify materials of instruction within lessons, modify curriculum content to address an individual student’s learning, and adapting instruction. Teachers need to know how to enhance their teaching and learning or innovate in teaching and to be familiar with different methodologies of teaching (Florian, 2012; Lancaster & Bain, 2010; Philpot et al., 2010). Adapting teaching methodologies, like cooperative learning and peer tutoring, may aid in the learning experience (Garrote et al., 2017). The opportunity to offer the optimal teaching means in the same manner with inclusive values works in the approach of educators in handling difficult elements in the framework of educational discipline of the 21st century (Di Gennaro et al., 2014).

When choosing tasks for learners to work on at their desks independently and/or when deciding to have an assistant work with students, the teacher should be able to answer “yes” as to whether each mainstream-taught learner can in fact work on the task without constant teacher support and attention (Polirstok, 2015). It is important to align curricula and content to be relevant to LSEN. As Farrell (2010) contends, the LSEN take priority over whether a curriculum has been designed for the mainstream and the LSEN have access to adapted curricula that suits them, not the other way around. Inclusive special education is faced with the challenge that, for every learner with special educational needs (LSEN), one needs to find the right balance between an academic or developmental curriculum (attending to most learners’ needs) and a functional curriculum that satisfies those of LSENs (Hornby, 2015).

## **2.4 SKILLS REQUIRED BY EDUCATORS TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE TEACHING**

According to Dapudong (2014) a skill is referred to as the term that encompasses the knowledge, competencies and abilities to perform operational tasks. Educators’ skills of educators are the most important variable in the education of LSEN. Dapudong (2014) stated that “The success of inclusion or organised placement of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms largely depends on teachers’ skills to teach pupils with SEN and their knowledge on how to differentiate the curriculum to educate them”. In several studies, the skills that educators possess towards educating LSEN have been put forward as a decisive factor in making schools more inclusive (Dopudong, 2014). Significantly, Landasan (2017) recommended that teachers’ KSA must be given appropriate measures to further enhance the skills and academic performance of the LSEN.

### **2.4.1 Classroom management skills**

Classroom management definitions may vary depending on the experiences of experts, educators, or people who have an interest in classroom management. Dodgson (2016) explained that the variations in these definitions start from “giving instruction”, “transitioning” one lesson to the next stage, “motivating and engaging learners”, to being centred “...on discipline and class rules”. These definitions may be the commonly understood concerning classroom management which is vital aid for educators to maintain learners’ behaviours and gain control of classrooms. The most

important competency that should be acquired by mainstream educators is the skill to manage teaching and learning in the mainstream, educators should also understand learner's behaviour and develop social interaction skills. Mainstream educators should be prepared with practical knowledge or application of the skills by working with learners with disabilities rather than purely through theoretical knowledge.

The common practice of inclusive programs is educating disabled and non-disabled learners in a mainstream setting (Manuel, Reyes, Cadiz & Natividad, 2024). Thus, inclusive education goes beyond the physical presence of a child in the classroom; LSEN also go through the same curriculum as the non-disabled, appear at the same examinations and acquire the same certificate (Manuel, et al, 2024). Inclusive education has actualised the need to study the willingness and competency of educators to work in inclusive education. It is important to provide educators with the knowledge, skills and understanding of inclusive (Sharma, et al, 2015), so they can be more competent in school.

Classroom management is a crucial skill for competent educators. Competencies in classroom management are generally based on the ability to plan an appropriate classroom physical environment, rearrange classroom sitting positions, provide a conducive classroom environment, and set up a comfortable environment for the learner. Effective classroom management strategies are important competencies to support the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Thus, classroom management skills play an important role in mainstream educators to succeed in inclusive education program (Manuel, et al, 2024). Creating a climate conducive to learners complying with behavioural expectations, volunteering answers or taking on more challenging assignments is closely tied to the emotional temperature of the classroom (Polirstok, 2015). Creating an emotionally safe classroom environment where learners can be successful involves high-approval interactions between learners and educators.

#### **2.4.2 Positive discipline skills**

Many components that make up positive discipline include teaching a learner how to solve problems, giving learners choices, using natural and logical consequences to teach, and teaching positive life skills using follow-through (Corpus & Wormington, (2014). In using positive discipline educators should easily be able to help and solve

their own problems whilst learning from them (Zaky, 2022). Learners need positive guidance from adults to help learn acceptable behaviour in a variety of circumstances, and to help build their independence and decision-making skills. Having this independence and frequent opportunities to make good decisions helps build a child's self-esteem. When an adult shames a child for not making their expectations clear or when punishing them, the child may fail to develop good self-esteem. Lower self-esteem can result in more behavioural problems (Chen, et al, 2022).

Learners should also experience the natural and logical consequences of their actions (Chen, et al, 2022), even within existing classroom rules. In experiencing consequence of their choices, they can learn from their mistakes. Being able to predict consequences is a necessary life skill and can only happen if learners could do so. Children also need to see that adults follow through. It is important, as a teacher, to mean what you say to help students develop these decision-making skills.

### **2.4.3 Counselling skills**

Educators teaching LSEN in inclusive classroom set-ups need to offer a wide range of support services to ensure the learners benefit meaningfully from the education system. Counselling is a service offered to LSEN in inclusive classrooms. Counseling is an interactive relationship between two people, namely the one in need of it and the other one providing it. Counselling is built between two individuals anchored on helping the person with the problem. For LSEN, counselling may be critical because learning disabilities affect not only their academic performance but also their psychological well-being. Poor academic performance caused by learning disabilities lowers learners' self-esteem which in turn may lead to withdrawal from school.

A study by Gül and Fazil (2016) on school counselling and LSEN revealed that these learners experienced problems ranging from frustration to difficulties in attempting to resolve issues they encountered in performance at school. However, counselling and guidance services helped LSEN realise their potential (Yesilyaprak, 2001). A similar study by Shari Tarver and Michael (2004) in California revealed that LSEN had diverse and complex needs requiring a wide range of services they key to which was counseling. Beth and Gloria (2014) study on the impact of counselling on SEN in Nigeria revealed that as a service helped people solve problems and learn to cope with other issues that were not easily.

In South Africa, DoE has provided guidelines on the support services which should be offered to LSEN as a way of helping them to realise their potential. According to the DoE, support services to be offered to learners with LSEN included guidance and counseling services. The emphasis on counselling within different studies demonstrates the significance such a service has in helping LSEN to accept the problems they have and find strategies to succeed. Educators should therefore possess counseling skills to help learners in this regard.

#### **2.4.4 Communication skills**

Communication skills can be defined as the transmission of a message that involves the shared understanding between the contexts in which the communication takes place (Crispel & Kasperski, (2021). In addition, educator communication skills are important for educator in delivery of education to learners (Aküzüm, et al, 2014). Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching, an educator needs to be highly skilled in these areas. Educators with good communication always make things easier and understandable (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). Effective communication skills are important for an educator in teaching, classroom management and interaction with learners in the class. An educator should teach learners to use different thinking approaches. Communication also assists educators in teaching per ability and capability of the learners which motivates them toward in their learning process (Sng Bee,2012).

Educators' communication skills are a basic need for learners academic and later professional success. Educators communicate instructions verbally in the classroom; poor communication skills would cause the failure of learners to learn or promote their academics. Furthermore, learners need to understand what is right, and what is wrong which depends upon educators' communication skills (Zembat, et al, 2017). Good communications minimises the potential of unkind feelings during the process of teaching. The learner must be attentive toward their educator during the lesson. Zembat et al, (2017), recommended that educators communicate clearly and understandably. Communication is a dynamic process in which an individual dares to face the other and effectively convey their message.

The communication process is successful when the message is delivered clearly and understandably. Effective communication involves clearly expressing your message

and actively listening to others, ensuring everyone understands and feel heard. Good communication is considered a strong tool for effectiveness in the teaching profession (Tok, et al, 2014). A variety of skills are needed for good teaching and learning. A study conducted by Tok et al (2014), indicated that for effective teaching, an educator must have good communication skills.

Communication is the process which one adopts while sharing their views with others. For an educator, it is necessary to have good communication skills for learners' education. Educators need good communication skills to facilitate learners and achieve good professional goals. The effectiveness of teaching is not dependent on a technicality but on the method adopted by the educator while teaching to the learners. Educators need clear communication to ensure learners understand them to avoid problems whilst teaching: importantly, the educators must first understand themselves (Loss, J. 2000). Good communication is not only needed for effective teaching, but it is cornerstone of everyday interceptions (Yılmaz & Altunbaş, 2012). The performance of educators in the classroom depends upon their communication skills - if the educator has good communication skills, they can easily convey their message or understandably deliver the lesson (Yılmaz, et al, 2012).

#### **2.4.5 Sign language skills**

Learners with hearing impairments have experienced discrimination during regular education. In the past, such learners were institutionalised in separate classes or schools. According to Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013), most schools have been failing LSEN by denying them access to appropriate facilities. LHIs have the right to be included in the least restrictive environment. Mapolisa et al (2013), argue that to deny any child the opportunity to learn with their age-mates and peers on grounds of impairment is tantamount to jeopardising their later opportunity of living fully in a multi-cultural society. The placement of the child in an ordinary classroom is synonymous with full inclusion. This means that the child will be a member of the regular school system and have all their education in an ordinary classroom (Moores, 2013).

However, there are gaps in the mainstream curriculum which need to be filled to enable deaf learners to fully benefit from it. The extent to which the curriculum should be modified great, especially if all learners (including deaf learners') are to be catered for (UNESCO, 1998). Many educators lack the necessary experience and expertise to

teach deaf learners in the mainstream (Hardman et al., 2014). Zindi (2013) asserted that educators must accommodate LHIs so that they can learn. An educator who teaches in an inclusion set-up must also acquire sign language skills to cater for those learners who are deaf. Education involves bringing learners into a social world in which they will participate. Like other forms of disability, a lack of hearing imposes limitations on the individual's ability to acquire social skills, daily living skills, peer interactions, self-concept, grooming, toileting, dressing and so on (Hardman et al., 2014). The deaf learn appropriate social behaviours only when they are deliberately sequenced into the curriculum since most social skills, morals and behaviours are transmitted through communication with other people (Northern & Downs, 2012).

#### **2.4.6 Operation of braille**

Educators working with LVs in a regular classroom should consider several things to be effective. First, an educator should understand the visual condition of the LVs. Secondly, they need teaching skills to deliver quality education to these learners in an inclusive classroom. As mentioned, inclusive education is essentially a programme that enables all learners with or without disability to participate fully in the life and work of mainstreamed settings to meet their learning needs. It gives equal opportunity for all learners to jointly undertake learning situations without discrimination and any learner considered to have a deviation because of a loss or damage in physical and mental development is given the right to belong to the mainstreamed setting.

The key element for decision-making/ -teaching adaptation is the selection of a medium of instruction and teaching strategy which enables the LVIs to be most proficient in learning and life achievement. Some strategies for handling LVIs in regular classrooms do exist (Leonard Cheshire Disability, 2011; UNESCO, 2001). For example, electronic braille writing; however, educators need to be skilled in operating and reading braille. Whilst useful, braille does have problems or difficulties in learning it. These problems vary with individuals depending on the onset of the visual problem and age of the individual. For instance, when one is visually impaired from childhood, the problem is reduced as the sense of touch on the fingertips is easily developed; this may become more challenging in later years, such as when an adult (educator) needs to learn braille (Nsagha, 2012).

#### **2.4.7 Lesson planning skills**

Differentiated lesson planning is a pedagogical-didactical approach that provides educators with a starting point for meeting LSEN's requirements. (Schleicher, 2016; UNESCO, 2017). Differentiation is a philosophy of teaching rooted in a deep respect for learners, acknowledgement of their differences, and the drive to help all learners thrive. Such ideas imply that educators proactively modify curricula, teaching methods, resources, lesson planning and learning activities or requirements for learners' products to better meet learners' learning needs. When educators deliberately plan such adaptations to facilitate learners' learning and execute these adaptations during their lessons the term differentiated lesson planning is used. Several developments in education have boosted the need for differentiated lesson planning. First, contemporary classes are becoming relatively heterogeneous due to policies focused on de-tracking, the inclusion of learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and inclusive education in which LSEN attend classes along with 'normal learners' (Rock et al., 2008; Tomlinson, 2015). Even within relatively homogeneous classrooms, there are considerable differences between learners; these all need attention (Wilkinson & Penney, 2014).

Second, the idea that learners have different learning needs and that a one-size-fits-all approach does not help learners, is gaining momentum (Subban, 2016). Policymakers stressed that all learners should be supported to develop their knowledge and skills at their level (Schleicher, 2016). Additionally, there is an attempt to improve equity or equality among learners (Kyriakides et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2017). When the aim is to decrease the gap between low and high-achieving learners, educators could invest most in supporting low-achieving learners. Although the concept of differentiated lesson planning is quite well-known, educators struggle to grasp how it should be implemented in their classrooms (Van Casteren, et al, 2017).

## **2.5 SKILLS-RELATED CHALLENGES EDUCATORS ENCOUNTER IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

According to Donohue and Bornman (2014), when the EWP6 was first published in 2001, South Africa appeared to be following the international trend towards inclusion, but subsequent policy implementation has made little progress over the decade that followed. Specifically, most LSEN who attend school are still in separate "special" schools for learners with disabilities (DoE, 2001; Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

According to educators, they lack the knowledge and skills to deal with inclusive education. Their roles are perceived to be assisting all learners; Many educators are seen to be disadvantaged due to the poor quality of their training within the field (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). In the past, in-service training was predominantly provided by universities, educator-training colleges and non-governmental or private organisations (Mpu, & Adu, 2021). In other words, the success of inclusive education in a country depends largely on the capacity of the educators' skills and knowledge in inclusive education (Mpu, et al, (2021).

The reality is that due to their diverse backgrounds and experiences, learners in inclusive classrooms have varying learning demands (Marsack, 2013). Attempts should be made to use these differences to meet their needs by creating conducive learning and teaching environments. These differences and diversities should be acknowledged (Mundial & UNICEF, (2016), so that learners have an education on par with other learners, whatever their differences. Today, inclusive schools have an increasing number of Learners with Special Education Needs, including learners with physical, sensory, emotional, behavioural, and learning challenges (Woodcock, et al, 2012).

### **2.5.1 Visual impairment**

Vision accounts for more than half of the information we learn about the outside world and its loss is a real fear among most people (Darrah, 2013; Zorluolu, et al, 2016). Educators struggle to teach LVIs; specifically, they lack appropriate teaching. Often, low academic performance of LVIs results from using the teaching method for learners with sight (Sight Saver International, 2010). This problem has caused poor classroom participation and performance among LVIs who end up with low education levels.

The research conducted in Zambia by (Penda, et al, 2015), showed that most educators lack skills when teaching LVIs or lack abilities to understand LVIs and teach them effectively. Educators in Zambia further explained that they had difficulty finding a suitable teaching method which could make LVIs learn better and perform well academically. Educators experienced the difficulty of reading LVIs braille and the inability to prepare questions and answers in braille for the lesson being taught. Educators also struggled to prepare both formative and summative assessments that accommodated LVIs.

In South Africa, the inclusion of LVIs in mainstream schools is not an easy task, exacerbated by contextual factors such as educators' lack of knowledge, an unadjusted environment and a non-user-friendly schooling environment for LSEN. Teaching methods and materials are not adequately adapted for LVIs, and the physical environment within classes and schools is not accessible (Ramrathan & Mzimela, 2016). Educators in mainstream schools are not adequately trained and supported, and not all stakeholders participate sufficiently to give LVIs the necessary support they need within the teaching and learning environment (Maguvhe, 2015).

Educators at schools with a broader focus on academic subjects must be aware of "the various eye conditions that impair the LVIs normal vision and the influence of such conditions on learners' visual functioning and learning abilities" (Ramrathan et al, 2016). When LVIs are integrated into regular classes, their performance is primarily dependent on the educators' preparation, the calibre of the support they receive, and the educators' confidence in educating LSEN (Delubom, et al, (2020)).

### **2.5.2 Hearing impairment**

According to Kiriungi, et al, (2014), a case study in Singapore showed that LHIs attended at elementary school with regular classrooms. According to Kiriungi et al. (2014), educators treated LHIs equally to other learners. LHIs and non-impaired learners attended the same school, took the same tests and exams including the Primary and Secondary School Leaving Examination, played together shared desks, and ate meals together. According to Kiriungi et al. (2014), this integration also improved LHIs social integration, improved the learning experiences for children in both types of learners, and allowed for one-on-one conversations, academic remediation, or other forms of support like additional lessons for hearing impaired learners. According to Kiriungi et al. (2014), all of these instructional techniques were created to help LHIs function more effectively in a conventional primary school.

International literature claims that although it is a child's human right to obtain an education in these regular schools LHIs in Zimbabwe encounter a variety of challenges (Musengi, et al, 2012). According to Musengi et al. (2012 as cited in White, et al, 2012), the study's findings showed that the curriculum in regular schools is designed for learners who do not have hearing impairments. Most educators acknowledged that they handled their classes as though they were instructing physically and cognitively

identical learners. According to Musengi et al. (2012), there is no education occurring when the curriculum is the same for all learners.

Most respondents said that a modified curriculum is required to accommodate the needs of LHIs. According to Zindi (1997 as cited by Musengi et al, 2012), educators had a responsibility to design the curriculum for LHIs so that it was less intimidating. Hawkins (2005, as cited by Musengi 2012), advocates for gaps in the national curriculum to be filled. This would provide LHIs with social skills, communication and language skills, auditory training, vocational skills, teaching approaches, assistive devices, and learning equipment. The curriculum should therefore accommodate their learning and social demands.

Only a limited number of studies have been done in South Africa concerning challenges faced by educators in teaching LHIs. Educators lack adequate knowledge, skills and training for effective implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. A comprehensive study conducted by Landsberg and Matthews (2016), revealed that South African educators have a definite lack of knowledge about issues relating to inclusive education. Furthermore, the teachers felt unprepared and unequipped to teach in inclusive classrooms because of their lack of training, lack of time, large classes and lack of teacher experience. Fear of not being able to manage diversity resulted in feelings of hopelessness and learners being referred for assessments by specialists and placements in special programmes (Ndou, 2015). Other specific concerns associated with negative attitudes included the lack of educational and teacher support, insufficient facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices. Negative attitudes and labelling resulted from misconceptions and assumptions about learners with specific educational needs and the potential effect of inclusion on these learners, as well as on other learners in the classroom (Ndou, 2015).

On closer investigation of these research results, it appears that educators in South Africa still tend to think in terms of the previous education system namely that some learners 'could not cope' within the ordinary education system due to their deficits (Ndou, 2015). The idea of separation between special schools and ordinary schools promoted a traditional view of special needs with the attention on the child with the problem (Swart & Pettipher, 2016). This traditional medical model influenced teacher

training and beliefs, attitudes and practices in education. It is therefore not strange that teachers presently lack adequate KSA in inclusive education.

It was also clear that most educators lacked background in teaching inclusively to LHIs. Additionally, they lacked the necessary training to effectively guide young LHIs. There is a dearth of specialised educators who can instruct the LHIs in conventional classrooms.

### **2.5.3 Dyslexia**

Ahmad et al. (2018) revealed that the teaching of pupils with dyslexia poses a lot of challenges to educators due to their lack of effective teaching methods in an inclusive classroom. Educators held negative implicit attitudes toward challenging behaviour and learning difficulties (Krischler & Pit-ten Cate, 2019). Kormos and Nijakowska (2017) opined that pre-and in-service teachers tend to have concerns about children in an inclusive classroom. Pino and Mortari (2014) revealed significant gaps in the available stock of evidence on the inclusion of learners with dyslexia in higher education. Knight (2018) revealed that educators lacked knowledge of the biological and cognitive aspects of learners with dyslexia which further demonstrated the relevance of good quality educator training in increasing educators' confidence in working with these learners. Stampoltzis et al. (2018) observed that educators faced several barriers and expressed neutral to positive attitudes to dyslexia.

