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# Principals' Perceptions towards Inclusive Education and the Recent Curriculum Policy Development in South Africa

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A research report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Educational Psychology) in the faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2014.

## DECLARATION

I, Anke Lampen, hereby declare that this research report is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Education (Educational Psychology) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

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Anke Lampen

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Date

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## ABSTRACT

After the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa joined the rest of the world in a movement towards a more inclusive and equal society based on principles of human rights. In line with this philosophy, it was the policy document Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), that began the process of creating an inclusive education system for all in South Africa. This study aimed to explore principals' perceptions towards inclusive education in South Africa, and the related curriculum policy developments. The sample for the study consisted of eight principals from government primary schools in the Johannesburg-north region of Gauteng. A semi-structured interview was used to gather data, and questions were devised in accordance with the research topic and aims. The results demonstrated that while the majority of principals believed in the philosophy, ideals and values of inclusive education, most of the principals were skeptical with regards to its implementation. This was primarily due to many of the challenges faced and changes that would be required for the full implementation of a wholly inclusive education system in South Africa. Furthermore, results from the study indicated that principals did not perceive the recent curriculum policy developments to be related to inclusive education, and also expressed that they did not believe that the current curriculum, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), lends itself to the accommodation of learners with barriers to learning and development. These findings suggest that South Africa is still facing many challenges in the process of implementing inclusive education.



***Keywords***

Education in post-apartheid South Africa; inclusive education; curriculum policy development; principals' perceptions; government schools; primary schools.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**


**Page No.**

1. **Chapter 1: Introduction** 1
   - 1.1 Rationale for the Study 2

2. **Chapter 2: Literature Review** 4
   - 2.1 An Introduction to Inclusive Education 4
   - 2.2 International Policies on Inclusive Education 5
   - 2.3 South African Policies on Inclusive Education 7
   - 2.4 Debate Around Inclusive Education in South Africa 9
   - 2.5 Key Barriers to Learning in South Africa 11
   - 2.6 South African Education Curriculum Policy Development 13
   - 2.7 The Importance of the Principal in Inclusive Education 16
   - 2.8 The School as an Ecosystemic Framework 18
   - 2.9 Principals' Perceptions Towards Inclusive Education 20

3. **Chapter 3: Methodology** 25
   - 3.1 Aims and Research Questions 25
   - 3.2 Research Approach 26
   - 3.3 Sample 26
   - 3.4 Instruments 27
   - 3.5 Procedure 28
   - 3.6 Data Analysis 29
   - 3.7 Researcher Reflexivity 30
   - 3.8 Ethical Considerations 31

4. **Chapter 4: Results** 32
   - 4.1 Principals' Understanding and View of Inclusive Education 34
     - 4.1.1 Principals' understanding of inclusive education 34
     - 4.1.2 Principals' views on inclusive education 34
   - 4.2 Principals' Perceptions of the Benefits of Inclusive Education 36
   - 4.3 Principals' Perceptions of the Disadvantages of Inclusive Education 38

4.4 Principals' Perceptions Regarding Facilitators and Barriers to the Implementation of Inclusive Education **40**
4.4.1 Principals' perceptions regarding facilitators of inclusive education **40**
4.4.2 Principals' perceptions regarding challenges of inclusive education **41**
4.5 Principals' Perceptions Regarding Curriculum Policy Development Related to Inclusive Education **43**
4.6 Principals' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of Curriculum Policies Related to Inclusive Education **44**
4.6.1 Principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that facilitate the implementation of inclusive education **44**
4.6.2 Principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that hinder the implementation of inclusive education **45**
4.7 Principals' Perceptions Regarding the Progression of Inclusive Education in terms of the Goals Outlined in Education White Paper 6? **46**
4.8 Additional Comments Added by Principals Regarding Inclusive Education in South Africa **48**
4.9 Additional Comments Added by Principals Regarding Curriculum Policy Development Related to Inclusive Education in South Africa Since 2001 **49**

**5. Chapter 5: Discussion** **52**
5.1 Discussion of Results **52**
5.1.1 Research question 1: What are principals' views and understanding of inclusive education? **52**
5.1.2 Research question 2: What do principals perceive the benefits, if any, of inclusive education to be? **53**
5.1.3 Research question 3: What do principals perceive the disadvantages, if any, of inclusive education to be? **54**
5.1.4 Research question 4: What are principals' perceptions regarding the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education? **56**

5.1.5 Research question 5: What are principals' perceptions regarding curriculum policy development related to inclusive education? **59**

5.1.6 Research question 6: What are principals' perceptions regarding aspects of the curriculum that facilitate or hinder the implementation inclusive education? **60**

5.1.7 Research question 7: What are principals' perceptions regarding the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6? **61**

5.1.8 Additional comments provided by principals regarding inclusive education and curriculum policy development in South Africa **63**

5.2 Implications of the Findings **64**

5.3 Limitations of the Study **66**

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research **67**

5.5 Conclusion **67**

**6. References** **69**

**7. Appendices**

~ Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

~ Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form (Interview)

~ Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form (Recording)

~ Appendix 4: Interview Schedule

~ Appendix 5: School Survey Checklist

~ Appendix 6: University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Form

~ Appendix 7: GDE Research Approval Letter

**8. List of Tables**

~ Table 1: Research Questions and Emergent Themes

# Chapter 1
# Introduction

There has been a growing movement all over the world towards a philosophy of inclusion, in which all individuals no matter how diverse are included and form part of a whole society. Inclusive education reflects this global consciousness and advocates for the right of learners experiencing barriers to learning to be a part of mainstream education (Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006; Bailey & du Plessis, 1997). Furthermore, the philosophy and policy of inclusive education advocates for an education system that is capable of accommodating the diverse needs of all learners (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010; Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2001).

This research study provides an overview of inclusive education, both at an international level as well as within South Africa, with a specific focus on principals' perceptions towards inclusive education. As principals play a key role within the school system and in the development of a successful inclusive education environment (Department of Education, 2001; Mentz & Barrett, 2011; Salisbury, 2006; Schmidt & Venet, 2012), their knowledge of, and perceptions towards, inclusive education are essential, and it is a view that has had a limited voice in South Africa. Furthermore, within South Africa, the education system has had to undergo a number of changes in order to create an inclusive education system, one of these changes being the continuous revision of the school curriculum; identified as a significant barrier to learning itself (Department of Education, 2001; Department of Education, 2011; Donald et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 1999). Thus this study also investigated principals' perceptions towards the South African curriculum system, and whether the revisions made to the curriculum can be seen to support the notion of inclusive education. More concisely, the general aim of this study was thus to explore principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the curriculum policy development in South Africa.

