

Facilitating educational access for children with learning disabilities: The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa

BY

Jane Thandi Mampane

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

In Public Policy and Administration

At the

Department of Political Studies at the

University of Cape Town

Supervisor: Associate Professor Vinothan Naidoo

February 2022

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Plagiarism declaration

I, Jane Thandi Mampane, declare that this research paper is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been cited accordingly using the Harvard referencing technique.

J.T.M

Jane Thandi Mampane

13/02/2022

Date

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank God for blessing me with life, health and wisdom, as well as protecting and giving me strength to survive each day as it comes. It is by His grace that I eventually completed this degree.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Assoc. Prof Vino Naidoo, for being so patient and supportive throughout this journey. My writing and thinking have improved under his supervision and without him this dissertation would not have been a success.

Mostly, I would like to thank my mother, Maria Mampane, and my little brother, Masego Mampane, for their constant support and efforts in making sure that I was always comfortable enough at home to be able to work on my research. Mama, thank you for your prayers. To my grandmother and aunt, Helen and Maureen Mampane, thank you for always being ready to respond to my call for help. Koko, you raised me to be the strong and prayerful woman I am today; I will forever be grateful.

Lastly, I acknowledge the following people who inspire me to push beyond limits in academia: Profs Maxi Schoeman, Abdi Samatar, Christopher Isike, and Siphamandla Zondi. I appreciate you all.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

CAPS	National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
D-CAPS	Curriculum differentiation
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBSTs	District-Based Support Teams
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early childhood development
EELC	Equal Education Law Centre
EFA	Education for All
EWP6	Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System
ISPs	Individualised support plans
LSEN	Learner with special educational needs
NGOs	Non- governmental organisations
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PEDs	Provincial Education Departments
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
SASA	South African Schools Act (1996)
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support policy (2014)
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

Children with disabilities have long experienced barriers to equal education due to discrimination. When the United Nations declared education a fundamental human right for every child in 1948, UNESCO-led conferences began to endorse campaigns worldwide that encouraged governments to reform their segregated education systems and promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in formal and mainstream schools.

Following the demise of apartheid in 1994, the newly elected democratic government declared education a fundamental human right of all South Africans. The Department of Education adopted an inclusive education approach that intended to dismantle the segregated education system that historically discriminated against children with disabilities. The department introduced the Education White Paper 6 in 2001 to establish an inclusive system that would accommodate children with diverse learning needs in ordinary classrooms. However, children with disabilities are still subjected to exclusion from ordinary schools, while thousands more are out of school. This is especially true for children with learning disabilities because they are considered 'stupid' and uneducable.

This study sought to examine the extent to which the implementation of policy on inclusive education, namely Education White Paper 6, has facilitated access to mainstream schooling for children with learning disabilities. The study was based on collecting data from a sample of full-service public and independent schools as well as special schools in Gauteng.

The study found that the implementation of inclusive education can claim certain achievements such as the adoption of alternative learning programmes in schools to

accommodate diverse learners, the development of good inter-relations between pupils with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers in schools, and the establishment of well-functioning and supportive District- Based Support Teams in some school districts.

However, some factors hinder the successful inclusion of children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools, which include a lack of teachers and government officials sufficiently trained in special and inclusive education, as well as large class sizes due to schools not having enough classrooms. Negative attitudes and cultural denialism towards children with learning disabilities as well as financial constraints were also found to be factors that prevent these children from attending school like their non-disabled peers. Other factors that continue to impede access to equal education for children with disabilities are misdiagnosis and incorrect placement in special schools when they are actually candidates for ordinary schools, as well as the lack of sufficient national information campaigns to educate the public about inclusive education.

The study found that although there have been efforts to implement inclusive education in ordinary schools and admit children with learning disabilities, progress remains slow due to several school-level and cultural barriers.

Table of contents

Plagiarism declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of abbreviations and acronyms	iii
Abstract	iv
1.1. Introduction and identification of the research theme	1
1.2. Problem statement	3
1.3. Aim of the study	5
1.4. Research question and objectives	5
1.5. Theoretical framework underpinning inclusive education	6
1.6. Brief overview of research approach and methodology	7
1.6.1. Data collection and sampling	7
1.7. Limitations of the study	8
1.8. Ethical considerations	8
1.9. Chapter outline	8
1.10. Conclusion	14
Chapter two: Reviewing the literature on inclusive education	11
2.1. Introduction	11
2.2. Describing and discussing the history of disability	12
2.3. Defining inclusive education	15
2.4. The rise of inclusive education on the global agenda	17
2.5. Mainstream, special and full-service schools: The most suitable for educating children with disabilities?	20
2.5.1. Mainstream schools	20
2.5.2. Special schools	21
2.5.3. Full-service schools	23
2.6. Theoretical framework underpinning inclusive education	26
2.6.1. Ambiguity in the policy (policy implementation challenges)	26
2.6.2. School-level barriers to inclusion	28
2.6.3. Cultural-level barriers to inclusion	29
2.7. Conclusion	30
Chapter three: Historical and policy overview of Inclusive education in South Africa	31
3.1. Introduction	31
3.2. The schooling system in South Africa: A historical overview	32

3.3. The rise of a democratic education system and the introduction of the inclusive education approach in South Africa	33
3.4. The right of a child to basic education: A policy overview.....	37
3.5. Policies that endorse inclusive education: A policy overview	39
3.5.1. The international context.....	39
3.5.2. The South African context	42
3.5.2.1. Education White Paper 6 (2001)	44
3.6. Conclusion.....	50
Chapter four: Research design and methodology	51
4.1. Introduction.....	51
4.2. Sample selection	51
4.3. Data collection.....	53
4.3.1. Interviews	53
4.3.2. Written documents	54
4.4. Data analysis.....	55
4.4.1 Transcribing interviews.....	55
4.4.2. Deductive and thematic analysis	55
4.5. Assessing the quality of the research.....	55
4.5.1. Triangulation	56
4.5.2. Member- checking.....	56
4.6. Conclusion.....	57
Chapter five: Findings and analysis	58
5.1. Introduction.....	58
5.2. Discussion of the findings	58
5.2.1. Understanding inclusive education.....	58
5.2.2. Adopting an inclusive education policy in schools	60
5.2.3. Achievements of inclusive education	62
a) Curriculum.....	62
b) Supportive inter-personal relations between children with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers.....	64
c) Supportive District-Based Support Teams.....	65
5.2.4. Factors that can impede the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools.....	67
5.2.4.1. Ambiguity in the policy (policy implementation challenges)	67
a) Lack of sufficiently trained teachers.....	67
5.2.4.2. School-level barriers to inclusion.....	70

a) Lack of resources	70
5.2.4.3. Cultural-level barriers to inclusion	72
a) Social stigma	72
b) Cultural denialism and poverty	75
c) Lack of public awareness about disability and inclusive education	77
5.2.4.4. Misdiagnosis	79
5.3. Conclusion	81
Chapter six: Conclusions and recommendations	83
6.1. Introduction	83
6.2. Conclusions: A summary	83
6.3. To what extent has the policy on inclusive education facilitated equal access for children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools?	86
6.4. Recommendation for future research	87
Bibliography	90
Appendix A: Ethical clearance letter	100
Appendix B: Interview schedule for full-service schools	101
Appendix C: Interview schedule for special schools	103

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1. Introduction and identification of the research theme

People with disabilities have long experienced barriers to accessing equal education due to discrimination. Therefore, they constitute a large proportion of the uneducated community (United Nations, 2016). It is even worse for children with learning disabilities because they are generally considered “stupid or mentally retarded”, and uneducable. This study will focus on the challenges faced by children with learning disabilities in mainstream South African schools.¹

Learning disability is a broad term used to refer to difficulties in learning basic academic skills such as reading, language or calculating numbers (Bornman and Rose, 2017: 169). It is a category that contains many specific disabilities (such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)) that make learning difficult by affecting children’s ability to either interpret what they see, hear, and feel, or to link information. Children with learning disabilities may also have trouble paying attention and getting along with peers (Human Rights Watch, 2015: II). However, learning disabilities are not a result of visual, hearing, or physical impairment; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages (Bornman and Rose, 2017: 169).

In 1948, the United Nations (UN) declared education a fundamental human right for all children, regardless of race, gender, language, socioeconomic status, and disabilities, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Signatory countries agreed to provide free and compulsory basic education to all children (Kurth et al, 2018: 473). This was followed by the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education, hosted

¹ The study will use the terms “ordinary” schools and “mainstream” schools interchangeably. This is a type of education system that was traditionally designed to educate learners without any special learning needs.

by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, which reaffirmed equal access to education for all children. Subsequent UNESCO conferences led to the formation of the Education for All (EFA) global movement launched in Thailand in 1990 and adopted by the Dakar Framework at the World Education Forum in Senegal in 2000. The EFA movement aimed to ensure that all children, youth and adults across the world, including those living with disabilities, receive equal, free primary and secondary education by 2015.

The inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools was later endorsed at UNESCO's World Conference on Special Education: Access and Quality in Salamanca (Spain), in 1994, where countries were encouraged to reform historically segregated schools to respond to the diversity of learning needs in local communities (Mittler, 2005: 4–5), and provide equal access to children with special needs in mainstream schools.

The result of this conference was a resolution known as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, which called upon the international community to promote the inclusive education approach and ensure that ordinary schools accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, and social differences (UNESCO, 1999: 5–6). The Statement supported inclusive education practices as the most effective way of fighting discrimination, providing effective education to the majority of children, and achieving the right to equal access for all children across the world (Botts and Owusu, 2013: 136).

According to the literature, these conferences were very influential in encouraging governments, including that of South Africa, to adopt inclusive practices in their education systems, which led to the introduction of inclusive education as an international phenomenon. Although other previously marginalised groups like girl-

children and children from racial minorities were also targeted in this initiative, the inclusive education programme mainly focused on the population excluded from ordinary schools based on their disabilities (Hove, 2014: 1903).

Following the demise of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, the newly elected democratic government, under the leadership of former President Nelson Mandela, declared education a fundamental human right of all South Africans. This change was formally entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) (particularly Section 29) (Engelbrecht, 2006: 254). The country simultaneously joined the EFA global movement and began to follow the international trend of implementing inclusive education in the country.

As a result, the Department of Education (DoE) (renamed the Department of Basic Education (DBE)) committed itself to implementing policies to dismantle a segregated education system that historically discriminated against children with disabilities. Consequently, policies such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996), the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (EWP6) (2001), among many others, were implemented to establish an integrated and inclusive education system that would grant equal access to all children, regardless of their differences.

1.2. Problem statement

In the South African context, the adoption of inclusive education in 1994 indicated the government's commitment to creating a system that would equally accommodate every learner despite their differences. Here lies a significant problem. On the one side, there is the adoption of inclusive education inspired by the democratic transition

which advocates for equal access to education for previously marginalised groups, including children with disabilities.

On the other side, the inclusive policy objective of including children with disabilities in mainstream schools stands in stark contrast to reality because many children with disabilities still struggle to access inclusive programmes (Hehir et al, 2016: 2). While there are still approximately 600 000 children with disabilities who are out of school (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 106), most of those who do attend school are enrolled in special schools, either out of habit that stems from the historical misconception that children with disabilities belong in special schools, or because ordinary schools rejected them because they do not “fit” into the conventional system (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 2). This is especially true for children with severe disabilities because their school attendance depends on the severity of their conditions. This is also true for children with learning disabilities because they are considered “mentally retarded or stupid”, and thus uneducable. Therefore, it is evident that inclusive education remains a challenge in South Africa 27 years after the publication of the Salamanca Statement and the establishment of a democratic society (Engelbrecht, 2006: 254).

Furthermore, there are written sources about the challenges of implementing inclusive education in South Africa, but most of those sources either refer to disability in a broad sense or to physical disabilities that can be seen. There also seems to be a paucity of studies written on the implementation of inclusive education to promote the access and inclusion of children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools in South Africa. Also, the South African government circulars mostly refer to the physically disabled group when they account for their progress in enrolling children with disabilities in ordinary schools. This is a lacuna that this study intends to fill. This study may inform

policymakers on how to better manage the implementation of an inclusive policy to include more children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools.

1.3. Aim of the study

This study sought to examine the extent to which the implementation of policy on inclusive education, namely Education White Paper 6, has facilitated access to mainstream schooling for children with learning disabilities. In this context, access relates to three aspects: (i) modifying the curriculum to accommodate diverse learning needs in classrooms; (ii) the ability of the environment to facilitate positive learning and development for all learners (this includes creating a culture of acceptance towards diversity among staff members and learners in a school); and (iii) the physical environment of the school in terms of making equal engagement possible in the education process (this includes arranging the classrooms to promote inclusion among learners) (Lazarus et al, 1999: 47).

According to the literature, EWP6 is considered the most influential policy on inclusive education because it outlines how the education system should be transformed to accommodate diverse learning needs and the measures that should be put in place (DoE, 2001:11). Therefore, this study will mainly focus on EWP6 but without neglecting other policies that played a significant role in implementing inclusive education in South Africa.

1.4. Research question and objectives

Against this background, the main research question is: *To what extent has the policy on inclusive education facilitated access for children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools?*

In relation to the main research question, the following research objectives are pursued:

- determining how schools have interpreted the inclusive education policy and the measures they have put in place to implement inclusive education;
- determining the challenges and achievements schools have experienced with implementing inclusive education; and
- determining what factors hinder and promote the inclusion of children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools.

1.5. Theoretical framework underpinning inclusive education

Scholars such as Donohue and Bornman (2014) have attempted to identify factors that have hindered the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, with specific reference to EWP6. They observed that the following three significant factors hinder the implementation of inclusive education:

- ambiguity in the policy (policy implementation challenges);
- school-level barriers to inclusion; and
- cultural-level barriers to inclusion.

Under the first factor, Donohue and Bornman (2014) drew from a top-down perspective of implementation which suggested that clear policy mandates and direction from policymakers, together with enforcements of such mandates, will be the most effective means of realising inclusive policy in South Africa. The second factor relates to the barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education at the school level. These include negative attitudes among the teaching staff, teachers who lack the skills to teach learners with disabilities, and lack of appropriate resources. The third factor relates to external cultural and financial barriers such as cultural

misconceptions about disabilities and the financial challenges of sending children with disabilities to school. These factors will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

This study will draw on Donohue and Bornman's (2014) observations as a guide to investigating the challenges of implementing inclusive education at the school level. This will help in gauging the progress made since the publication of the Salamanca Statement and the introduction of EWP6 in South Africa. The information will also help to answer the research question.

1.6. Brief overview of research approach and methodology

Since the study entails an inquiry into the implementation and delivery of inclusive education, a qualitative research approach is used to design and guide the study.

1.6.1. Data collection and sampling

The study collected data through one-on-one informant interviews. Six interviews were conducted via Zoom and Google Meet, each session lasting between one hour and one hour, 30 minutes. The sample includes four full-service² and special schools in Gauteng province, South Africa. The sample will be limited to one province (Gauteng) because the researcher resides in Gauteng and is familiar with the province's educational set-up. In addition, focusing on one province allowed the researcher to draw a sufficiently in-depth and informative impression about the challenges of facilitating access to education for children with learning disabilities.

² According to the DBE, full-service schools are mainstream schools that cater to learners with different learning needs in an equitable manner (DBE, 2010). In other words, these schools have enrolled children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers.

1.7. Limitations of the study

The sampling was restricted to primary schools in Gauteng province and the results are in no way intended to be generalised to the larger population of independent and public schools in South Africa.

1.8. Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained permission and ethical clearance from the Department of Political Studies to commence with the intended interviews. The respondents signed consent forms before the interviews, and they were made aware of the purpose of the research, that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time. Their real identities will be concealed, and pseudonyms will be used (Phahlamohlaka, 2017: 26).

1.9. Chapter outline

The study is structured as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction

This chapter introduced inclusive education as the research topic and outlines the problem statement, the aim of the study, and the main research question and objectives. It also briefly discussed the theoretical framework that will guide the data collection process, the methodological approach, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations.