Leseyane et al. (2018) revealed that educators in public schools used negative comments that embarrassed dyslexic learners and offered them no extra attention to them. A different study found that English language educators lack sufficient knowledge of learners with dyslexia's difficulties as well as the inclusive language teaching practices (Indrarathne, 2019). The necessary knowledge and skills to adjust the teaching approach towards dyslexics' learners' among English language educators were lacking (Nijakowska et al., 2018). Nijakowska (2014 as cited in Nijakowska, 2019) found that the necessary knowledge and skills needed for inclusive teaching environments to meet the needs of dyslexic learners were lacking among foreign language educators. Considerable concerns and low levels of self-efficacy in implementing inclusive teaching practices with dyslexic learners were found among foreign language educators (Kormos & Nijakowska, 2017). Keenan et al. (2020) found that educators recognised their role in supporting the promotion of executive skills but

reported that effective implementation of individualised support for learners with dyslexia may be limited by issues such as neuropsychological reports and resource limitations.

In Hong Kong, educators are grappling with increasing diversity among learners, especially in teaching LSEN (Chan & Lo, 2017). School educators face substantial challenges in delivering quality instruction and helping learners with dyslexia overcome their difficulties in learning (Tam & Leung, 2019). Educators had more negative experiences than positive experiences in teaching these learners (Yeo et al., 2016). Evidence from interviews with educators of inclusive classrooms showed there appeared to be an absence of educators' strong leadership and ability to carry out quality instruction in an inclusive classroom (Webster & Blatchford, 2019). Educators often approach the inclusion of LSEN in regular classrooms with feelings of ill-preparedness and apprehension (Pit-ten Cate et al., 2018). Krischler, et al, (2019) investigated Greek educators' views on inclusive education of learners with dyslexia and found a plethora of negative experiences among them. Furthermore, according to Jaka (2016), a very limited number of elite schools provide policies to facilitate educators' teaching in an inclusive classroom and no importance is paid to professional training related to dyslexia. Crispel et al, (2021) indicated that pre-service educators possessed negative attitudes towards people with disabilities due to little or no knowledge and experience with disability.

For most educators, the adequacy of initial educator education to support struggling learners in an inclusive classroom setting seems to have been low (Krischler, et al, (2019). In South Africa, research has shown that overcrowding is one of the leading stressors in diversified classrooms especially where there are learners with dyslexia as they need a one-to-one teaching approach (Potgieter-Groot, et al, 2012). Additionally, overcrowding made discipline difficult to exercise in the diversified classroom (Engelbrecht et al., 2015). According to Landsberg et al. (2005 as cited in Mogashoa, 2019) some learners with dyslexia lacked discipline, which increased the likelihood of classroom disruptions. Hence, overcrowding was often linked to deteriorating academic performance (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012). Studies revealed that overcrowding impinged on important aspects such as the demands of the job the role to be performed and the availability of the learning resources (Adewumi, et al, 2017; Margartoiu, 2015).

#### **2.5.4 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

ASD-specific education is challenging because of the disorder's complex symptoms, atypical learning styles, and behaviours not aligned with expected classroom behaviour. These often leave educators feeling unskilled (Smith-Myle 2005:2-5). As a result of worldwide educational inclusion policies (Mundial, et al, (2016), many more children with ASD are now educated in mainstream schools, particularly in Europe and America. In Scotland, a study showed that 88% of children with ASD are currently educated in mainstream schools and 4% are educated partly in mainstream and partly in special schools (Scottish Government, 2016). This means that educators must meet learners with ASD's needs in most schools across Scotland. These learners have a very different way of experiencing and perceiving the world compared to neurotypical learners. This is the result of difficulties in communication and social understanding, the flexibility of thought and sensory processing which impact all aspects of learning both within school and in life in general (Ravet, 2015). These features combine in complex ways at varying levels of severity and therefore manifest differently from one individual with ASD to the next.

In mainstream schools, learners with ASD often have a diagnosis of high-functioning ASD where the presentation of ASD can be subtle and more difficult to identify. However, this subtlety does not necessarily mean that the condition is mild, and that the learner can cope without support. Indeed, the very 'invisibility' of the condition amongst this group can be highly problematic, for it means that teachers may overlook their needs and fail to recognise the challenges they face.

Inadequate resources and lack of knowledge and skills to teach learners with ASD in a mainstream classroom are factors that contribute to educators' negative attitudes toward inclusion (Ahmadi, et al, 2013:20-27; Moreno, et al, 2011: online). Additionally, the severe challenges concerning limited opportunities for training, operational challenges, lack of therapeutic support, limited support by the DoE and restricted opportunities for debriefing also influence educator attitudes.

Thus, training and increased KSA regarding ASD education were described as critical success factors for ASD education (Rodrigues, et al, 2011: online). A total of 25 educators (27.8%) indicated personal and professional development as a reason for deciding to work in ASD education. Although educators indicated a need for training

and development, 44 educators reported limited training in ASD education as a severe challenge. Hence, there appeared to be a conflict between educators' need for training and the availability of training opportunities within the South African context.

## **2.6 STRATEGIES CURRENTLY USED BY EDUCATORS IN TEACHING AND ASSESSING LEARNERS IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CLASSROOM**

From the previous sections, the process of enabling all learners the chance to actively participate in routine classroom activities, regardless of handicap or any other issue that might influence their learning, is known as inclusion in education. In addition, according to Mosolla (2020), inclusion in South Africa refers to the kind of schools, classrooms, teaching methods, and assessment procedures that could be described as inclusive: this includes institutional and informal support structures (Tshifura, 2012).

Recognising that learners differ in terms of emotional, physical, and cognitive development is the cornerstone of effective inclusive education. The implementation of the child-centred way of teaching is emphasised in curriculum papers such as the curricula blueprints and Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) for the elementary and secondary schools. To ensure an inclusive curriculum, educators must be trained to use a wider variety of instructional strategies, such as Information Communication Technology (ICT), cooperative group work, experimentation and independent self-study, such as reorganise the classroom by expanding access to self-study spaces like libraries and encouraging more group work outside of the educator's direct control (Tshifura, 2012). Nevertheless, not all learners from various backgrounds can be served by this approach.

### **2.6.1 Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

Many South African schools have easy access to Teaching and Learning Support Materials (LTSM), which aids in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Mokwena, 2016). In addition, Mokwena (2016) contended that to compensate for inclusion, efficient use of ICT in education is required. An "assistive device" is any item, piece of equipment, or product system used to raise, maintain, or improve the functional capacities of learners with impairments, whether it was bought commercially off-the-shelf, modified, or customised (Mhlongo, 2017). For example, if large-print books are not accessible, LVIs can be taught by projecting onto a white board.

In a typical classroom, effort should be made to arrange the seating so that any equipment required by LVIs does not interfere with other learners. In South Africa, several strategies have been used to ensure that LVIs are integrated into society (Mokwena, 2016). For example, laptops are utilised in highly technologically equipped schools to take class notes and voice recording devices are also used to record educators' lessons so that content can be examined later. Exams and learning written language might be difficult for LVIs, thus educators can provide exams orally or on a computer to ensure that the material is readily visible or repeated to the learners verbally as a comprehension evaluation (Chambers, 2020). Nevertheless, those methods were limited to serving LVIs.

### **2.6.2 Demonstration strategy**

LHIs are often excluded. However, in one study hearing aids and audiometers were made available to and utilised by learners with sensory impairments (Chekan, Haiash, Liubchenko, Popovych & Barna, 2023). In a diverse classroom with LHIs lectures/presentations, questions and answers, and demonstrations are some of the more often used teaching and learning techniques. A typical teaching strategy is to employ presentations and question-and-answer sessions; in reality, these sessions often include props such as photos or manufactured/real objects depending on the subject. As they can be seen and make it easier for LHIs to follow the lesson, photos and objects are used in the classroom to aid in learning. Therefore, to address limitations, all classes are taught visually.

### **2.6.3 Multi-sensory approach**

The learner-centred teaching approach is used in South African public school however it often excludes learners with dyslexia from participation. Dyslexia predominantly impacts reading abilities (Boardman, 2020). According to Boardman, (2020), people who have dyslexia learn information more effectively when it is given graphically. When given the chance to engage with the subject kinaesthetically, learners can achieve great success. In Australia, dyslexic learners benefited from mobile technology use in the classroom and its related educational applications. Mobile technology is another teaching tool that is quickly gaining favour. This covers tablets, cell phones, and MP3 players such as the iPod. Mobile technology is now widely used

by both children and adults for learning as well as for entertainment purposes, including playing games and listening to music.

According to a South African study public schools in township regions are most likely to have a shortage of qualified educators who can successfully teach dyslexic learners (Cuturi, Cappagli, Yiannoutsou, Price, & Gori, (2022)). Additional findings showed that there was a mismatch between the resources available to dyslexic learners and their requirements in South Africa (Du Plessis, 2014). Due to this, educators of dyslexic learners must succeed in the classroom even in the absence of adequate support resources and formal education. Despite these difficulties, educators frequently adopt the multi-sensory approach to support dyslexic learners (Mogoshoa, 2019). According to Cuturi, et al, (2022), educators primarily provide step-by-step instructions and read-written aloud instructions to learners who have dyslexia. Educators also highlighted the important words and concepts on worksheets for learners.

#### **2.6.4 Observational learning approach**

The majority of the aforementioned tactics were detrimental to learners with ASD. Leo Kanner first used the term "ASD" in 1943. (Donohue & Bornman, 2018). The development of a person's social, communication, and behavioural skills are all impacted by ASD, which is now recognised as a pervasive developmental condition. ASD and sensory input modulation are frequently linked. Both hypo- and hypersensitivity to various senses, such as touch, taste, sight, smell, and noise, can occur in individuals with ASD. In South Africa, the observational learning approach is a prominent strategy for learners with ASD (Donohue, et al, 2018). Modelling has been utilised as an observational learning strategy to educate learners with autism ASD on life skills such as language, play, vocational behaviour, academics, and social interaction (Lamichhane & Tsujimoto, 2023).

#### **2.6.5 Group work**

According to Chonen (2014) group work is defined as learners working together in a group small enough so that everyone can participate in clearly assigned learning

tasks. Moreover, learners are expected to carry out their task without direct and immediate supervision of the educator. Group work is not the same as ability grouping in which the educator divides up the class by academic criteria so that they can instruct a more homogenous group. Group work is an effective technique for achieving certain kinds of intellectual and social learning goals. Small-group work was observed in two classrooms. In Suzy's classroom this took the form of learning centres in which small groups of learners worked together on educator-designed tasks. In Kate's classroom, learners worked in pairs as well as in small groups. Analysis of the observation and interview data related to educators' grouping practices revealed that the educators considered several factors in their decisions to group learners (such as learners' skills in mathematics or reading and how learners within the group interacted together).

Kate acknowledged that she made only minor, if any, instructional modifications on behalf of her English learners whose English ability level was below grade level in reading. For instance, concerning grouping for reading instruction, Kate noted, "I don't know that I have placed her to any particular, especially on the floor. I don't tell the learners where to sit unless I see there is a behaviour issue going on with learners." She continued, "Adriana always says, 'come and sit next to me, come and sit next to me' [but] I don't do it on purpose per se" (Kate, interview). Observation data of small-group reading instruction in Kate's class verified the basis of her instructional decision-making. Suzy made similar decisions regarding grouping learners. When asked about the choices she made regarding grouping, Suzy noted, "They're based according to grade level when I pull them out for small-group instruction, but for the regular squads, since we're a K-1-2, I always make sure there is at least one second [-grade student] in each group so that they can kind of be the leaders for the activity that they're doing" (Suzy, interview). Suzy added that her grouping decisions were based on learners' content ability levels as opposed to their language learning needs. She further revealed that homogeneous grouping was reserved for direct and small-group instruction. Observation data confirm that grouping for literacy centres was based on the mixed ability goal for all learners. For example, the beginner ELL Maria was always placed with first- and second-grade native speakers of English. While cross-age grouping structures had the potential to scaffold Maria's English language learning, the educator's goal was grouping for mixed ability rather than for the ELL's English language development.

## **2.6.6 Assessment strategies**

The assessment theory proposed by Scriven in 1967 served as the foundation for this investigation. According to this idea, the evaluation process involves making a decision based on a set of weighted standards, objectives, and criteria. This evaluation is summative. Identifying the strengths and limitations of different learners in a teaching and learning situation is made possible through educational evaluation, which is a basic endeavour. Evans (2013) defined educational assessment as the full process of gathering pertinent information about a learner to make decisions. Educational assessment has been strongly linked to and associated with words such as evaluation, measuring, and testing. According to Hayes (2010), assessment, testing, and evaluation are all terms that essentially represent the results of the educational process. This type of assessment's feedback identifies discrepancies between the ideal and the necessary (Nguyen & Thanh, 2015).

### **2.6.6.1 *Types of assessments***

One type of educational evaluation that is carried out at specific points during the teaching process is formative assessment (Popham, 2011). This is done to determine how far learning's method, substance, and outcome have come along in relation to specified objectives. Diagnostic and ongoing assessments are the two types of formative evaluation. Continuous assessment (CA) has the goal of delivering informed decisions on whether to keep using, modify, or alter instructional strategies and educational activities. To gain an understanding of learning attributes, such as past knowledge, motivation, interests, and preferred learning styles, a diagnostic evaluation is conducted. Summative evaluations are final and used to determine grades. When sufficiently differentiated to represent the knowledge and skills acquired by learners after a learning cycle, it is beneficial for students with a variety of abilities (Hayes, 2010).

### **2.6.6.2 *Assessment for learners with visually impairment (LVIs)***

Assessment of learners with ASD, LVIs, learners who use wheelchairs or crutches, have dyslexia or dysgraphia, and LHIs must take into account several variables. With regard to LVIs must be determined which colours the visually challenged students can

see so that the educator can evaluate them in the first dimension. Since they needed more time to read and comprehend assignments in terms of the second dimension (time), LVIs must be given more time to finish their tasks. This implies that educators must use differentiated assessment techniques to accommodate learners who have learning challenges. Learners may benefit from increased or decreased brightness in the third dimension depending on the specific visual issue they are experiencing.

Learners with intact cataracts require different illumination or lighting from behind, while those with retinal detachments are likely to benefit from increased lighting (according to Mokwena, 2016). This dimension showed that how learners are seated in the classroom is important; for instance, poor lighting conditions can impair learners' vision. The fourth and final dimension of space—moving to and from various locations in the classroom may be helpful for LVIs. A learner with poor distance acuity could do better if they are seated in the first row of the class, (Mokwena, 2016). Font size is another element of shape: while larger text may be helpful for certain LVIs, others may find it challenging to read because it does not fit their visual fields.

#### **2.6.6.3      *Assessment for learners with hearing-impairment (LHIs)***

Reading test items aloud, using sign interpreters for instructions, and extending time or duration for writing test items or examinations are all assessment accommodations for LHIs as they are intended to remove factors that penalise them for having a disability (American Institute for Research, 2014; Cawthon & Wurtz, 2015). The use of objective examinations, CA, and adapted/modified English alongside Sign Language interpreters should all be considered as adaptive measures for evaluating LHIs (Chifinda, 2017). To prevent undermining exceptional learners during exams, appropriate assessment for them is essential (Muzata, 2015). In South Africa, using assistive technology is crucial for helping deaf learners participate in communication processes (Mosolla, 2020). According to Mosolla (2020), the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy enables the DoE to assess LHIs and then supply them with hearing aids.

#### **2.6.6.4      *Assessment of dyslexia learners***

When evaluating learners with dyslexia, several things must be taken into account, (Engelbrecht, 2020). Reading ability is recognised by Engelbrecht, (2020) as being

important in the evaluation of learners with dyslexia. The approach looks at language-related abilities such as word recognition, phonemic awareness, and rapid item naming. Additionally, learners must be assessed on their oral language abilities, which include their capacity for attentive listening, speech comprehension, and concept communication (Faith, 2013). Oral abilities are those that can be spoken, including sound recognition, which falls into the low-level group, and speaking to convey one's thoughts, which falls into the high-level category. The ability of learners to decode the speech of elderly people should be considered in assessments. This is a phonological process, which is a low-level linguistic ability that excludes meaning decoding (Kumburu, 2011). Furthermore, when evaluating dyslexic learners effectively, automaticity and fluency skills must be taken into account. According to Fäloth (2013), one of the best indicators of reading proficiency is how quickly one can name letters and words. Therefore, a multidisciplinary approach must be taken into account while evaluating dyslexic learners, (Woolley, 2010).

#### **2.6.6.5 Assessment of ASD learners**

In terms of SIAS, curricular change is encouraged in South Africa. For learners with ASD, the assessment is scaled back so they can finish their assignment. South African educators use alternative assessments to include learners with ASD. Academic achievement of learners with ASD is facilitated by alternative response options, such as drawing and signing replies to assignments. Standardised tests were also employed as the other technique to gauge learners' progress. Both (2014) stated that visually based evaluations that helped learners concentrate on relevant stimuli, reduced knowledge to the essentials, made abstract concepts clear, and shifted attention in an organised manner show that learners with ASD appeared to perform well (Cook, et al, 2011).

## **2.7 CAPACITATION OF EDUCATORS TO EFFECTIVELY HANDLE LEARNERS WITH DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CLASSROOM**

The EWP6 identified a systemic problem regarding inclusion and acknowledged a diversity of learning needs that arose from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. It suggested a model that acknowledges that all learners can learn and need the necessary support to do so, in an education system which respects differences in

learners' age, class, language, disability and disease. The system must shape education structures, systems, methods, environment, curricula and attitudes to meet the needs of all learners. According to Donald, et al, (2012), to understand learning and development in children, and the barriers to learning they might have, it is necessary to have an understanding of the dynamic interaction between these contextual factors. Therefore, in attempting to improve the quality of education for all, it is necessary to understand that a range of needs exist among learners and that these must be addressed to provide effective learning for all.

### **2.7.1 Curriculum training**

The lack of training in the realm of mainstream educators has affected many areas of education such as, for example, the curriculum. According to the literature, educators generally encountered challenges regarding curriculum adaptation (Dalton et al., 2012; Swart et al., 2002). Curriculum-related challenges were exacerbated by a lack of training and poor skills (Adewumi et al., 2017; Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012). Studies showed that by making provision for their training, educators could be equipped with the knowledge of various teaching styles that could be employed to make the curriculum more flexible and adaptable (Dalton et al., 2012). Therefore, curriculum development requires educators to acquire proficient facilitation skills, hence the importance of professional training highlighted in the literature (Young, 2018).

Research findings in the literature have revealed that a significant contributory factor to the curriculum challenge was inappropriate curriculum design. In one study (Howarth, 1988), the curriculum design was found to be unsuitable in terms of age-appropriateness and developmental level for LSEN. It was recommended in another study (Lambe, 2007), however, that training workshops could provide an in-depth knowledge into curriculum differentiation and as such improve learning. Multiple studies showed that teaching LSEN requires that educators practise curriculum differentiation to meet each learner's needs (Adewumi et al., 2017). Curriculum differentiation involved tailoring the curriculum according to the needs of each learner, thereby gearing the curriculum to the strengths rather than the weaknesses of the individual learner (Brody & Mills, 1997). Curriculum differentiation had a significant contribution to the success of learners by offering an enriched and relevant learning experience (Adewumi et al., 2017; Brody & Mills, 1997).

The growing need to work with diversity requires that educators take an active role in presenting suitable curriculum design (Adewumi et al., 2017; Strydom et al., 2012). Many studies have supported educators in their quest to carry the responsibility of adjusting the curriculum according to the learners' abilities (Dalton et al., 2012). LSEN require the use of different strategies, skills and methods to flourish (Brody & Mills, 1997; Walton, 2011). Hence, curriculum adaptation could contribute to success in the learning experience (Brody & Mills, 1997; Otukile-Mongwaketse et al., 2016).

Curriculum challenges in special schools in South Africa have been associated with linguistic barriers (Olivier, & Williams, 2005). Teaching LSEN, who belonged to different linguistic groups proved to be a barrier to learning (DoE, 1997c; Olivier & Williams, 2005). Moreover, the use of English as the language of instruction has also proven to be problematic. Linguistic barriers hindered progress as most learners found it difficult to learn in another language other than their home language (Olivier & Williams, 2005). Studies showed that learners who did not initially receive instruction in their native language were likely to under achieved academically (Landsberg et al., 2005). On the educators' side it could also be frustrating to teach learners who struggle to comprehend what is being taught due to both linguistic barriers and learning barriers.