Chapter 2 of this research report provides a review of existing literature on inclusive education. The literature review begins with a broad overview of inclusive education and the international and South African policies that have been put in place in a

movement towards this new philosophy. Inclusive education will then be discussed with specific reference to South Africa, taking into account the current challenges faced within our education system, the key barriers to learning that may be experienced, and the curriculum policy developments since the release of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). The importance of the principal within inclusive education will then be discussed, taking into account the role of the principal within an inclusive school environment and how this role can be understood from an ecosystemic theoretical framework. Following this, an overview of existing studies on principals' perceptions towards inclusive education will be provided.

Chapter 3 provides the methodology of the study in which the aims and research questions, research approach, instruments and procedures used, data analysis, researcher reflexivity and ethical considerations are discussed in detail. This is then followed by Chapter 4, which provides the results of the current study. Chapter 5 provides a summary and discussion of the findings and it explores the implications and limitations of the current study, as well as possible directions for future research.

### 1.1. Rationale for the Study

The movement towards an inclusive orientation and philosophy, at both the level of society and education, can be seen in countries all over the world. In South Africa, it was the release of the policy document Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) that officially started the process of a movement towards an inclusive education system. This policy document provided a twenty year framework for the goals of the implementation of inclusive education to be achieved. Now, thirteen years after its release, the question arises of how far inclusive education has progressed in reaching the goals set out in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

Principals of schools are considrered to be the primary agents within the transformation to an inclusive education system, as it is through their position, leadership and management abilities, that they are able to both foster and implement a philosphy and practice of inclusion (Mentz & Barrett, 2011; Schmidt & Venet, 2012). As principals play such an invaluable role in schools, and in creating an inclusive school environment, their voice on the matter is significant. Furthermore, because of

the position they hold within schools, working both internally at a school level and externally at a policy level, principals can provide a unique perspective on the current level of implementation of inclusive education within schools. While many studies have been conducted on educators' perceptions towards inclusive education (Ali et al., 2006; Blackie, 2010; Hay, Smit, & Paulsen, 2001), there seems to be a gap in the literature, particularly within South Africa, of principals' perceptions towards inclusive education. It is for this reason the principal was chosen as the entry point into an understanding of inclusive education within South Africa today.

While principals' perceptions towards inclusive education forms the primary focus of this research, the secondary focus is that of principals' perceptions towards the curriculum policy development within South Africa and its relation to inclusive eduaction. South Africa's education system has undergone numerous changes since the end of aparthed in 1994, with one of the motivating factors being the creation of an inclusive education system (Engelbrecht, 1999). Within our country, due to a number of socio-political and economic factors, there are many barriers to learning that an individual can experience (Department of Education, 1997; Donald et al., 2010). However, in a report released by the Department of Education in 1997, a particularly significant barrier to learning that may occur, resulting from the education system itself, is that of the inflexibility of the school curriculum. Thus again, as principals fill the unique role of being involved with the curriculum at both the school level and the policy level, principals are able to provide insight into the current Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and its effectiveness in accomodating learners experiencing barriers to learning. There seems to also be a gap in the literature concerning principals' perceptions towards the curriculum policy developments within South Africa.

Thus it is this study's aim to attempt to address the above mentioned gaps and to provide some insight into inclusive education within South Africa and the related curriculum policy developments, as perceived by the school principal.

# Chapter 2
# Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the existing literature on incusive education, both from an international and South African perspective, and it provides a broad overview of the recent curriculum policy developments in South Africa related to inclusive education. The current challenges faced within our education system, the key barriers to learning that may be experienced, as well as principals' roles and perceptions towards inclusive education will also be discussed.

## 2.1 An Introduction to Inclusive Education

Over the past couple of years, there has been a growing movement all over the world towards a philosophy of inclusion of all individuals no matter how diverse, based on the principles of human rights. Specifically, there has been a growing movement towards the inclusion of children with 'special educational needs' into mainstream schools (Ali et al., 2006; Bailey & du Plessis, 1997). The term 'special educational needs' is used most commonly in developed countries to describe learners who require some form of support in the educational environment due to cognitive, sensory, physical or emotional difficulties. Viewing learning difficulties in this light typically indicates an intrinsic impairment, arising from within the individual (Donald et al., 2010). While this may be the case in many developed countries, in developing countries like South Africa, many of the educational difficulties learners' experience are due to external factors arising from problems within the broader socio-economic climate (Donald et al., 2010).

It is for this reason that within South Africa, the term 'barriers to learning' has been deemed more appropriate than that of 'special educational needs' (Donald et al., 2010). In 1997 the South African Department of Education released a report by the National Commission of Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Educational Support and Services (NCESS), in which 'barriers to learning' was conceptualised as as any factor that leads to the breakdown of the learning process, including factors such as "the curriculum, the centre of learning, the system of education, and the broader social context" (Department of Education, 1997, p.2).

While many definitions of inclusive education have been put forward, the basic premise of inclusive education is to include, accommodate and support all learners no matter their background, race, gender or disability (Mentz & Barret, 2011). The movement towards inclusive education can be highlighted by three main goals, these being a) supporting the rights of children who experience barriers to learning and affording them the right to equal opportunities; b) minimizing unjustified discrimination, and c) providing children with barriers to learning specialized services and support facilities (Ali et al., 2006). The fundamental principle behind inclusive education is embedded in the notion that education is a basic human right and that all learners, no matter how diverse, have the right to an education (Schmidt & Venet, 2012). Thus the primary objective of all educational systems in societies should be the provision of "quality education for all learners so that they will be able to reach their full potential and will be able to meaningfully contribute to and participate in that society throughout their lives" (Department of Education, 1997, p. 10). Inclusive education thus allows children with barriers to learning to be taught by mainstream educators and experience 'normal' school life, as well as interact with mainstream students (Ali et al., 2006).

An important distinction can be made between the terms 'mainstreaming' or 'integration' and 'inclusion' as these terms are essentially very different. Mainstreaming or integration refers to the process of providing extra support to learners who experience barriers to learning so that they can 'fit in' to the existing system, most often seeing barriers to learning as arising from within the learner (Schmidt & Venet, 2012). The concept of inclusion on the other hand, shifts the focus of the learner having to adjust to the system, to the system being capable of accommodating the diverse learning needs of all children (Department of Education, 2001; Swart & Pettipher, 2001).