Chapter two: Reviewing the literature on inclusive education

This chapter will discuss the history of disability and the rise of inclusive education as a global agenda. This will be followed by the scholarly debates about the most appropriate schooling system for educating children with disabilities and the theoretical

framework that will be used to investigate the challenges of implementing inclusive education at the school level in South Africa.

Chapter three: Historical and policy overview of inclusive education in South Africa

This chapter will provide a historical overview on the rise of a democratic education system and the introduction of inclusive education in South Africa. The chapter will also provide an analysis of the policies that endorsed the right to basic education and inclusive education in the international and South African context, particularly the implementation of Education White Paper 6.

Chapter four: Research design and methodology

This chapter will present and describe the study's research design, the sample selection techniques and the methods used to collect and analyse data. It will also describe the strategies employed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter five: Research findings and discussion

This chapter will provide an analysis of the interview data, including a discussion on the achievements and challenges experienced in implementing inclusive education in ordinary schools.

Chapter six: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter will provide summaries of the findings and conclusions of the study and attempt to answer the research question. Recommendations for future research will also be highlighted here.

1.10. Conclusion

This chapter has indicated that the global need for inclusive education was realised after 1948 when the UN declared education a fundamental human right for all children, regardless of their differences. This goal then transpired into national programmes in signatory countries after the 1994 UNESCO conference, with South Africa being one of them. However, the chapter highlighted that, to date, the inclusive education policy (outlined in EWP6) remains a challenge in South Africa.

The chapter also indicated that although it is common for children with disabilities to be rejected by ordinary schools because of their condition, children with learning disabilities are the most disadvantaged segment of the population in accessing equal education. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent to which the implementation of inclusive education policy has facilitated equal access to mainstream schooling for children with learning disabilities.

Chapter two: Reviewing the literature on inclusive education

2.1. Introduction

As stated in chapter one, the central aim of this study is to examine the extent to which policy on inclusive education has facilitated access for children with learning disabilities in South Africa. This study takes as its point of departure the assumption that inclusive education cannot be fully understood without first analysing the history of disability. This is because one of the major objectives of inclusive education is the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Secondly, inclusive education cannot be fully understood without looking at the international discussions surrounding the concept. The introduction of inclusive education generated immense public commentary and one common question was: how can ordinary schools accommodate learners with diverse learning needs? Part of these discussions is the debates on which schooling system (between ordinary, special and full-service schools) is the most appropriate for the educational and social attainment of children with disabilities in the 21st century. These debates will be highlighted in this chapter.

Despite the global campaigns on inclusive education and the introduction of related policies, the literature indicates that the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, particularly those with learning disabilities, remains a challenge in many countries, including South Africa. This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that will be used to investigate the challenges of implementing inclusive education at the school level in South Africa, and the extent to which it has facilitated access to education for children with learning disabilities.

Therefore, following the introduction, this chapter will briefly define and discuss the history of disability. The third section will discuss the definition of inclusive education. This will be followed by a discussion on the development of inclusive education as a global phenomenon. The fifth section will provide scholarly debates about the most effective schooling system for educating children with disabilities. This will be followed by a discussion on the theoretical framework that will be used to guide the investigation to help answer the research question. The last section will provide concluding remarks.

2.2. Describing and discussing the history of disability

People with disabilities have been misunderstood for generations in most parts of the world, and as a result, public discussions about disability have been neglected. For years, they were seen as sub-human and, in some communities, considered a “curse” or an “ancestral punishment” for the sins of their parents or forefathers. Other people believed that having a disabled person in the family was a test of faith, and if the person does not physically heal, they are regarded as having lack of faith in God. This was known as the moral/ religious model of disability (Retief and Letšosa, 2018: 5). It was, thus, common for people with disabilities to be isolated from their communities around the world and often placed in jail and other facilities where they were subjected to ill-treatment and abuse in the name of “rehabilitation” (Lohman, 2011: 17) while their families were also excluded from society because of the shame they incurred (Retief and Letšosa, 2018: 5- 6).

In the education sector, special education placement was considered the most effective way of providing education and special services to children with disabilities. Thus, they were generally segregated from ordinary classes and placed in special schools. This was due to the historical perception that children with disabilities belong

in segregated living and educational facilities, with specialised caregivers to attend to their needs (Lohman, 2011: 17, 18–19).

It was not until the 1800s, when science became more prevalent in the diagnosis of disabilities, that disabilities were finally attributed to medical conditions (the medical model of disability) (although some cultures still associate disability with spiritual curses and a test of faith) (Lohman, 2011: 17). In this sense, disability was viewed as a medical condition associated with mental and physical impairments (e.g. paralysis), activity limitations (e.g. difficulties in walking), and possibly restrictions to participation in certain areas of life (e.g. discrimination in the employment field) (Bickenbach et al, 2011: 4–5). The medical model viewed disability as a problem that resided in the individual who needed to be fixed by being subjected to medical treatments, and often failed to consider the external conditions that may have contributed to the person's disability (Retief and Letšosa, 2018: 7–8).

As a result, state health and mental institutions (also known as asylums) slowly began to mushroom across the world to provide a safer environment for people with disabilities. Many people in the UK during mid-1800s, for instance, believed that mentally ill people will be cured after receiving treatment from these asylums. Thus, more people with mental illness were moved away from their homes or jails to these institutions. However, Jarrett (2012: 29) pointed out that a decreasing number of people ever left these asylums while more arrived, and these institutions simply became a place of permanent confinement. During this period, in Louisiana, for instance, state asylums became overcrowded by new patients with different disabilities and were forced to be held in city prisons, warehouses or the Charity hospital. The influx of mentally ill and other disabled patients resulted in these institutions being understaffed and underfunded, creating difficult and dangerous living conditions for

both patients and workers. This became a common problem all over the US and some other parts of the world (Jarrett, 2012: 430, 433).

The medical perception began to radically change from the 1960s when organisations supporting the equal rights of people with disabilities started movements across the world (such as the British disability movement) to stand against the exclusion and discrimination they were subjected to in societies (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 108). These organisations demanded that disability no longer be viewed as an impairment caused by a medical condition; but as a situation caused by societal barriers (the social model of disability) (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 4). Therefore, a meaningful solution must be directed at societal change rather than individual rehabilitation (Retief and Letšosa, 2018: 9). The social model played a huge role in supporting the implementation of inclusive education globally.

From the 1970s, the world started experiencing a gradual awakening of six more models that are still referred to in the current era: the affirmation, human rights, cultural, charity, economic, and limits models of disability. Although this section will not discuss all the models due to limited scope, they still form part of the discussion about people with disabilities in general.

The human rights model emphasizes the human rights and dignity of people with disabilities and calls on states to ensure (through policies and institutions) that people with disabilities enjoy civil, political, cultural, social and economic rights like anyone else (Retief and Letšosa, 2018: 17). In South Africa, the human rights of people with disabilities are protected by the Bill of Rights and other policies that ensure that their rights are protected in schools, workplaces, and society (this will be discussed further in chapter three).

The charity model calls for special and humane treatment for people with disabilities in all areas, such as in school, the workplace or the community. This model views people with disabilities as victims of their impairment, and able-bodied people should always offer them special treatment and services because “they are different” (Retief and Letšosa, 2018: 19). However, Seale (2006) argued that this negates the abilities of people with disabilities by depicting them as helpless and dependent on others to succeed (Ibid, 2006: 10). This goes against the principle of inclusive education and human rights policies that calls for equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

2.3. Defining inclusive education

The literature indicated that inclusive education is a complex concept that does not have a single definition because it means different things to different people in different contexts (Inclusion International, 2009: 20).

For example, the DoE (2001) defined inclusive education and training as:

Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that they all need support; enabling education structures and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners; acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to gender, ethnicity, age, language and disability; changing attitudes, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners; and maximising the participation of all learners and minimising barriers to learning (2001: 6–7)

UNESCO (2005) defined inclusive education as:

...process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusions within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2005).

The World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank (2011) described inclusive education as:

...the understanding that the education of all children including those with disabilities should be under the responsibility of the education ministers or their equivalent with common rule and procedures. In this model, education may take place in a range of settings such as special schools and centres, special classes, special classes in integrated schools or regular classes in mainstream schools, following the model of the least restrictive environment (WHO and World Bank, 2011).

The third definition posits that all children should have access to education, regardless of the type of educational setting (it can be ordinary, special or full-service schools), and the government is responsible for ensuring that every child is in school. The second definition maintains that ordinary schools are responsible for educating all children at the appropriate school-going age, regardless of their differences, and this should be facilitated by modifying the curriculum, institutional structures and teaching strategies to accommodate children with diverse learning needs (Murungi, 2015: 3168). This view is supported by the Salamanca Statement, which proclaims that “those with special education needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within children-centred pedagogies capable of meeting these needs” (UNESCO, 1994: viii).

However, the first definition is somewhat ambiguous. It mentions the need to modify the educational structures to meet the needs of all learners, despite their differences, but it does not specify which learning environment should be modified or which schooling system is responsible for educating diverse learners. It could also be that the ambiguity in the definition is intended to allow different educational entities in South Africa to interpret it in a way that suits their goals and unique conditions.

Despite the multiple definitions and varying contexts, the underlying principle of inclusive education is the inclusion of children with disabilities in the same classes as their non-disabled peers, and where necessary, support should be provided for

learners to overcome their different learning challenges (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 108).

2.4. The rise of inclusive education on the global agenda

Inclusive education evolved as a movement that sought to challenge exclusionary policies and practices in the education sector across the world. Dyson and Forlin (1999: 25) claimed that inclusive education has its origins in rich developed countries that had already adopted mainstream and special education systems. They pointed out that in the 1960s, for instance, several Scandinavian countries began to shift their focus of providing education to learners with disabilities from separate special schooling to integrated learning settings³.

By the 1970s, countries such as the US and France followed the trend and started to prioritise the integration of learners with special needs into mainstream schools (Kurth et al, 2018: 472). However, this was a mere integration, rather than full inclusion⁴ of these learners. In some parts of the US, for example, just like several other countries, the department of education viewed this model of having separate special classes in mainstream schools as ideal for educating children with learning challenges (Lohman, 2011: 1). The system of integration can be regarded as one that perpetuates segregationist practices in schools. Though it is often argued that integration and inclusion are not synonymous, it was clear that some of the international players viewed the integration of learners with disabilities into mainstream schools as an essential part of inclusive education (Murungi, 2015: 3170).

³ Integration generally means admitting children to ordinary schools but teaching them in special classes that are often separate from the rest of the school (Lohman, 2011: 1).

⁴ Inclusion means accommodating learners with diverse needs in the same classroom (Mittler, 2005: 7).

However, the model of separate classes in these high-income countries (especially the US), often containing children with learning difficulties or behaviour challenges, began to be criticised for containing a disproportionate number of learners from racial minority groups, like Black and Hispanic, compared to white learners. These classes were also accused of teaching lower-quality content to the learners compared to what was taught in ordinary classes, as well as denying them the opportunity for inclusion in ordinary classes. According to Mittler (2005: 12), what was seen as a progressive integration was now criticised for providing a restrictive environment for children whose needs could be met in ordinary and inclusive classrooms.

These critics fuelled the existing advocacy campaigns for equal access to ordinary schools for children with disabilities in some parts of the US by the 1970s. Other international organisations slowly began to follow suit when they realised the need (and the human right) to place children with disabilities in an environment that promotes social and educational inclusion, equality, and full participation, rather than one that restricts those values (Schuelka, 2018: 3).

Following UNESCO's declaration of education as a fundamental right for *all children* in 1948; the EFA global movement was first launched in Thailand in 1990 and adopted by the Dakar Framework at the World Education Forum in Senegal in 2000. The movement aimed to ensure that all children, youth and adults across the world, including those living with disabilities, would receive equal and free primary and secondary education by 2015 (Mittler, 2005: 4).

The international discussions about including children with disabilities in ordinary schools gained momentum and were later endorsed at UNESCO's World Conference on Special Education in Salamanca in 1994, where approximately 92 governments, including South Africa, and 25 international organisations were encouraged to promote

an inclusive system to end segregation and exclusion in schools (UNESCO, 1999: 5). The Salamanca Statement and the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education were adopted at the conference which called upon the international community to end discrimination and promote equal access to general education for children with disabilities and other previously disadvantaged groups (Botts and Owusu, 2013: 136). Consequently, inclusive education was officially adopted as a global programme and countries like South Africa began adopting it into their national agendas. However, the literature indicates that many countries adopted inclusive education differently because they had different goals and backgrounds. For instance, Dyson and Forlin (1999: 32–33) argued that developed countries generally had well-resourced ordinary schools that effectively enrolled many pupils. Therefore, the inclusive policy for them primarily focused on including learners with disabilities in ordinary schools, whereas in less developed countries, there was generally a significant number of children from a broad range of marginalised groups who had no access to education. Children with disabilities may have been a small proportion of that percentage. Given that such countries may have also had limited funds to establish and maintain special schools alongside ordinary schools, inclusive schools may have been the only viable means of extending education to the broader marginalised population.

In the South African context, it can be argued that during the early years after the dawn of democracy, the policy on inclusion was primarily focused on expanding equal access to the broader range of previously marginalised groups. Part of this initiative was the government's commitment to equally allocating state resources to former "black" schools to improve the quality of education in black communities and eliminate the racial and class inequalities in the education system (Dyson and Forlin, 1999: 33). This raises a question: did the focus on redressing the past injustices inflicted on

previously marginalised groups overshadow the single objective of including children with disabilities in ordinary schools? This point will be revisited in the next chapter.

2.5. Mainstream, special and full-service schools: The most suitable for educating children with disabilities?

As described in the introduction, the discussions on inclusive education include debates on which schooling system is the most appropriate for the educational and social attainment of children with disabilities. In hindsight, enrolling a child with special needs in a special school may seem like an obvious choice. However, in the era of the EFA movement and inclusive education, there are alternatives. The following subsections will discuss the three types of schooling systems.

2.5.1. Mainstream schools

Mainstream (or ordinary) schools are traditionally designed formal schools that cater to children, youth, and adults who are considered normal or average, and do not necessarily have special resources to cater for special needs. For instance, such schools do not use a special curriculum designed for children with learning challenges or have user-friendly bathrooms for the physically disabled. Therefore, Agbenyega and Deku (2011: 10) argued that mainstream schools often reinforce discrimination and inequity because they are unsuitable for meeting diverse learning needs and thus, are not appropriate for educating learners with special needs.

Moreover, Agbenyega (2007) conducted a study in selected mainstream schools in Ghana and found that several teachers who felt unprepared and fearful to work with learners with disabilities in ordinary classes displayed frustration and negative attitudes toward inclusive education because they believe that it could lead to underperformance and lower the academic standard of the whole class/school (Ibid:

44). Thus, most of the teachers prefer that children with learning disabilities be transferred to either separate classes or special schools where they will receive specialised learning activities and care.

2.5.2. Special schools

Children with disabilities were historically educated in segregated special schools which were traditionally designed to cater for children with special needs. According to Wang (2009: 154), teachers find this system beneficial for children with special learning needs because they can apply a curriculum formulated specifically for their needs. Although special education might be regarded as marginalising people labelled as “different”, Kassah et al (2018) support Wang’s (2009) claim that there are some proponents who consider segregated special settings as more suitable to meeting the needs of learners with disabilities (Ibid: 344).

Hove (2014: 1906) supported the previous argument that special schooling is the most suitable to meeting the needs of learners with disabilities. He added that special schooling should not be viewed as a system that promotes segregation but rather as one that best provides for learners with special needs. He further argued that placing these children in ordinary classes is a betrayal to their futures because the conventional curriculum does not teach technical skills like beautician skills, gardening, or other skills that these learners might be good at. Instead, it is fully theory-based and only benefits academically strong pupils.

To meet the needs of children with disabilities who are unable to attend ordinary schools in India, the 1990s saw the development of alternative schooling systems (apart from special schools), such as the Non-Formal Educational Learning and Vocational Training Programmes (recently reframed as the Education Guarantee

Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education). These programmes consist of trained volunteers who provide home-based learning and skills training to children. Children are allowed to engage in these programmes until they reach 18 years of age and would receive accredited certificates upon completion that they could use to seek employment or further their studies (Singal, 2006: 354).