In South African realities English was found to be the most frequently used language of instruction in most schools even though it appeared to be challenge. Landsberg et al. (2005) stated that learners found it difficult to master English, as they spent most of their formative years communicating in the home language. This proved to be challenging to both learners and teachers, since effective communication is important to the success of learning.

A lack of educator training in teaching LSEN also proved to be one of the major shortfalls of the educational system which also affected the provision of quality education (Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012). Educators acknowledged that they required intensive training to support a diverse learner population (Mahlo, 2017; Potgieter-Groot et al., 2012). The provision of training was identified as one of the most effective ways of enhancing teaching skills and improving the overall learning environment (Lessing & De Witt, 2010; Potgieter et al., 2012).

### **2.7.2 Teamwork**

Inclusion requires LSEN to be educated with their non-disabled learners by providing special education support and services (Bauer & Brown 2011). Factors, such as a lack of knowledge and skills for teaching LSEN as well as limited training in teaching inclusive classes, do not motivate educators to approach inclusive education with a positive attitude (BlackHawkins, et al, 2007). Foreman et al. (2011) further suggested that this can only be realised in a unified education system where all role-players work together and are supported in creating learning that meets the diverse learning needs of every learner.

However, some countries, such as Australia, Canada, France and Germany have addressed the issue of support for inclusive education through the use of task forces, long-term studies, short-term professional development and short-term pay incentives (Boyer & Gillespie, 2013). Most inclusive class educators have completed a basic teacher training programme which has not sufficiently covered inclusive education. To change, adapt and become experts in teaching learners of all abilities could take years for the effects to be discernible. It is, therefore, imperative that an educator should be qualified and motivated by support received from management as well as other school stakeholders.

### **2.7.3 Professional training**

Most of the South African educators are not professionally to teach LSEN as they were excluded from regular schools (Tshifura, 2012). Educators in another study reported emotional fulfilment as a result of successfully assisting learners to improve their behaviour (Ainscow, 2020). Vaghrodia & Patel, (2022) stated that learner behaviour was often improved by supporting life skills support to equip learners with effective ways of solving problems. Knowledge about life skills makes learners behave in a more socially acceptable manner and to interact effectively with their environment especially learners with ASD, Vaghrodia, et al, (2022). In Singh, Kumar & Singh, (2020), a supportive learning environment was linked with a nurturing space that motivated learners to improve their performance in the learning process. The resultant success required collaboration among educators (Net, et al, 2011).

Educators in inclusive schools must be trained professionally to teach LSEN (Nel et al., 2011). Studies showed that training workshops could provide educators with the knowledge and the skill set to engage effectively with LSEN (Molina, Marauri, Aubert

& Flecha, 2021). Training workshops specifically equipped educators with the skills to be flexible in their style of teaching (Haegele & Hodge, 2016; Net et al., 2011; Otukile-Mongwaketse et al., 2016).

In one study, educators reported that training workshops increased their efficacy and morale concerning their jobs (Molina, et al, (2021). These workshops also proved to be essential in modelling unity amongst educators which made them more committed to their jobs. Commitment to their jobs increased their level of motivation, which also had a positive impact on their learning and teaching practices (Kempen and Steyn, 2016). Educators need to be trained with skills in communication, basic knowledge of different forms of disabilities, multidisciplinary work skills, knowledge of the effects of social deprivation and poverty, identification and assessment processes of learners, multilingual approaches, and behavioural management (Khatib, 2017). Al-Adwan and Khatib (2017) raised a concern that there is an acute shortage of trained educators who teach LVIs, thus there is a need for well-qualified educators in this field worldwide. In this regard, educators who have acquired the necessary skills can make a significant and valuable contribution in teaching LSEN.

## 2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter investigated the existing literature concerning the capacitation of educators to handle skills-related challenges in inclusive education environments. This was in line with the identified objectives, namely i) establish competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments; ii) identify skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching; iii) explore strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners under inclusive education classrooms, and to iv) propose strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms. The subsequent chapter will discuss the research methodology.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with existing literature on the capacitation of educators to handle skills-related challenges in an inclusive education learning environment. This chapter discusses the research methodology used to answer the research problem. The discussion consists of the research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

This study was set within the interpretive paradigm. According to Antwi and Hamza (2015) the interpretive paradigm “sees the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions with each other.” The study sought to discover how educators can be capacitated to handle skills-related challenges in inclusive education learning environments. The interpretive paradigm functions on the assumption that there are no fixed realities; rather, people make individual, subjective meanings of the world as they interact with it. Individual meanings are influenced by cultural, historical, and political backgrounds, among others. This study’s research was concerned with uncovering educators’ competencies to effectively function in an inclusive classroom and to identify skills-related challenges in these classrooms and the strategies that can be used to deal with them.

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

A research approach is defined as the general framework guiding a research project (Cheek, 2012). Every researcher needs to know which approach will serve as the foundation for research. Creswell (2012) affirms that the selection of a research method is crucial for the conclusions one can make about a phenomenon.

This study used the qualitative research approach. According to Crossman (2020), qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data. The research seeks to interpret meaning from this data and may in turn help understand social life through the study of the targeted population. Rossman and Rallis (2019) described qualitative research as a type which is naturalistic in the sense that the researcher goes to the people but does not remove people from their everyday world. The researcher becomes the means through which the study is conducted. This approach was crucial for this study of since the researcher looked into the capacitation of educators in handling skills-related challenges of inclusive learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

For the researcher to better understand the research problem, research was conducted in the educators’ natural setting (or where everything happens), since human behaviour is better understood in natural settings. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) and Mills and Birks (2017) shared the same sentiments about qualitative research as the researcher should seek answers to questions in the real world to enhances an in-depth description and understanding of the human experience.

### 3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Sarantakos (2012), defines a design as “a plan from which something can be made.” A research design regards how the research study will be carried out or implemented. Nishishiba, et al, (2017) affirmed that a research design is a conceptual structure on which the research is conducted. This is confirmed by Rossman and Rallis (2019), who asserted that a design is an outline detailing how the chosen method will be carried out. Cheek (2012) revealed that a research design not only encompasses the structure but also decisions about how the research itself is conceptualised, its subsequent conduct, as well as the type of contribution the research is intended to make to the development of knowledge in a particular area of study.

The design underpinning this study was a **multiple** case study given that the study adopted a qualitative method. It is not surprising that the researcher chose this type of design as Stewart (2017) stipulated that it is a common component of qualitative research. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2014) affirmed that **multiple** case studies is descriptive, holistic, heuristic and inductive; such characteristics match the nature of the qualitative study as they are descriptive too. Moreover, their emphasis was on the fact that **multiple** case studies are particularly useful for descriptive and heuristic values, which are characteristics of qualitative research.

Flyvbjerg (2011) stated that **multiple** case study aims to conduct the same analysis of data from different cases. That is, it provides an in-depth picture of the units of study which could be people, groups or organisations. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2014) argued that the strength of **multiple** case studies is the detail and complexity it provides as well as the use of sources to obtain different perspectives. The above characteristics were the reason the study ascribed to such a design. **It had qualities which are qualitative in nature and used three educators from SBST, three principals, three SGB members from three schools and three DBST officials as a frame of reference so as to get different perspectives on their experiences to handle skills-related challenges of an inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The data were collected from a total of 12 participants. Yin (2013) stipulates that the researcher has to ensure that the multiple case studies which are under case studies are executed with sufficient firmness and quality for good results.**

### **3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

According to Creswell (2012), a population is a group of people who have the same characteristics. A researcher needs to decide what group they intended to study. The researcher in this study targeted three principals, three SBST committee, DBST and SGB members (each) from three schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana District as participants of the study.

Regarding the principals, the researcher sought to establish the principal's understanding of inclusive education, and what diverse learner characteristics and needs learners at their school possessed. Furthermore, the researcher questioned what KSA a competent educator should possess to effectively operate in an inclusive classroom environment. The challenges encountered by educators in inclusive education classrooms and capacitation strategies to handle skills-related challenges in inclusive education were also examined from principals' perspectives.

The researcher also interviewed educators from SBST committees to gather information. They were questioned about their level of understanding regarding inclusive education, the roles of educators in inclusive education settings and how they plan for diversified lessons for different learners. They were further questioned about the teaching strategies that should be adopted to accommodate diverse learners in a regular classroom, teaching equipment that is currently used by educators to accommodate these learners and how educators can be empowered to effectively handle inclusive education settings.

The researcher then interviews SGB members, to discover parents understanding of inclusive education. The researcher further wanted to establish challenges they have identified in the implementation of inclusive education, skills that are lacking in educators which are necessary for effective teaching in inclusive education schools, and strategies they can recommend to the school for the success of inclusive education.

The researcher lastly interviewed officials from the DBST to gather information. The researcher sought to gather following information regarding the attitude educators need to possess in a diverse classroom to ensure that all learners get quality education, teaching challenges they have identified to mainstream educators during

school visits when teaching diverse learners, and how educators must plan/ prepare their lessons in an inclusive education. Additionally, DBST members were asked about the teaching equipment educators need to accommodate diverse learners.

The researcher must decide which group they intend to study. Importantly the researcher does not use everybody but focuses on a smaller number which would represent the entire population, known as a sample. Omona (2013) defined sampling as the act, process or technique of selecting a representative part of a population to determine parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Collins (2015) asserted that sampling involved selecting a subset from a larger group and its purpose is to address the study's research questions.

According to Daniel (2012), the choice of sample size, as observed in the sample size for this study, is a very important decision in research as relevant factors should be taken into consideration before a sample size is chosen. Daniel (2012) further affirmed that qualitative research designs such as this one do not require large sample sizes; the majority of qualitative studies concerning lived experience usually have a sample size of less than 30 participants. Creswell (2012) concurs, having highlighted that qualitative researchers usually study a few individuals. Omona (2013) supported the notion of a small sample size, as a large one would result in difficulty making a deep case-oriented analysis.

However, Omona (2013) maintained that the sample size should not be too small as this may cause difficulty in achieving saturation. Lopez and Whitehead (2013) argued that in qualitative research there are no overall formal criteria for determining the sample size so there are no rules to suggest the size of a sample; what matters most is the richness of the data collected as compared to the number of participants. However, Creswell (2012) is of the view that small samples are more manageable because of the amount of potentially rich and detailed data which can be generated from every single participant. According to Suter (2014), qualitative researchers are guided by the quality of understanding many details about something rather than having a larger sample size; thus, researchers use substantially smaller samples. What matters the most are samples that provide rich descriptions. With that in mind, the researcher used a smaller sample size, for the case study of three mainstream public schools located in Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

The study adopted purposive sampling. Creswell (2013) referred to purposive sampling as intentionally selecting participants based on their characteristics, knowledge or experiences. In this study, three principals and three SBST committee, DBST and SGB members (each) from Thabo Mofutsanyana District were purposively selected. This enabled the researcher to make logical and analytical generalisations based on this carefully selected sample. Creswell (2013) claimed that purposive sampling (also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling) is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys.

Lopez and Whitehead (2013) explained that information-rich cases are those who are known to possess special knowledge to provide the information researchers seek. That is, the sample consists of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about a particular subject matter. In this study, SBST committee members teaching Life Skills/- Life Orientation were interviewed: these subjects-would place them at an advantage in knowing the needs of their learners since they deal with learners holistically. Such participants would therefore be of great help in developing a detailed understanding of their experiences as inclusive education is implemented in the mainstream learning environment.

Some researchers argued that all sampling strategies are, in a way, purposeful as all sampling is done with some purpose in mind. For example, Creswell (2012:206) attested that in qualitative research, the standard used in choosing participants and sites is whether they are information-rich or not. A good sampling assisted the researcher to narrow down to the three schools that were closest to reach. The study targeted three principals and three SBST committees, DBST and SGB members (each) from three schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana District as participants of the study. The overall total of participants was 12.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Data collection for this study occurred through interviews with the above-mentioned participants. In addition, document analysis occurred. These are discussed below.

#### **3.6.1 Data collection**

The term data collection indicates a complex process that involves the need for the researcher to actively engage with the outside world (Phiri, 2021). Creswell (2012) stated that for qualitative data collection, it is vital for the researcher to identify data collection strategies that will address the research questions. That is, the tools used in data collection mostly determine the data produced.

Qualitative research studies have a variety of data collection techniques such as observations, interviews, questionnaires, documents and audio-visual materials. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stipulated that the researcher should choose strategies for collecting data from existing techniques which would give the best possible results. According to Bouma (2016), it is better to use more than one data collection method to increase the depth and quality of information. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) referred to this as triangulation which aims at assisting in corroborating the findings of one data collection technique to another, thus improving the accuracy of the study. As a result, this study employed in-depth interviews and document analysis together as a means of data collection.

### **3.6.1.1      *In-depth interviews***

Sabee (2018) stated that interviews are one of the most important data collection strategies in qualitative research. This was affirmed by Lichtman (2017) who added that interviewing is one of the primary technique researchers' uses in qualitative research to gather data. An interview involves a researcher talking with another person, known as a participant, to gather data about a phenomenon of interest. When conducting the interview, the researcher asked individuals' opinions or experiences regarding a particular subject – in this case, the skills-related challenges to handling an inclusive learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Knowledge is said to be constructed from the direct interactions between the interviewer and interviewee. It is worth noting that the term 'interview' is broad, but this research study employed face-to-face interviews, even though a contingency plan for telephone interviews was put in place as per the status quo. The face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to construct knowledge surrounding participants' experiences of inclusive education in mainstream schools. The interviews took about 30 minutes at a time as arranged before the interviews with the interviewees. This was in between periods when they had their free periods.

The interviews were conducted in English even though the interviewees would code-switch to their native language (Sesotho) in an attempt to explain their experiences in the implementation of inclusive education in their own words. As the interviews were conducted, recording devices were used for verbatim transcription purposes and thereafter the process of data analysis was undertaken. Cramer (2018) asserted that the nature of questions solely depends on the type of interview the researcher plans to conduct. They deemed open-ended questions as advantageous because they not only provide an overview of phenomena but also give in-depth information regarding areas of interest to the researcher (Cramer, 2018). Creswell (2012) also preferred open-ended questions as they allow participants to best discuss their experiences unconstrained by any perspective of the researcher. The interview involved developing a set of questions for the participants with the interview directed by the interviewer to learn what participants felt about the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

Gubrium et al. (2014) argued that there is an over-reliance on interviewing as a method of data collection in qualitative research as it focuses on how people see things, while ignoring how people do things. Nonetheless, it is important to note that a study of this nature required the interviewees to share their sentiments on inclusive education, hence they were in a better position to reveal those experiences.

### **3.6.1.2 Document analysis**

Creswell (2012) asserted that documents are a valuable source of information in qualitative research. Tight (2019) agreed with that notion, arguing that documents support findings made through other research methods like interviews, which was the case in this research study. It is, however, important for the researcher to shed some light on what documents are. According to Heaton (2020), documents consist of either public or private records that qualitative researchers obtained about a site or participants in the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010 as cited by Phiri, 2021) defined documents as printed or written records of past events. According to Mills and Birks (2017), document analysis in qualitative research can include both peer-reviewed literature and what is referred to as grey literature. The latter includes government reports, websites, minutes from meetings, policies and procedures.

Document analyses as a data collection procedure were used in this study to corroborate and triangulate the research findings from the in-depth interviews, which constituted the initial data collection instrument. A study such as this one required the analysis of copies of documents that helped to set forth the legal basis for the inclusive education. Thus, the researcher, elicited information on the implementation of inclusive education in the country from various documents which included the Constitution, the EWP6 and the Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements 2011. The researcher also made use of the educators' code of conduct, job descriptions, the learners' code of conduct, learner admission policy, learner profiles, LTSM and inventory policies and daily lesson plans. These policy documents gave a plan of action by both the South African Government and three schools for the implementation of inclusive education in the country. Unfortunately, the schools did not have school development plans which function as an annual plan of action on how things would roll-out.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Kozinets (2013) defined data analysis as a process of systematically searching, arranging and creating meaning from raw data. In qualitative research, it is important to make sense of the data which results in the formulation of answers to the research questions. Data analysis was done following Creswell's (2012) six steps. They are i) organisation, ii) transcription, iii) coding, iv) description, v) formulation of themes and vii) interpretation. The study adopted a thematic strategy.

Data analysis began with the organisation of the data following the large amount of information to be gathered during the study. From the organisation of the data came transcription of audio recordings. After that the researcher made sense of the transcribed data by noting emerging patterns which were then categorised into different themes - this is known as coding. An analysis of the coded data was then formulated through the interpretation of the given themes, thus giving a detailed description which in turn will provide answers to the specific research questions.

For the documents, the researcher implemented the five stages as identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) in the analysis and interpretation of artefact collections. Once the documents had been obtained, they were photocopied to easily

identify the information relevant to the study. The descriptive details were then ascertained regarding the implementation of inclusive education. The researcher corroborated the documented information that was practically reviewed concerning to the information from the participants and conclusions were formulated.

### **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Polit and Beck (2014) defined the trustworthiness of a study as the degree of confidence in data, interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of a study. A research tasks needs to guarantee the validity of the results. Taylor and Devault (2016) stated that researchers should establish protocols and procedures necessary for a study to be considered worthy of consideration by readers. To establish trustworthiness in qualitative research, four criteria have been identified as presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985). They are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability and are discussed in the sub-sections below.

#### **3.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility is the term used to refer to the activities that make it more convincing that the findings were derived from the data (Wagner, et al, 2012). Credibility enabled the researcher to justify certain claims. Research must be credible, as McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated that the results can be judged to be accurate, trustworthy and reasonable. Tierney and Lanford (2019) confirmed that credibility can be established through several methods which include triangulation, prolonged engagement with the participant, and by the researcher sharing preliminary drafts with participants. In this study, the researcher attained credibility through triangulations by making use of two data collection methods: namely in-depth interviews and document analysis.

#### **3.8.2 Dependability**

Mambo (2011) defined dependability as the consistency of the measurement and the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) agreed that it is a way of attaining reliability which is achieved through the triangulation of methods and thus provides an audit trail. In attaining dependability, the researcher used the interviews and analysed documents

to explore the situation regarding educators' experiences in implementing inclusive education in mainstream schools in the Thabo Mutsanyana District.

### **3.8.3 Transferability**

This is the basis for making similar judgements in other similar contexts. Transferability, as defined by Coghlan and Miller (2014), is the extent to which the researcher's working hypothesis can be applied to another context. This is necessary as the current study can be of great use in terms of literature review for other research studies. Tierney and Lanford (2019) assert that transferability is possible through thick descriptions given by the researcher. This entailed the researcher providing descriptions that were rich enough to make judgements about the findings' transferability to different contexts - in this case to all mainstream schools, especially in rural contexts such as in Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

### **3.8.4 Conformability**

Conformability is making sure that the findings are a true reflection of the data and may not just be the researcher's creation. Mambo (2011) described this as how neutral the researcher is to avoid bias. Wagner et al. (2012) revealed that conformability can be established by keeping records of all notes accumulated over the course of a project as well as making known the pre-conceptions the researcher might have from the start. In this study, this was established by the researcher making known preconceived ideas on the research to ensure audit by others who read or reviewed their research findings.

## **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

It is necessary to obtain permission from relevant authorities regarding ethical concerns before conducting a study. In a qualitative research study the researcher seeks an in-depth description of a phenomenon which solely relies on the participants' views and experiences. Thus, it is important to build a level of trust from the onset. Creswell (2012) stated that the researcher must first identify guidelines for ethical practices and review key issues which may arise such as informing participants of the purpose of the study, sharing information with participants which includes the researcher's role, using ethical interview practices, maintaining confidentiality and collaborating with participants. Patton (2002, as cited in Creswell, 2012) lists some

ethical principles which include informed consent, data access and ownership, confidentiality, and assessment of risk, amongst other things.

### **3.9.1 Seeking permission**

Creswell (2012) clearly stated that after identifying and selecting participants for a study, the researcher must obtain their permission to participate in the study. Not only will this permission ensure that they participate in the study and provide data, but it will also acknowledge that they understand the purpose of the study and that they will, in turn, be treated ethically. The researcher sought permission to conduct the research from the Central University of Technology and ethical clearance was obtained from its Ethics Review Committee. The researcher also gained permission and consent from the Director in the DoE, principals and educators who participated in the study.