### 2.2. International Policies on Inclusive Education

Over the past two decades, there have been numerous policies and legislations put in place in support of a movement towards inclusive education. In Britain in 1989, the Centre for the Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) drew up the *Inclusion Charter* (revised in 2002), in support of the de-segregation of special schools from mainstream schools, the principles of which are summarized below:

1) The support of an end to segregated learning systems based on learning difficulties and disabilities.
2) All learners deserve equal opportunities to education.
3) All children are of equal value, and thus the segregation of learners based on disabilities or learning difficulties from mainstream schools is devaluating and discriminatory.
4) Through the gradual transferring of resources, specialized staff and learners from 'special schools' to mainstream schools, a supportive, diverse and inclusive system can be achieved.
5) The segregation of schools based on learner differences fosters discrimination and prejudice against learners with disabilities or learning difficulties, and thus that the inclusion of these individuals into a mainstream education system is a step towards changing discriminatory attitudes in creating greater understanding of these individuals (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, 2012).

A few more important international policies and legislations that have been drawn up to protect the rights of the child, with special consideration to the right to education, are: the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), the Salamanca Statement (1994), the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001), and the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (2004).

One of the most fundamental policy documents formulated in support of inclusive education is that of the Salamanca Statement and thus deserves some further explanation. In 1994, ninety-two government representatives from countries all over the world attended the World Conference on Special Education in Salamanca, Spain (The Salamanca Statement, 1994). The aim of this conference was a movement towards the philosophy of 'Education for All', in which schools are able to assist all children, including those with barriers to learning, essentially creating systems in which everybody is included, differences are celebrated, learning is supported and individual needs are responded to (The Salamanca Statement, 1994). The primary principles on which the Salamnca Statement (1994) is based are as follows:

1) Education is a fundemental human right, and every indivdual should be given equal opportunities to learn.
2) Every child is unique, in terms of their abilities, characteristics, interests and learning needs.
3) The diverse learning needs of each individual child should be considered when designing and implementing educational programmes.
4) Regular schools should be available to children with barriers to learning and should accommodate their diverse learning needs.
5) In adopting this inclusive philosophy, the majority of children will receive effective education, as well as fostering communities which are welcoming and non-discriminatory.

Furthermore it is stated that all children are to be included and accomodated in schools, no matter their "physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions" (The Salamanca Statement, 1994, p. 6) and this should include "disabled or gifted children; street and working children; children from remote or nomadic populations; children from linguistic, ethinic or cultural minorities; and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups" (The Salamanca Statement, 1994, p. 6).

**2.3. South African Policies on Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education in South Africa has its roots in the transformation from a discriminatory and segregated society, as was the case pre 1994 during the apartheid era, to that of an inclusive and democratic society (Engelbrecht et al., 2006). The movement towards an inclusive society based on human rights was one of the motivating factors for the development of an inclusive education system (Hay et al., 2001). A few of the policy documents related to inclusive education in South Africa are discussed below.

The philosophy of inclusive education can be seen in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), under the Bill of Rights, where it is stated that everyone has the right to an education. Embodying this principle, the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) states that public schools must be accessible to all

learners, including those with barriers to learning, and must provide such learners with the appropriate support services needed.

However, it was the policy document released by the Department of Education in 2001, entitled *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system*, that is at the forefront of creating an inclusive education system in South Africa. The policy document, Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), is intended to show the Department of Education's commitment to the provision of an education system that caters for the diverse learning needs of all students, in particular for those students who experience barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001). The Ministry "sees the establishment of an inclusive education and training system as a cornerstone of a caring and integrated society and an education and training system for the 21st century" (Department of Education, 2001, p. 10).

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) acknowledges and respects that all learners are diverse and may have different needs, and thus that it is necessary to create an education system and learning environment that caters for and supports all of these needs, at which ever level they may arise. The development and implementation of an inclusive education system in South Africa was conceptualised as a twenty year project (Department of Education, 2001), the goals of which are broken down as follows:

Short-term steps (2001-2003): the beginings of implementation in this time frame included the implementation of the policies and education programmes geared towards inclusive education; implementing outreach programmes to out-of-school learners; the conversion of 30 special schools to function as resource centres in allocated school districts; the conversion of 30 primary schools to full-service schools in the same allocated school districts; the implementation of district support teams; the gradual introduction of an inclusive orientation to school management; governing bodies and staff within all public education systems; and the implementation of systems in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) geared towards early identification and intervention strategies for barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2001).

Medium-term steps (2004-2008): the recognition of, and desire to address, barriers to learning by all education and training institutes; the expansion of the outreach community programmes; the expansion of the number of resource schools, district support teams and full-service schools (Department of Education, 2001).

Long-term steps (2009-2021): the expansion of inclusive education institutions to a targeted number of 500 full-service schools and district support teams, 380 resource centres/special schools and the provision of these to the 280 000 out-of-school children (Department of Education, 2001).

Building on Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), in 2010 the Department of Basic Education released the policy document *Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*, in which further goals were set in striving for a quality education for all (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

### 2.4. Debate Around Inclusive Education in South Africa

In South Africa, as in other parts of the world, it has historically been assumed that there are two distinct categories of learners: those with 'ordinary needs' and those who experience barriers to learning who need some form of support to enable them to participate in the learning process (Department of Education, 1997). Prior to 1994 in South Africa, education systems were indeed divided along these lines, separating mainstream schools from 'special needs schools', and it is recognized that it is this second category of learners whose educational needs were not always met. Thus it was hoped that through the movement towards a more inclusive education system, that these learners would be provided with the opportunity that they were perhaps not afforded in the past (Department of Education, 1997; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Green, 2001).

However, there are many challenges that South Africa faces in creating an inclusive education system where all learners' needs are accommodated (Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Gous, Eloff & Moen, 2013). One of these challenges is in the number of learners that can currently be conceptualized as experiencing barriers to learning (Donald et al., 2010). While in developed countries those who experience barriers to learning (most commonly intrinsic barriers) are considered to comprise the minority

of learners, in developing countries like South Africa, where extreme social and educational inequalities exist, those experiencing barriers to learning (most commonly external barriers) are considered to comprise the majority of learners (Donald et al., 2010). In addition to this, many schools in South Africa, especially within the underdeveloped communities, are reported to be ill resourced in terms of both school facilities and teaching staff, with large classes and at times under qualified educators (Amod, 2003; Muller, 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). Furthermore the problem of crime, drugs, violence and gangsterism has also been reported to be rife within schools ("Freedom is a mirage", 2013). As a result of the current challenges found in schools, educators have been found to be feeling overworked, tired and frustrated, compromising even competent educators' ability to actually teach (Muller, 2013). Over the past few years, an increase in educator absenteeism has been reported, as well as educators resorting to striking to express their frustration (Brand, 2013).