Furthermore, the DBE in South Africa has acknowledged the high drop-out rate of learners with disabilities, and although there are various reasons why this happens, paramount among these is that children fail to meet the minimum requirements to pass because their needs are not being met in the classroom. The department also acknowledged that not all learners are academically strong; some are more gifted with handy-work skills. As a result, the General Education Certificate⁵ has been introduced to be awarded to learners who wish to leave formal schooling after grade 9 to pursue other opportunities of their interest (Ngqakamba, 2019).

However, the DoE pointed out the challenges of special schools. One major challenge is that most learners with disabilities have to travel far to reach the school or stay in a school hostel to avoid transportation costs because there are a limited number of special schools per district, especially in low-resourced provinces like the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. The department found that staying in a hostel has a negative impact because the learners become isolated from their families and communities, and it has been reported that the living conditions in many hostels are sub-standard and there are also cases of abuse (DoE, 2001: 24).

Another possible disadvantage of segregated learning settings is the isolation of learners and teachers, which may result in their knowledge and capabilities becoming

⁵ This certificate is currently being field-tested before it can be officially implemented.

limited because of the watered-down content taught in those settings. Likewise, Epperson (2012) argued that vocational skills and technical training programmes only prepare people for a limited job market, like arts and crafts, plumbing and so forth (Ibid: 1867). Unfortunately, it is common for people with disabilities to be directed to vocational training centres after they leave formal education because these centres are generally known to provide more technical subjects (Inclusion International, 2009: 70), compared to conventional colleges or universities, which are more theory-based.

2.5.3. Full-service schools

Inclusive or full-service schools are mainstream schools that are well-resourced and more capable of catering to the full range of learning needs than most mainstream schools (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 109). In other words, full-service schools can teach children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers, and generally use a curriculum that enables equal participation and learning in the same classrooms.

According to Naicker (1999), an inclusive system should ideally look the way Giangreco (1997) has characterised it, with its characteristics implemented daily. The characteristics are summarised as follows:

- All students are welcomed in ordinary schools in their local areas and are educated with peers in the same age groups,
- Students are educated in classes where the numbers of those with and without disabilities are proportional to the local population,
- Students with varying characteristics and abilities participate in shared educational experiences while pursuing individually appropriate learning outcomes with the necessary support,

- Educational experiences should seek to establish a balance between academic and social achievements for each learner (Naicker, 1999: 20).

The policy document titled Department of Basic Education: Guidelines for Full Service/ Inclusive Schools (DoE, 2010) provides a full list of how full-service schools should look AND function in South Africa.

Schuelka (2018) is one of the scholars who supports the claim that full-service schools are the most appropriate system for educating children with disabilities. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education also claims that sharing the same recreational and learning space for children with and without disabilities has proven to have a positive impact on their mental and social wellbeing, as well as increasing the likelihood that children with disabilities will enrol in higher education and have better employment opportunities (Schuelka, 2018: 3).

Furthermore, a large body of research indicates that children with learning disabilities within inclusive educational settings are more likely to develop stronger numeracy and literacy skills; improved memory and concentration skills; and improved ability to work in big groups. These stem from the confidence they gain when they feel accepted by other “normal” children. Therefore, learners with disabilities who have been in full-service schools are more likely to progress to post-secondary education, live independently, and find employment (and successfully work alongside non-disabled employees) than learners who have not been included (Hehir et al, 2016: 2).

Research also indicated that non-disabled pupils who are educated in inclusive classrooms alongside peers with disabilities hold less prejudicial views and are more accepting of people who are different from themselves (Hehir et al, 2016: 2). During a research study that Swart et al (2014) conducted, they came across a class that had

a “buddy system” where learners took turns helping their disabled peers with schoolwork and other things. For example, they helped with carrying the bags of disabled learners. Such support systems help by encouraging non-disabled learners to accept their disabled peers with their differences. However, the outcome cannot be generalised because there is occasional ill-treatment towards children with disabilities by other learners or in other classes (Swart et al, 2014: 97).

Moreover, Srivastava et al (2013: 12) emphasise that the mere physical presence of learners with disabilities in schools or classrooms does not automatically lead to positive academic or social outcomes. Bornman and Rose (2017) have stated that there need to be two components of participation: being present and engaging in class activities, and one cannot happen without the other (Ibid: 22). Therefore, one of the most effective ways of ensuring that all children participate in classroom activities is if teachers adopt a whole-school approach that involves using multiple strategies to promote equal learning by getting all learners involved in the lessons. This way, individuals with learning challenges will not feel left out. Therefore, the pedagogies shift from a transmission of knowledge to a more inclusive approach that actively involves learners in producing knowledge (Agbenyega and Deku, 2011: 8).

This section discussed the scholarly debates about which school is the most appropriate for the educational attainment of children with disabilities. It may be beneficial to point out that the quality of education of each school depends on the level of financial support it gets from the government, parents or donors. For instance, a quintile 4 or 5 full-service school (mostly fee-paying-schools located in wealthy areas) may be better at accommodating learners with special needs alongside average learners and providing quality education because they can afford additional qualified teaching staff in special and inclusive education, and acquire necessary learning

materials and support professionals (including psychologists). This is because parents can afford to pay school and other fees in addition to the subsidy the school gets per learner (Ogbonnaya and Awuah, 2019: 106).

2.6. Theoretical framework underpinning inclusive education

2.6.1. Ambiguity in the policy (policy implementation challenges)

Donohue and Bornman (2014) argued that the first major factor that hindered the implementation of inclusive education stems from the ambiguities in EWP6. It is not clear whether these ambiguities are intentional, but they believed it has led to the inaction of the stakeholders involved. First, they referred to the observation made by Matland's (1995) ambiguity-conflict model that when goals are not explicitly stated, there is bound to be uncertainty and misunderstanding about the purpose of the policy. They referred to the six broad strategies listed in the White Paper for establishing an inclusive education system in the country. According to them, the strategies lack specificity and detail and may give little guidance on how to effectively implement the policy in practice (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 7–8).

Secondly, Donohue and Bornman (2014) pointed out that researchers like Stofile (2008) found that education officials in South Africa reported they were unsure about the goals of inclusive education, while some officials were unclear about how ordinary and special schools would be converted into schools more suitable for inclusive education. Scholars like Wildeman and Nomdo (2007) also found that other officials were confused about the parameters of barriers to learning and how these barriers would be addressed in inclusive schools (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 8).

Thirdly, they referred to the ambiguity in financial means and departmental responsibilities attached to the policy. Stofile (2008) found that the education officials in the Eastern Cape province complained that the national Department of Education was not committed to implementing an inclusive policy and had tried to relegate their responsibilities to other entities. She also found that some school officials reported having received no funding from the department to help implement some of the strategies of EWP6 (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 8).

Fourthly, Donohue and Bornman (2014) emphasised that some schools currently lack teachers who have the capacity and knowledge to teach diverse learners in a single classroom. Although the White Paper states that a new curriculum will be required to focus on including the full range of diverse learning needs, it does not explain in detail how teachers are expected to tailor the curriculum to suit each learning need. Furthermore, the department had envisioned that many teachers would be taught new teaching methods for teaching children with disabilities through comprehensive teacher training programmes. However, Stofile (2008) found that teachers reported that these brief training programmes (generally lasting a week or two) were helpful but insufficient. The programmes only focused on developing a few skills, whereas teachers often need far more comprehensive training programmes (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 9).

Therefore, Donohue and Bornman (2014: 6–7) drew from a top-down perspective of implementation and argued that reducing the ambiguity in the policy (clearly stating the goals and means to achieve them) and strengthening the enforcement of the policy would promote the inclusion and participation of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

2.6.2. School-level barriers to inclusion

The second major explanation includes two factors: school-level and cultural-level barriers to inclusion. First, Campbell et al (2003) found that although teachers often report that they agree with the idea of inclusion, they actually believe that the needs of learners with disabilities are best met in separate classrooms. It became clear that successful inclusion depends on the attitudes and actions of the school personnel because they have the ability to either challenge or support inclusion. Bornman and Rose (2010) added that a general lack of support and resources, as well as negative attitudes toward disability, all contribute to hindering the progress towards inclusion (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 4).

Second, before the social model of disability was widely accepted in the contemporary era, teachers in South Africa were trained to teach either general or special education (by-products of the medical model). As a result, the system produced many teachers who did not have the necessary skills to teach learners with disabilities. Although contemporary teacher education now trains teachers on how to accommodate diverse learners in a single classroom, reorienting old teachers (over 50 years) to new ways of teaching learners remains a challenge to inclusive education (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 4).

Third, it is argued that teachers' attitudes towards inclusion might become more positive if, along with training, they received the appropriate service support for their learners with disabilities. According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001), appropriate support and resources are necessary for successful inclusive education because the needs of learners with disabilities go beyond the basic services available in typical mainstream classes. However, Nel et al (2011) found that some school principals in Gauteng (the most resourced province in South Africa) reported that most learners

with disabilities receive little to no specialised support (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 5).

2.6.3. Cultural-level barriers to inclusion

Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities were identified as another factor that hinders the implementation of inclusive education. It was argued that the meaningful participation of people with disabilities in schools and the community is affected by the cultural attitudes and values of the community members, and if a community disregards them, then discriminatory practices will prevail (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 5).

Donohue and Bornman pointed out that those negative cultural attitudes can also impact the parents' decision to take their disabled children to school. For example, Groce (2004) found that in several developing countries, many children with disabilities do not attend school because it is mistakenly believed that "they cannot learn" or will be disruptive to other learners. Hosegood (2007) further indicated that in South Africa, traditional beliefs attribute disability to family sin, witchcraft or angered ancestors. This sometimes leads to parents of children with disabilities being humiliated and blamed for their child's disability (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 5–6).

Furthermore, some parents also consider the financial implications of sending their disabled children to school to be too great. Since many schools charge tuition fees, it may not be economically feasible for parents to send their child with a disability to school, particularly if they have other children of school-going age whose prospects of bringing in an income are much better than the disabled child's (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 5). Thus, their disabled child may end up being kept at home.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that many children with learning and other disabilities worldwide were historically sent to special schools because it was believed that was where they belonged. However, the introduction of inclusive education has granted caregivers the opportunity to explore alternative schooling systems that would be appropriate for their children, rather than being restricted to special education, as was the norm before the 1960s.

Despite the efforts to promote inclusive schooling, many children with disabilities are still not included in mainstream schools because of their conditions, while thousands more are out of school. Donohue and Bornman (2014) argued that the three significant factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools are ambiguity in EWP6, and barriers to inclusion at the school and cultural level.

The next chapter will discuss the policies and legislation that supported the implementation of inclusive education both on the international stage and in South Africa, with a particular focus on EWP6.

Chapter three: Historical and policy overview of Inclusive education in South Africa

3.1. Introduction

The institutionalisation of discriminatory practices has led to extreme disparities in the education system in South Africa. Until 1994, the only role player education production was the white authoritarian government (Engelbrecht, 2006: 254). After the dawn of democracy in 1994, the newly elected democratic government introduced policies to endorse the right to basic education and equal access for all, including people with disabilities (Dalton et al, 2012: 1).

To fully understand the adoption of inclusive education in South Africa, this chapter will look at the historical overview of the schooling system until recent years, to understand the journey towards the adoption of the inclusive policy. The overview will also include the analysis of the international and South African policies that supported inclusive education in the country. This background information may help readers understand how the history of the schooling system in South Africa might have impacted the implementation of the inclusive education policy, and ultimately answer the research question.

After the introduction, this chapter will discuss the history of the schooling system in South Africa, followed by a discussion on the rise of a democratic education system and the introduction of the inclusive education approach in South Africa. This will be followed by a policy overview on the right to basic education in the international and South African context. The fifth section will discuss the policies that endorse inclusive education in the international and South African context, particularly the implementation of EWP6. The last section will provide concluding remarks.

3.2. The schooling system in South Africa: A historical overview

When the South African state was formed in 1910 under British colonial rule, it racialised the public education system, and its first concern was the welfare of the English-speaking whites. Successive governments used the education system to anglicise Afrikaners. When the National Party government took over in 1948, more and more schools were opened for blacks, but the apartheid education laws cemented the racialised and segregated schooling system with the introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Asmal and James, 2001: 197). The Education Commission headed by Dr W.W.M Eisselen defended the Act by arguing that Bantu Education embraced the same idea as European or Western education- to civilise its (black) population and provide a curriculum that suited their needs (Thobejane, 2013: 2).

However, Jonathan Hyslop (1988) claimed that the Act was designed to restrain the increasing urbanisation of black people (Asmal and James, 2001: 197). Thobejane (2013: 2) also claimed that the Act limited black people from accessing an education system that would allow them to equally compete with their white counterparts. Thus, the Bantu Education system was designed to maintain the subordinate economic status of a black person.

The education system was further divided into 19 different departments for each ethnic and racial group- whites, Indians, coloureds (mixed races) and blacks (further divided along ethnic lines such as Zulus, Pedis, Sothos and so forth) (Thobejane, 2013: 2). The fiscal allocation in the education sector was based on race, which resulted in wide-scale disparities. While white schools enjoyed immense state funding, resources and well-trained teaching staff, black schools received little to zero support. It was even worse for schools for learners with special needs because they generally received less state funding than ordinary schools in general, although special schools in white

communities were better resourced than those in black communities (Mpu and Adu, 2021: 225).

According to the DBE, it was estimated that only 20 per cent of learners with disabilities had access to education (mostly through special schools) during the apartheid era and a small percentage were black learners (including coloureds and Indians), while the majority were whites. Also, special schools were disproportionately distributed across the country. This resulted in a disparity between the number of children with disabilities and the availability of special schools in each district (EELC: 2016: 1).

When apartheid rule ended in 1994, it was evident that the segregationist system was characterised by racial and gender disparities and was also fragmented by policies that separated “ordinary” children from children categorised as having special needs (Engelbrecht, 2006: 256). Khumalo and Hodgson (2017) called it a double apartheid system that needed to be resolved: a racial apartheid and interconnected disability apartheid (Ibid: 106). Therefore, the democratic government was faced with the immense task of restructuring the education system to be efficient and equitable to everyone.

3.3. The rise of a democratic education system and the introduction of the inclusive education approach in South Africa

When the African National Congress won the first democratic elections in April 1994 and became the first black government, the Nelson Mandela administration implemented changes that significantly reformed the education and training system. After extensive negotiations between the leaders of black liberation movements and the National Party, the new Constitution of South Africa (adopted in 1996) was formulated and paved the way to reforming the education system. This was followed

by the introduction of other national policies that aimed to redress the past injustices inflicted on previously marginalised groups (OECD, 2008: 37–38). For example, the DoE was committed to improving former black schools to compete equally with “Model- C” white schools by equalising the distribution of funds between the schools. This principle was encompassed in The National Norms and Standards for School Funding aimed at improving the equity of funding by ranking each school into five quintiles (as discussed in chapter two) (Van Dyk and White, 2019: S1).

One of the first major reforms that the Mandela administration undertook was the disestablishment of the 19 education departments in 1995. This apartheid system was replaced by a single, non-racial national department that would work in a co-governance arrangement with nine new provincial departments representing each province in the country (Asmal and James, 2001: 186–187). Over time, the provincial departments, together with the national department, took up the responsibility of ensuring that the objectives of the new Constitution and education reform were effectively implemented (Manganyi, 2001: 25).

Soon after the new administration took office, South Africa adopted the Salamanca Statement. This meant that, as part of redressing the injustices experienced by previously marginalised groups, there was a specific focus on addressing the exclusion of children with disabilities from ordinary schools. In October 1996, the Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services to investigate the existing barriers to learning, all aspects of special needs, and the support services needed to accommodate special needs in the education and training system in South Africa (Stofile, 2008: 60–61).

A joint report was presented to the Ministry of Education in November 1997, and the final report titled Report of National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and National Committee on Education Support (1997) was published by the DoE in February 1998 for public comment and advice. The central findings included, among others, (i) specialised education and support have predominantly been provided to a small percentage of learners with disabilities within special schools and classes, (ii) where provided, it was on a racial basis- the best resources were reserved for whites, (iii) most learners with disabilities had either fallen outside of the system or been mainstreamed by default, and (iv) the curriculum and education system as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of learners, resulting in massive drop-outs and failures (DoE, 2001: 5).