### **3.9.2 Informed consent**

Fielding et al (2013) defined informed consent as a fundamental principle of research ethics that ensures participants give their consent freely and with full knowledge of what they are agreeing to. The best way to seek permission is through a letter of consent which is directed to the intended participants - in this case principals, SGB member and SBST and DBST committee members- to participate in the study. The participants' signature confirmed their understanding of the purpose and ethical aspects of the study as well as their ability to withdraw at any time.

### **3.9.3 Anonymity and confidentiality**

Confidentiality and anonymity are important in research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Participant confidentiality is of utmost importance; even if the lives and experiences of participants are told, their identities should be concealed. The study used pseudonyms, which guaranteed participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Codes were also used to substitute their names in all the research documents.

## **3.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter dealt with the study's research methodology which included the research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and issues pertaining to ethical considerations. The data collected for interviews and document analysis are presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The study explored the extent to which educators are capacitated to handle skills-related challenges associated with an inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Data were collected using face-to-face interviews. Existing documents such as the educators' codes of conduct, educators' job descriptions, learners' codes of conduct, learner admission policies, learner profiles, LTSM and inventory policies, daily lesson plans were analysed. In addition, the EWP6 and Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy, (2011).

Data were collected from three mainstream schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. A total of three principals, three SBST committee, DBST members and SGB members (each) were interviewed. The table below portrays the distribution of participants in the study.

**Table 1: Participant's biographical data**

Mainstream schools	No. of participation	Position(s)	Code name	Gender	No. of years in education
School A	1	Principal	Principal 1	Female	25 years
	1	Educator	Educator 1	Female	10 years
	1	SGB Member	SGB Member 1	Female	3 years
School B	1	Principal	Principal 2	Male	23 years
	1	Educator	Educator 2	Male	8 years
	1	SGB Member	SGB Member 2	Male	9 years
School C	1	Principal	Principal 3	Male	26 years
	1	Educator	Educator 3	Female	11 years
	1	SGB Member	SGB Member 3	Male	3 years
Thabo Mofutsanyana District	1	Senior Education Specialist (SES)	District Official 1	Male	24 years
	1	(SES)	District Official 2	Male	18 years
	1	(SES)	District Official 3	Female	23 years

## 4.2 Data presentation

This section presents the data collected in an attempt to answer the study's sub-research questions and the related objectives stated in Chapter One. These were to 1) establish competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments; ii) identify skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching iii) explore strategies currently used by educators in teaching LSEN in inclusive education classrooms and to iv) propose strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms.

### 4.2.1 Competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments

Competencies required by educators to effectively teach in inclusive education environments were expressed and categorised as KSA (knowledge, skills and attitudes). Participants' responses are presented below per aspect.

#### 4.2.1.1 *The knowledge component that is needed for effective inclusive education*

The study established that educators have an understanding of the knowledge aspects educators need to possess to effectively function in inclusive learning environments. Participants mentioned that learners must be taught using methods or teaching techniques that best suit them so that they can grasp the content educators are teaching them. The participant responses are summarised in the sub-sections below:

- *Learning disorders*

Participants indicated that educators should have knowledge of different learning disabilities to effectively function in an inclusive education environment. The participants stated that:

*For educators to be effective in mainstream schools, it is important for them to understand that learners are different and learn differently. They must further have an understanding about different types of learner disabilities so as to accommodate them and be able to teach them (Principal 3).*

*There is a lot that educators in an inclusive environment must be knowledgeable of, but most importantly different learning disabilities in an inclusive environment such as dyslexia, ADHD, LHI, LVI, and non-processing language to mention a few (Principal 1).*

Participants showed that knowledge of learning disorders helped them to easily accommodate and teach diverse learners in an inclusive classroom. Participants emphasised the need for educators to have a thorough awareness of learner diversity and the range of disabilities that learners may experience, including dyslexia, ADHD, hearing loss, vision impairment, and language processing issues. In order to effectively support and educate every learner, educators must be able to use diversified instructional methodologies and accommodate a wide range of learning requirements. Furthermore, the excerpts highlight the necessity for educators to possess a wide range of knowledge regarding various learning disabilities to establish an equitable and inclusive learning environment that addresses the distinct strengths and challenges of every individual learner. This highlights the vital significance of cultivating a profound comprehension of learner diversity and the capacity to modify teaching practices correspondingly.

- *Learning styles*

The participants indicated that educators in an inclusive environment should have knowledge of different learning styles in a diverse environment to be able to provide appropriate teaching methods. The participants cited the following:

*It is important for educators in an inclusive education environment to know that learners are unique and in their uniqueness, they learn differently (Principal 1).*

*Learners learn in many different ways, some are visual which means that they learn easily through seeing objects (Educator 1).*

*Learners are different and as a result they learn differently. Some learners are auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, informal learning style (playing) and spatial just to mention a few (Educator 2).*

The excerpts captured above underscore the necessity for educators working in inclusive education environments to have an understanding of each learner's individual needs and various learning styles. The fact that each learner is unique means that they pick up knowledge and skills several ways, including tactile, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and spatial methods. According to participants, some learners might do better in less formal, play-based learning contexts, while others would do better in more formal, organised learning situations. These findings highlight the need for educators to gain a thorough grasp of the complex nature of learner diversity and the capacity to use a variety of teaching techniques to guarantee that every learner, in their individuality, can successfully participate in an inclusive educational environment.

- *Differentiated instructional approach*

The findings established that for inclusivity to effectively take place in regular classrooms educators must have knowledge of differentiated instructional approaches to accommodate diverse learners. The participants cited the following:

*The knowledge that we possess to be effective in the classroom is that different assessment strategies as well as effective teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learners in an inclusive classroom. Learners in an inclusive environment must be taught with differentiated approaches to accommodate diverse learners (Educator 2).*

*There are a lot of aspects that educator in an inclusive environment must be knowledgeable of. Educators must have knowledge to read and interpret braille for blind learners and sign language alphabets (District Official 2).*

*Educators must also have knowledge to multisensory (visual- auditory- kinaesthetic- tactile) approach as it helps learners who are dyslexic to learn, understands, remember and recall new information taught (District Official 3).*

*Educators must have knowledge on how to interpret braille and to use sign language alphabets (Principal 2).*

Participants emphasised the need for educators to have in-depth knowledge of learners' diversity to effectively adopt the correct differentiation of instrumental approaches to learners in an inclusive education environment. According to participants, learners learn better when they are taught in methodologies that best suit them. The participants further indicated that educators could use differentiated approaches that accommodate diverse learners such as collaborative learning, digital resources, grouping learners with similar learning styles and the use of think-pair-share to name a few. These findings highlight the need for educators to gain thorough knowledge of differentiated instructional approaches to fully engage diverse learners in an inclusive education environment.

- *Lesson planning*

The participants indicated that for effective teaching and learning to take place, educators must have knowledge of the different learning styles to plan a lesson that is inclusive of all learning needs in an inclusive education environment. The participants highlighted the following:

*We as educators, for us to effectively implement inclusive education, we must be able to develop an individual education plan for all learners who may require a more focused approach for their learning. These will help educators to have a suitable teaching approach to the diverse learners in an inclusive classroom (Educator 3).*

*To prepare lessons taking into account orientation, regional courses, new approaches, techniques, evaluation, teaching aids, braille operation and language (Principal 3).*

Participants emphasised the need for educators to have a thorough knowledge of learner diversity and the variety of disabilities that learners may experience in an inclusive education environment so that they can develop appropriate lesson plans that are diversified. To effectively support and educate diverse learners, educators must prepare diversified lesson plans. This highlights the vital significance of having a

profound understanding of differentiated lesson plans and the capacity to modify lessons to accommodate diverse learners in an inclusive education environment.

- *Classroom management*

The participants indicated that for the success of inclusive education, educators must be knowledgeable about creating a conducive and user-friendly learning environment that can accommodate diverse learners in the inclusive education environment. The participants cited the following:

*Create a friendly learning environment for all learners in an inclusive classroom regardless of their learning difficulties (Principal 2).*

*Educators must love and treat all learners equally in an inclusive environment (Educator 2).*

The excerpts underscored the necessity for educators working in inclusive education environments to have an understanding that diverse learners learn differently. As a result, they require educators to create a friendly learning environment for them to feel welcome and accommodated. The participants indicated that inclusive classrooms must be user-friendly so that diverse learners can learn properly in a welcoming environment. Participants further indicated that educators must be able to create conducive and friendly learning environments that address different learners' needs, avoid judging, and create a sense of order. Most importantly they must build positive relationships with learners. These findings highlight the need for educators to gain thorough knowledge and the capacity to manage inclusive classrooms effectively and efficiently.

The educators' codes of conduct articulated the roles and duties of educators in an inclusive environment clearly. A section titled *Core duties and responsibilities* partially read: "To establish a classroom environment which stimulates positive learning and actively engages learners in the learning process". The written evidence proves that there is the existence of inclusive education in mainstream schools. The codes of conduct for educators prove that learners with different abilities are considered within the mainstream. Educators in inclusive education environments establish a friendly and conducive learning environment for diverse learners. LVIs are close to the board and hearing aids are given to LHIs. Sign language charts are available, and classrooms are print-rich.

## **4.2.2 Skills needed by educators to effectively operate in an inclusive classroom environment**

The study indicated that effective teaching and learning does not only depend on the knowledge base of an educator. It is also related to skills an educator needs to possess in a classroom to cater for diverse learners. The participant responses are summarised in the sub-sections below.

### **4.2.2.1 Sign language**

Participants indicated the importance of sign language in an inclusive environment to effectively engage LVIs in an inclusive environment. The participants highlighted the following:

*In my school we admit a lot of LHIs and LVIs. The DoE normally assists schools with hearing aids. However the school needs educators who can interpret sign language alphabets and teaching using sign language (Principal 1).*

*In order for us as educators to be fully effective in an inclusive teaching and learners we need to have a skill to interpret sign language alphabets (Educator 1).*

Participants argued that educators need to possess the ability to use sign language in inclusive education classroom settings. A principal noted that while the Department of Education provides hearing aids to assist these learners, there is a critical need for educators who possess the skills to interpret sign language alphabets and deliver instruction using sign language. This emphasised the need for specialised training and competencies for educators working in inclusive settings, which is necessary to ensure that learners with sensory disabilities are fully and meaningfully included in the learning process. An SBST committee member (Educator 1) statement further emphasised the necessity for all educators in inclusive environments to acquire the ability to use sign language.

### **4.2.2.2 Operate braille**

The participants indicated that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without discrimination in any way. Educators in an inclusive environment must be able to accommodate all learners regardless of their learning abilities. Educators can only achieve that if they are skilled enough to perform the required skills. The participants highlighted the following:

*In my school I have learners who cannot see at all. These learners poses a challenge to most educators still requires a skill to interpret and operate braille so as to accommodate LVIs (Principal 2).*

*Teaching in an inclusive environment requires an educator who is able to accommodate diverse learners in their lessons. Most of the schools that I have visited they have admitted LVIs, this means that the school requires a skill to operate and interpret braille (District Official 2).*

Participants argued that educators need to possess the ability to use braille machines in inclusive education classroom set-ups. A principal noted that the school has learners who cannot see at all which poses a problem to subject educators. Thus, there is a critical need for educators who possess the skills to operate and interpret braille to deliver a lesson. This emphasised the need for specialised training and competencies for educators working in inclusive settings, as this is necessary to ensure that LVIs are fully and meaningfully included in the learning process. The SBST committee member (Educator 2) statement further emphasised the necessity for all educators in inclusive environments to acquire the ability to operate and interpret braille.

#### **4.2.2.3 Computer literacy**

The participants indicated that educators in an inclusive education environment need to be computer literate to deliver effective lessons in an inclusive classroom. The participants indicated that:

*In my school, I have more dyslexic learners and most of them enjoy learning through playing and by seeing objects on the computer, which means that they need educator who is literate (Principal 3).*

*In the school that I am' working at, we have learners who are dyslexic and most of them learn through seeing objects which means that educators must be able to use PowerPoint presentations so that they can project posters (Educator 2).*

Participants emphasised the need for educators to possess the ability to use digital devices such as computers in inclusive education classroom settings. The SBST committee member (Educator 2) noted that they have learners who are dyslexic and

learn through seeing objects which means that educators must be able to use PowerPoint to project posters. This emphasised the need for specialized training and capacity for educators working in inclusive settings, which is necessary to ensure that learners who are dyslexic are fully and meaningfully included in the learning process. The principal's 3 statements further emphasised the necessity for all educators in an inclusive environment to acquire the ability to use computers.

#### **4.2.3 Attitudes educators need to possess in an inclusive education environment**

The current study established that for inclusive education to be a success it requires a dedicated educator who has the required set of attitudes to teach diverse learners with different needs and abilities. The participant responses regarding attitudes related to inclusive learning and teaching are summarised in the sub-sections below.

##### **4.2.3.1 Patience**

The participants indicated that an educator in an inclusive education environment should be patient as learners need time and patience to perform well academically. The participants highlighted the following:

*Educators need to be patient with diverse learners because they take time to learn as their learning ability differs (Principal 3).*

*Educators must show love and patience to accommodate diverse learners in the same classroom (SGB Member 3)*

The participants stressed how crucial it is for educators to deal with various learners in an inclusive classroom setting by being patient and kind. One of the principals emphasised that because diverse learners can have widely varying individual learning capacities, they could need more time to learn. In a similar vein, an SGB member emphasised that educators must show compassion and tolerance to successfully meet the diverse learning requirements of their learners in the same classroom. These views highlighted the realisation that inclusive education necessitates a significant change in the way educators think and handle the subject thereby requiring a move away from a one-size-fits-all paradigm towards a more flexible, learner-centred, and empathic approach.

#### **4.2.3.2 Empathy**

The participants highlighted that educators must at times put themselves in their learners' situation. The participants cited the following:

*Educators must feel for every learner and put themselves in their situation (Principal 2).*

*We must have empathy for these learners as most of them are born that way (Educator 2).*

The participants indicated that the success of inclusive education depends on educators who have empathy for diverse learners as they have different barriers to learning that hinder their academic performance. Principal 2 emphasised that because diverse learners can have a variety of individual learning abilities, they need educators to deeply understand their differences and social situations to feel care and love. In a similar vein, an SBST committee member (Educator 2) emphasised that educators can enhance learning outcomes by actively listening to their learners by giving them full attention. These views highlighted that inclusive education necessitates a significant change in the way educators think and handle diverse learners. They need to recognise the worth and value of each learner, valuing differences and promoting tolerance.

#### **4.2.3.3 Passion**

Participants indicated that educators should have a passion for teaching diverse learners as they have different needs that require a dedicated educator who will address them. A participant cited the following:

*To the best of my knowledge in this profession, educators must have passion for the learners regardless of the disability or barriers and the attitude of lifelong learning. The attitude of the educator plays a vital role in the development of the learner. Once educator develops negative attitude, it will also make those learners to have the same attitude towards education (District Official 3).*

Participants stressed how crucial it is for educators to handle various learners in an inclusive classroom setting. However, DBST committee member (District Official 3) emphasised that for inclusive education to be successfully implemented in the mainstream, it requires educators to have a passion for teaching diverse learners

regardless of their barriers to learning. These views highlight that passionate educators in an inclusive education need to have the ability to plan lessons by taking into account learner differences and striving to meet the needs of their learners.

#### **4.2.3.4      *Respect***

The participants indicated that educators must respect each learner regardless of their learning disabilities. The participants highlighted the following:

*Educators are expected to treat learners with respect and courtesy (District Official 1).*

*Educators are “in loco parentis” meaning they act in place of a parent who has entrusted the custody and control of his or her child to an educator (District Official 2).*

The research participants strongly stressed how critical it is for educators to deal with diverse learners in an inclusive classroom setting by showing respect. The DBST committee member (District Official 2) emphasised that educators are *in loco parentis* which means that they are legal parents to these learners whilst at school and they must at all times be respected for who they are. Similarly, an educator emphasised that educators are expected to treat learners with respect and courtesy. These views highlight the realisation that inclusive education necessitates educators to show respect to all learners regardless of their disabilities or barriers to learning at all times. An educator who respects learners is more likely to build positive relationships with learners.

The document analysis of the codes of conduct for educators articulated the attitude that must be displayed or portrayed by educators in an inclusive classroom. Written evidence accounts for the existence of positive attitudes of educators in an inclusive set up. A section titled *Core duties and responsibilities* partially read: “To recognize and engage learners with respect at all times”. The participants indicated that an educator in an inclusive environment must have patience and empathy, and such positive attitude can only be promoted when an educator has passion to work in an inclusive environment. The attitude required in an inclusive education must entail respect, adaptability, patience and empathy. This means treating all learners with kindness, understanding and being willing to listen to and consider their different learning abilities thereby creating a positive learning environment wherein learners will equally access basic education.

#### **4.2.4 Challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive education**

The study established a wide range of challenges educators encounter in implementing inclusive education. The challenges raised pertain to inadequate knowledge, skills and lack of support required for effective performance. The participant in responses are summarised in the following sub-sections:

##### **4.2.4.1 Inability to use sign language**

The study established that when inclusive education was introduced, its entire burden was left with educators without any adequate support from the DoE. The emphasis on inclusive education created room for diverse learners in mainstream teaching and learning. However, what seems to be a challenge is the usage of sign language in an inclusive classroom to accommodate LHIs. Participants highlighted the following:

*Here at school we have more LHIs. Most educators here are not adequately trained to use sign language to actively engage these learners as a result we struggle to accommodate these LHIs (Educator 3).*

*In my observation during class visits, I have noticed that educators do have knowledge about inclusive education, however educators struggle most in accommodating them in a regular classroom. Educators find it very difficult to teach LHIs because they are not adequately trained to use sign language (District Official 2).*

Participants admitted that they conducted their lessons as though they were teaching learners who were the same physically and mentally. This was because most educators were not professionally trained to integrate sign language in a regular classroom and LHIs were always left behind. Furthermore, LHIs may have appeared isolated in the learning environment. The interaction between LHIs and subject educators became limited due to inadequate communication. This also affected learners' performance academically and even lowered their self-esteem.

##### **4.2.4.2. Inability to operate braille**

The research participants indicated that educators have a challenge accommodating LVIs in their regular classroom set-up as they are not adequately trained to teach these learners. The participants cited the following:

*I find it very difficult to accommodate LVIs as I have never received any intensive training to operate braille and sign language (Educator 1).*

*Educators cannot operate braille in order to teach LVIs (Principal 2).*

*In my school as a Full Service School I have learners who are visually mixed with learners who are normal and educators as when they deliver a lesson, LVIs are left behind because educators struggle to accommodate them in a lesson (Principal 3).*

Participants indicated that they struggled to operate braille machines. This was due to inadequate training to operate, read and interpret braille. The above excerpts indicated that there is a need for adequate training in the schools for educators to be able to engage with LVIs productively. Lack of training makes it difficult for educators to accommodate LVIs in their classrooms as they cannot use assistive equipment satisfactorily.

#### **4.2.4.3      *Insufficient Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM)***

The participants indicated that most schools do not have enough LTSM to support and engage diverse learners academically as they learn differently. The participants cited the following:

*Dyslexic learners are also a challenge because of time and we are used in teacher-centred approach which only accommodate gifted learners yet dyslexic learners need posters as they learn through seeing objects or pictures which are not enough for all learning areas (Educator 1).*

*The challenge that I have noticed is that the school does not enough have braille machines so that more learners can be assisted (Educator 2).*

Most schools within Thabo Mofutsanyana District do not have enough LTSM to support teaching and learning in a classroom. Participants indicated that LTSM was often lacking, and this hindered learning and especially in support of learners with dyslexic who learn by seeing objects. These were, as a result, not attended to in an inclusive classroom as they learn more when they see pictures and posters. Participants further indicated that LVIs were also left out due to lack of enough braille machines in the schools leading to poor academic performance.