It has thus been debated whether an education system already facing so many challenges will be able to successfully implement a policy of inclusive education. While the idea of inclusive education, with the recognition and celebration of diversity, may be representative of a global consciousness (Engelbrecht, 1999; Green, 2001; Hay et al., 2001), questions have been raised regarding the feasibility of its implementation (Engelbrecht, 2006; Grous et al., 2013). While the inclusion of learners with barriers into mainstream schools may change attitudes around those barriers, questions have been posed around whether those learners and others will receive adequate education. Are South African schools equipped to handle the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning? And if schools are not equipped, then although learners with barriers are afforded the right to belong within a mainstream school, are they truly receiving *quality* education? It has thus been debated whether the South African education system can sustain a policy of inclusive education that is in the best interest of all learners (Department of National Education, 1997; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Green, 2001; Grous et al., 2013). This indicates a current gap between policy and implementation on ground level (Grous et al., 2013). Oswald and de Villiers (2013) express that before learners with barriers "will be able to receive appropriate education and support, this gap – between policy ideals and classroom realities regarding the implementation of inclusive education – needs to be addressed" (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013, p. 6).

One of the most fundamental steps reported in the Salamanca Statement "Framework for Action" (1994) for making inclusive education both possible and successful is said to be the provision of support services by the government. Support services for learners and the system may include: teacher training and support, the provision of assisstive devices, counselling, thearpeutic support (such as physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy), parental support, organisational development and curriculum development (Department of Education, 1997). While policies may outline a change in direction, it has been argued that the implemntation of such a system has not been prescribed with sufficient clarity, and thus that it is questionalble whether these support services are currently being provided (Green, 2001; Meier, 2005)

**2.5. Key Barriers to Learning in South Africa**

Many barriers to learning have been identified, which may arise from either internal or external factors. As described earlier on in the paper, internal barriers to learning are considered to arise from the individual learner, whereas external barriers to learning may arise from the environment and/or broader social context of the individual. Within South Africa in particular, as a develoing country, there are many external barriers to learning that may arise due to the broader socio-economic context (Department of Education, 1997; Donald et al., 2010).

The Department of Education (1997) listed a number barriers to learning that many of the children in South Africa may face, some of these being: *socio-economic barriers,* such as insufficient resources and inadequate number of learning centres; *lack of access to basic services,* such as transport systems and medical centres; *poverty and underdevelopment* such as lack of basic needs (shelter and nutrition), poorly resourced learning facilities and inadequately trained teachers; *factors which place learners at risk* (often arising out of the social, economic or political environment) such as learners who experience abuse, political violence, civil war, high rates of crime and violence, a change in home environment, natural disasters, or epidemics such as HIV/AIDS; *discriminatory attitudes* based on factors such as race, gender, cuture, sexual orientation, class, religion, ability or disability; *lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy* in which barriers arise not only from the education system, but from policy and legislation that governs the education system and wider

societies; *lack of parental recognition and involvement; disability* in which total exclusion from learning centres may arise due to a failure of the education system to meet the needs of these individuals; *inadequate provision of support services and lack of human resource development strategies* such as lack of training of teachers which can lead to uncertainity, fear and even negative attitudes by the teacher towards the learner (Department of Education, 1997; Mentz & Barret, 2011).

All of the above mentioned barriers to learning can significantly inhibit an individual's learning development. However, according to the report by the NCSNET and the NCESS (Department of Education, 1997), a fundemental barrier to learning that may arise from within the education system itself, and which is the focus of the current research study, is that of an *inflexible curriculum* (Department of Education, 1997). Aspects of the curriculum identified that may perpetuate barriers to learning include the content, language used, how the classroom is organized, teaching methods, pace of teaching, time allocated to complete the curriculum, learning materials used and assessment methods. Related to barriers arising from the curriculum, are barriers arising from the *language and communication* used in schools. The majority of learners in schools are being taught in a language that is not their home language, and this not only puts these students at a disadvantage, but also leads to a breakdown of learning due to linguistic difficulties (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). Furthermore, learners who have more severe dificulties such as the inability to speak due to a physical impairment, may be excluded completely from the learning system due to the inability of the system to provide 'augmentative and alternative communication' (AAC) (Department of Education, 1997).

The movement towards inclusive education has taken hold in countries all over the world, and the guidelines for achieving this have been stipulated at government policy level. However it is essentially up to the schools and the personnele therein to implement the policies practically, through the provision of resources, instructional methods and support for learners, to ensure the outcome of effective learning (Amod, 2003; Bailey & du Plessis, 1997). Although many key barriers to learning have been identified which may effect the learning ability of the individual, a significant barrier that has been identified is that of the school curriculum, and it is this potential barrier

that the present research focuses on. What follows is a brief description of the curriculum policy development in South Africa related to inclusive education.

### 2.6. South African Education Curriculum Policy Development

South Africa has undergone vast and significant changes over the past couple of years, among them being the restructuring of the educational system (Department of Education, 2011; Engelbrecht, 1999; Naicker, 2006). No longer is there a policy of segregation, separating normal developing learners from those with barriers to learning, thus creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all children (Department of Education, 2011; Donald et al., 2010; Engelbrecht, 1999; Naicker, 2006).

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) aims to create an education system that is based on principles of equality and non-discrimination with the belief that all learners, no matter how diverse their learning needs, can be accommodated and supported in reaching their full potential. One of the most important changes the education system has had to undergo in order to accommodate the diverse learning needs of students is through the curriculum and instructional strategies (Department of Education, 2011). As stated by Naicker (2006), "the curriculum is the vehicle to create the conditions for inclusive education" (Naicker, 2006, p. 4).

There are many barriers to learning (as highlighted above), but one of the most significant barriers identified that students may encounter is that of the school curriculum. Aspects of the curriculum that may create barriers to learning include the content, the medium of instruction (the language used), how the classroom is organized, teaching methods, pace of teaching, time allocated to complete the curriculum, learning materials used and assessment methods (Department of Education, 2001). Within inclusive education, it is considered essential for a curriculum to be flexible in order to accommodate the varied needs of the learners within the classroom (Department of Education, 2011).