The report also recommended that the DoE develop an inclusive education and training system that would include children who had been historically excluded from schools, and emphasised accommodating diverse learning needs (Lazarus et al, 1999: 46). Such a system should also allow children with disabilities to learn alongside their non-disabled peers and equally participate in the education process so that they could reach their full potential as equal members of society (DoE, 2001: 5).

Consequently, the DoE formulated and introduced a national Curriculum 2005 in 1997 as a counter-strategy to the apartheid curriculum. Curriculum 2005 was described as learner-based and inclusive, compared to the previous curriculum, which was authoritarian, teacher-based, and discriminatory. According to Naicker (2006: 4), it was assumed that this new curriculum would reform apartheid pedagogies to include mixed teaching and learning methods that would accommodate learners with diverse learning needs and challenges. However, this failed to materialise due to the absence

of a theoretical framework; thus, most knowledge productions (including textbooks) and teacher-training programmes remained unchanged.

The DoE then revised Curriculum 2005 and introduced a new curriculum later that year known as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) which was viewed as a national curriculum that would effectively facilitate the transformation of the education system. This new curriculum was concerned with two principles: (i) each learner's needs should be accommodated through flexible teaching and learning strategies, and assessment methods (Naicker, 2000: 3); and (ii) the system should establish conditions that would enable and encourage all learners to achieve essential learning outcomes. This meant that the curriculum developers had to establish outcomes that related to the learners' needs and different methods that would assist each learner to achieve these outcomes at their own pace and in their own style of learning (Naicker, 1999: 21). Essentially, OBE differed from Curriculum 2005 in that it focused on changing the knowledge production and delivery in classes.

The OBE curriculum was thought to be exactly what was needed to expand access to all children because the apartheid education system had generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of learners, leaving most of them out of school. Naicker (1999) regarded it as a useful vehicle for implementing inclusive education in South Africa (Naicker, 1999: 21).

Following the recommendations in the joint report, alongside the widespread international campaigns to mainstream children with disabilities, the department released a Consultative Paper in August 1999 (Consultative Paper No.1 on Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System) for public commentary. The feedback was collated and informed the formulation of EWP6, which was then introduced in 2001.

3.4. The right of a child to basic education: A policy overview

According to Murungi (2015: 3161), the term “basic education” has its origins in UNESCO’s World Declaration on Education for ALL (1990), where it was reaffirmed that every child across the world has the right to basic education. However, the meaning of the term is still debated among officials and scholars. On the one side, the term is believed to mean primary education, which is often understood to refer to the first few years of formal schooling, where the focus is on imparting basic learning skills, including literacy and numeracy.

On the other side, echoing the description by the World Declaration on Education for All, it refers to the actual learning of basic life skills rather than exclusively on enrolment in school and completion of certification requirements. These include basic literacy and numeracy skills, non-academic skills relating to one’s health, personal care, and social skills such as oral expression and problem-solving (Murungi, 2015: 3161). In the South African context, the term “primary school education” encompasses both meanings.

Before this section discusses children’s right to basic education in the South African context, it is important to mention that this right was also embedded in several international declarations before South Africa became a democratic country. Among the most influential international declarations and conventions were the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015), Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) (Dyson and Forlin, 1999: 28–29), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ratified by South Africa in November 2007.

It was not until the Normalisation movement (described in chapter two) that children's right to education was extended to those with disabilities. From the 1960s, the UN promoted greater awareness of equal educational rights for people with disabilities through declarations such as *the* Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971); and the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975). These international declarations have also contributed to the growing international movement of including children with disabilities in ordinary classes (Dyson and Forlin, 1999: 29–30). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) also referred to the responsibility of states to ensure that this group is not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability (EELC, 2016: 5). The UN's fourth SDG also called for equitable, quality and free primary and secondary schooling to be made available to all. It was argued that achieving inclusive education reaffirms the belief that education is a powerful vehicle for sustainable development (UNDP, 2015) because children with special needs will be encouraged to be independent and acquire the same skills as their peers, while average learners learn to accept them. This will reduce stigmatisation and discrimination and pave the way for a united nation in future (Kusimo and Chidozie, 2019: 2- 3).

In South Africa, one of the objectives of the Mandela administration was to establish a society based on democratic values such as human rights (Bill of Rights), social justice and equality. These values were embedded in the Constitution (1996) (Stofile, 2008: 60). According to Section 29 (1)(a) of the Constitution, everyone has the right to basic education and to access educational institutions, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (Dalton et al, 2012: 1). Chapter 2 (2) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 further states that the state

has the obligation to fulfil all the children's rights as set out in the Bill of Rights, treat every child fairly and equitably, and protect them from unfair discrimination on any grounds, including disability (2005: 20).

According to Khumalo and Hodgson (2017), the fact that the right to basic education is not based on progressive realisation means that the government has is obliged to immediately make this right available to everyone without any constraint or barriers. This requires the government to provide equal access to education for children with disabilities on the same basis as other children, and must do so immediately (Ibid: 113).

Khumalo and Hodgson (2017) further argued that if the government fails to provide immediate and equal access to education for children with disabilities on the same basis as other children, it then amounts to discrimination based on disability which violates Section 9 of the Constitution (Ibid: 113). Section 9 requires individuals to be treated equally under the law and that the state may not unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone on any grounds including disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or language (EELC, 2016: 2). The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000 also supports Section 9 in this regard.

3.5. Policies that endorse inclusive education: A policy overview

3.5.1. The international context

Although the focus of this chapter is to provide a policy overview of South Africa, it is important to briefly discuss the significant role that the UNCRC and the Salamanca Statement played in paving the way for inclusive education in the international community. Most of the literature regards these two international policies as the most influential in advocating for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream

schools. It was not until the Salamanca Statement was adopted in 1994 that there was an urgency to expand equal access to education for children with disabilities (Kurth et al, 2018: 473).

All 92 governments and 25 international organisations that were present at the 1994 conference, agreed to the following obligation (UNESCO, 1994: viii):

We, the delegates of the World Conference on Special Needs Education represent...hereby affirm our commitment to Education For All, recognising the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special education needs within the regular education system, and further hereby endorse the Framework of Action on Special Needs Education, that governments and organisations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations.

The Salamanca Statement and the Framework of Action on Special Needs Education were born out of this conference, which advocated for the development of inclusive schools that would accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic, or other conditions (UNESCO, 1999: 5). However, the Statement also notes that sending children with special needs to special schools or classes permanently should be an exception, only to be recommended in cases where it is demonstrated that regular education is incapable of meeting the education or social needs of the child or their inclusion impedes the needs of other children (UNESCO, 1994: 12).

This commitment was supported by the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 4 March 1994 regarding the standard rules on the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities, which reads as follows (UN, 1994: 15):

Education in mainstream schools presupposes the provision of an interpreter and other appropriate support services. Adequate accessibility and support services, designed to meet the needs of persons with different disabilities, should be provided.

This commitment was solidified in 2006 when the UNCRPD was published and echoed many other international declarations (as described earlier), stating that people with disabilities should receive appropriate support within the general education system, to fully develop their potential and be able to participate effectively in society. (This principle supports the Salamanca Statement and Section 9 of the South African Constitution.) By June 2018, 117 countries had ratified the Convention, including South Africa (Kurth et al, 2018: 473).

Khumalo and Hodgson (2017: 113) pointed out that the Convention further emphasised children with disabilities being equipped with the ability to read, write, communicate and develop other life and social development skills- this may require learning Braille or sign language for some children. Therefore, professionals and teaching staff who work at all levels of education must be trained comprehensively, not only in skills such as Braille or sign language but also in disability awareness and educational techniques to support children with disabilities.

Article 24(2)(d) and (e) of the Convention addressed the aspects of alternative schooling systems for children with disabilities that would be appropriate for their educational and social attainment- either in the ordinary, special or inclusive schools (as discussed in chapter two). Essentially, the article established a basis of choice between these systems. However, the principle of choice is often assumed to be about the parents' (or legal guardians) choice of religious education for their children and between private and public schools. According to Murungi (2015), a critical question to ask in this regard is if this freedom of choice can be extended to the choice between ordinary and special schools for children with disabilities. She further argued that if the parents are awarded that right to choose which schooling system their children use, then signatory countries of the UNCRPD must take measures to provide well-equipped

schools to facilitate this exercise of choice (Ibid: 3183–84). Although the costs of ensuring that all schools are equipped to accommodate pupils with different needs would be enormous, the countries would be living up to the full purpose of Article 24 with regard to equal access and the principle of choice.

However, Wang (2009) emphasises that although there are policies that recognise the parents' right of choice in their children's placement; it is still necessary for assessments to be done by professional support staff, like educational psychologists and qualified teachers, to make proper recommendations about the best schooling system for children with learning difficulties. If the assessment results indicate that a child has learning challenges and may struggle to cope in ordinary schools, mainstream education is unadvisable because it may do more harm than good. Thus, Wang (2009) believes parents should not disrupt the assessment phase, despite their desires to place their children in mainstream schools (Ibid: 159) because they want to raise their children as normal as possible or positively influence societal views on disability by proving that these children are human beings like everyone else and should be treated equally (Swart et al, 2014: 89- 90).

3.5.2. The South African context

For Engelbrecht (2006), inclusive education in South Africa is framed within a human rights discourse and based on the ideals of freedom, social justice and the right to equal participation as depicted by the Constitution. This is based on the idea that every child should be allowed to interact equally with others in an education system that equally distributes learning opportunities to all without any discrimination (Geldenhuys and Wevers, 2013: 1).

The DBE published many official documents and policies to support the adoption of inclusive education and the establishment of inclusive schools in South Africa. Some of the significant policies are as follows:

- **The South African Schools Act (1996):** Section 5 of the Act states that ordinary schools must admit all learners without unfairly discriminating in any way. This means that as early as 1996, even before the publication of EWP6, the education department had a responsibility to make sure that all children, including those with disabilities, would be included and provided for in ordinary schools (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 116).
- **SIAS policy (2014):** The policy of Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support was introduced in 2014 to provide a standardised guide and procedures for schools and parents on early detection and assessment of learners who may have learning challenges, and identifying the level of support that may be required for them to progress academically. The policy also contains clear guidelines on the admission of learners with barriers to learning. Furthermore, the policy also encourages all children, irrespective of disability, to be admitted to their neighbourhood schools where the screening and identification process will occur (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 122).
- **Curriculum differentiation** or D-CAPS (as it is commonly known) outlined in the policy document titled CAPS Grade R– 5 for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disability (2018), is currently still in the draft phase is available to the public for comments on the DBE website. It is regarded as an alternative learning programme to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) that is generally used in ordinary schools. The D-CAPS has been developed to respond more effectively to the diverse needs of learners in the same

classroom and to particularly accommodate learners who are not academically strong but whose strengths lie more in technical areas. It involves processes of modifying teaching methods, assessments and the curriculum content to suit the unique learning needs, style and pace of different learners (DBE, 2012: 2, 4).

3.5.2.1. Education White Paper 6 (2001)

Khumalo and Hodgson (2017) believed that EWP6 was a policy framework implemented to remedy the segregated education system inherited from the apartheid government (Ibid: 117). This White Paper had risen out of the need to change the provision of education and training to be responsive and accommodate a diverse range of learning needs. It also acknowledged the need for revised educational structures and learning methodologies that would meet the needs of all learners in an inclusive setting because it recognised that each learner had a unique learning challenge and style (DoE, 2001: 12, 16).

Therefore, EWP6 provided a framework for how to establish an inclusive education and training system in South Africa within a 20-year period, which will be broken down into three phases: short-term (2001–2003), medium-term (2004–2008), and long-term (2009–2021) plans. The framework included six broad strategies for how the inclusive system would be established, which are as follows:

1. The improvement of existing special schools and their phased conversion to resource centres

The first strategy outlined in EWP6 was the improvement of existing special schools in South Africa and converting some into resource centres that would provide professional support to neighbourhood schools (ordinary and full-service schools), as

part of the District-Based Support Teams (DBSTs) (DoE, 2001: 7). Accordingly, the number of special schools increased from 295 in 2002 to approximately 501 (447 public, 54 independent) in 2018 (PMG, 2019). By 2015, 80 special schools were converted into resource centres across the country, 28 of which were in Gauteng (DBE, 2015: 25). The number of converted resource centres increased to 108 during the 2016–2017 period (PMG, 2019).

The resource centres aimed to provide high-level support to learners with severe disabilities that mainstream schools cannot provide yet (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 118), as well as support services to neighbouring schools so they can reasonably accommodate learners with disabilities. These support services include providing the necessary resources, such as Braille machines, and appropriate teaching methods to accommodate diverse learners in the same classroom (DoE, 2001: 21).

In 2005, the DoE published a policy document known as the Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: Special Schools as Resource Centres, which provided guidelines on how special schools should operate as resource centres (DoE, 2005). Despite this document, many public special schools are reportedly experiencing serious challenges, such as inadequate teaching and support staff, staff who are untrained in special education, inappropriate infrastructure, poor living conditions and abuse of children in hostels, and inadequate funding from the government. The lack of reasonable accommodation for children with disabilities in schools is seen as a violation of Section 10 of the Constitution (right to dignity of children) (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 113, 118). This raises a question: if many special schools are faced with challenges that often negatively impact the quality of education, how can they effectively offer support services to full-service and mainstream schools? This point will be discussed further in chapter six.

2. The mobilisation of children and youth with disabilities who are out of school

The second strategy aimed to ensure that approximately 380 000 children and youth with disabilities of school-going age, who were not in school when the policy was introduced in 2001, got admitted into school (DoE, 2001: 22). However, Khumalo and Hodgson (2017: 106) claimed that the number doubled in 2017 to approximately 600 000 children with disabilities, which is an ongoing crisis with unequal access and provision of education for children with disabilities⁶.

3. The designation and conversion of primary schools to full-service schools

This strategy aimed to designate and convert approximately 500 mainstream primary schools to full-service schools by 2021, beginning with the 30 school districts that were part of the national district development programme. Similarly, adult basic and higher education were also targeted to designate and establish full-service institutions in those levels (DoE, 2001: 8). The intention of establishing full-service schools was to allow children with low and moderate support needs the opportunity to attend ordinary schools in their neighbourhoods. Apart from EWP6 outlining strategies for establishing full-service schools, the department later developed a policy document titled *Guidelines for Full-Service Schools/Inclusive Schools* in 2010 that provided guidelines on how these schools should ideally operate (Khumalo and Hodgson, 2017: 119).

By the end of 2018, provincial education departments (PEDs) had designated approximately 848 ordinary schools as full-service schools, which exceeded the DBE's target before 2021. There was an increase in the number of learners with disabilities admitted into mainstream schools from 2002 to 2018: the number increased from

⁶ The study acknowledges that there may be other socioeconomic reasons why children are not going to school, which will require more than the inclusive education policy to fix the social problem.

approximately 77 000 in 2002 to 121 461 in 2018 (PMG, 2019); 40 367 of whom were attending school in Gauteng. According to the report on White Paper 6 (DBE, 2015: 19), the enrolment of learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities was 16 329 in 2011 and increased to 19 704 in 2012; and those with severe intellectual disabilities numbered 6 762 in 2011 and 3 085 in 2012. The admission of children with severe intellectual disabilities witnessed a decrease in number, while that of those with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities witnessed an increase by 2012.

4. The introduction, orientation and training of teaching and professional staff in inclusive education

The fourth strategy aimed to orientate and introduce the management, governing bodies, and teaching and professional staff in mainstream schooling to the inclusion model. This included orientating teachers about early identification of disabilities and intervention in the Foundation Phase (DoE, 2001: 23).

It was evident that the international move towards inclusive education was accompanied by a shift from training in “special needs” as an area of specialisation to the idea that all teacher education programmes should include special needs training. The pre-service training that all teachers were supposed to undergo was outlined in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education (2007) and the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2011) which both emphasised the need for all teachers to understand how to implement inclusive education. However, given that the process of reviewing teacher qualifications, their implementation and delivery, and the throughput of graduates who end up practising in schools takes a long time, the current emphasis is on in-service training for inclusive education (Bridge, 2014: 9–10).