#### **4.2.4.4      *Overcrowded classrooms***

The participants identified overcrowded classrooms as one of the major factors that hindered effective teaching and learning within an inclusive classroom. Educators

struggled to provide much-needed individual attention to each learner due to the higher number of learners in the classrooms. Participants indicated that:

*It is unfortunate that educators teaching time is being used for administrative work and many of them sit with overcrowded classrooms. Some educators have no space to move around and assist the learners (Principal 1).*

*Our classes are overcrowded, and you can't assign them any individual attention (Educator 1).*

Participants indicated that they were unable to provide individual attention and assistance that would improve the academic outcomes of diverse learners. Overcrowded classrooms made it difficult for educators to actively every learner in a diverse classroom resulting in educators as they cannot identify LSEN's requirements.

Learning should take place in the least restrictive environment so that learners can be taught in an atmosphere that supports their unique learning needs. A large classroom could make it difficult for educators to provide for that individual support to meet each learner's needs. Hence, by modifying the classroom size, the individual learner support could be addressed and would possibly result in improved academic performance.

#### **4.2.4.5 Inability to utilise the differentiated approach in classroom management**

The study further established that when inclusive education was introduced, more emphasis was placed on learners' rights as enshrined in the Constitution. In so doing, educators' skills needed for the success of inclusive education were ignored and never addressed. The participants indicated that:

*Most educators struggle to use differentiated approach methods to cater for all learners in an inclusive environment, especially accommodating learners who are deaf. Most educators cannot teach using sign language as they are not adequately trained to use sign language (Principal 3).*

*In my teaching qualification I did not study about braille remedial teaching, again DoE has not yet provided adequate training hence it poses a lot of frustration when I have to teach learners who are having such barriers to learning (Educator 3).*

Participants indicated that they were unable to integrate sign language and braille operation in inclusive education settings, due to lack of training and capacitation. This left learners who are LVIs and LHIs unattended. The participants stressed that they were not adequately trained to operate braille or to use sign language in inclusive education settings. An inclusive classroom requires educators who can utilise all differentiated techniques to ensure that no learner is left behind.

Document analysis of daily lesson plans revealed a section titled *Formative assessment techniques*. It regarded differentiated techniques that can be used in an inclusive classroom setting reading: Educators are expected to differentiate techniques which are name stick, mini boards, read aloud, think, pair and share, braille and sign language were applicable. However, educators taught diverse learners in the same way and did not correctly follow differentiated lesson planning and presentation, which disadvantaged most learners.

#### **4.5 Strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners in inclusive education classrooms**

The participants shared their views on teaching strategies used in inclusive education. There were sub-themes that emerged namely i) teaching strategies currently used by educators in teaching diverse learners and ii) teaching equipment educators need to have in place to accommodate diverse learners.

##### **4.2.5.1 Teaching strategies currently used by educators in teaching diverse learners**

This study established that when inclusive education was introduced, more focus was seeing all learners regardless of their learning abilities in one classroom. Educator preparedness and readiness for inclusive education were ignored by the DoE. The participant responses are summarised in the sub-sections below.

- *Group-guided approach*

The participants highlighted that they have been using the group-guided approach to teach diverse learners in an inclusive education environment. The participants further indicated that a group-guided approach did not meet all learners' needs in an inclusive education classroom. An SBST committee member highlighted the following:

*I have noticed that learners do well when working in groups and peer teaching. Group-guided readings and reading clubs encourage learners to read yet they do not accommodate LVIs and those who cannot hear anything (Educator 1).*

The participant emphasised that for the success of inclusive education, educators must use relevant teaching strategies that accommodate all learners in an inclusive education classroom. However, educators indicated that they have been using a group-guided approach and reading clubs which encourage learners to engage with one another. The approach disadvantaged learners who have LHIs who struggled to interact with other learners due to a lack of sign language knowledge.

- *Seating arrangements*

The participants stated that they used seating arrangements as one of the methods to address barriers to learning. The participants highlighted the following:

*Seating arrangement also assists in teaching and learning. For example, learners who are short-sighted will sit in front so that they can be able to see on the board. Learners with behavioural problem will always be closer to educators so that he/ she is able to control them so as to class not being disruptive (Educator 2).*

Educator 2 (an SBST committee member) emphasised that the effectiveness of inclusive education requires educators to use appropriate teaching strategies to ensure that no learner is left behind. Educators indicated that they have been using seating arrangements as a strategy to address barriers to learning in inclusive classrooms. The SBST committee member further indicated that the seating arrangement was for learners who are short-sighted and those who have behavioural problems. The same strategy left out LVIs, LHIs and learners with dyslexia.

- *Scaffolding and straddling*

The participants indicated that most educators used scaffolding and straddling which did not address other barriers for LVIs and LHIs. A participant highlighted the following:

*In schools where the teaching environment is conducive, educators are implementing different strategies of teaching methods, however educators are mostly using scaffolding and straddling in an inclusive environment which does not accommodate all learners (District Official 2).*

Participants emphasised that educators apply scaffolding and straddling for inclusive education to be conducive. This teaching strategy provided contextual support for

meaning through the use of simplified language, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning. Scaffolding consisted of educators guiding learners' learning via focused questions and positive interactions.

- *Teacher-centred approach*

The participants indicated that most educators are using a teacher-centred approach which only allows educators to dominate in a lesson. Learners are less engaged through this teaching approach. A participant cited the following:

*During my school visits in most of the schools, educators use teacher-centred model which do not cater different cognitive levels of achievement of learners manifesting learning barriers (District Official 1).*

The participant stressed how educators use teaching strategies that they feel comfortable with ignoring learners learning styles in inclusive education settings. District Official 1 (a DSBT committee member) indicated that educators mostly used teacher-centred approach, which implied that during a lesson, the educator was the one who does the most. With less is a less learner participation only academically gifted learners can achieve under this type of teaching strategy.

- *Demonstrations*

The participants indicated that learners learn easily when the lesson is visualised and when it is demonstrated to them. Participants highlighted the following:

*Learners in inclusive education environment learn more when they see objects. Educators must visualise their lessons because learners learn easily through see objects (District Official 3).*

*Educators in order for them to be effective they must use teaching aids and demonstrate to learners so that they learn through seeing objects (Educator 1).*

Participants stressed the need for educators to use teaching aids to effectively engage learners in an inclusive education environment. District Official 3 (a DBST committee member) emphasised that educators must use teaching aids so that learners can see and visualise what is being taught. In a similar vein, educators emphasised the need educators to use teaching aids in inclusive classrooms because learners learn easily when they see objects or teaching aids. Educator 1 (an SBST committee member) further emphasised that educators must demonstrate to learners how to use teaching aids. Demonstration enabled educators to communicate ideas with the aid of visuals

such as flip charts, posters and PowerPoint. It further helped educators to go step-by-step with learners.

- *Experimental learning*

The participants indicated that learners learn effectively when they are hands-on. Experimental learning allows learners to fully participate in a lesson and discover new knowledge on their own. The participants highlighted the following:

*Educators must allow learners to do experiments which help them to be hands-on whilst learning (District Official 2).*

*In the school I' am working at, educator do perform experiments and allow learners to do it alone as it helps them to discover new knowledge on their own (Educator 3).*

Participants stressed the importance of experimental learning in an inclusive setting. Participants indicated that experimental learning helped learners to be more observant and inquisitive and to discover new knowledge on their own. A DBST committee member (District Official 2) emphasised that experimental learning helps learners be hands-on in a lesson and fully participate. In the same breath, an SBST committee member indicated that the experiment learning allows learners to discover new knowledge on their own. These views highlight the need for educators to allow learners to fully participate in a lesson through guidance from their educators.

The document analysis of lesson plans articulated teaching methods educators need in a classroom to ensure that the lesson is fruitful. The educators' lesson plans indicated different teaching strategies they can utilise to ensure effective teaching and learning in a diverse classroom. Educators can choose between experimental learning, differentiated instruction, the demonstration approach, or the scaffolding and straddling approach, role play, storytelling, group learning and teacher-centred approach which is commonly preferred and used by most educators. However, the participants used experimental learning, scaffolding and straddling, group guided, demonstrations and teacher-centred approaches. Educators must use teaching strategies that address most of learning needs in inclusive education classrooms so that no learner is left behind.

#### **4.2.5.2 Teaching equipment educators need to have in place to accommodate diverse learners**

The participant indicated that for the success of inclusive education, educators must have all the necessary resources they may need during teaching and learning. The following sub-sections provide participant quotes:

- *Computer Lab*

The participants indicated that to fully implement inclusive education, schools should have functional computer labs. An SBST committee member mentioned:

*Adequate resources should be allocated to schools to cater for the diverse needs of all learners such as computers and tablets. Computers could be a useful teaching aid in making inclusive education a success in regular classes, which include learners with and without SEN (Educator 1).*

Participants emphasised the need for the school to have a computer lab. Computers can be a useful teaching aid as most learners are familiar with digital devices. Educator 1 emphasised that computers can be used to cater to diverse learners in inclusive education. Furthermore, the experts highlighted the necessity for schools to have computer labs to establish an equitable and inclusive learning environment that addresses most learning styles that each learner has.

- *Braille machine*

Participants highlighted that in an inclusive environment enough braille machine should be made available and educators should be able to operate them. A participant highlighted the following:

*Braille machine should be made available to all mainstream schools to accommodate visual learners (Principal 2).*

The experts captured the necessity for an inclusive education environment to have all necessary resources such as a braille machine to successfully assist LVIs. According to participants, the braille machine is very important for LVIs as it allowed them to have the same access to written words sighted learners and could enjoy reading and writing in the inclusive education environment.

- *Audiobooks*

Participants indicated that audiobooks are also essential in the success of inclusive education, especially to accommodate learners who are dyslexic. Participants highlighted the following:

*Learners who are dyslexic needs speech recognition software (speak-to-text technology), audiobooks, flashcards and writing helpers to be able to learn (District Official 2).*

*It would be a mammoth task to set a list of equipment that can be used and required to deal with diverse learners. Some learners are on the same ASD and needs different equipment such as audiobooks, videos, bulletin boards, educational toys and posters (District Official 1).*

The participants stressed how important it was to be equipped with relevant teaching resources for the success of inclusive education. The DBST committee member emphasised that in an inclusive education environment, dyslexic learners are also accommodated; thus, schools should have speech recognition software such as audiobooks. This view highlighted the need for audiobooks as a learning tool. Audiobooks allow some learners to expand their vocabulary, improve their comprehension and develop reading techniques.

- *Sign language chats*

Participants indicated that educators should also use sign language chats to accommodate LHIs. A DBST committee member highlighted the following:

*LHIs need sign language chats and assistive listening devices (District Official 3).*

The LTSM and inventory policies highlight the materials/ equipment to be bought and recorded in the school inventory register by Schools A-C: Specifically, section titled *LTSM acquisition* read:

*The DoE defines LTSM as any material that supports and facilitates teaching and learning inside the classroom or at home (homework), including:*

- *Textbooks, reading books, reference books, prescribed work and dictionaries;*
- *Modules and workbooks*
- *Posters and maps and wall charts;*
- *Educational board games;*
- *Library reference materials;*
- *Reference material for educators, learners, classrooms and library.*

Participants emphasised the need for educational charts especially for LHIs. To efficiently support and educate such learners, educators must have sign-language charts and hearing devices. Furthermore, the experts highlighted the necessity for schools to have sign language charts and assistive listening devices to establish an equitable and inclusive learning environment that can address LHIs. This enhanced learning and communication skills for learners who have hearing loss.

The document analysis of LTSM and inventory policies highlighted on the materials and equipment schools must support teaching and learning. However, participants indicated that schools seemed to lack materials and equipment that support teaching and learning especially in an inclusive environment. This could be because the schools are underfunded by the DoE. Participants further indicated that LTSMs serve as tools to provide the learners with information and the skill set necessary to gain knowledge concerning the content of lessons. Without adequate provision being made for LTSM, classrooms become unproductive and are not conducive to learning. Educators need adequate LTSM and assistive devices appropriate for the needs of learners with disabilities in an inclusive education classroom.

#### **4.2.6 Strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle learners with learning needs in inclusive classrooms**

The findings revealed that the implementation of inclusive education in their schools was a challenge. This was not only because their schools were situated in a semi-urban area and were receiving government grants but also because the government was dragging its feet when it came to ensuring that this initiative run smoothly. Participants need to be effectively trained to ensure that inclusive education was carried out in their regular classrooms. The following excerpts from interviews reflect the participants' feelings.

##### **4.2.6.1 *Workshop***

The study revealed that participants indicated that despite having braille machines at school to assist LVIs educators needed to be capacitated on how to operate and interpret braille. A participant cited the following:

*Frequent workshops will help us a lot and will also serve as a motivation. In my school educators struggle a lot in operating braille machines. This means that educators in my school need to be capacitated to interpret braille and to operate braille machine so as to effectively LVIs, (Principal 2).*

The research participant stressed how crucial it is for educators to have frequent workshops that will help them improve their teaching in an inclusive education environment, especially when dealing with LVIs. The principal noted that educators struggled the most in operating braille which disadvantaged LVIs. There is a critical need for educators to understand and operate braille, thus recommendation for a specialised braille workshop for educators working in inclusive settings. This would ensure that LVIs are fully and meaningfully included in the learning process.

#### **4.2.6.2 Training**

Participants underscored the need for educators to be trained in the reading and use of sign language. A participant cited the following:

*Educators must also be trained to use sign language alphabets so as to able to engage LHIs in a normal classroom. Educators struggle a lot to deliver an effective lesson using a sign language (Principal 3).*

Participants argued that educators need to be capacitated to read and use sign language in inclusive education classroom settings. The principal emphasised that co-teaching could help educators in inclusive education to successfully and meaningfully teach diverse learners. Whilst an educator is presenting a lesson, the other specialised educator will be reading and interpreting using sign language specifically for LHIs. Co-teaching is a collaborative approach to instruction in which two educators, typically a general education educator and specialised education educator, work together to plan and then implement instruction for a diverse classroom that includes LSEN.

#### **4.2.6.3 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**

Participants underscored the need for educators to establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) wherein educators in inclusive education will have to share best practices amongst themselves. The participants highlighted the following:

*Most educators lack knowledge about inclusive education. The Department of Basic Education must train more remedial educators and provide support full-service schools with all the necessary resources that will be useful to learners. Educators must also be capacitated to use digital devices in their classroom through PLC, because educators learn best when they are sharing knowledge (Educator 1).*

*Educators must establish PLCs whereby they will be sharing best practices among themselves as to how best they prepare/ plan a lesson for diverse learners in an inclusive education environment (District Official 3).*

The experts underscored the necessity for educators working in inclusive education environments to establish PLCs so they could share knowledge and best practices for the effective implementation of inclusive education. According to participants, some educators can learn through sharing knowledge with other educators. The finding highlighted the need for educators to capacitate each other to successfully participate in an educational environment. PLCs could enhance educators' teaching practice and create a learning environment where all learners could reach their full potential.

#### **4.2.6.4 Mentorship programs**

The study revealed that for a lesson to be engaging, it must cater to all cognitive levels to ensure learner participation. Educators must be capacitated to use a differentiated approach as well as all necessary teaching aids to engage all learners in an inclusive classroom regardless of their different learning abilities. The participants mentioned the following:

*The educator needs to know his or her clientele and that will help them to be mentored on how to prepare a differentiated lesson plan in order to address different learning styles in an inclusive environment (District Official, 1).*

*Educators must also be knowledgeable of Bloom Taxonomy and it must be taken into consideration when preparing formative and summative assessments. This will help educators to reach each learners ability. Educators need to be mentored in setting standardised question papers (District Official 2).*

Participants emphasised the need for educators to be capacitated to plan differentiated lesson plans that are inclusive of all the needs of diversified learners through mentorship. According to participants, educators in inclusive education must be mentored on how to prepare differentiated lesson plans that accommodate the different learning needs of the learners. Mentoring would facilitate the personal and

professional growth of individual educators by providing guidance, support and knowledge from an education specialist.

#### **4.2.6.5 Access to resources and information**

Participants indicated that schools must ensure that adequate resources are available to effectively and meaningfully implement inclusive education. A participant cited the following:

*Schools must have enough resources such as braille machines, sign language charts and computer labs (District Official 3).*

The research participant emphasised the need for the schools to have enough and adequate resources to fully assist learners in inclusive education classrooms. DBST committee members highlighted the need for adequate resources in inclusive education. Specifically, teaching resources are materials that are designed to help facilitate learning and knowledge acquisition.

The document analysis of educators' code of conduct highlighted the capacitation for educators to improve and update their skills and knowledge. However, this is not consistent with what the participants mentioned. They indicated that learners experiencing a lot of barriers were placed in a regular classroom and educators were not adequately capacitated to handle such diversity. This was argued to be due to a lack of funds from the DoE to facilitate in-service training to capacitate educators. The participants further mentioned that most educators lack knowledge and skills to operate braille machines for LVIs or use of sign language for LHIs and multisensory approaches for learners with dyslexia.

### **4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of this study solely centred on the main research question as specified in Chapter One, namely *How can educators be capacitated to handle the skills-related challenges of inclusive education learning environment?* The researcher grouped the findings according to the main themes: These include i) establish competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments; ii) identify skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching; iii) explore strategies currently used by educators in teaching

learners in inclusive education classrooms and iv) propose strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms.

#### **4.3.1 Participants understanding of the inclusive education**

It was imperative to establish participant's understanding of what is meant by the term 'inclusive education'. Its definition according to participants was that it is education that includes everyone, with non-disabled and disabled people (including LSEN) learning together in mainstream schools. An SBST committee member remarked:

*Inclusive education is education for learners with learning barriers, for example, learners with physical disabilities and learners who cannot read or write being taught with normal learners in a regular classroom (Educator 1).*

Another perspective was highlighted by SGB Member 2 who defined it as:

*Inclusive education means that all learners with different abilities are taught in one classroom.*

Responses given by participants demonstrate an adequate understanding of inclusive education. These views were synonymous with [Rasooli, et al, \(2024\)](#), who argued that inclusive education involves the movement of learners with disabilities from institutions to community living, from special schools and from resource rooms or special classes to ordinary classes. Literature recorded that inclusive education was introduced after the integrity and dignity of LSEN were prioritised within society's existing social, health, education and labour structures (Mosola, 2020).

Inclusive education is a concept that allows LSEN to be placed in and receive instruction in regular classes and taught by regular educators ([Mpu, et al, 2021](#)). According to [Mpu, et al, \(2021\)](#), the goal of inclusion in education is to restructure and reform the school so that all children can be part of all the social and educational opportunities offered in a school. It was imperative therefore, to venture into conversations with participants against the understanding that inclusive education is broad-based encompassing both learners with barriers and those without barriers to learning in a regular classroom. Inclusive education embraces the concept of equality of opportunity for all learners, whereby education provisions should ensure that all learners are included regardless of differences or difficulties.

### **4.3.2 Competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments**

The study revealed that educators have an idea of how inclusive education can be effectively put into practised. Participants highlighted factors in the interviews such as educators' attitudes towards inclusive education, as well as the knowledge and skills required by educators to actively engage diverse learners in a regular classroom. According to [Bhroin, et al, \(2020\)](#), competences are KSA that enable educators to be successful in inclusive education learning environments. [Bhroin, et al, \(2020\)](#), further indicated that educator's KSA positively affect diverse learners' outcomes in the inclusive education learning environment. Educators' professional competence involves KSA which in, interplay, will determine the extent to which an educator can successfully teach diverse learners ([Rajendran, et al, 2020](#)).

#### **4.3.2.1 *The knowledge component that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments***

The findings revealed that it is imperative to understand learners' needs to provide a learning environment that best suits them. The participants stated that an educator in an inclusive education setting must be able to diversify lessons and be on board with various learning barriers learners possess and learning styles which will inform an educator as to how to diversify a lesson. These views were consistent with Molakeng (2019) who emphasised that a knowledgeable educator is most likely to have a huge impact in imparting knowledge to these diverse learners in a regular classroom.