Since the end of apartheid, the curriculum used in schools has undergone a number of changes, with one of the motivating factors being a system aimed at education for all.

There have been three primary curriculum policy developments since the implementation of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), each one building on the previous policy to ensure a curriculum that supports inclusive education and accommodates the diverse learning needs of individuals. These three curriculum policy developments are Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and now the current curriculum, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

In 1998 *Curriculum 2005* was introduced in a movement away from the apartheid curriculum based on segregation. Curriculum 2005 had a learner-centered approach and was based on principles of inclusion (Naicker, 2006). The approach used under Curriculum 2005 was that of Outcomes-Based Education (Department of Education, 1997). Although a first step towards an inclusive education model, criticisms towards Curriculum 2005 led to the development of the Revised National Curriculum Statement, which is based on principles of human rights, social justice and inclusion, and thus furthered the movement towards a fully inclusive educational system (Naicker, 2006). While OBE and NCS embodied the principles of inclusive education, the curriculum was further revised to that of the current curriculum for South African schools, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). CAPS is said to support the policies outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) and is reported to be tailored to meet the needs of all learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2011; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013).

One of the ways in which the current curriculum CAPS is said to support the diverse learning needs of all students is through what is known as 'curriculum differentiation', which includes "processes of modifying, changing, adapting, extending, and varying teaching methodologies, teaching strategies, assessment strategies and the content of the curriculum" (Department of Education, 2011, p. 4). Curriculum differentiation is thus a strategy proposed to overcome the potential barriers to learning that were identified as resulting from the older curriculum structure (Department of Education, 2001).

Curriculum differentiation can be implemented in a number of ways to varying aspects of the curriculum, as reported in the policy document "Guidlines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements" (Department of Education, 2011), some of these being: *content differentiation* in which the content taught is modified to suite the variety of learners needs in a class; *learning environment differentiation* which includes both *a) physical environment* (classroom size, infrastructure, arrangement of furniture and space, classroom resources and displays, noise level) and *b) psychosocial learning environment* (effective communication, co-operation, classroom and school culture, protection against harrasment); *differentiation in teaching methods* which involves a flexible use and range of learning materials, methods of presentation, learning activities and lesson organization, and lastly *differentiation of assessment methods* (group assessments, oral assessments, extra time given for assessments and so forth) (Department of Education, 2011).

With regards to the differentiation of assessment methods, three types of alternative assessment methods have been accepted by the National Protocol for Recording and Reporting (Grade R - 12) for learners experiencing barriers to learning (Department of Education, 2011), and these are: *Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Attainment of Knowledge* – in which the assessment is based on the grade level content, but with reduced depth and complexity. This assessment type is specifically for learners with cognitive disabilities. *Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Attainment of Knowledge* – in which learners are assessed on grade-level content but given more time to complete the assessment. This type of assessment is used for learners with disabilities (such as moderate intellectual disabilities and/or deaf learners). *Alternate Assessment Based on Grade-Level Attainment of Knowledge* – in which grade-level content is assessed, although through a differing format and procedure than that of the standard test (such as verbal tests for learners with a visual impairment). This type of assessment is used for learners with disabilities and/or learning dificulties (learners who are blind, have physial disabilities, dyslexia, or communication difficulties) (Department of Education, 2011).

While provision has been made for curriculum differentiation in CAPS, in an attempt to accommodate the diverse needs of learners, there is limited research or reviews on

whether this is being implemented successfully at schools, and whether it is effective in accomodating the diverse needs of learners experiencing barriers. There is thus a need for research on this new policy and the effectiveness of its implementation within schools.

### 2.7. The Importance of the Principal in Inclusive Education

Since the 1970s, the principal's role in schools has slowly evolved from one of 'building managers' and 'student disciplinarians' to one of 'instructional leadership' (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Thus, as the philosophies and policies regarding the education system have slowly moved towards inclusion, the role of the principal has become increasingly more important (Amod, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Salisbury, 2006; Edmunds, Macmillian, Specht, Nowicki & Edmunds, 2009). Salisbury (2006, p. 70) states:

> the capacity of schools to address the diverse needs of students who differ in their ability, language, culture, and socioeconomic standing will require that schools alter not only their structures, policies and practices, but the underlying philosophy of the school and the attitudes and beliefes of school personnel.

It is essentially the principal's role to facilitate and lead this change (Gous et al., 2013; Salisbury, 2006). Principals are considered to be at the heart of creating a successful inclusive school environment as it is under their leadership and school management that change is initiated and sustained (Gous et al., 2013; Mentz & Barrett, 2011; Schmidt & Venet, 2012). Principals are charged with facilitating the change and helping others to adjust to the change. In order to be successful in this, it is argued that principals need to be dynamic leaders, commited to the vision of inclusive education, and use a democratic leadership style in which collaboration with all role players forms the cornerstone (Mentz & Barrett, 2011; Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Schmidt & Venet, 2012). It is for this reason that principals are at times refered to as 'school managers' (Department of Education, 2001).

There are many key roles reported that a principal must play in order to achieve a successful inclusive educational environment. Patreese (1997) argues that above all else, a principal must act as a role model to the rest of the school, especially to the

educators, and promote an ethos and culture of acceptance and diversity. Furthermore, Garrison-Wade, Sobel and Fulmer (2007) describe a number of principles that are said to form the basis of effective leadership by a principal: 1) active involvement in implementing inclusive policies, 2) creating an effective and open communication system, 3) collaborating with all parties involved to achieve effective implementation of inclusion, and 4) implementation of professional development around barriers to learning. Furthermore, DiPaola and Walther-Thomas, (2003) also propose that principals need to have a clear educational mission for the school; manage instruction methods and the curriculum; provide support for educators; monitor the progress of students, and promote a climate conducive to learning.

Of the principles mentioned above, two are considred essential in the implementation of a successful inclusive school environment, these being *profesional development* and the use of a *collaborative approach*. DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003) advocate that professional development, for both principals and educators, should involve the attainment of knowledge of all the barriers to learning that may arise for an individual, as well as the skills necessary to manage and accomodate these barriers. Furthermore, the use of a collaborative approach in an inclusive environment is considered essential, in which the principal, educators, parents and students work together in creating an inclusive educational environment for all (Amod, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Gous et al., 2013).