According to Mpu and Adu (2021: 230), the South African Co-operation Programme in Education (COPE) has funded various in-service teacher-training programmes in which a cascade model was used to introduce inclusive education practices in several provinces. The cascade model is when one or two representatives from each school attend the programmes and go back to relay the knowledge and skills they learnt to their colleagues. The Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities (2013) reported that, from 2008 to 2011, more than 39 515 educators and 7 148 officials received in-service training on the key implementation guidelines of inclusive education (2013: 7).

Khumalo and Hodgson (2017: 120) argued that the following are just a few of the important skills that teacher-training programmes must incorporate to equip teachers with the necessary skills to teach children with special needs:

- how to differentiate the curriculum for children with disabilities,
- understanding disability and how policies about education for children with disabilities work, and
- learning skills-based subjects to teach children with specific disabilities who severely struggle with theory-based learning activities, such as dressmaking and woodwork.

5. The launch of national advocacy and information programmes on inclusive education

This strategy aimed to launch nationwide advocacy and information campaigns to orientate and educate the public about the inclusive education model. The campaigns were intended to focus on outlining the roles, responsibilities and rights of all learning institutions, parents and communities with regard to adopting the inclusive model, as

well as highlighting the focal programmes and reporting on their progress (DoE, 2001: 8)

According to the 2002 DoE report on the implementation of inclusive education, the department has hosted several information sessions since 2001 in different districts to educate parents and communities about inclusive education and help them understand what their responsibilities are regarding supporting school teachers in putting inclusive education into practice (DoE, 2002: 14).

Tomlinson et al (2008) added that parents play a central role in schools because teachers have to coordinate with them and work as a team to effectively help children reach their full potential in terms of learning and development. That is, principals and teachers cannot be expected to address the barriers to learning on their own but parents and the broader communities should also assist, which starts with changing any existing negative attitudes and misconceptions about disability. Thus, communication and cooperation between parents, communities and the school are a very important component of inclusive education (Nel et al, 2011: 40).

6. The establishment of District-Based Support Teams

The last strategy aimed to establish DBSTs to provide coordinated professional support services to schools and teachers. DBSTs operate from the district level and are made up of officials from the provincial, district, regional, and national departments; special education experts and teachers; educational psychologists; curriculum specialists; technology experts; and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. (DoE, 2001: 8, 47). In the case of inclusive education, DBSTs are responsible for providing support to all teachers in mainstream and full-service schools to be able to identify and address

barriers that learners are subjected to (DoE, 2005: 19). For example, they assist with creating flexible teaching methods and learning assessments and providing learning support materials to accommodate diverse learning needs.

According to the DBE (2015: 43–44), about 80 districts across the country, with 15 in Gauteng, had functioning DBSTs by 2015.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter gave a historical overview of the education system in South Africa. The institutionalised discriminatory practices of the colonial and apartheid eras have evidently led to extreme disparities in the education sector in South Africa. One of the biggest impacts of apartheid education was the creation of a dual system (ordinary and special education components) which was characterised by social divisions and divisions between “ordinary” children and children with special needs. As a result, many children with disabilities were excluded from formal education.

The chapter also indicated that in South Africa, the move towards inclusive education was supported by several international declarations and has a firm foundation in the Constitution’s Bill of Rights, the SASA and EWP6. Despite the implementation of EWP6 and related policies, children with disabilities remain the most marginalised segment of the population in terms of accessing equal education. Therefore, the inclusion of children with disabilities in ordinary schools remains a challenge in South Africa. What went wrong? Chapter five will provide answers to this question. The next chapter will outline the methodological approach that will be used to guide the data collection process to ultimately answer the research question.

Chapter four: Research design and methodology

4.1. Introduction

This study took a qualitative research approach where one-on-one key informant interviews were used to obtain insights from respondents at the school level about the progress and challenges of implementing inclusive education. Written academic publications and policy documents were also analysed.

This chapter will present the research design that was used to guide the study. This will be followed by a discussion on the sample selection techniques used to select key participants. The third and fourth sections will discuss the methods used to collect and analyse data, followed by a description of the strategies employed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The last section will provide concluding remarks.

4.2. Sample selection

Sampling (respondents) allows the researcher to study a population based on only a selected portion of that population (Wagenaar and Babbie, 2004: 113). Nonprobability sampling techniques were used in this study because, unlike the probability techniques that allow results to be generalised to a larger population (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016: 96), nonprobability sampling is more suitable for qualitative studies that investigate social phenomena where findings cannot be generalised because of unique circumstances that occur at different periods.

This study used purposeful, convenience and maximum variation sampling to select key respondents for the interviews.

Purposeful sampling is generally used when the researcher wants to gain insights about issues of central importance to the topic (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016: 96–97). The sample includes four full-service schools in Gauteng that have adopted inclusive education. Due to the limited scope of this study, the researcher had to use the convenience sampling (available sample) technique to select only four schools- the first four schools that were contacted and agreed to the interview (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014: 151).

Representatives from both public and independent full-service schools in different districts in Gauteng were interviewed (maximum variation sampling) to explore any possible variations in data that may have arisen due to different geographical locations and financial aspects, rather than interviewing only one school district and risking being vulnerable to information bias. This technique will help to minimise the chance of credibility threats in the conclusions. The schools are as follows:

- School B (joint-interview): Public full-service school in Pretoria West (District 4, quintile 4, no-fee)
- School C: Public full-service school in south-west of Johannesburg (District 12, quintile 2, no-fee)
- School D: Independent full-service school in Boksburg (District 18, fee-paying)
- School E: Independent full-service school in the South of Johannesburg (District 18, fee-paying)

The researcher chose to interview the principals to provide valuable information that will help answer the research question because they manage the implementation of inclusive education in their schools and (sometimes) teach classes. This means they are also involved in the daily activities of the learners. Thus, they will be able to answer questions related to the implementation of inclusive education and its impact on

learners. However, two of the principals could not participate due to unforeseen circumstances. In these cases, the researcher was asked to interview other senior personnel- the founder and former principal in one school and two senior teachers in the other (as a joint interview).

Furthermore, two special schools (one public and one independent) were also interviewed as supplementary samples to provide additional insights into the challenges that schools in general face when they cater to children with learning disabilities. The schools were chosen because of their experience with teaching children with learning disabilities. Their insights may bring value to this topic and help readers better understand what can be done to enhance the implementation of inclusive education in the country. The schools are as follows:

- School A: Public special school in Pretoria East (District 4, no-fee)
- School F: Independent special school in the east of Johannesburg (District 9, fee-paying)

4.3. Data collection

4.3.1. Interviews

According to deMarrais (2003: 55), a research interview is “a process in which a researcher and participants engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study”. Interviews are necessary when researchers want to enter into other peoples' worlds and gain insights about their lived experiences, as well as to observe their behaviours, feelings, and thoughts, which are abstract things that cannot be observed through written documents (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016: 108, 115).

The researcher conducted five interviews and one joint interview via Zoom and Google Meet that were open-ended and flexible. This meant that each interview was guided by an interview schedule that was prepared in advance, but the questions were not fixed- the researcher did not stick to the exact wording or order of questions as they appeared on the interview schedule. This format allowed the researcher to ask probing questions and follow up on responses to new information that the respondents brought up.

Most of the interview questions were informed by the theoretical framework, while others were inspired by the six strategies of EWP6 to ensure that the researcher asked relevant questions that would contribute towards the aim of the study and research question. With the consent of the respondents, the interviews were audio-recorded.

4.3.2. Written documents

Written documents are the best sources for collecting data on a particular subject because many of them are easily accessible and contain information that would otherwise take a researcher an enormous amount of time and effort to gather.

For this study, data were extracted from sources such as academic journal articles and books, policy documents, government circulars and reports, and online articles. Academic journals were accessed through Google Scholar. The academic books were collected from the University of Cape Town's main and Special Collections library. Sources such as policy documents (including EWP6 and the Salamanca Statement, government circulars and evaluation reports) were accessed online from the DBE and other accredited organisational websites like un.org. Online articles were accessed from accredited online media platforms like news24.com.

4.4. Data analysis

The researcher used the following strategies to analyse data extracted from written documents and interviews:

4.4.1 Transcribing interviews

All recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to ensure the authenticity of the interviews.

4.4.2. Deductive and thematic analysis

The deductive analysis involved using Donohue and Bornman's (2014) article to guide the data collection process and the evidence found in the interviews was tested against their observations.

Relevant themes were chosen from the existing literature, the theoretical framework, and transcribed interview data to formulate the literature review chapters (chapter two and three) and the findings chapter (chapter five) (Maxwell, 2013: 107). For instance, the researcher went through all the interview data and formulated themes based on content that most likely fell under the same theme and aligned with the research question and the findings from the theoretical framework section.

4.5. Assessing the quality of the research

It is important to establish the trustworthiness of any qualitative study. Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the data obtained in the study is plausible, reliable and trustworthy. Establishing a study's credibility begins with establishing whether the results are believable from the respondents' perspective. In other words, is there a correlation between what the respondents said and the researcher's representation of them? This is because qualitative research aims to describe the phenomenon from

the respondents' perspective. In this view, the respondents are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results (Trochim et al, 2016: 72).

Therefore, triangulation and member-checking techniques were employed to ensure the trustworthiness of this research.

4.5.1. Triangulation

The researcher used the triangulation (or cross-checking of information) method to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings by comparing data received from different sources (interviews against written documents) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 306). According to Patton (2015: 662), comparing or cross-checking information helps identify any consistencies or variations in the data and makes the researcher aware of any possible threats of inaccurate information.

However, receiving different information from different participants, and/or information that differs from written sources, does not necessarily mean that either or both kinds of data are invalid, although that may be the case (Patton, 2015: 661); it may just be that the participants (and/or authors) come from different backgrounds. Therefore, it is wise for the researcher to note such variations and identify possible reasons for them.

4.5.2. Member- checking

The interview transcripts and interpretations (as noted in chapter five) were sent to the respondents to allow them to correct any factual errors or incorrect interpretations before the writing of the final report (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 314). This was done to ensure a true reflection of what was said (and meant) during the interviews.

Using the member-checking method is the most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting what was meant and said during interviews (Maxwell,

2013: 126), which can be regarded as a threat to the credibility of the research process and findings.

Moreover, the findings in this study can be trusted because the data were collected acceptably and ethically, and no respondent was harmed in any way during the interviews.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter described how the researcher used one-on-one interviews to obtain insights from respondents at the school level about the progress and challenges of implementing the inclusive education policy. The data gathered from both the interviews and written documents were analysed using deductive and thematic analysis. Verbatim accounts of the interviews, triangulation and member-checking methods were used to detect any possible threats to the credibility of the findings and trustworthiness of the study.

The next chapter will discuss the interview findings to answer the research question.

Chapter five: Findings and analysis

5.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an analysis of the information received from the respondents about the extent to which White Paper 6 has facilitated access to equal education for children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools. The section will first discuss how the respondents have described inclusive education and how their schools have adopted the inclusive policy. This will be followed by a discussion on the achievements and challenges experienced in implementing inclusive education at the school level. The last section will provide concluding remarks.

5.2. Discussion of the findings

Below is a short description of the respondents:

Respondent A:	A principal of a public special school
Referred to as “School B” (joint-interview:	Two senior teachers from a public full-service school
Respondent C:	A principal of a public full-service school
Respondent D:	A former principal and founder of an independent full-service school
Respondent E:	A principal of an independent full-service school
Respondent F:	A principal of an independent special school

5.2.1. Understanding inclusive education

It was essential to find out what the respondents from full-service schools understood about the concept of “inclusive education”, to get a sense of how their understanding of the concept informed how they have sought to adopt inclusive practices in their schools. That is why the researcher asked the question “what do you understand about inclusive education?” Their responses were as follows:

Respondent E (independent): “All learners have the right to access the national curriculum. The curriculum can be adapted or modified according to the individual learners’ needs. In this manner, all learners can learn and succeed.”

School B, respondent 1 (public): “...inclusive education includes everyone! It means that all learners will come to school and they will get the skills and knowledge.”

Respondent D (independent): “...for inclusive education the classes should be smaller so that the teacher can build a relationship with the child, so that she can feed towards that potential.”

It is clear from the responses that different people understand inclusive education differently, which has already been revealed by Inclusion International (2009), as noted in chapter two. For instance, respondent E confidently described inclusive education as a system that supports the right of all learners to access the national curriculum, which can be modified according to their individual learning needs. In this system, all learners can successfully learn from the same curriculum despite their different needs. In other words, she associated inclusive education with the right to equal access to general education for all learners, focusing on modifying the curriculum to suit diverse learning needs.

Respondent 1 from school B held a similar view to what respondent E said. According to her, inclusive education is where all learners are included in the same school and acquire equal skills and knowledge, despite their differences. Both these views supported how the DoE (2001) and UNESCO (2005) described inclusive education in chapter two- that it involves modifying the education structures to respond to the diversity of all learners. The content and methodologies should also be modified to meet all learners’ needs and maximise their participation in learning processes.

While the previous respondents described inclusive education from a human rights perspective, respondent D provided a different view that is more practically orientated (how inclusive education should ideally look). She stated that inclusive education requires smaller classes that would enable teachers to build individual relationships with learners, to help them reach their potential. In other words, she associated inclusive education with the practical classroom setting that should be arranged in a way that allows learners to receive equal and individual attention to reach their full potential according to their unique learning style and pace.

5.2.2. Adopting an inclusive education policy in schools

Once it was understood how most of the respondents from full-service schools described inclusive education, the researcher wanted to understand how they had adopted inclusive practices in their schools. The respondents expressed their views as follows:

Respondent C (public): "...we accommodate all learners regardless of any abilities or capabilities- we accept all learners who have challenges...we have different teachers and different programmes to deal and adjust to different challenges but still in the same institution."

Respondent E (independent): "...we develop ISP's for all our learners and constantly monitor their progress, adjusting our activities as needs be." She further stated that "we also aim at providing a good standard of education...many of our learners have proceeded to mainstream schools and have done well."

School B, respondent 1 (public): "we are regarded as a full-service school where we cater to all children in the classroom." Respondent 2 added: "...As a teacher, you need to adapt your content to suit all needs of the learners."

Respondent D (independent):

50% of our learners are normal and average IQ learners... the other 30% of the children are extremely autistic spectrum and then we have a number of children who are cognitively impaired... We also have children with learning disabilities like dyspraxia... So, we have children with so many different challenges.

It is clear from the responses above from full-service schools that they have adopted an inclusive policy to cater to a diverse learner population. Respondents C, E and 2 (from school B) indicated that they have modified their content, learning activities and programmes to accommodate diverse learning needs to ensure that no one feels left out. Respondent D explained that her school has admitted a diverse learner population, from learners with an average IQ to those with autism spectrum disorder. They are thus living up to the purpose of being full-service institutions that accommodate diverse learners.

The researcher also noticed the consistency between how some respondents described inclusive education and how they have adopted inclusive practices in their schools. For instance, respondent E described inclusive education as a system that supports the right of all learners to access the national curriculum, which can be modified according to their individual learning needs. She confirmed that her school developed individualised support plans (ISPs) for each learner and adjusted learning activities (as needed) to suit their needs and ensure that they successfully proceed to mainstream schools.

Similarly, respondent 1 from school B described inclusive education as a system that allows all learners to acquire skills and knowledge from the same school, despite their differences. She also confirmed that they have adopted an inclusive policy by catering to all learners in the same classroom.

5.2.3. Achievements of inclusive education

Much of the literature on inclusive education has tended to focus on the challenges of implementing inclusive education practices. However, respondents in this study mentioned several achievements resulting from their efforts to implement inclusive education, which is important to highlight. Some of these achievements could also be regarded as factors that could enhance the implementation of inclusive education at the school level.

a) Curriculum

EWP6 acknowledged the need to revise educational structures and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners in an inclusive setting, and this was part of the policy's six strategies (DoE, 2001: 12, 16). It was thus vital that the researcher ask the respondents of full-service schools how they accommodate and teach diverse learners in the same classroom and what type of curriculum they use to get a sense of how diverse learners are accommodated in the same classroom.

Developing a diverse learning programme to accommodate diverse needs was the first achievement presented by the respondents. It could also be a factor that promotes the implementation of inclusive education because it provides a tool for diverse learners to succeed equally in school, despite their differences in learning styles.