- *Learning disorders*

The study established that there are many learning disorders that educators must be able to accommodate in an inclusive environment without discrimination. Participants mentioned that learning disorders include learners with dyslexia or ADHD, LHIs, LVIs, learners who cannot process language and/ or dyscalculia. These affect their learning capabilities if they are not given the necessary support. Principal 3 indicated that:

*For educators to be effective in the mainstream, it is important to have understanding about different types of learner disabilities so as to accommodate them in a normal classroom.*

In addition, Principal 1 had this to say:

*There is a lot that educators must be knowledgeable of, most importantly different learning disabilities in an inclusive environment.*

These views were consistent with **Donohue & Bornman, (2018)** who remarked that learning disorders are developmental disabilities in reading, writing, or performing arithmetical calculations, despite adequate instruction. **Donohue, et al, (2018)** further argued that educators should be able to identify these learners who are experiencing barriers to learning for early intervention. Early intensive individualised remedial education can be provided on a one-to-one basis once an educator identifies learning disabilities in learners (**Delubom, et al, 2020**).

- *Learning styles*

The findings revealed that there are many learning styles that educators should know in an inclusive environment. Learners learn differently as they have different qualities and abilities. Principal 2 had to say this:

*It is important for educators in an inclusive education environment to know that learners are unique and in their uniqueness, they learn differently.*

Additionally, Educator 2 remarked:

*Learners are different and as a result they learn differently. Some learners are auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, informal learning style (playing), spatial just to mention a few.*

In support of the above views, literature sources proposed that educators are *in loco parentis* and have a responsibility to be aware of the learners learning styles (**Vaghrodia, et al, 2022**). **Vaghrodia, et al, (2022)** further stated that knowledge of learning styles may help educators identify and solve learning problems among learners, thus helping their learners to become more effective. While doing so, it may be possible to reach out to more learners because of the better match between teaching methods used by the educator and learner styles. Educators can help learners more effectively both in and out of the classroom if they are aware of learning styles and can assist them in determining their preferences. Similarly, Molakeng (2019) argued that knowing learners preferred learning styles is vital if educators are to provide tailored strategies for individual learners. Knowing learners' preferred learning styles also helps to overcome the predisposition of many educators to treat

all learners similarly as well as motivate educators to move from their preferred mode(s) to using others (Doyi, 2023).

- *Differentiated instructional approach*

The study established that educators need to use a differentiated instructional approach to effectively teach diverse learners in an inclusive classroom. Participants highlighted that learners in an inclusive classroom learn best when a differentiated approach is used. The learners' differences are significant enough to have a major impact on what learners need to learn; thus, learners will learn best when they can make connections between the curriculum and their interests and life experiences. The central job of schools is to maximise the capacity of each learner. Educator 2 had this to say:

*Diverse learners in an inclusive environment must be taught using a differentiated instructional approach so as to maximise each learner's participation in a classroom.*

This view was consistent with Rajendran, et al, (2020) who argued that when educators differentiate instruction according to learners' existing interests, such learners are motivated to connect what is being taught with things they already value. A differentiated instructional approach also encourages learners to discover "new interests" (Rajendran, et al, (2020). Differentiated instruction is not merely an instructional strategy but rather a critical teaching and learning philosophy that all prospective educators should be exposed to in teacher education programmes (Rasooli, et al, 2024).

- *Lesson planning*

The findings established that educators should adopt differentiated lesson plans that can accommodate diverse learners with their LSEN. Educator 3 had to say this:

*To effectively implement inclusive education, educators must have individual educational plan so as to assist them to plan appropriate lesson plan for diverse learners.*

Additionally Principal 3 remarked:

*To prepare lessons taking into account orientation, regional courses, new approaches, techniques, evaluation, teaching aids, braille operation and language.*

The findings were in agreement with Mnguni, (2017) who defined a lesson plan as a written and considered program that the educator prepares for a lesson before teaching. Monteiro, et al, (2021) stated that having a lesson plan helps an educator examine how to get into the material through various possibilities. Without a curriculum and written a lesson plan, educators may miss out on the ability to think regularly and systematically during the training course about all the effective factors in the teaching-learning process (Mpu, et al, 2021).

- *Classroom management*

The study established that for inclusive education to be effectively implemented, educators must create a conducive learning environment for all learners regardless of their barriers to learning. The participants concurred with Educator 2 stating:

*Educators must love and treat all learners equally in an inclusive environment regardless of their different learning disabilities.*

Manuel, et al, (2024) confirmed these findings having stated that classroom management is intended to provide learners with more opportunities to learn the material provided by educators does in class. Additionally, Demirdag (2015) stated that classroom management means to organise learners, space, time, and materials so that learning can take place. Learners should be able to carry out their maximum potential, which allows learners to develop appropriate behavioural patterns (Manuel, et al, 2024). Effective classroom management and positive classroom climate construction are essential goals for all educators and learners in an inclusive environment.

#### **4.3.2.2 Attitude educators need to possess in an inclusive education environment**

The study established that for an educator to be effective in an inclusive education environment they need to have passion to work with diverse learners, patience, respect and empathy. This view is consistent with Avramidis, et al, (2020) who propose that, if educators perceive inclusive education positively, the goals of inclusive education (all learners being part of all the social and educational opportunities offered in a school) could be fulfilled.

- *Empathy*

From the findings, the researcher established that educators need to have empathy for diverse learners in an inclusive classroom set-up to boost their morale. The participants highlighted the fact that teaching in an inclusive environment involves a lot more than merely delivering lessons in the classroom. Educators have to provide emotional support to their learners who often experience emotional difficulties related to challenges in the classroom. Educator 2 remarked:

*We must have empathy for these learners as most of them are born that way.*

The views were similar to Amoriello (2017), who stated that an empathetic attitude in educators helps them learn about learners' feelings and embrace learners' differences.

Alassaf, (2025) noted that emotional stability and empathic sensitivity in teachers are considered the most important factors in creating the overall atmosphere in the classroom. Alassaf, (2025) further stated that the empathetic attitude in educators will result in learners feeling pleasure, free, adopted and involved, respected and understood.

- *Patience*

The study revealed that teaching in an inclusive environment requires educators who are patient with those learners who may need more time and special attention. The participants highlighted that LSEN need more time to learn hence they need patient educators. Principal 3 remarked:

*Educators need to be patient with diverse learners because they take time to learn as their learning ability differs.*

Thwala (2015) urged that patience creates an inclusive and supportive learning environment where diverse learners feel valued and motivated to participate during a lesson.

In a similar vein, Molakeng (2019) emphasised that educators need to be patient when teaching LSEN as they learn differently. Alassaf, (2025) stressed the importance of

educators being patient in an inclusive education environment as LSEN require an educator who will have time to address their learning challenges without being impatient.

- *Respect*

The study revealed that educators should understand that inclusive education goes hand-and-hand with respect and passion working with diverse learners. Being an educator as “*in loco parentis*” means that educators also play parental roles for learners. Educators should respect learners regardless of their abilities as one DBST committee member remarked:

*Educators are “in loco parentis” meaning they act in place of a parent who has entrusted the custody and control of his or her child to an educator (District Official 3).*

The findings of the current study were congruent to the existing literature that LSEN need to be respected. The findings indicated that LSEN need to be treated with respect so that they can feel like to be part of the mainstream, which calls for innovative and creative educators (Cuturi, et al, 2022). Cuturi, et al, (2022) opined that appropriate pedagogy is often displayed in the respectfully.

#### **4.3.2.3 Skills needed by educators to effectively operate in an inclusive classroom environment**

The study revealed that when working in an inclusive education environment an educator should have certain skills to effectively deliver a fruitful lesson. The participants indicated that educators should be able to use sign language for learners who cannot hear and speak, be able to operate and interpret braille and also be able to use technological devices. These views were consistent with Mpu (2020), who added that one factor that is integral to an inclusive education environment is adequate skills.

- *Sign language*

The study revealed that inclusion involves the movement of LSEN from special schools to the mainstream. This means that even learners who have LHIs can be

accommodated in the mainstream when educators know how to use sign language. Educators must have a skill to use sign language so as to accommodate learners who have hearing problems. Participants indicated that an educator in an inclusive environment should have all the necessary skills (including sign language) to effectively implement inclusive education for diverse learners. Educator 1 had this to say:

*In order for us as educators to be fully effective in an inclusive teaching and learners we need to have a skill to interpret sign language alphabets.*

Additionally Principal 1 remarked:

*School needs educators who can interpret sign language alphabets and teaching using sign language.*

These views were consistent with [Van Steen, et al, \(2020\)](#) who argued that educators are expected to differentiate and adapt teaching to meet learners' diverse needs including LHIs. Additionally, Getnet (2019) remarked that "sign language" will make it easier for the educator to effectively engage LHIs. Sign language as a physical act is a way to communicate in a very visual way could be an alternative way which of transmitting information ([Van Steen, et al, 2020](#)).

- *Operate braille*

The findings revealed that LVIs must also be accommodated in mainstream schools. The participants indicated that inclusive education requires educators to operate and interpret braille to accommodate LVIs. Principal 2 had this to say:

*LVIs pose a challenge to most educators as they still require a skill to operate and interpret braille.*

Additionally, District Official 2 remarked:

*Most school admitted visually impaired learners which makes the ability to operate braille machine a key requirement for inclusive education educator.*

These views were consistent with [Schonert-Reichl, et al, \(2017\)](#) who argued that educators of LVIs are responsible for conducting comprehensive assessments to determine the optimum primary literacy medium for their learners. They must also identify if there is a need for dual-media instruction in both print and braille. If a learner

is likely to experience progressive vision loss, it is essential to address both immediate and long-term literacy needs, which may require providing reading and writing instruction in both print and braille (Schonert-Reichl, et al, 2017).

- *Computer literacy*

The findings established that computer literacy is often seen as a milestone in education as it enhances the ability to use interactive programmes, aids in problem-solving and allows for personalised learning experiences. The participants indicated that computer literacy gives educators the chance to teach learners using digital devices. Educator 2 mentioned:

*We have learners who are dyslexic and most of them learn through seeing objects which means that educators must be able to use PowerPoint presentation so that they can project posters.*

. Additionally, Principal 2 remarked:

*I have more dyslexic learners and most of them enjoy learning through playing and by seeing objects on the computer, which means that they need an educator who is computer literate”.*

These views were consistent with Sabrina, et al, (2017) who explained that educators are the primary agents of educational innovation. Therefore, computer skills among educators should be seen as an invaluable prerequisite that would help facilitate the teaching and learning procedure in this modern age of information explosion. Sabrina, et al, (2017) added that the use of computers can revolutionise teaching and learning and could bring advances that would improve education dramatically.

### **4.3.3 Skills related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching**

The findings have revealed numerous challenges experienced in the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools which centred on non-compliance by the DoE (Phiri, 2021). Building an inclusive education system requires a change in certain areas such as school infrastructure and lesson planning amongst other things. District Official 1 indicated that:

*Educators are having a difficult time to accommodating learners with and without barriers to learning in a regular classroom because they are not adequately equipped with necessary skills to teach in an inclusive environment.*

Phiri (2021) confirmed this, stating that educators are not given the appropriate support; leads to frustrated educators who fail to execute their duties. Educators do not only need advice in the implementation of inclusive education but also practical assistance, as they deal with real-life situations (Lamichhane, et al, 2023). Lamichhane, et al, (2023) concurred stating that inclusion is successful if educators are well prepared to teach all learners; this is only possible if the educators are empowered with the skills needed to carry out inclusion.

Education has been characterised by fragmentation and involves deep disparities in duration and quality. Many educators are seen to be disadvantaged due to the poor quality of their training within the field. From the findings, it seems that educators were not always equipped to prepare learners for the workplace due to difficulties with curriculum modification. Principal 1 highlighted that:

*Educators lack skills to operate braille and even sign language.*

Molakeng (2019) argues that for quality of teaching and learning in an inclusive environment LTSM, as well as assistive devices like braille, magnifying glasses, the use of sign language and the use of flexible teaching methods must be available, and educators be trained to utilise these during a lesson presentation. An inclusive learning environment, therefore, is an environment that allows and supports the potential learning of all learners, regardless of the learning differences and diversities these students possess in the class (Molakeng, 2019).

Findings revealed that in terms of summative assessments; the DoE only prepared for braille (Mobara, 2015). Educators still find it difficult as they are not professionally trained to accommodate such learners in the mainstream. These learners are always left behind during teaching and learning. Findings further revealed that LHIs are being given hearing aids which makes it easier for them to learn in an inclusive learning environment. However, LHIs can also be left out because most educators lack sign language skills (Molakeng, 2019).

This could also be viewed through the lens of Vygotsky's SCT (1962), which advocates that human learning is largely considered a social process. In considering the status quo from the given findings, learning would be impossible as the surroundings themselves are not inclusive. The attitudes of educators could tamper with the ZPD as

explained by this theory, since learners cannot perform on their own but are capable of learning through guidance from educators through their skills and knowledge. If this learning cannot take place, inclusive education initiatives will fail.

#### **4.3.4 Strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners inclusive education classrooms**

From the findings, the researcher discovered that most educators have been using old teaching approaches (teacher-centred methods) that do not cater to LSEN. Educator 1 indicated that:

*They use group-guided method which it does not accommodate LVIs and LHIs.*

Another perspective was highlighted by Educator 2:

*Seating arrangements also assist in teaching and learning, meaning learners who are short-sighted and behavioural problems will always sit in the front or closer to chalkboard/ whiteboard.*

In addition, District Official 2 highlighted:

*Educators use old traditional model of which it does not cater different cognitive levels to accommodate diverse learners.*

Findings further revealed that some educators lack technological skills which many young educators find user-friendly; excite learners who often enjoy using computers or tablets. However, the teacher-centred approach places a barrier between learner and educator leading to learners feeling unwelcome which results in poor academic performance. Some learners even drop out the school. [Dunahue, et al, \(2018\)](#) further urged that a large percentage of South African educators are nearing retirement and learning new ways of educating LSEN remains a significant challenge to inclusive practices. Mosolla (2020) concurred stating that educators still encounter problems in using assistive technology to operate braille and usage of sign language to support education for LSEN.

#### **4.3.5 Capacitating educators to effectively handle learners with special education needs (LSEN) in inclusive classrooms**

##### **4.3.5.1 Training**

The findings revealed that educators find it very difficult to accommodate LVIs and LHIs in a regular classroom because they cannot translate using sign language or operate a braille machine. Most educators are not familiar with these tools. As a result, LHIs and LVIs are often left out of learning exercises. Principal 1 remarked:

*Educators struggle a lot to deliver an effective lesson using sign language.*

Another viewpoint was highlighted by Principal 2 stating that:

*In my school educators struggle a lot in operating braille machine.*

In addition, District Official 1 remarked:

*Educators must be capacitated to prepare lesson plans that accommodate for all learners regardless of their barriers to learning.*

School educators in the mainstream must be trained professionally to teach LSEN (Molina, et al, (2021)). Studies showed that training workshops could provide educators with the knowledge and skill set to engage effectively with LSEN (Young, 2018). Training workshops equip educators with the skills to be flexible in their teaching style, which is essential when working with LSEN (Young, 2018).

#### **4.3.5.2 Co-teaching**

The findings revealed that educators learn best when one educator teaches and the other educator observes. Participants indicated that co-teaching would assist them learn teaching methods which are mostly used in an inclusive education environment. Principal 2 had this to say:

*Educators need to be capacitated to operate braille machines so as to effectively engage LVIs and that can be done through co-teaching.*

Bhroin, et al, (2020) concurred. The authors argued that in the co-teaching approach, subject and special education educators work collaboratively in the planning, implementation and evaluation of courses to be carried out in an integrated educational environment, and perform their roles and responsibilities based on active sharing (Ainscow, 2020). In this approach, there are several different teaching models in which the teaching environment and the roles that educators will undertake are

designed in different ways. These teaching models are not considered to be superior to each other. They include the one educator, one observation model; station teaching model; parallel teaching model; alternative teaching model, team teaching model (Kart, et al, 2021).

Educators who apply co-teaching approaches gain professional experience and job satisfaction. Learners have the opportunity to become acquainted with different teaching materials LSEN benefit too improving their academic achievements and increasing their self-confidence by using appropriate instructional adaptations for their learning speed and forms (Kart, et al, 2021).

#### **4.3.5.3 Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**

The findings established that educators could work collaboratively with other educators for a successful inclusive education environment. The participants indicated that the PLCs hold considerable promise for capacity building, for example:

*Educators must also be capacitated to use digital devices in their classroom through PLCs because educators learn best when they are sharing knowledge (Educator 1).*

These views were consistent with Gokbulut (2018), who defined the 'effective' PLCs as one having: the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals and other staff in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning. As with most educational policies, such as the notion of 'educator effectiveness' and the ubiquitous appeal to 'excellence', this statement conceals an essentially empty concept enhanced pupil learning behind a normative mask (Gokbuluk, 2018).

Gokbulut (2018) further remarked that PLCs have also been interpreted as a "professional community of learners" that enhances educator, learner and organisational learning, whereby – "educators in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning". The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the learners' benefit; thus, this arrangement may also be termed communities of continuous inquiry and improvement. Recent research provided evidence that PLCs can have positive effects on educators and their instruction, which in turn can lead to improved learner performance. Sijuola, et al, (2022) reported that the monthly professional development

workshops led educators to feel a sense of camaraderie with colleagues, connection to their schools, and ownership of the content of the workshops.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

The chapter gave the presentation of findings in accordance with the interviews and document analysis which aimed at the capacitation of educators to handle skills-related challenges of an inclusive education environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The findings revealed that there is still a challenge in the implementation of inclusive education by educators in the mainstream. While some of the participants in this study indicated some limited knowledge of inclusive education, they highlighted the challenges that hinder the progress of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a summary of the entire study, and articulates the contributions of the study to knowledge, policy and educational practice. The chapter then proposes recommendations for best practices and directions for future study. Finally, conclusions drawn from the major findings of this study are presented as possible answers to the research questions of this study.

The study was guided by the following research questions and objectives:

#### **5.1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study sought to answer one main research question, namely:

*How can educators be capacitated to handle the skills-related challenges of an inclusive education learning environment?*

The study further sought to answer the following sub-research questions:

- What competencies do educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments?
- What skills-related challenges are encountered by educators in the implementation of inclusive education?
- Which teaching strategies are currently used by educators in inclusive classroom settings? and
- What strategies can be adopted by educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms?

### **5.1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study pursued the following the following objectives:

- To establish competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments;
- To identify skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching;
- To explore strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners in inclusive education classrooms; and
- To propose strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms.

## **5.2 SUMMARY**

The study was conducted with the view to capacitate educators to handle skills-related challenges in inclusive education environments in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The first chapter outlined the background of the study. It was noted that educators lack the knowledge and skills to effectively implement inclusive education-related strategies in a regular classroom. The chapter also stated the objectives and sub-research questions for the study. The study objectives of the study were to i) establish competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments; ii) identify skills-related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching; iii) explore strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners in inclusive education classrooms and finally iv)

proposing strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle LSEN in inclusive classrooms.

Chapter Two focused on the literature review. Previous studies on inclusive education were explored in the South African context. According to the information gathered a range of competencies are required to effectively implement inclusive education. The competencies regard KSA which are required in the mainstream to effectively teach diverse learners. Literature also showed that educators have a deficiency in effectively implementing inclusive education due to the lack of several skills including interpreting and using of braille, using sign language, computer illiteracy and the inability to utilise differentiated approaches in inclusive environments. The literature further noted that educators used demonstration strategy, multi-sensory approach, observational strategy and group work strategy to teach diverse learners in an inclusive learning environment.

Suggestions of strategies for capacitating educators to address skills-related challenges in inclusive education were also gathered from the literature. As per the literature, educators must undergo curriculum training and promote teamwork and professional training to be capacitated to operate in inclusive teaching and learning environments.

Chapter Three focused on the research methodology wherein the research paradigm and design were discussed. The study adopted an interpretivist research paradigm which allowed the researcher to gather qualitative data. The study adopted a case study design based on selected schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. A purposive sampling technique was used. Through this sampling technique, three educators who are part of the SBST committee, three education managers (principals), three district officials who are part of the DBST and three SGB members were interviewed. Interviews and document analysis were used to collect data which were then analysed through thematic analysis.

The fourth chapter analysed presented and interpreted the data using the thematic approach. Thematic approach enabled the researcher to collect data through interviews and transcripts. The study established that educators need to have KSA competencies which are required to effectively function in the inclusive learning environment. The study further established that educators need to be capacitated to

prepare differentiated lesson plans, operate and interpret braille, use sign language and use computer devices for diverse learners in inclusive teaching and learning environments. The participants suggested training, co-teaching and PLC in capacitate educators to effectively implement inclusive education.