Furthermore, educators are also considered to play a vital role in the successful implementation of inclusive education, as it is their knowledge of, and acceptance of students with barriers to learning that shapes their willingness to teach these children (Ali et al., 2006; Hay et al., 2001). Thus one of the principal's pivotal roles in creating a successful inclusive educational system is considered to be the motivation of educators (Edmunds et al., 2009; Patreese, 1997). Accordingly, Patreese (1997) conducted a study on the type of principal leadership qualities that are most successful in supporting and motivating educators in an inclusive school environment. From the study, Patreese (1997) identified two types of principal leadership styles and behaviours that are used to motivate educators: *transactional leadership* and *transformational leadership.* Transactional leadership uses external rewards to motivate educators, whereas transformational leadership motivates a change in

educators' attitudes and beliefs, and instills a commitment to the school's mission and vision of creating an inclusive educational environment. Thus in a study conducted by Patreese (1997) on educators' perceptions of principals' leadership behaviours and the extent to which these behaviours motivated educators, it was found that leadership behaviours that were 'transformational' as opposed to 'transactional' led to increased motivation for the educators. This was reiterated in a study conducted by Ingram (1997) in which transformational leadership was found to be essential and more effective in changing the values, attitudes and beliefs necessary for a successful inclusive school environment.

Furthermore, highlighting the importance of the principal, studies have shown that principals who are motivated and play an active role in the implementation of inclusion policies are often most successful in implementing change in their schools (Collins & White, 2001; Edmunds et al., 2009; Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Patreese, 1997).

### 2.8. The School as an Ecosystemic Framework

Bronfenbrenners' ecological model can be used to understand the importance of the school principal in the development of a learner within an inclusive educational setting. According to Bronfenbrenner's model, an individual is influenced by a series of interlinking systems. Five environmental systems have been identified, these being the: 1) microsystem, 2) mesosystem, 3) exosystem, 4) macrosystem, and 5) chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The *microsystem* is the immediate environment of the developing learner in which interactions with important figures occur (such as family, friends, and educators). The *mesosystem* is formed from a series of interacting microsystems (such as interaction between the school and the learner's parents). The *exosystem* consists of organisations that the learner is not immediatley involved with but that nevertheless influences the learner (such as the school governing body). The *macrosystem* involves the broader society in which the learner lives and the laws, value systems, customs and cultures that form part of that society. Lastly, the *chronosystem* refers to the time or era in which the individual is living in (such as the era of inclusive eduaction) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Bronfenrenner, 1979; Schmidt & Venet, 2012).

The principal acts as a key figure in the learning development of students and falls within a number of the environmental systems that influence the learner. The role of the principal can be seen in the mesosystem in which the principal interacts with the school governing body, implementing the policies formed at the macrosystemic level of inclusive education. The principal also falls within the mesosystem of the learner through the principal's direct interaction with the learner's educators and other supportive interventions, as well as within the learner's microsystem through the direct interaction with the learner and their parents (Schmidt & Venet, 2012).

Expanding on this theory, an ecosystemic framework can be used to look at inclusive education as a whole within South Africa, and the role the principal plays within this. The ecosystemic framework, an integration of both the systems theory and the ecological theory, advocates for a holistic approach in which all parts need to be considered to understand the whole (Donald et al., 2010). From an ecosystemic perspective, a social context (an inclusive school environment) is formed by overlapping and interdependent systems, and thus to understand inclusive education one has to look at all the systems and subsystems involved therein. For example the school as a whole system is made up of parts, such as the learners, the staff, the school management team and the curriculum. All of these parts or subsystems interact with oneanother to form the whole system, and changes in any one subsystem can influence changes in another subsystem (Donald et al., 2010).

Thus in considering inclusive education in South Africa, the ecosystemic perspective provides a holistic view in which the success or failure of inclusion is dependant on many factors. This research study focuses on two such factors, that being the importance of the principal within an inclusive education setting and the current curriculum used in schools. While the successful implementation of inclusive education depends on many factors (learners, parents, communities, resources, government), the principal plays a key role in both managing and initiating changes within different subsystems. It is for this reason that principals play such an important role within the successful implementation of inclusive education and why principals are able to provide a unique understanding of inclusive education within schools and communities.

## 2.9. Principals' Perceptions Towards Inclusive Education

As principals play such a key role in the successful implementation of inclusive policies in the educational setting, understanding principals' perceptions towards inclusive education is essential. In a qualitative study conducted in Australia by Bailey and du Plessis (1997) on more than 200 school principals' attitudes towards inclusive schooling, as well as in a qualitative study conducted by Conrad & Brown (2011) in Trinidad and Tabogo with a sample of eighteen principals, it was found that the majority of principals' perceptions and attitude towards inclusion could be divided along two lines: their perceptions regarding the philosophy of inclusion and their perceptions regarding the practice of inclusion. Bailey and du Plessis (1997) found that most of the principals agreed with the philosophy of inclusion and understood the value of inclusive education in fostering a diverse, accepting and inclusive society. However in terms of practice, concerns were raised that while inclusion may be beneficial for learners experiencing barriers to learning, some believed that it may not be as beneficial for other 'typically' developing learners. Furthermore, concerns were also voiced regarding whether inclusion was truly in the best interest of the learners experiencing barriers to learning. Challenges of the implementation of inclusive education were also raised in the form of inadequate resources, a lack of teacher training, and the need for specialised support.

The study conducted by Conrad and Brown (2011), also revealed confusion around 'what is meant' by 'inclusive education'; principals expressed queries regarding the severity of barriers to be included and whether there was a cut-off line, as well as whether the implementation of inclusive education is dependent on school resources and services offered. Participants from within this study believed that a change in both organizational and school climate would be necessary for the successful implementation of inclusive education, as well as a need for curricular modifications, teacher training and collaborative efforts in creating an inclusive education system.