The responses to the questions above were as follows:

Respondent C (public):

We have different outline programmes and we do not deal with children the same. We have what we call the “pulling system”- this is a programme designed to pull out the learner and take him to another class where the LSE⁷ will support

⁷ LSE stands for Learner-Support Educator. These are teachers with specialised skills to help children with special needs– particularly those who are struggling academically– to learn basic contents and re-integrate back into the mainstream class.

that particular learner...if a learner is struggling to grasp basic skills of mathematics at that level or grade, then that programme should be designed in such a way to help the learner grasp the basics.

He confirmed that his school uses the D-CAPS curriculum to accommodate learners with severe learning disabilities.

Respondent E (independent) confirmed that her school uses the same CAPS curriculum used in ordinary schools, as well as multi-level teaching methods and ISP's to cater to individual needs.

Both respondents of school B (public) also confirmed that their school uses the CAPS curriculum. However, they also use specialised learning programmes to accommodate learners who are struggling academically and adapted different teaching and learning methods to suit diverse learning needs and styles. For example, respondent 2 noted that "...if there is a child who learns by singing, then you have to incorporate singing in your lessons."

Respondent D (independent) also confirmed that her school uses the CAPS curriculum, as well as different learning methods to adapt to the needs of each learner.

It is evident from the views above that all the respondents from full-service schools have developed a multi-level teaching approach and/or diverse learning programmes to adapt to the learners' different learning styles and paces in the same classrooms. However, respondent C noted that learners who are struggling academically are placed in a separate class where they receive specialised learner support. Although this might be helpful for the learners who need it, it can be regarded as a segregationist practice described by Lohman (2011), as noted in chapter two- separating the special class from the rest of the learners (Ibid: 1). Therefore, this defeats the purpose of inclusive education where all learners are supposed to be taught in the same classroom, even if different learning approaches are utilised.

Furthermore, respondents B, D and E (but not respondent C, who confirmed that his school uses the D-CAPS) confirmed that they use the ordinary CAPS curriculum. The difference in responses here is intriguing because one would expect that all full-service schools would use a standard curriculum, or if different curricula were used, the difference would be between public and independent schools. In this case, both independent and one public school use CAPS, while the other public school uses D-CAPS. This is an interesting matter that deserves further investigation to look into the non-standardisation of the curricula.

b) Supportive inter-personal relations between children with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers

The second achievement that most respondents from full-service schools presented is the supportive inter-personal relations that are formed between children with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Respondents were asked to describe the relationship between these two learner groups in their schools and they expressed their views as follows:

Respondent C (public): "...there is no difference that you can spot when they are together because they all get along."

School B, respondent 2 (public): "it's amazing what you will learn from the children because they do not see any disability...They are there for one another and they appreciate each other." Respondent 1 added: "if you have a group activity, you will find that the stronger learners will help the weaker ones, so the weaker ones will learn from the stronger ones."

Respondent D (independent):

Our children who are “normal”...average children learn empathy and they do not see all other children’s...inadequacy...They really have empathy for these children and they are much more accepting of them and their “disability”.... That kind of relationship is beneficial to both of them, especially for the child with the disability because they now have people that they can look up to and know that know that person will not reject him.

This question was important because the researcher wanted to get a sense of how the inclusive policy impacted the socialisation of disabled and non-disabled learners, since the policy also aimed at enhancing the social attainment of children in inclusive settings, especially for children with disabilities. It is quite amazing to see that the respondents (C, D and both respondents from school B) provided positive comments- that learners get along well, and the non-disabled group does not see the “disability” of the others and is very supportive, while the learners with learning disabilities feel accepted, welcomed, and learn from their peers. Therefore, not only do the children with learning disabilities benefit academically from inclusive education, but they also attain social relations with their peers, which is good for their self-esteem.

The responses support Hehir et al’s (2016: 2) argument, noted in chapter two, that research indicate that frequent contact between the non-disabled children and their peers with disabilities contributes to them holding less prejudicial views and being more accepting of people who are different from themselves.

c) Supportive District-Based Support Teams

One of the strategies of EWP6 was to establish DBSTs to support schools in implementing inclusive education by providing appropriate teaching and learning materials to accommodate diverse learning needs (DBE, 2001:8). It was thus important to ask the respondents from both full-service and special schools how the DBSTs has supported their schools in adopting inclusive practices and ensuring that they provide the best educational service to their learners. Their views were as follows:

Respondent E (independent): “The ISS from our district is very supportive...”

School B, respondent 2 (public): “The District-Based Support Teams are there to hear and respond to our needs and they really do respond positively.”

Respondent F (special school, independent): “In terms of financial support, I chose not to be a subsidised school because then I would be made to follow mainstream...So, we get no support from the government and that is fine with me.”

Respondent A (special school, public): “I do not think we have enough qualified personnel who will be able to support our needs. For example, my supervisor at the district office has no information or understanding about a special school”.

The mixed views above are very intriguing because they show that the DBSTs seem to be supportive to school F and B (full-service schools), while respondent A seems not to be receiving sufficient support and respondent F (both special schools) does not receive any support at all because she chose not to. The varied nature of the support that DBSTs appear to be providing to special and full-service schools is surprising because one would assume that both categories of school would receive equal support from the district office, considering that they both cater to children with special needs who require special support services.

Respondent A explained that the district is failing special schools because there are not enough qualified and knowledgeable officials in special education. Therefore, he is not receiving adequate support to effectively cater to children with special needs. A similar challenge of inadequate and untrained teaching and support staff in special education was raised by Khumalo and Hodgson (2017), as noted in chapter two, as a common challenge faced by many other special schools (Ibid: 118). Thus, the

researcher questions how special schools can effectively offer support services to neighbouring schools if they have challenges of their own.

5.2.4. Factors that can impede the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools

This section will discuss the challenges that respondents from full-service and special schools have presented as factors that can impede the implementation of inclusive education in schools. The data will be discussed in relation to the observations made by Donohue and Bornman's (2014) findings.

5.2.4.1. Ambiguity in the policy (policy implementation challenges)

a) Lack of sufficiently trained teachers

Donohue and Bornman (2014) have maintained that one of the major factors that impede the implementation of inclusive education stems from the ambiguities evident in EWP6 regarding the means by which schools can meet the goals of inclusive education. In some instances, the policy does not clearly outline the goals or the means to reach the goals. For example, one of the strategies outlined in the policy was about the orientation and training of staff members in mainstream schools in practices of inclusive education and how to conduct early identification of children who may have disabilities. It also noted that a new curriculum will be required to focus on the inclusion of the full range of diverse learning needs in schools (*Ibid*: 6, 7 & 9)

However, the policy failed to specify how mainstream teachers are expected to modify and tailor the curriculum to suit the different learning needs. Donohue and Bornman (2014) found that some schools currently lack teachers with the capacity and knowledge to teach diverse learners in a single classroom (*Ibid*, 2014: 9), and this may

be due to lack of clarity about the skills they need to accommodate diverse learners and how to modify the curriculum to suit unique learning needs.

Therefore, it was vital for the respondents to be asked about the factors and challenges that hampered the implementation of EWP6 in South Africa and their collated responses will be divided into the following sections.

Respondent E (independent) stated that teachers from other schools are not sufficiently trained to meet the needs of all learners. She further confirmed that her school conducts regular in-service training programmes and workshops in inclusive education. When the district officials from the inclusive education division visit the school, they conduct training sessions as well.

Respondent A (special school, public) “I think the educators in the mainstream would need more training so that they can understand or to see how to support the learners who are showing signs of disability maybe in their schools.”

Respondent C (public) “we received many trainings and workshops to train and orientate teachers and administrators about inclusive education.”

School B, respondent 1 (public) argued that training was provided, but not to all mainstream teachers- only those in full-service schools. Respondent 2 confirmed that they received training, and most workshops were arranged by the DBSTs and School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs).

Respondent F (special school, independent) supported respondent A’s comment about teachers needing more training to support the learners with disabilities. According to her, the problem of children who struggle academically starts at the early childhood development (ECD) level where teachers do not have the knowledge and skills to detect any possible learning challenges in learners. To effectively adopt

inclusive education, she recommended that preschool teachers be trained to detect possible learning challenges and identify the best learning methods to help those children overcome their barriers and reach their full potential. If that can be achieved at the ECD level, children will be able to successfully progress through their schooling years because they know how to overcome their learning challenges.

It is interesting that not all respondents held the same view about the extent to which mainstream teachers have been trained in inclusive education. On the one hand, respondents A, E, and F argued that there are teachers in mainstream schools who are not sufficiently trained to teach diverse learners or to detect possible learning challenges at the preschool level, and that they should receive more training in that regard. This supports Donohue and Bornman's (2014) argument above. Respondent 1 (from school B) added that not all mainstream teachers are trained- only those from full-service schools. On the other hand, respondents C, E, and 2 (from school B) agreed that they have received training from the district.

There are two points here: firstly, despite the indication that the department organises training workshops, it seems they are mostly presented to full-service schools, while some mainstream schools and teaching staff are not exposed to these workshops. This may be one reason why some teachers in the mainstream division are still not trained with the skills necessary to teach diverse learners or even identify possible learning challenges at the preschool level. This could explain why all the respondents from full-service schools confirmed earlier that they were able to develop alternative learning programmes and multi-level teaching methods to accommodate diverse learners. This could be because they have received training in inclusive education (either organised by the school or the department) more than mainstream schools.

On the other hand, not only did EWP6 fail to outline how mainstream teachers should modify the curriculum to suit diverse learning needs, the policy also failed to specify what trainings teachers should receive and what they should be taught in these programmes. It could be that mainstream teachers find it difficult to modify the learning content and adapt multi-level teaching methods without a detailed framework and/or comprehensive training on how to do so effectively. The lack of sufficiently trained teachers and of specificity about what teachers should be taught and how they should modify the curriculum continues to be a challenge, despite the efforts made by some full-service schools to adopt alternative learning programmes. Therefore, ambiguity in the policy around teacher training workshops to achieve inclusivity in the mainstream division remains a challenge for inclusive education.

5.2.4.2. School-level barriers to inclusion

a) Lack of resources

It was highlighted in Donohue and Bornman (2014: 4) that a general lack of support and resources contributes to school-level barriers that hinder the progress of inclusive education. Some respondents noted lack of classrooms as another major factor that could hinder mainstream schools from successfully admitting learners with disabilities.

Respondent C (public) noted that large class sizes with only one teacher per class negatively impacts the learning environment. “When you are dealing with learners with challenges, there need to be a small number in a class to receive individual attention...” He further said that in his school particularly, he faces the challenge of not having enough classrooms to admit more learners.

Respondent E (independent) said a similar thing: “...we all know how our educators are battling when having to teach large classes. They either focus on the weak learners

and neglect the average and above average learners, or they focus on the stronger learners and neglect the weaker learners.”

Respondent F (special school, independent) also alluded to the fact that the teachers in mainstream ECD schools “are dealing with 40 kids in a class is just too much for them.”

School B, respondent 2 (public): “We also need to get rid of the over-crowded classes and improve infrastructure so that we can get more classes and only have 20 learners per class.”

First, it is interesting that all the respondents agreed that overcrowded classes due to lack of enough classrooms constitutes a challenge for promoting inclusivity. Respondent C agreed with the argument made by respondent D earlier that having smaller classes allows teachers to attend to learners individually and work with them effectively based on their unique learning challenges. Unfortunately, this may be difficult to achieve in large classes because learners may receive unequal attention, which could negatively impact some learners’ progress. For inclusive education to work, ideally there needs to be equal access for all learners, but learners with disabilities should also be able to obtain additional support when needed. The problem of large class sizes militates against these aims.

Second, respondent C confirmed that his school, being one of a few in South Africa to admit children with disabilities along with non-disabled peers, is facing the challenge of not having enough classrooms to admit more learners (particularly those with disabilities), which poses a threat to the principle of inclusive education. This argument supports the one made in Donohue and Bornman (2014) that lack of resources (in this case, enough classrooms) could hinder schools’ progress towards inclusion.

Lastly, it is evident from the responses above that large class sizes seem to be a challenge that particularly affects respondents from full-service public schools, because respondents from independent schools did not state that they have the same challenges. In fact, they stated that they have smaller classes to allow teachers to give all the learners equal attention on an individual level. This disparity is common in our education system- the challenge of overcrowded classes in public schools while independent schools generally have small classes because they admit a limited number of learners.

5.2.4.3. Cultural-level barriers to inclusion

a) Social stigma

It was highlighted in Donohue and Bornman (2014: 5) that the meaningful participation of people with disabilities in schools and communities is affected by the cultural attitudes within those communities- if a community disregards and expresses prejudice towards them, discriminatory practices will prevail. Most of the respondents below supported this argument as they identified societal stigma towards children with learning disabilities as another major factor that hinders the implementation of inclusive education. They expressed their views as follows:

Respondent C (public): “you find that the majority of the community are labelling these children and they feel that these children should not be accommodated in the school.”

Respondent E (independent): “a stigma is attached to learners who face learning barriers...Society does not understand how much potential these learners have and that most of them can overcome their barriers when early intervention takes place...”

Respondent F (special school, independent) argued that children with learning disabilities are seen as “possessed, cursed, or broken”: “I call it the invisible disability because we are the most marginalised group in society... This is because learning disabilities is such a misunderstood concept and you can’t physically see it...people do not understand it and that is where the stigmatisation comes.”

Respondent D (independent) emphasised how hard it is for most parents of children with learning disabilities because they do not understand the condition and neither does society: “it is so unknown and people would rather not think about these things”.

Respondent A (special school, public): “...when someone out there looks at a child that goes to a particular school like ours, already those learners are labelled...automatically a person in the community will think those learners are crazy...we are looking at those learners and undermine them because of their disabilities...”

School B, respondent 2 (public) expressed an opinion that differed from those of the other respondents. She said that parents hold an optimistic idea that their children might one day overcome their challenges because they do not see it as a permanent problem.

Based on the views above, it is interesting to see that respondent 2 (from school B) was the only one who claimed that most parents have an optimistic attitude towards their children with learning disabilities, and believed that the challenge is temporary and will fade away with time. All the other respondents argued that society generally perceives children with learning disabilities negatively because they are viewed as crazy, spiritually possessed, or broken.

According to respondents D and F, the stigmatisation also stems from the fact that some people do not understand what a learning disability is; it is something people would rather not talk about, making it a neglected topic, which in turn creates a stigma around it. Misconceptions about children with disabilities generally has a way of undermining their potential and abilities, as noted by respondents A and E, and this could promote discriminatory acts against them in schools and broader communities, as noted by respondent C. Therefore, such negative attitudes could hinder the inclusion of these children in ordinary schools because they are considered to “not belong there”. This is especially true if school principals and other influential staff members are also part of the communities that propagate discrimination; they too can negatively influence the decision-making processes of admitting learners with disabilities.

Moreover, there is an interesting contrast here: respondents A, E, and F referred to the stigma that is rife in communities against children with learning disabilities and how society generally labels the children as crazy or demonic, whereas respondents C and D, as well as both respondents from school B said that their learners get along well despite their differences.

The reason could be that society generally judges people based on their disabilities because of historical misconceptions about disabilities. Alternatively, it could be that the non-disabled learners no longer have prejudicial views (assuming that they had them before they came to the school) against their disabled peers owing to the frequent contact (as noted earlier). A further possibility is that children generally have love for one another because they are not yet accustomed to socially constructed views about differences between people.

b) Cultural denialism and poverty

It was noted in Donohue and Bornman (2014: 5–6) that cultural and financial aspects were discovered to be factors that could prevent children with disabilities from attending school. For instance, it was found that in some developing countries, children with disabilities do not often attend school because it is thought that they cannot learn or their families are shamed, rejected and blamed for their child's disability. Some of the respondents below identified cultural denialism and poor-economic backgrounds as factors that may negatively affect the schooling possibilities of disabled children.

For instance, in terms of cultural aspects, respondent C (public) stated that some families believe that “if your children were born like this and they cannot do something, it means they cannot be helped.” There are also some poor families in our country who cannot afford to expose their disabled children to schools at all.