### **5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.3.1. Contribution to Knowledge**

The study advances knowledge on inclusive education by providing an empirically grounded understanding of the competencies educators require, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to function effectively in inclusive classrooms. It highlights that effective inclusive education is not solely dependent on policy prescriptions but on the educator's ability to understand learning disorders, differentiate instruction, plan inclusive lessons, manage diverse classrooms, and adopt positive attitudes such as empathy, patience, respect and passion.

The study further refines theoretical perspectives on inclusive education by demonstrating that educator capacitation is a multidimensional construct that integrates pedagogical knowledge, specialised skills (e.g., braille, sign language, ICT use), and transformative attitudes. The findings thus contribute to an emerging framework for inclusive pedagogy that aligns South African inclusive education policy intentions with classroom realities. The study also deepens contextual knowledge on how inclusive education unfolds in semi-urban and resource-constrained environments, providing insight into how systemic limitations shape educator practice and learner outcomes.

#### **5.3.2. Contribution to Practice**

Practically, the study offers a comprehensive set of actionable strategies that can strengthen the implementation of inclusive education at classroom, school, and district levels. It identifies specific pedagogical gaps, such as the inability to use braille, sign language, or differentiated instructional approaches, and proposes targeted interventions including workshops, professional learning communities (PLCs), mentorship programmes and co-teaching models. These interventions enable educators to improve lesson planning, adapt teaching strategies, use assistive

technologies, and create conducive learning environments where learners with diverse needs can participate meaningfully.

The study also contributes practical insight into how educators are currently navigating inclusive education, revealing a reliance on outdated teaching approaches such as teacher-centred pedagogy and generic group-based methods. By identifying the limitations of current practice, the study provides direction for improving inclusive teaching strategies to ensure that no learner, particularly LSEN is excluded.

### 5.3.3. Contribution to Policy

The study contributes significantly to policy by exposing the persistent gaps between the intentions of inclusive education policies and the realities faced by educators in mainstream schools. It highlights systemic challenges such as inadequate training, insufficient LTSM, overcrowded classrooms, under-resourced learning environments and lack of departmental support. These findings offer strong evidence for policy review and refinement in areas such as:

- **Educator Training Policy:** The study underscores the need for compulsory, structured training in braille, sign language, ICT integration and differentiated pedagogy within both pre-service and in-service educator development frameworks.
- **Resource Provision Policy:** It strengthens policy arguments for increased funding for assistive devices, computer laboratories, braille machines, audiobooks, sign language charts and other inclusive learning technologies.
- **Curriculum and Assessment Policy:** Findings show the need for flexible curriculum guidelines and assessment adaptations that align with the diverse learning needs in inclusive classrooms.
- **Staffing and Infrastructure Policy:** The study provides empirical justification for reducing the educator-learner ratio, enhancing classroom space, and upgrading infrastructure to create user-friendly environments for LSEN.
- **Whole-School Development Policy:** It reinforces the importance of institutionalising PLCs, co-teaching and ongoing mentorship as part of district-level support to schools.

Overall, the study provides evidence-based recommendations that can guide policymakers, district officials and school management teams in revising inclusive education implementation strategies to better support educators.

#### 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed from the study's findings:

- Training on inclusive education and special needs education should be conducted with in-service and pre-service educators, and principals so that they can comply with expectations and standards under the inclusive dispensation;
- The educator-learner ratio should be revised (and lowered) to motivate educators and help create a conducive environment for learning;
- Special needs education expert educators should be assigned to co-teach with mainstream education educators to attend to the unique needs of LSEN more effectively;
- Educators should adopt the differentiated approach, use sign language, operate and interpret braille and use technological devices in a diverse classroom.
- PLCs should be established so that educators can interact with each other to share best practices to effectively implement inclusive education in the mainstream;
- Curriculum, textbooks, furniture and examinations should be modified to accommodate the diversity of learner needs within an inclusive classroom set-up;
- DoE should provide schools with adequate finances to cater for the diverse needs of all learners;
- DoE should provide mainstream schools with adequate resources to cater for the diverse needs of all learners;
- Infrastructure should be modified to accommodate diverse learners within an inclusive education environment;
- Educators in mainstream schools should do exchange visits with schools that are successfully implementing inclusive education; and
- Future researchers may investigate the issue of readiness by the DoE to effectively implement inclusive education in mainstream schools.

## 5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded the following:

- Educators must have KSA competencies to fully function in the inclusive education learning environment. Under the knowledge aspect, educators should know learners' rights, individual differences, and teaching and assessment methods for inclusive classrooms. For skills competency, educators should have classroom management skills, positive discipline skills, counselling skills, communication skills, sign language skills, operation of braille and lesson planning skills. Under the attitude competency, educators should portray ESA, self-regard, assertiveness, self-actualisation, empathy, stress tolerance, adaptability, flexibility, optimism and happiness;
- Educators are challenged when interpreting and operating braille, using sign language; they also lack computer literacy and the ability to prepare a differentiated lesson plan to address different learning needs in the inclusive learning environment;
- Educators are currently using the group-guided approach, seating arrangements, scaffolding and straddling, teacher-centred approach, demonstrations and experimental learning to teach LSEN in a regular classroom and experimental learning to teach diverse learners in a regular classroom.
- Educators should adopt the differentiated approach, use of sign language, operate and interpret braille and usage of technological devices in a diverse classroom.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

Adewumi, T.M., Mosito, C. & Agosto, V., (2019). Experiences of teachers in implementing the inclusion of learners with special education needs in selected Fort Beaufort District primary schools, South Africa. *Cogent Education*, 6(1), 1-20. doi: 10.1080/2331186X.2019.1703446

Adewumi, T.M., Rembe, S., Shumba, J. & Akinyemi, A., (2017). Adaptation of the curriculum for the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in selected primary schools in the Fort Beaufort District. *African Journal of Disability*, 6(0), 1-5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v6i0.377>

Adi, S.S., Unsiyah, F. and Fadhilah, D., 2017. Teaching special students: English lessons for deaf students in Indonesian special junior high schools. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 5(12), pp.121-136.

Agbenyega, J., 2007. Examining Teachers' Concerns and Attitudes to Inclusive Education in Ghana. *International Journal of whole schooling*, 3(1), pp.41-56.

Ainscow, M. (2020). Inclusion and equity in education: Making sense of global challenges. *Prospects*, 49, 123-134.

Ainscow, M. (2020). Inclusion and equity in education: Making sense of global challenges. *Prospects*, 49, 123-134.

Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting Inclusion and Equity in Education: Lessons from International Experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7-16.

Akhtar, N., 1994. The attitude of society towards hearing-impaired children. *Unpublished Master's thesis*. University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Alassaf, M. A. (2025). Teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward inclusive education for children with autism in mainstream schools. *Frontiers in Education*, 10, Article 1630710. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2025.1630710>

Alechina, S.V., Alekseeva, M.N. and Agafonova, E.L., 2011. Willingness of teachers as the main factor of success in the formation of the inclusive. *Psychological Science and Education*, (1), pp.83-92.

Anabel Moriña (2017) *Inclusive education in higher education: challenges and opportunities*, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32:1, 3-17, DOI: 10.1080/08856257.2016.1254964

Anastasiadou, E. 2016. "Teacher's Attitudes towards Inclusion and the Inclusion of Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders." MEd diss., University of Jyväskylä.

Anthony, J. (2011). *Conceptualising disability in Ghana: implications for EFA and inclusive education*. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(10), 10731086

Asmal K & James W, (2017). *Education and democracy in South Africa today*. *Daedalus*, 130:185-204.

Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2020). Teachers' attitudes toward integration/inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 35(1), 133-151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1719883>

Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B., (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration / inclusion: a review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17, 129–147.

Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000). A survey into mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the

ordinary school in one Local Education Authority. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 20, 191–211.

Behr, A.L. & MacMillan, R.G. (2019). *Education in South Africa*. Pretoria: J.L. van (Grades r-3). Pretoria: Government Printers

Bhroin, Ó. N., & King, F. (2020). *Teacher education for inclusive education: A framework for developing collaboration for the inclusion of students with support plans*. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(1), 38-63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1691993>.

Blanche, M.T., Blanche, M.J.T., Durrheim, K. and Painter, D. eds., 2006. *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*. Juta and Company Ltd.

Boardman, K. (2020). *An exploration of teachers' perceptions and the value of multisensory teaching and learning: a perspective on the influence of Specialist Dyslexia Training in England*. *Education 3-13*, 48(7), 795–806. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2019.1653349>

Borg, G., Hunter, J., Sigurjonsdottir, B., & D'Alessio, S. (2011). *Key principles for promoting quality in inclusive education*. Brussels, Belgium: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

Bornman J & Rose J (2010). *Believe that all can achieve: Increasing classroom participation in learners with special support needs*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Bornman, J. & Rose, J. 2017. *Believe that all can achieve: Increasing Classroom Participation in Learners with Special Support Needs (2nd Ed.)*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*: Sage.

Brookhart, S. M. (2011). *Educational assessment knowledge and skills for teachers*. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 30(1), 3-12.

Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (2018). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis*. London: Heineman W.E. (Eds). 2015. *Problems in Pedagogy*. Durban: Butterworths.

Buthelezi, S. & Mawila, D. 2024. *There is always Sorrow: Risk Factors Faced by Parents of Children Presenting with Severe Intellectual Disabilities*. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Diagnosis and Treatment*, 12(1):12-21.

Cairney, P., & St Denny, E. (2015). Reviews of what is qualitative research and what is qualitative interviewing. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Philosophy and Practice*, 18(1), 117-125. doi:10.1080/13645579.2014.957434  
*Chaplaincy*, 20, 109-122.

Chambers, D. (2020). Assistive technology supporting inclusive education: Existing and emerging trends. *Assistive Technology to Support Inclusive Education*, Query date: 2024-05-12 20:21:26. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-363620200000014001>

Chau, V. S., & Witcher, B. J. (2014). Longitudinal tracer studies: Research methodology of the middle range. *British Journal of Management*, 16, 343-355.

Chekan, O., Haiash, O., Liubchenko, I., Popovych, N. and Barna, K. (2023). Inclusive education: Approaches and methods of working with children with special needs. *Cadernos de Educação Tecnologia e Sociedade*, 16(3), 639–647. <https://doi.org/10.47725/cadernos.v16n3.2023.132>.

Chen, S., Huang, Q., Liu, Z., & Wang, H. (2022). Inclusion of young children with special needs in early childhood education in the United States: Advantages and disadvantages. *International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication*.

Chen, S., Huang, Q., Liu, Z., & Wang, H. (2022). Inclusion of young children with special needs in early childhood education in the United States: Advantages and disadvantages. *International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication*.

Chibwe, F., & Mulenga, R. M. (2021). Challenges Faced by Administrators in the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Selected Primary Schools in Kitwe District. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, V(VI)

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among the five approaches*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 77–83.

Crispel, O., & Kasperski, R. (2021). The impact of teacher training in special education on the implementation of inclusion in mainstream classrooms. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(9), 1079-1090.

Cuturi, L. F., Cappagli, G., Yiannoutsou, N., Price, S., & Gori, M. (2022). Informing the design of a multisensory learning environment for elementary mathematics

learning. *Journal on Multimodal User Interfaces*, 16(2), 155–171.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12193-021-00382-y>

Dalton, E.M, Mckenzie, JA & Kahonde, C. 2012. The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa: Reflections arising from a workshop for teachers and therapists to introduce Universal Design for Learning. *African Journal of Disability* 1(1) Article 13. Accessed online 2 September 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v1i1.13>

Daniels, B. (2010). *Developing inclusive policy and practice in diverse context. African experience*. *School Psychology International*, 31(6). 631-643.

Darrah, M. A. (2013). Computer haptics: A new way of increasing access and understanding of math and science for students who are blind and visually impaired. *Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research*, 3(2), 3-47.

Davies, J & Green, L. 1998. Mainstream teachers' attitudes to the mainstreaming of learners with special educational needs in primary classroom: A Western Cape study. *South African Journal of Education*, 18 (2): 97-102.

Delubom, N. E., Marongwe, N., & Buka, A. M. (2020). *Managers' Challenges on Implementing Inclusive Education: Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges*. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 15(6), 1508-1519.

Department of Education. 2001. White Paper 6 on special needs education: *Building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government printers.

Dewi, A. A., Yawisah, U., & Siregar, S. (2019). Teaching English to Children With Hearing Impairment: A Case Study in Special School. *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7 (1), 10-19.

Donohue, D. & Bornman, J. 2014. The challenges of realising inclusive education in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*. 34(2): 01-14. Available at: <http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za>. Accessed [5 September 2014]

Donohue, D. & Bornman, J., 2018, 'The challenges of realising inclusive education in South Africa', *Learning and Teaching around the World around the World* 34(2), 120–126. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429491498-15>

Doyi, E. M. (2023). The implementation of inclusive education with regard to curriculum transformation in the primary schools (Doctoral dissertation, North-West University (South Africa)).

Dyson, A. (2013). Inclusive education: a global agenda? *Japanese Journal of Special Education*, 41 (6), 613-625.

Dyson, A., & Millward, A. (2016). *Schools and special needs: Issues of innovation and inclusion*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, 2009, (2008). Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters. [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) 2008]. Paris, France: Author. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000177683>. [Accessed 16 August 2019].

Engelbrecht, P. (2020). Inclusive education: Developments and challenges in South Africa. *Prospects*, 49(3-4), 219-232.

Fielding, J., Fielding, N., & Hughes, G. (2013). Opening up open-ended survey data

Fiorentino, C. (2014). Blind patient teaching methods. [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com) Accessed on 12/03/2015.

Fulcher, G., 2015. *Disabling policies?: A comparative approach to education policy and disability*. Routledge.

Gluckman, H., 1981. The extent to which Calvinism and Christian National education have influenced pedagogical findings in South Africa. *Problems of Pedagogics*. Durban, Butterworth.

Gregorius, S. (2016). *Exploring narratives of education: disabled young people's experiences of educational institutions in Ghana*. *Disability & Society*, 31(3), 322-338

Grossoehme, D. H. (2014). Overview of qualitative research. *Journal of Health Care*

Hadiana, D. (2015). Penilaian hasil belajar untuk siswa sekolah dasar. *Journal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 21(1), 15-26.

Hettiarachchi, S., and Das, A., 2014. "Perceptions of 'inclusion' and perceived preparedness among school teachers in Sri Lanka." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 43: 143–153.

Kart, A., & Kart, M. (2021). Academic and social effects of inclusion on students without disabilities: A review of the literature. *Education Sciences*, 11(1).

Kiplagat, H., Syonhi, J., & Situma, J. (2019). *Learning Challenges to Inclusive Learning in an ECDE Centers in Eldoret East Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya*. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(11).

Kuyini, A. B., & Desai, I. (2007). *Principals' and teachers' attitudes and knowledge of inclusive education as predictors of effective teaching practices in Ghana*. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 7(2), 104-113.

Kuyini, A. B., Yeboah, K. A., Das, A. K., Alhassan, A. M., & Mangope, B. (2016). *Ghanaian teachers: competencies perceived as important for inclusive education*. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20 (10), 1009-1023.

Kuyini, A.B., Yeboah, K.A., Das, A.K., Alhassan, A.M. and Mangope, B., 2016. Ghanaian teachers: competencies perceived as important for inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(10), pp.1009-1023.

Lamb, R.L.; Annetta, L.; Firestone, J.; and Etopio, E. (2018). A meta-analysis with examination of moderators of student cognition, affect and learning outcomes while using serious educational games, serious games, and simulations. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 80, 158-167.

Lamichhane, K. & Tsujimoto, T., 2023, 'Impact of universal primary education policy on the schooling of girls and children with disabilities in Uganda', *Education Sciences* 13(9), 953. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13090953>

Landsberg E, Krüger D & Swart E (eds.) 2011. *Addressing barriers to learning: A South African perspective* (2nd). Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik Publishers.

Landsberg, E., & Kruger, D., Swart, E., (2013). *Addressing barriers to learning*. Hartfield Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Maguvhe M 2015. Inclusive education: A transformation and human rights agenda under spotlight in South Africa. *African Journal of Disability*, 4(1):183. <https://doi.org/10.10.4102/ajod.v4i1.183>

Makoelle. (2012). *The state of inclusive pedagogy in South Africa: A Literature review*. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 3(2), 93-102

Manuel, L. A. F., Reyes, M. M., Cadiz, M. C. D., & Natividad, L. R. (2024). *21st century management and leadership in education and the modern workplace: Roles,*

responsibilities, and coping strategies of school leaders. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*

Marsack, C.N., 2016. *An examination of quality of life of parents of adult children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder*. Wayne State University.

Masakona, T.C. 2022. *The impact of migration on learning: A case of Mvudi Circuit in Vhembe District Limpopo South Africa*. University of Venda: South Africa

Matabane, M.B. 2022. *Crisis in the implementation of inclusive education: Reflection on the role of full-service schools in Sekhukhune district*. University of Limpopo: South Africa.

Matthews, L., Landsberg, E. (2016). learning assistance. E. Swart, D. Kruger, and E. Landsberg in E. (Eds.). *removing obstacles to learning* (pp. 95-116). Van Schaik in Pretoria.

Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 135–136.

McMillian, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2015). *Research in Education: Evidenced-based inquiry* (6th Ed). United States of America: Pearson. Prentice-Hall. Press. pp.29-53.

Mhlongo, S.A. 2017. *Inclusive Education Support Programmes Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties in Full-Service School: Umlazi District Educators' Voices*. Unpublished Master's Dissertation. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

Mngo, Z.Y. & Mngo, A.Y. (2018) Teachers' perceptions of Inclusion in pilot inclusive education program: Implication for instructional leadership. *Education Research International*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/3524879>

Mnguni M.A., (2017). *From inclusive education policy to implementation: A case study of a full- service school in Umngeni District, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa*. University of Kwazulu Natal.

Mokwena, M. & Tabane, R. (2019). Challenges experienced by learners with visually impairments in South African township mainstream primary schools. *South African journal of Education*, Volume 39.

Mokwena, M. (2016). Challenges experienced by learners with visual impairment in two mainstream primary schools in Klerksdorp, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District. University of South Africa.

Molakeng, M., (2019). Factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education practices in the selected secondary schools in Omaheke Region (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Namibia).

Molina Roldán, S., Marauri, J., Aubert, A., & Flecha, R. (2021). How inclusive interactive learning environments benefit students without special needs. *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Monteiro V, Mata L & Santos NN 2021. Assessment conceptions and practices: Perspectives of primary school teachers and students. *Frontiers in Education*, 6:631185. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.631185>

Mosala, L.L., (2020). Enhancing teacher's self-efficacy for supporting visually-impaired learners in Lesotho schools through school support network. University of the Free State.

Mpu, Y., & Adu, E. O. (2021). The challenges of inclusive education and its implementation in schools: The South African perspective. *Perspectives in Education*, 39(2), 225-238.

Muego, M. (2016). Social Science Dilliman. *Inclusive Education in the Philippines through the Eyes of Teachers, Administrators, and Parents of Children with Special Needs*.

Mundial, G. B., & UNICEF. (2016). Education 2030: Incheon declaration and framework for action: towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Murphy K. (2014). *Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Education Practices*. Mount Saint University.

Musyoka, M. M., Gentry, M. A., & Bartlett, J. J., (2016). Voices from the Classroom: Experiences of Teachers of Deaf Students with Additional Disabilities. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 4 (2), 85-96.

Ndou, N. (2015). managing the implementation of educational policies to ensure high-quality instruction in the province of Limpopo's public schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. South African University.

Ntinda, K., Thwala, S., & Tfusi, B. (2019). Experiences of Teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students' in a Special Needs School: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 7 (7), 79-89.

Oder, T., & Eisenschmidt, E. (2018). Teachers' perceptions of school climate as an indicator of their beliefs of effective teaching. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 48 (1), 3-20.

Ozokcu, O. 2018. The relationship between teacher attitude and self-efficacy for inclusive practice in Turkey. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(3): 6-12.