Similar to the above mentioned studies, in a quantitative study conducted by Ngwokabuenui (2013) in Cameroon on 73 principals' perceptions towards inclusive education, it was found that while the majority of principals agreed with the philosophy of inclusion, practically it was thought that the inclusion of learners with barriers should depend on the severity of the barriers they experience. While

principals reported that they thought learners with 'mild' barriers, such as learning difficulties or physical impairments, could be accomodated within a mainstream school, they expressed the view that learners experiencing more severe barriers, such as visual or hearing impairments, emotional desturbances or pervasive developmental disorders, should attend a school that provides specialised support services. In accordance with this view, most principals were found to be more willing to include learners with 'mild' barriers to learning in their school, than learners with more severe barriers. This was also found to be true in a quantitative study conducted by Praisner (2003), in which one in five principals (from a sample of 408 school principals from Pennsylvania) were found to have favourable attitudes towards inclusion, with the significant deciding factor of whether to place learners with barriers in their school, being the severity of the barriers experienced. One of the reasons for the above mentioned findings was expressed by Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011), to be due to the competitive nature and pressure put on schools today to succeed and maintain a certain standard. Thus including learners with more severe barriers to learning and development has been seen as a threat to the success of school results based on measures of assessment (Ngcobo & Muthukrishna, 2011).

While principals play a pivotal role creating an inclusive school environment, there are many obstacles and difficulties that have been reported that principals' face in assuming their role (Salisbury, 2006; Schmidt & Venet, 2012). In a qualitative study conducted by Brotherson, Sheriff, Milburn and Schertz (2001), with a sample of 61 principals from the state of Iowa in the United States, principals voiced that they experienced many challenges in attempting to create an inclusive school environment, such as 1) the high volume of learners entering into schools with barriers to learning, 2) the attainment of educators with training and specialized skills concerning learners with barriers to learning; 3) the lack of training and experience of current educators within schools concerning learners with barriers to learning; 4) the uncertainty faced by most educators and staff within schools at providing effective and quality services to learners with barriers to learning; 5) a lack of resources to make inclusivity both possible and successful; and 6) a wide gap between policy and 'what should be' and the reality of the classroom situation. A further challenge reported by principals, found both in the study conducted by Brotherson et al., (2001) and Schmidt and Venet, (2012) was a lack of collaboration between all parties involved in both the

school and community settings. Furthermore, Brotherson et al., (2001) also found that principals tended to attribute the difficulties and challenges they faced in implementing inclusive education to external factors (such as lack of government assistance, resources and funds), yet did not easily acknowledge their role in fostering a successful inclusive school environment. This was also found in the study conducted by Conrad and Brown (2011), in which principals reported that they did not believe it was their responsibility to facilitate the change towards an inclusive school environment.

A particularly significant challenge to the implementation of inclusive education, voiced by principals in a number of studies (Brotherson et al., 2001; Conrad & Brown, 2011; Edmunds et al., 2009; Salisbury, 2006; Schmidt & Venet, 2012), is educator preparedness in teaching learners with barriers to learning. This was illustrated in a study conducted by Hay et al., (2001), on educators' preparedness for inclusive education in the Free State province of South Africa, where it was found that many of the educators felt "unprepared and unequipped to teach integrated classes, and ascribed this to a lack of training, lack of time, large classes, lack of facilities, and lack of teacher experience" (Hay et al., 2001, p. 218). Oswald and de Villiers (2013) express that educators can no longer "work with learners from a one-size-fits-all approach" (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013, p. 5), that they have to respond to and educate learners based on their different needs and abilities. It is for this reason, along with the increased demands educators have been reported to feel with the changes involved in inclusion, that some educators are reported to have negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning (Conrad & Brown, 2011; Edmunds et al., 2009; Salisbury, 2006). This highlights the importance and necessity of educator training regarding learners with barriers to learning and how best to accommodate them within a classroom, as well as a need for educator assistance within the classroom.

A further factor that has been reported by principals and educators alike, and that forms a current debate within the literature, is peers' attitudes towards learners with barriers to learning. One of the many challenges to inclusive education is that of the notion that learners who experience barriers to learning, especially those learners with disabilities, are at risk of being subjected to being teased or bullied at school (Conrad

& Brown, 2011; Frederickson, Simmonds, Evans, & Soulsby, 2007; Frederickson, 2010). Studies have shown that learners with barriers to learning (most commonly intrinsic barriers) are often less socially accepted and rejected by their mainstream peers. This has been said to be due to two reasons: 1) learners with barriers (typically intrinsic) are often noticably and visably different from their 'normal' developing peers which increases the risk of bullying and victimisation, and 2) these learners often have fewer friends and are thus less socially protected (Frederickso et al., 2007). However, although this may be a real possibility, there are also studies that have found the opposite to be true, whereby mainstream learners formed a positive, caring and even protective bond with those learners experiencing barriers to learning. This was shown in a study conducted by Frederickson et al. (2007), in which learners with barriers to learning were in fact positively received and accepted by their typically developing peers. The differences in these findings are said to largely be due to the intervention strategies used, with strategies aimed at educating learners about barriers to learning thought to promote acceptance of these learners (Frederickso et al., 2007).

A further debate to be considered is whether the labeling of children with barriers to learning increases their risk of being victimised and bullied. This notion has been said to be overemphasized, and that in fact, open communication with learners about barriers to learning can often serve as a protective factor and fostor accepting relationsips (Frederickson, 2010).

Existing literature thus reveals that while the majority of school principals may believe in the ideals and philosophy of inclusive education, principals reported to be reserved in their view of the effectiveness of the policy's implementation. The primary reasons for principals' reservations appeared to be the many challenges faced in the process of implementation, such as lack of resources, educator unpreparedness, an unclear cutoff line regarding the severity of the barriers experienced to be included, and a lack of collaboration between involved parties at both the government, community and school level.

In conclusion, while a wealth of studies have been conducted regarding the perceptions of educators towards inclusive education, both internationally and in South Africa, there appears to be a gap in the literature concerning principals' views

towards inclusive education, especially in the South African context. While understanding the perceptions of educators towards inclusive education is essential, as it is educators who ultimately teach learners both with and without barriers to learning, the perceptions of principals towards inclusive education is also fundamentally important, as principals play such a vital role in the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Furthermore, there seems to be a gap in the literature concerning principals' views towards the recent curriculum policy developments in South Africa related to inclusive education, and whether the current curriculum policy CAPS is succeeding in supporting the implementation of inclusive education. This study thus aims to address these gaps by providing insight into the current state of our education system with regards to inclusive education, from the viewpoint of the school principal.

# Chapter 3
# Methodology

This chapter presents the research method and design of the current study. An overview of the aims and research questions will be provided followed by a description of the research approach and sampling methods for the current study. Following this will be a discussion of the instruments and procedure used to collect the data. The method of data analysis used will then be discussed followed by a brief discussion of researcher reflexivity in conducting this study. The chapter will conclude with the ethical procedures considered in implementing current study.