Respondent E (independent) also stated that “in some cultures, the families feel shamed because of the fact that their child presents disabilities and the child is then kept at home.” She further argued that poverty impacts many families (especially those who live in rural areas) who cannot afford to have medical professionals assess their children and make recommendations about educational possibilities.

School B, respondent 2 (public) added that “most of the families when you deal with them, they are still in denial and they do not understand the condition of their children.”

Respondent F (special school, independent) did not refer to poor backgrounds per se, but she referred to her experience with parents who thought their children with disabilities were not worthy of spending money on their education because “the child won't find a job or amount to anything” and they viewed them as a burden.

Based on the responses above, it is clear that respondents C, E and 2 (from school B) agreed that cultural denialism plays a huge role in possibly denying children with disabilities the opportunity (and human right) to go to school like their peers. They made the same argument as Donohue and Bornman (noted above) that some families are ashamed of their child's disability or believe their child cannot learn or be helped. As a result, the children are kept at home and away from school.

Additionally, Donohue and Bornman (2014: 5) argued that for some families, it may not be economically feasible to send their child with a disability to school, particularly if they have other children of school-going age whose prospects of bringing in an income are better than the disabled child's. Likewise, respondents C and E indicated that poverty may prevent children with disabilities from attending school because many families do not have the financial means to expose their disabled children to schools or get medical assistance to help them progress academically. As a result, they end up being kept at home and denied the opportunity to access equal education like their peers.

Respondent F also agreed with Donohue and Bornman (2014) that some parents consider the financial implications of sending their disabled children to school to be too great. She said that she has experienced parents who did not believe in spending money on the education of their disabled children because they considered them a financial burden and unlikely to find a job in future. They saw it as a waste of money to invest in them. This may also be a reason why children with disabilities are kept at home and denied equal access to education.

c) Lack of public awareness about disability and inclusive education

Donohue and Bornman (2014) proposed that to address the misconceptions and stigma around disability in communities and win support for the inclusive policy, the DBE must conduct information advocacy campaigns to accompany the implementation of EWP6. However, lack of public awareness about disability and inclusive education was identified as another factor that could impede inclusive education in schools.

Respondents were asked about the efficacy of national advocacy campaigns and how often they have been conducted to educate communities about disabilities and inclusive education. They provided mixed opinions as follows:

Respondent C (public): “much has been done because even now, everywhere you go, you will find that there isn’t discrimination anymore...”

Respondent E (independent): “I do not know to what extent South African citizens have been exposed to the principles of inclusion and inclusive education.”

School B, respondent 2 (public): “this campaign has never been effective. In some communities, the target was the parents who have children in special schools, and yes, they did get information. But to come here in my community and announce to parents that there is this campaign that the Department of Education is conducting- there is no such a thing here.”

Respondent D (independent) stated that she has no knowledge of the advocacy campaigns that were supposed to educate the public about inclusive practices and inclusive education.

Respondent F (special school, independent): “...I think that is so far down on the list of things to do for the department. You must understand that the challenges that the

department faces just in terms of normal schooling, pit toilets, teachers etc, we are literally just constantly been put at the bottom of the list.”

Respondent A (special school, public) stressed the importance of educating the community about disabilities and making them understand that these learners can make something of their lives: “I think we need to engage more with the communities...and invite the community to come to the school and see what the learners are doing. These strategies can assist with curbing the stigma that we have in our communities.”

Unlike respondent C, who believes that much has been done to educate communities about disabilities and inclusion, respondents D, F, and 2 (from school B) maintained that they have not witnessed or had knowledge of any information campaigns that took place in their areas. Respondent F also pointed out that educating the public about disabilities and inclusive education does not seem to be a priority for the Department of Education because there are other pressing matters that the department has prioritised. According to Donohue and Bornman (2014: 11), a study conducted in 2009 in KwaZulu-Natal also found no evidence of information campaigns to educate the public about inclusive education.

The views from the respondents above indicate that the information campaigns might have taken place in some areas but not everywhere in the country, and one of the reasons for this could be that this objective is overshadowed by other pressing matters that the department is faced with, as noted by respondent F.

The White Paper clearly states that information campaigns must be conducted nationally to orientate and educate the public on disabilities and inclusive education. However, it failed to specify which key players are supposed to conduct these

campaigns and what their responsibilities are. This indicates the lack of clarity in the policy strategy on information campaigns, as noted in EWP6. Therefore, misconceptions about inclusive education and disabilities may still be rife in some communities and may continue to hinder inclusive education in ordinary schools.

Furthermore, respondent A supported the argument made by Donohue and Bornman (2014) about the importance of exposing the public to conversations on disability as a tool to help eliminate the stigma against people with disabilities and make society see that children with disabilities also have the potential to succeed in life. The information campaigns could also be an instrument to promote inclusive education.

5.2.4.4. Misdiagnosis

Misdiagnosis was interestingly pointed out as another factor that could hinder the inclusion of children with learning disabilities, or learners with special educational needs (LSEN), in mainstream schools.

For instance, respondent E (independent) stated that “at times a child is said to be a candidate for an LSEN school, only to find the child is blossoming and succeeding academically. At other times it is said that a child is a remedial candidate just to find that the child should be placed in an LSEN class...”

Respondent D (independent) noted that “what usually happens is that we get grade 4 and 5 learners coming to the school from a mainstream school, and they can’t do anything. They are often diagnosed with learning disabilities, sometimes wrongly diagnosed, but that is sometimes something that we turnaround within a year.”

Respondent F (special school, independent): “I had an autistic child who came in with that diagnosis and it turns out to be a sensory processing issue. You see, so now we are dealing with misdiagnosis.” She further argued that misdiagnosis results from the

disconnection between the education and medical fields (doctors and therapists), the Department of Health, Social Development, and other relevant units. For example, she said that paediatricians often neglect the education aspects and only focus on the medical side when diagnosing children. Therefore, the different departments need to work together to get inclusion right in schools.

Respondent A (special school, public) also pointed out that some learners are wrongly referred to special schools because the teachers in mainstream schools did not support them the way they were supposed to.

It is interesting that it is respondents from independent schools who referred to their experiences with misdiagnosed children, while respondents from public schools did not mention that they had similar experiences. It could be that the sampled public schools have experienced such cases but did not think to mention them during the interviews, or it could be that independent schools have smaller classes where the teachers can more easily detect if a learner has been wrongly diagnosed with a learning disability. It has already been established that it may be harder for teachers in public schools to fully detect the strengths and weaknesses of each learner in a large class because learning may occur in groups rather than individually.

Furthermore, respondent A emphasised that children are often wrongly referred to special schools because the teachers in mainstream schools did not support the learners the way they were supposed to- perhaps by providing them with learning methods that would suit their learning style and pace. This could be a result of insufficiently trained teachers (as described earlier).

Moreover, respondent F argued that misdiagnosis is a direct result of a non-existent working relationship between the relevant stakeholders involved in the development

of children with disabilities, such as paediatricians and special education teachers and experts. For example, medical doctors often diagnose a child without considering the educational aspects, such as the right learning methods to academically succeed. If a child is wrongly diagnosed with a learning disability and wrongly placed in a special school instead of an ordinary school, the child is denied the chance to access general education like their peers. Thus, the progress of including children with disabilities in mainstream schools will remain stagnant.

Respondent F thus proposed a partnership between all the relevant stakeholders to make collective decisions that would suit the interests of children with special needs (and thus potentially help minimise cases of misdiagnosis). Although the matter of misdiagnosis was not mentioned in Donohue and Bornman's (2014) article, this proposal enhances their recommendation that teachers receive comprehensive training programmes, which can be supplemented with specialised support teams to provide teachers with practical training and skills they need to address barriers to learning (Donohue and Bornman, 2014: 10). In this case, specialised support teams can include medical professionals and special education experts.

5.3. Conclusion

This chapter has indicated that although the concept of inclusive education is described differently by different respondents of full-service schools, they all adopted the inclusive policy to accommodate a diverse learner population. The chapter also presented the achievements of EWP6, which include alternative learning programmes, supportive inter-relations between children with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers, and well established and supportive DBSTs in some school districts.

This chapter has also shown that some of the interview data confirm some of the observations drawn from Donohue and Bornman (2014) linked to policy ambiguity and school and cultural– level barriers as factors that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in schools. However, the inclusion initiative can be accelerated by providing appropriate resources and training for teachers, conducting information campaigns on disability and inclusive education, and addressing the issue of misdiagnosing children with learning disabilities and wrongly placing them in special schools instead of ordinary schools.

The next chapter will provide summaries of the findings and concluding remarks.

Chapter six: Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This study aimed to examine the extent to which policy on inclusive education has facilitated access for children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools in South Africa since the Salamanca Statement was adopted in 1994. Thus, this chapter will firstly summarise the findings and conclusions and secondly, it will attempt to answer the research question. The last section will provide recommendations for future research.

6.2. Conclusions: A summary

This section will summarise the conclusions derived from the previous chapter concerning the implementation of EWP6.

Achievements of EWP6

- EWP6 acknowledged the need to revise learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners in an inclusive setting. Therefore, the study identified the adoption of multi-level teaching approaches and alternative learning programmes to accommodate all learners with diverse learning needs in the same classroom as an achievement of EWP6. Alternative learning programmes could also be a factor that enhances the implementation of inclusive education because it provides a tool for diverse learners to learn equally in school.
- The study discovered that non-disabled pupils are generally supportive and helpful towards their disabled peers in full-service schools, while pupils with learning disabilities feel accepted and learn from their peers. Therefore, children with learning disabilities can benefit academically from inclusive

education and improve their social relations with their non-disabled peers in their school, which is good for their self-esteem.

- One of the strategies of EWP6 was to establish DBSTs to support schools in implementing inclusive education by providing appropriate teaching and learning materials to accommodate diverse learning needs. The study found that the establishment and support of DBSTs to some schools in Gauteng was identified as an achievement of EWP6 and could also be a factor that promotes the implementation of inclusive education even further by providing support to other schools as well.

Factors that can impede the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools

- The study identified the lack of sufficiently trained teachers in mainstream schools to teach diverse learners as a factor that could impede the implementation of inclusive education. This may be because only a few schools and teachers were exposed to teacher-training programmes. Also, the lack of sufficiently trained teachers can be attributed to a lack of specificity and detail in the policy's description of training workshops because it failed to specify what training programmes teachers should receive and what they should be taught in those programmes.
- Overcrowded classes were identified as school-level barriers that could hinder the progress of inclusive education in schools. In other words, mainstream or full-service schools not having space to admit new learners, particularly those with disabilities, poses a threat to the entire principle of inclusive education.
- The study also found that the societal stigmatisation and negative attitudes towards learning disabilities promote discriminatory practices against children

with these disabilities in schools and communities. Therefore, such attitudes could hinder the inclusion of children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools because they are considered not to belong there.

- Cultural denialism and financial constraints were found to play a huge role in possibly denying children with disabilities the opportunity to go to school like their peers. Some families are shamed of their children's disability and believe they cannot learn because of the disability. Furthermore, some families do not have the financial means to take their disabled children to school or get medical assistance to help them progress academically. As a result, the children are kept at home.
- EWP6 clearly stated that information campaigns should be conducted nationwide to orientate and educate the public about disabilities and inclusive education, as well as to accompany the implementation of EWP6. However, the study found that these campaigns have only taken place in some areas of the country. Therefore, the misconceptions and stigma against disabilities and inclusive education may still be rife in some communities and may continue to hinder inclusive education or the inclusion of children with disabilities in ordinary schools.
- Misdiagnosis was identified as another factor that could hinder the inclusion of children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools. For example, if a child is misdiagnosed with learning disabilities and wrongly placed in a special school, the child is denied the chance to access general education like their peers. Thus, the progress of including children with disabilities in mainstream schools will remain stagnant.

6.3. To what extent has the policy on inclusive education facilitated equal access for children with learning disabilities in ordinary schools?

As described in chapter one, the main objective of the inclusive education policy is the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools. So, to what extent has the policy on inclusive education facilitated access for children with learning disabilities?

The policy on inclusive education has been effective, to some extent, in facilitating access to education for children with disabilities because, first, policies such as the Salamanca Framework have encouraged countries like South Africa to dismantle discriminatory practices and include children with disabilities in the general education system. Second, the country adopted the inclusive education approach by introducing national policies such as the SASA, SIAS policy and EWP6 that paved the way towards an inclusive and integrated system. Lastly, EWP6 promoted the establishment of full-service schools to admit children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers.

Therefore, the interview data indicated that EWP6 has changed the way many traditional mainstream schools operate- now some of those schools have been converted into full-service schools that admit children with disabilities alongside non-disabled peers (just like the ones that were interviewed). As described in chapter three, PEDs had already designated approximately 848 public ordinary schools as full-service schools by 2018, which exceeded the DBE's target of 500 schools. There has been an increase in the number of children with disabilities being admitted into mainstream education from approximately 77 000 in 2002 to 121 461 in 2018, with 40 367 being in Gauteng.

However, the interview data also indicated that the progress is still slow because not all learners with disabilities are accommodated in mainstream education, even since the introduction of inclusive policies. Most children with disabilities who attend school are enrolled in special schools, while approximately 600 000 are out of school. This is especially true for children with learning disabilities because they are considered “mentally retarded, stupid or crazy” and thus are generally viewed as people who cannot learn or do not belong in school, let alone ordinary schools. They are thus still the most marginalised segment of the population in terms of accessing equal education.

6.4. Recommendation for future research

It was discovered in the previous chapter that the sampled public and independent full-service schools do not use the same curriculum to guide their teaching and learning processes. It will be worthwhile to investigate the non-standardisation of the curricula in full-service schools.

The study has also discovered that children are often misdiagnosed with learning disabilities when they only have mild learning conditions that can be mitigated with the right remedial and learning programmes. It was also discovered that these children could be denied the chance to access general education if they are wrongly placed in special schools. If this continues to be the case, the progress of including children with disabilities in mainstream schools will remain stagnant. It will be meaningful to further research the impact that misdiagnosis has on the principle of inclusivity and whether using the SIAS policy at ECD and primary school- level can minimise cases of misdiagnosis of children with learning disabilities.

This study also discovered that the lack of a working relationship between the relevant government departments, schools, NGOs, medical practitioners and private stakeholders involved in the development and welfare of children with disabilities may contribute towards misdiagnosis. It might also be worthwhile to look into how these partnerships (or the lack thereof) impact the implementation of inclusive education. Such study could inform policymakers regarding which stakeholders should work together and be formally incorporated into discussion forums and training programmes towards improving inclusive education.

Another area for further research could be thoroughly examining the extent to which the ambiguous strategies outlined in White Paper 6 have impacted the implementation of inclusive education. For example, this study found that one of the challenges of accommodating children with special needs in mainstream schools is the lack of teachers with skills and knowledge on how to teach diverse learners in the same classroom. This can be attributed to the lack of clarity in the policy on how teachers are expected to modify the curriculum to accommodate diverse learning needs, or what training programmes they should receive and what they should be taught in those programmes. Therefore, further research could look into how the training programmes are conducted in both independent and public schools and how these programmes have impacted (negatively or positively) the implementation of inclusive education in schools.

It has also been established that special schools play a significant role in enhancing inclusive education by providing support services to full-service and mainstream schools in South Africa. It might be beneficial to the scholarship to interrogate in detail the extent to which special schools support neighbouring schools in implementing inclusive education, in order to establish best practice scenarios for other special

schools in the country. This proposed study could also investigate the challenges that special schools face that could hinder their ability to effectively support neighbouring schools. This may also be supplemented with recommendations from participants on how to solve those challenges.

Bibliography

1. Journal articles

Agbenyega, J. A. 2007. 'Examining teachers' concerns and attitudes to inclusive education in Ghana'. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 3(1): 41–56.

Agbenyega, J. & Deku, P. 2011. 'Building new identities in teacher preparation for inclusive education in Ghana'. *Current issues in Education*, 14(1): 1–37.

Asmal, K. & James, W. 2001. 'Education and democracy in South Africa today'. *Daedalus*, 130(1): 185–204.

Botts, B. H & Owusu, N. A. 2013. 'The state of inclusive education in Ghana, West Africa'. *Preventing School Failure*, 57(3): 135–143.