Peacock, D. P. (2016). Teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of inclusion in elementary classroom settings. Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Walden University.

Penda, A. and Ndhlovu, D. (2014). How Art Education Teaching Method is used in Teaching Learners with Visual Impairments. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*. Vol-1 (7). Pages 165-168.

Pendidikan, M. (2013). Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. Nomor 66, 1-3.

Pettipher, R.; Swart, E. (2016). a conceptual foundation for grasping inclusion. *Addressing barriers to learning*, edited by E. Landsberg, D. Kruger, and E. Swart (pp. 3-27). Van Schaik in Pretoria.

*Phiri P.P. 2021. Teachers experiences of implementing inclusive education in mainstream secondary schools in Hhohho region, Eswatini (Swaziland), University of South Africa*

Pitten Cate, I. M., Markova, M., Krischler, M., & KrolakSchwerdt, S. (2018). Promoting Inclusive Education: The Role of Teachers' Competence and Attitudes. *Insights into Learning Disabilities*, 15(1), 49-63.

Rahmah, C. R., & Kholiq, A. (2018). An Analysis Of Communication Types Of Deaf Students With Environment. *Jo - ELT (Journal of English Language Teaching)*

Rajendran, P, Athira, B.K, Elavarasi, D. (2020). "Teacher Competencies for Inclusive Education: Will Emotional Intelligence Do Justice?" *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2020, pp. 169-182. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v9i1.3494>

Ramrathan L & Mzimela J 2016. Teaching reading in a multi-grade class: Teachers' adaptive skills and teacher agency in teaching across grade R and grade 1. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 6(2):a448

Rasooli A & DeLuca C 2024. A critical review of fairness from multiple perspectives: Implications for classroom assessment theory. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 37(2):148-164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08957347.2024.2345594>

Round, P. N., Subban, P. K., & Sharma, U. (2016). 'I don't have time to be this busy. 'Exploring the concerns of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 20(2), 185-198

Sabrina, Nadia, and Sansrisna. (2017). Teachers' Beliefs in Practicing Inclusive Education: Case Study of Elementary Schools in Banda Aceh, University of Tampere.

Saravanabhavan, S., & Saravanabhavan. (2010). Knowledge of learning disability among pre- and in-service teachers in India. *International Journal of Special Education*.

Schonert-Reichl, Kimberly A. (2017). "Social and Emotional Learning and Teachers." *The Future of Children*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 137-155.

Sharma, U., and S. George. 2016. "Understanding Teacher Self-Efficacy to Teach in Inclusive Classrooms." In *Asia-Pacific Perspectives on Teacher Self-Efficacy*, 37

Sijuola, R., & Davidova, J. (2022). Challenges of Implementing Inclusive Education: Evidence from Selected Developing Countries. Rural environment. *Education. Personality*, 15, 140-147.

Singh, S., Kumar, S., & Singh, R. K. (2020). A study of attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 9(1), 189-197.

Smith, S.J. 2016. Outcome-Based Education and the Gifted Learner. Theory, Practice and Challenges. 14(1)52-56

Spady, W. 2014. *Outcomes Based Education: Critical Issues and Answers*. Virginia:

Suhlane, L. 2017. "Disabled people not charity cases". Sunday Express. Page. 7. June, 25.

Suryawati, E.; and Osman, K. (2017). Contextual learning: Innovative approach towards the development of students' scientific attitude and natural science performance. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 14(1), 61-76.

Tarver-Behring, S. & Spagna, M.E. (2004) 'Counseling With Exceptional Children', Focus on Exceptional Children, vol. 36, no. 8.

Thwala, S., 2015. *Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Managing Inclusive Classrooms in Swaziland*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1):495-500. doi: 10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n1p495

Timo Saloviita (2020) Attitudes of Teachers Towards Inclusive Education in Finland, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 64:2, 270-282, DOI:10.1080/00313831.2018.1541819

Toyin M.A, Symphorosa R, Mncube V., 2020. *Assessment strategies adopted for implementing inclusion of learners with special education needs in selected primary schools in the Amathole West District*. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 71(1-3): 147-153.

Vaghrodia, S., & Patel, H. (2022). Impact of inclusion education on attitude and social interaction of students with and without disabilities. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 11(2), 50-51.

Valeeva, L. A. (2015). *The current state of special needs education in Russia: Inclusive policies and practices*. Elsevier Ltd. doi10.1016/j.bspro.2015.04374

Van Steen, T., & Wilson, C. (2020). Individual and cultural factors in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion: A meta-analysis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 95.

Walton E 2011. *Getting inclusion right in South Africa*. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 46(4): 240–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451210389033>

Waters, J. (2017). *Phenomenological research guidelines*, Capilano University, British Columbia Canada.

White, C.J. (2010). *Research: A practical guide*. Pretoria: Ithuthuko Investments Publishers.

Wood, J. 2017. *Secondary special education educators' attitude and sense of self-efficacy towards inclusive education*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. California State University, California.

Woodcock, S., Hemmings, B., & Kay, R. (2012). Does Study of an Inclusive Education Subject influence Pre-Service teacher's Concerns and Self Efficacy about inclusion?. *Australian Journal of teacher education*, 37 (6).

Woolfolk, A. 2013. *Educational Psychology*. 11th Edition. New Jersey: Pearson.

Yada, A. & Savolainen, H. 2017. Japanese in-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and self-efficacy for inclusive practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 64: 222-229.

Zakia, D. L., Sunardi, S., & Yamtinah, S. (2017). The Study of Visual Media Use on Deaf Children in Science Learning. *European Journal of Special Education Research*

Zaky, H. 2022. *Emotional Intelligence and professional development: The impact of affective competence on teacher performance*. In (first Ed.), *Implementing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Educational Management Practices*, pp. 174-202. IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-4803-8.ch009>

Zorluoğlu, S. L., Sözbilir, M., & Kızılaslan, A. (2016). Teacher educators' views on scientific literacy of visually impaired students. *Cukurova University Faculty of Education Journal*, 45(2), 209–242.

Zwane, S.L. 2016. *Research Report. Teacher Training for inclusivity at selected schools in Gege Branch of Schools, Swaziland*. (Master's Dissertation). Pretoria: University of Swaziland.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Research Ethics Approval



### RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

**Date: 29 August 2023**

This is to confirm that ethical clearance has been provided by the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee [01/06/16] in view of the CUT Research Ethics and Integrity Framework, 2016.

**Ethical clearance number:** [HREIC 03/23/11] ST.M.Ed

Applicant's Name and student number	LJ Makate 2100322 86
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------

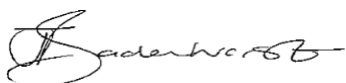
Supervisor's Name for Student Project	Prof S Makola
Level of Qualification for Student's Project	M.Ed
Title of research project	Capacitation of educators to handle skills-related challenges of inclusive education learning environments in Thabo Mofutsanyana district.
FRIC approval number	<b>FRIC 03/23/11</b>

All conditions as set out below have to be met as set out in your LS 262 a form. As this research focuses primarily on human beings you will be ethically responsible for:

- protecting the rights and welfare of the participants;
- gaining the trust and co-operation of all the participants with the assurance that the information collected will be kept confidential;
- informing the participants from the outset that their participation will be voluntary, and that the data collected will be conducted with the consent of the relevant authorities at the participant schools;
- adhere to the principles of rigorous data collection, analysis and interpretation consistent with the design of the study;
- keeping a data trail for possible auditing purposes and safe-keeping of raw data for a period of three years after publication of the results/findings;
- respecting the confidentiality of the data.

We wish you success with your research project.

Regards



Prof JW Badenhorst  
(Chairperson: Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics and Integrity Committee)

## Appendix B: Department of Education Permission Letter

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango  
Ref: Research Permission L. J. Makate  
Tel. 051 404 8808  
Email:

Department of  
Education  
FREE STATE PROVINCE

12 Wiid Street  
Lindley  
9630

Dear Mr. L. J. Makate

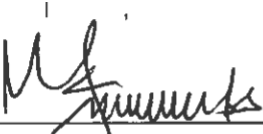
### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the Central University of Technology are as follows:

**Topic:** Capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

- 1. List of schools involved:** Maluti Hoogland, Thiboloha School for the Blind, Thebe Full Service School and District Based Support Team (DBST).
- 2. Target Population:** Three principals, three educators, three SGB members, and three District Based Support Team members in Thabo Mofutsanyana district.
- 3. Period of research:** From the signature of this letter until 30 September 2023. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.

- 4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:**



---

MZAMO

S

SSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

3/09/2023

**Appendix C: Letter requesting permission from the school principal**

QASME, M&E and Strategic Planning Directorate Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 93 - Thut House Room 101, 1 Floor, St Andrew Street, Bloemfontein

12 Wiid Street

Lindley

9630

Dear Principal

RE: Request for permission to conduct research

My name is Makate Lerata Jan and I am a Masters student at the Central University of Technology in Welkom Campus, School of Education. My student number is 210032286. The research I wish to conduct for my Master's dissertation entails "Capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District". I am hereby seeking your participation and permission to conduct a study in your school in order to be able to

engage participants in this research project. The data will be collected through interview from selected educators and SGB members of your school.

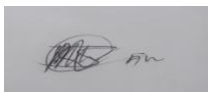
The aim of the research is to capacitate of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District and the following objectives will assist in responding to the main subject of this research study:

- To establish competencies that educators need for effective teaching in inclusive education environments.
- To identify skills related challenges educators encounter in the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching.
- To explore strategies currently used by educators in teaching learners under inclusive education classrooms.
- To propose strategies for capacitating educators to effectively handle learners with diverse learning needs in inclusive classrooms.

The study will be useful for many stakeholders in education in navigating ways to support educators in an inclusive teaching and learning environment.

I will be grateful to get your permission to carry out the study in your school and upon the approval of my request. I will then seek permission from the three educators and three SGB members to be engaged in this research project.

Yours sincerely



Mr Makate L.J

Contact details: 073 571 5336

## **Appendix D: Informed Consent Forms**

### **CONSENT FORM (English)**

My name is Makate Lerata Jan; I am a Masters student at the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus, School of Education. I wish to engage you as my participant in my research project for my Master's degree dissertation and the research I wish to conduct entails "Capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District."

The aim of the research is to capacitate of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

#### **Declaration by participant**

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to take part in a research study entitled "Capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District."

Signed at (place) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_ 2023.

---

Signature of participant

---

Signature of witness

## **Appendix E: Foromo ya tumello**

### **FOROMO YA TUMELLO**

Lebitso la ka ke Makate Lerata Jan, ke moithuti wa Masters univesithing e bohareng ya thekinoloji, khamphaseng ya Welkom, sekolo sa thuto. Ke lakatsa ha o kaba emong wa ba rupellwa baka dipatlisisong bakeng sa dipatloiso tseo ke lakatsang ho di etsa di kenyelletsa bokgoni ba matitjhere a amanang le ditsebo tsa tikoloho ya thuto e kenyeletsang bohle seterekeng sa Thabo Mofutsanyana.

Sepheo sa dipatlisiso ke ho matlafatsa matitjhere ho sebetsana le mathata a amanang le di tsebo tsa tikoloho ya thuto e kenyelatsang thuto seterekeng sa Thabo Mofutsanyana.

### **Phatlalatso ka ho monkakarolo**

Ka ho saena mona ka tlase, nna \_\_\_\_\_ ke dumela ho nka karolo phuputsong ya “Matlafatso ya matitjhere ho sebetsana e di phepetso tse amanang le ditsebo tsa tikoloho ya thuto e kenyeletsang bohle seterekeng sa Thabo Mofutsanyana”.

E saennwe (sebaka) \_\_\_\_\_ ka mohla la \_\_\_\_\_ (2023)

---

Tshaeno ya monkakarolo

---

Tshaeno ya bopaki

## **Appendix F: Interview schedule for the principals**

### **Introduction**

My name is Makate Lerata Jan (920422 5270 080) working as an educator in Department of Education Free State in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. I am currently enrolled for a Master in Education with the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus. The topic of my study is capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The purpose of this study is to capacitate educators on identified skills related challenges in the implementation of effective inclusive education in mainstream schools.

### **Confidentiality**

This interview will be transcribed and where audio-recording was used, tapes will be destroyed after data has been analysed. Confidentiality will be assured to participants and that after the completion of this research all information given will be destroyed. The purpose of this research will be outlined to the participants and the participants are not forced to participate in this study but I will be very pleased if they all be part of the study. Participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any given time and that has no negative consequences on their part. The teaching and learning will never be compromised during the data collection in your school.

### **Ground rules**

Before we begin with the interviews, there will be some ground rules to be set to the participants for the good flow of the interviews and all of us will have to observe them.

- Only one person speaks at a time
  - Give each other a chance to voice out his/her ideas
  - Confidentiality will be assured, and should not be repeated outside of this meeting
  - There is no wrong or right response as long as it is relevant to this study
- 

**The researcher will engage the principals in the discussion by asking the following questions:**

- 1 What do you understand by inclusive education?
- 2 What diverse learner characteristics and special education needs do learners at your school possess?
- 3 What knowledge, skills and attitudes should a competent educator possess to effectively operate in an inclusive classroom environment?
- 4 Through classroom visit to your educators what are the challenges you have identified in the implementation of inclusive education?
- 5 When you do internal moderation on educators' formative and summative assessments, do they cater diverse learners?
- 6 What challenges do educators encounter in handling inclusive education classrooms?
- 7 Which teaching strategies are used by educators to handle inclusive learning environments?
- 8 Are those teaching strategies appropriate for handling learners with diverse learning needs and abilities?
- 9 What strategies should educators adopt in order to be effective in handling inclusive education classrooms?
- 10 What should be done to capacitate educators to be well equipped for inclusive education classroom environments?

## **Appendix G: Interview schedules for educators**

### **Introduction**

My name is Makate Lerata Jan (920422 5270 080) working as an educator in Department of Education Free State in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. I am currently enrolled for a Master in Education with the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus. The topic of my study is capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The purpose of this study is to capacitate educators on identified skills related challenges in the implementation of effective inclusive education in mainstream schools.

### **Confidentiality**

This interview will be transcribed and where audio-recording was used, tapes will be destroyed after data has been analysed. Confidentiality will be assured to participants and that after the completion of this research all information given will be destroyed. The purpose of this research will be outlined to the participants and the participants are not forced to participate in this study but I will be very pleased if they all be part of the study. Participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any given time and that has no negative consequences on their part. The teaching and learning will never be compromised during the data collection in your school.

### **Ground rules**

Before we begin with the interviews, there will be some ground rules to be set to the participants for the good flow of the interviews and all of us will have to observe them.

- Only one person speaks at a time
- Give each other a chance to voice out his/her ideas
- Confidentiality will be assured, and should not be repeated outside of this meeting
- There is no wrong or right response as long as it is relevant to this study

**The researcher will engage educators in the discussion by asking the following questions:**

- 1 What do you understand by the term inclusive education?
- 2 According to your understanding, what are the main roles of an educator in inclusive education settings?
- 3 What attitudes should an educator possess in a diverse classroom to ensure that all learners experience quality education?
- 4 What knowledge should an educator possess in order to be an effective inclusive education classroom practitioner?
- 5 What teaching challenges do you encounter on a daily basis when teaching diverse learners?
- 6 How do you plan/ prepare your lesson in an inclusive education?
- 7 How do you prepare formal assessments for diverse learners?
- 8 What teaching strategies are you currently using in teaching diverse learners?
- 9 What teaching equipment are you currently using to accommodate diverse learners?
- 10 What teaching strategies teaching strategies should be adopted to accommodate diverse learners in a regular classroom?
- 11 How can educators be empowered to effectively handle inclusive education settings?

## **Appendix H: Interview schedule for SGB members**

### **Introduction**

My name is Makate Lerata Jan (920422 5270 080) working as an educator in Department of Education Free State in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. I am currently enrolled for a Master in Education with the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus. The topic of my study is capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The purpose of this study is to capacitate educators on identified skills related challenges in the implementation of effective inclusive education in mainstream schools.

### **Confidentiality**

This interview will be transcribed and where audio-recording was used, tapes will be destroyed after data has been analysed. Confidentiality will be assured to participants and that after the completion of this research all information given will be destroyed. The purpose of this research will be outlined to the participants and the participants are not forced to participate in this study but I will be very pleased if they all be part of the study. Participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any given time and that has no negative consequences on their part. The teaching and learning will never be compromised during the data collection in your school.

### **Ground rules**

Before we begin with the interviews, there will be some ground rules to be set to the participants for the good flow of the interviews and all of us will have to observe them.

- Only one person speaks at a time
- Give each other a chance to voice out his/her ideas
- Confidentiality will be assured, and should not be repeated outside of this meeting
- There is no wrong or right response as long as it is relevant to this study

**The researcher will engage SGB members in the discussion by asking the following questions:**

- 1 What do you understand by inclusive education?
- 2 Based on the schools performance, what challenges have you identified in the implementation of the inclusive education?
- 3 What skills are lacking in educators which are necessary for effective teaching in inclusive educations schools?
- 4 What strategies would you recommend to the school for the success of inclusive education?
- 5 How can parents assist educators to be more effective in handling learners with diverse education needs?

## **Appendix I: Interview schedule for District officials**

### **Introduction**

My name is Makate Lerata Jan (920422 5270 080) working as an educator in Department of Education Free State in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. I am currently enrolled for a Master in Education with the Central University of Technology, Welkom campus. The topic of my study is capacitation of educators to handle skills related challenges of inclusive education learning environment in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. The purpose of this study is to capacitate educators on identified skills related challenges in the implementation of effective inclusive education in mainstream schools.

### **Confidentiality**

This interview will be transcribed and where audio-recording was used, tapes will be destroyed after data has been analysed. Confidentiality will be assured to participants and that after the completion of this research all information given will be destroyed. The purpose of this research will be outlined to the participants and the participants are not forced to participate in this study but I will be very pleased if they all be part of the study. Participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any given time and that has no negative consequences on their part. The teaching and learning will never be compromised during the data collection in your school.

### **Ground rules**

Before we begin with the interviews, there will be some ground rules to be set to the participants for the good flow of the interviews and all of us will have to observe them.

- Only one person speaks at a time
- Give each other a chance to voice out his/her ideas

- Confidentiality will be assured, and should not be repeated outside of this meeting
- There is no wrong or right response as long as it is relevant to this study

**The researcher will engage district officials in the discussion by asking the following questions:**

- 1 What do you understand about inclusive education?
- 2 What attitude do educators need possess in a diverse classroom to ensure that all learners get quality education?
- 3 What knowledge components and skills are necessary for an effective inclusive educator?
- 4 What teaching challenges have you identified to mainstream educators during school visits in teaching diverse learners?
- 5 How do educators must plan/ prepare your lesson in an inclusive education?
- 6 How do educators must prepare formal assessments for diverse learners?
- 7 What teaching strategies are currently used by educators in teaching diverse learners?
- 8 What teaching equipment educators need to have in place to accommodate diverse learners?



## Appendix J: Editorial letter

Marielle Tappan Simmetrie & Kegel Street Meyerspark, Pretoria

Tel 072 474 1158

Email [mteditorialinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mteditorialinfo@gmail.com)

Date of Edit: 11 April 2025

Edit: Makate Lerata Jan

### CAPACITATION OF EDUCATORS TO HANDLE SKILLS-RELATED CHALLENGES OF AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT

To whom it may concern,

I, Marielle Tappan, trading under the name MT Editorial, hereby confirm that I am a language editor.

I have extensive experience in the field of language and publishing and received my Bachelor of Information Science in Publishing from the University of Pretoria. I am also a registered member of the Southern African Freelancers' Association.

I hereby declare that the editing done for any client is done with the utmost diligence and the full appreciation of the English language and all of its intricacies, as was done for edited sections of this document. My involvement was restricted to the main body of text's language use, spelling, consistency and completeness, alongside general formatting of the document's layout. I did not restructure any content that would influence the academic outcome in any way. I cannot take responsibility for any changes made by the client once the paper was returned after the above- mentioned 'Date of Edit'.

If there are any other queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. Kindest Regards,

Marielle Tappan Owner

MT Editorial (BIS)

Publishing SAF03058, SAFREA

*Marielle Tappan*