Dalton, E. M., Mckenzie, J. A. & 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): 1–7.

Donohue, D. & Bornman, J. 2014. 'The challenges of realising inclusive education in South Africa'. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(2): 1–14.

Engelbrecht, P. 2006. 'The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa after ten years of democracy'. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 21(3): 253–264.

Epperson, L. 2012. 'Bringing the markets to students: School choice and vocational education in the twenty-first century'. *Notre Dame Law Review*, 87(5): 1860–1890.

Geldenhuys, J. L. & Wevers, N. E. J. 2013. 'Ecological aspects influencing the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream primary schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa'. *South African Journal of Education*, 33(3): 1–18.

Hove, N. 2014. 'The effectiveness of special schools in the teaching of children with learning disabilities in South Africa'. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(20): 1903–1907.

Kassah, B. L. L., Kassah, A. K & Phillips, D. 2018. 'Children with intellectual disabilities and special school education in Ghana'. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 65(3): 341–354.

Kurth, J. A., Miller, A. L., Toews, S. G., Thompson, J. R., Cortés, M., Dahal, M. H., de Escallón, I. E., Hunt, P. F., Porter, G., Richler, D., Fonseca, I., Singh, R., Šiška, J., Villamero, R Jr., & Wangare, F. 2018. 'Inclusive education: Perspectives on implementation and practice from international experts'. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 56(6): 471–485.

Kusimo, A. O & Chidozie, F. C. 2019. 'Inclusive education and sustainable development goals: A study of the physically challenged in Nigeria'. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 6(1): 1– 13.

Matland, R. E. 1995. 'Synthesizing the implementation literature: The ambiguity-conflict model of policy implementation'. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 5(2): 145–174.

Mittler, P. 2005. 'Building bridges between special and mainstream services'. *Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal*, 16(1): 3–15.

Mpu, Y. & Adu, E. O. 2012. 'The challenges of inclusive education and its implementation in schools: The South African perspective'. *Perspectives in Education*, 39(2): 225–238.

Murungi, L. N. 2015. 'Inclusive basic education in South Africa: Issues in its conceptualisation and implementation'. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal (PER)*, 18(1): 3160–3195.

Naicker, S. 2006. 'From policy to practice': A South–African perspective on implementing inclusive education policy'. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 3(1): 1–6.

Nel, N., Müller, H. & Rheeders, E. 2011. 'Support services within inclusive education in Gauteng: The necessity and efficiency of support'. *Mevlana International Journal of Education*, 1(1): 38–53.

Ogbonnaya, U. I. & Awuah, F. K. 2019. 'Quintile ranking of schools in South Africa and learners' achievement in probability'. *Statistics Education Research Journal*, 18(1), 106–119

Retief, M. & Letšosa, R. 2018. 'Models of disability: A brief overview'. *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies*, 74(1): 1–29.

Singal, N. 2006. 'Inclusive education in India: International concept, national interpretation'. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 53(3): 351–369.

Srivastava, M., de Boer, A., & Pijl, S. J. 2013. 'Inclusive education in developing countries: closer look at its implementation in the last 10 years'. *Educational Review*, 67(2): 179–195.

Swart, E., Engelbrecht, P., Eloff, I., Pettipher, R. & Oswald, M. 2014. 'Developing inclusive school communities: Voices of parents of children with disabilities'. *Education as Change*, 8(1): 80–108.

Thobejane, T.D. 2013. 'History of apartheid education and the problems of reconstruction in South Africa'. *Sociology Study*, 3(1): 1–12.

Van Dyk, H. & White, C.J. 2019. 'Theory and practice of the quintile ranking of schools in South Africa: A financial management perspective'. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(1): S1- S9.

Wang, H. L. 2009. 'Should all students with special educational needs (SEN) be included in mainstream education provision? A critical analysis'. *International Education Studies*, 2(4): 154–163.

2. Books and book chapters

Bornman, J. & Rose, J. 2017. *Believe that all can achieve: Increasing classroom participation in learners with special support needs* (second edition). Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria.

deMarrais, K. 2003. Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In, K. B. deMarrais & S.D Lapan (eds), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Erlbaum, Mahwah: 51–68.

Dyson, A. & Forlin, C. 1999. An international perspective on inclusion. In, P. Engelbrecht., L. Green., S Naicker. & L. Engelbrecht (eds), *Inclusive education in action in South Africa*. J.L van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria: 24– 42.

Human Rights Watch. 2015. '*Complicit in exclusion*': *South Africa's failure to guarantee an inclusive education for children with disabilities*. Human Rights Watch, USA.

Khumalo, S. & Hodgson, T. F. 2017. The right to basic education for children with disabilities. In, F. Veriava., A. Thom. & T. F. Hodgson (eds), *Basic education rights handbook: Education rights in South Africa*. SECTION27, Johannesburg: 105–127.

Lazarus, S., Daniels, B. & Engelbrecht, L. 1999. The inclusive classroom. In, P. Engelbrecht., L. Green., S Naicker. & L. Engelbrecht (eds), *Inclusive education in action in South Africa*. J. L van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria: 45–68.

Lincoln, Y. S & Guba, E. G. 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park.

Manganyi, N. C. 2001. Public policy and the transformation of education in South Africa. In, Y. Sayed & J. Jansen (eds), *Implementing education policies: The South African experience*. UCT Press, Cape Town: 25–37.

Maxwell, J. A. 2013. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (third edition). Sage Publications, London.

McMillan, J. & Schumacher, S. 2014. *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (seventh edition). Pearson Education Limited, Essex.

Merriam, S. B. & Tisdell, E. J. 2016. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (fourth edition). Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Naicker, S. 1999. Inclusive education in South Africa. In, P. Engelbrecht., L. Green., S. Naicker. & L. Engelbrecht (eds), *Inclusive education in action in South Africa*. J. L van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria: 12–23.

OECD. 2008. Education in South Africa– An overview. In, *Reviews of National Policies for Education*. OECD Publishing, South Africa: 37–47.

Patton, M. Q. 2015. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (fourth edition). Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Seale, J. 2006. *E-learning and disability in higher education*. Routledge, London.

Trochim, W. M., Donnelly, J. P. & Arora, K. 2016. *Research methods: The essential knowledge base* (second edition). Cengage Learning, Australia.

Wagenaar, T. C. & Babbie, E. 2004. *Guided activities for the practice of social research* (tenth edition). Thomson Wadsworth, Australia.

3. Internet sources

Bridge. 2014, May. 'Disabilities in education and inclusive education: Policy review and Literature Survey'. https://www.bridge.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Annexure-A-Disabilities-and-Inclusive-Education_Policy-and-Literature-review-20140527.pdf. Policy review document. *Bridge*, Accessed: May 08, 2022.

Isaacs, B. 2020, August 14. 'How the quintile system for school works'. <https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/opinion/how-the-quintile-system-for-schools-works-8bab7f23-f23d-431e-816a-883bb00fe90b>. Online article. *Independent Online*, Accessed: May 08, 2022.

Jarrett, S. 2012. 'Disability in time and place'. <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/research/disability-in-time-and-place-pdf/>. Online article. *Historic England*, Accessed: May 08, 2022.

Ngqakamba, S. 2019. EXPLAINER: 'Grade 9 certificate is not an exit from school, says education dept'. <https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/explainer-grade-9-certificate-is-not-an-exit-from-school-says-education-dept-20190927>. Online article. *News24*, Accessed: October 15, 2020.

Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG). 2019. 'Inclusive education: status update'. <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/29205/>. Committee meeting minutes. *Parliamentary Monitoring Group*, Accessed: January 13, 2022.

United Nations. 2016. Toolkit on disability for Africa: Inclusive education. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2016/11/toolkit-on-disability-for-africa-2/>. Guidance document. *United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, Accessed: August 20, 2020.

United Nations Development Plan. The SDGs in action. <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>. *UNDP website*, Accessed: May 08, 2022.

4. Dissertations/ theses

Lohman, A. E. 2011. 'Special education learning environments: Inclusion versus self-contained'. Doctor of education, Lindenwood University. United States.

Phahlamohlaka, T. 2017. 'Challenges of inclusive education in multicultural public primary schools'. Mini-dissertation (MA degree), University of Pretoria. South Africa.

Stofile, S. Y. 2008. 'Factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education policy: A case study in one province in South Africa'. Doctorate in philosophy, University of the Western Cape. South Africa.

5. Conference papers

Naicker, S. M. "From apartheid education to inclusive education: The challenges of transformation.." Presented at the International Education Summit for a Democratic Society, Wayne State University, Michigan USA, June 26- 28 2000.

6. Reports

Bickenbach, J., Degener, T., Melvin, J., Quinn, G., Posarac, A., Schulze, M., Shakespeare, T., Watson, N., Officer, A., Jessup, N. & Khasnabis, C. 2011. 'Understanding Disability', In, *Officer A & Posarac, A. (eds), World report on disability*. WHO, Switzerland.

Department of Basic Education. 2015. 'Report on the Implementation of Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education: An Overview for the Period: 2013- 2015.' Department of Education, Pretoria.

Department of Basic Education. 2012. 'Guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom: National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement'. Department of Basic Education, Pretoria.

Department of Education. 2001. 'Education White Paper 6. Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System'. Department of Education, Pretoria.

Department of Education. 2002. 'Implementing Inclusive Education in South Africa: True Stories We Can Learn from'. Department of Education, Pretoria.

Department of Education. 2005. 'Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education for Special Schools as Resource Centres'. Government Printer, Pretoria.

Department of Women, Children, and People with Disabilities. 2013. 'Initial country report to the United Nations on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008 – 2012'. Department of Women, Children, and People with Disabilities, Pretoria.

Department of Education. 2010. 'Guidelines for Full-Service Schools/Inclusive Schools'. Department of Education, Pretoria.

Equal Education Law Centre (EELC). 2016. 'Inclusive Education: Learners with learning barriers. The right to an equal and quality education.' Equal Education Law Centre: 1–19.

Hehir, T., Grindal, T., Freeman, B., Lamoreau, R., Borquaye, Y. & Burke, S. 2016. 'A summary of the evidence on inclusive education'. Abt Associates: 1–40.

Inclusion International. 2009. 'Better Education for All: When We're Included Too. A Global Report'. Instituto Universitario de Integración en la Comunidad, Spain.

Schuelka, M.J. 2018. 'Implementing Inclusive Education'. K4D Research Helpdesk: 1–14.

UNESCO. 1994. 'The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education: Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education'. UNESCO.

UNESCO. 1999. 'Salamanca 5 years on: A review of UNESCO activities in the light of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education'. UNESCO.

UNESCO. 2005. 'Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all. UNESCO Digital Library'. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000140224>. UNESCO, Accessed: August 20, 2020.

United Nations. 1994. 'Standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities'. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/48/96. New York, 4 March.

World Health Organization and World Bank. 2011. 'World Report on Disability'. WHO, Geneva.

7. Acts

Children's Act 38 of 2005

Appendix A: Ethical clearance letter



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Department of Political Studies
Room 5.21 · Leslie Social Science Building · Upper Campus
University of Cape Town · Private Bag X3 · Rondebosch · 7701
Cape Town · South Africa
Telephone: +27 21 650 3381
Fax: 021 650 3799
Email: hum-politics@uct.ac.za

To: Jane Mampane

From: Department of Political Studies, Research Ethics Committee

Subject: Ethics Clearance

Research: Expanding educational access to children with learning disabilities: The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa

Date: 22nd June 2021

This letter confirms that the student researcher, Ms Jane Thandi Mampane's Ethics Project Title: Expanding educational access to children with learning disabilities: The implementation of inclusive education in South Africa has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Political studies on 22nd June 2021, in accordance with COVID-19 human participants fieldwork guidelines.

Yours sincerely

Dr Vinothan Naidoo

Chair
Research Ethics Committee
Department of Political Studies

"OUR MISSION is to be an outstanding teaching and research university,
educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

Appendix B: Interview schedule for full-service schools



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Political Studies

Questions

Understanding the phenomenon of disability and inclusive education

1. How would you define disability and learning disabilities?
2. What is the general perception of children with learning disabilities in society?
3. Are you aware of the policies that promote inclusive education or the inclusion of children with disabilities in ordinary schools in South Africa, particularly the policy known as the *Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training system (EWP6)* adopted in 2001?
4. What do you understand about inclusive education?
5. What do you think about the principle of educating children with low-intensive disabilities in ordinary schools alongside non-disabled children?
6. Do you think that the current mainstream education system supports children with learning disabilities? Elaborate.

Evaluating the progress of implementing inclusive education policy

7. The Education White Paper 6 has outlined six broad strategies and goals of establishing an inclusive education system in South Africa and establishing full-service schools. One of the goals was to convert 500 ordinary primary schools into full-service schools by 2021. How far do you think the government has come with this?
8. Another goal outlined in the White Paper was the introduction of training programmes and workshops to train and orientate teachers and administrators of ordinary schools about inclusive education and applying inclusive practices- to what extent do you think this has been done?
9. Another goal outlined in the White Paper was about conducting national advocacy campaigns to teach South African citizens about the principles of

inclusion and inclusive education– to what extent has this been done and how do you think the society welcomed the idea of inclusive education?

10. Do you think the cultural, societal and economic backgrounds of families of disabled children have any impact on the child's schooling possibilities?

11. What challenges and obstacles do you think the implementation of inclusive education faced in our country?

Implementing inclusive education in your school

12. How has your school implemented inclusive education; for example, what objectives, goals and activities have you set?

13. Describe the roles that school management, teachers, SGBs and parents play in implementing inclusive education.

14. What type of skills, resources and attitude does your teaching staff need to have to be fully capable of teaching diverse learners in the same classroom?

15. What achievements has your school made in implementing inclusive education?

16. What challenges and obstacles has your school faced with implementing inclusive education?

17. According to the Education White Paper, one of the goals was to establish district-based teams to support educators with adopting inclusive practices in classrooms– how have these structures supported your school in this regard?

18. How does the school management measure and monitor the progress of learners with learning disabilities in your school?

Inclusion in classrooms

19. Describe how the teachers cater to diverse learners in their classrooms?

20. Is the curriculum used in your school different from the one used in ordinary schools?

21. Describe the relationships between learners with learning disabilities and non-disabled learners in your schools?

22. How does the inclusion of children with learning disabilities impact them as well as the non-disabled children in your school?

Appendix C: Interview schedule for special schools



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Political Studies

Questions

1. How would you define disability and learning disability?
2. What is the general perception of children with learning disabilities in society?
3. According to some of the literature, about 70% of children with disabilities at school-going age are out of school. Of those who do attend school, most of them are likely to enrol in special schools. What do you think is the reason for that?
4. Do you think that the current mainstream education system supports children with learning disabilities? Elaborate.
5. What challenges do you think the ordinary (mainstream) schools face with educating children with learning disabilities?
6. Are you aware of the policies that promote inclusive education⁸ or the inclusion of children with disabilities in ordinary schools in South Africa, particularly the policy known as the *Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training system (EWP6)* adopted in 2001?
7. According to the Education White Paper, one of the goals was to convert some of the existing special schools into resource centres to accommodate children with severe disabilities; improve other special schools to accommodate children with moderate disabilities; while those with low-intensive disabilities may be placed in ordinary schools- what are your thoughts about that?

⁸ Inclusive education is a global phenomenon that was accepted after UNESCO declared education a fundamental human right of all children despite their differences in gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic backgrounds, and bodily [dis]ability. Subsequently, the Salamanca Statement was adopted by several countries, including South Africa, which advocates for the elimination of segregated education systems and exclusions of children based on discriminations, and called for nation-states to adopt an inclusive education system that will allow equal access to all children despite their differences. One of the objectives of the Salamanca Statement was the inclusion of children with disabilities in ordinary mainstream schools.

8. What support has the government offered your school to ensure that you provide the best educational service to children with learning disabilities?
9. How do special schools and special education staff contribute towards the development of inclusive education and full-service schools⁹ in South Africa?
10. What support does your school offer to neighbourhood schools, whether they are ordinary or full-service schools?

⁹ Full-service schools is the term used by the South African government to label schools that accommodate both children with disabilities and non-disabled children in the same schools and classrooms.