## 3.1. Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this study was to explore principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the curriculum policy development in South Africa since the implementation of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

The specific research questions of this study, in relation to the above stated aim, were:

1) What are principals' views and understanding of inclusive education?
2) What do principals perceive the benefits, if any, of inclusive education to be?
3) What do principals perceive the disadvantages, if any, of inclusive education to be?
4) What are principals' perceptions regarding the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education?
5) What are principals' perceptions regarding curriculum policy development related to inclusive education?
6) What are principals' perceptions regarding the implementation of curriculum policies related to inclusive education?
    a. What are principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that facilitate the implementation of inclusive education?
    b. What are principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that hinder the implementation of inclusive education?
7) What are principals' perceptions regarding the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6?

### 3.2. Research Approach

The research approach for this study was based within a qualitative paradigm which "aims to address questions concerned with developing an understanding of the meaning and experience dimensions of humans' lives and social worlds" (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002, p. 717). Within this paradigm, a phenomenological research design was used to explore and gain a deeper understanding of principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the curriculum policy development over the past thirteen years, as they have experienced it. This research approach focuses on a specific phenomenon from the participants' lived experience and social realities (Seabi, 2012).

### 3.3. Sample

The sample used for this research consisted of eight principals from government primary schools in the Johannesburg-north area of Gauteng. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, as the participants in this study needed to meet certain criteria - in the case of this research, being a principal of a government primary school in the Johannesburg-north area in Gauteng, South Africa. Convenience sampling was used in this study, as the schools that participated in the study were located in the general residing area of the researcher and consisted of principals who volunteered to participate in the study. Furthermore, data was gathered from principals until saturation was reached, providing a sample size of eight principals (Huck, 2009).

The sample for this research was not gender specific and thus the researcher aimed to find both male and female participants. Of the eight principals that participated in this study, five of the participants were female and three of the participants were male. The age of the sample group was approximated to be thirty years or above, due to the nature of the position of the principal, however this was not a set criterion. The majority of the principals had been involved within the education and school setting in varying positions for a period of twelve years or longer, and had been acting in the position of principal for at least three years.

All schools involved in the study were government/mainstream schools located within the Johannesburg-north area of Gauteng, with six of the schools falling within urban areas and two of the schools falling within peri-urban areas. All schools were

classified as co-educational schools with the majority of schools appearing to have an integration of different racial groups and cultures among the learners. The number of learners per school ranged from 612 to 1248 learners. The majority of schools reported to have a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:35, with two of the schools having a teacher to pupil ratio of 1:40. While six out of the eight schools involved appeared to be fairly well resourced, two of the schools involved were very poorly resourced. Even so, the majority of schools appeared to have basic resources available to them (blackboards, library, computer centers, printers, photocopy machines, internet access, school governing body, school based support team, text books and workbooks). In terms of support services available to learners at the school, three of the eight schools had access to a psychologist, although not always based at the school. However none of the schools reported to have access to speech therapists or occupational therapists, and none of the schools reported to have ramps for wheelchairs.

### 3.4. Instruments

Two instruments were used for the purpose of this study. A School Survey Checklist (see Appendix 4), adopted from the study conducted by Blackie (2010), was used to ascertain the resources available at each school as this can likely influence the successful implementation of inclusive education. The School Survey Checklist included questions on: the number of learners in the school, the pupil-to-teacher ratio, the teaching materials available, as well as the physical and human resources available to the school and its learners.

A semi-structured interview (see Appendix 5) was used in order to explore principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the recent curriculum policy developments related to inclusive education. The use of interviews allows the researcher to collect descriptive and rich data from the social realities and lived experiences of the participants (Greef, 2002; Seabi, 2012). Caution however must be used in the interview process as both participant and researcher play an active role in the meaning-making process, and thus the researcher must find a balance between creating rapport with the participants while remaining an objective observer. A further limitation of the use of interviews is that questions may raise sensitive issues for the participants, which may lead them to restrict their willingness to share information (Greef, 2002). However, as the researcher developed rapport with each of the

participants as well as due to the nature of the current study, this did not present as a limitation. Furthermore, a possibility that participants may tailor their answers to reflect what they perceive is the appropriate answer, may also present as a limitation (Greef, 2002). However as participants were ensured of confidentiality, as well as assuming that principals who volunteered to participate within the study want to be heard, it was believed that their answers would reflect their true opinions.

The questions used in the interview were formulated in accordance with the research questions of this study. The first two interview questions addressed the *first research question* by exploring principals' perceptions towards inclusive education. The third and fourth interview questions addressed the *second* and *third research questions* by exploring principals' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education. The fifth and sixth interview questions aimed to address the *fourth research question* by exploring principals' perceptions of the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education. The focus then shifted onto the curriculum developments within South Africa, with the seventh interview question aimed at addressing the *fifth research question* by exploring principals' perceptions on the recent curriculum policy development in South Africa related to inclusive education. Following on from this, the eighth and ninth interview questions addressed the *sixth research question*, regarding principals' perceptions on aspects of the curriculum that facilitate or hinder the implementation of inclusive education. Lastly the tenth interview question addressed the *seventh research question*, by exploring principals' perceptions of the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). Lastly interview questions eleven and twelve were added as open-ended questions for any other comments the principals wished to add regarding inclusive education in South Africa and the related curriculum policy developments.

### 3.5. Procedure

The researcher requested permission to conduct the present study from the Government Department of Education (GDE) as well as from the Human Research Committee (School of Human & Community Development) associated with the University of the Witwatersrand. The researcher was granted permission to conduct the current study from both organisations and was provided with an approval letter

(see Appendix 7) from the GDE and an ethical clearance certificate (see Appendix 6) from the University of the Witwatersrand. The researcher then proceeded to contact principals from government primary schools in the Johannesburg-north area.

Principals were contacted telephonically by the researcher and briefed on the nature of the present study. For those principals willing to participate in the current study, the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 1), explaining the aims and objectives of the study, as well as the consent forms for both the interview and for the audiotape recording of the interview (see Appendix 2 & 3) were sent to the principals via email. Once these documents had been read and agreed to, a time was arranged for the interview to take place. Before the interview began, principals were asked to complete the School Survey Checklist (see Appendix 4), which took approximately 5 minutes. Principals were then asked to sign both the consent forms before the interview began. The interviews took place on the school grounds and at a time agreed upon by the principal and the researcher, and took approximately 50 to 60 minutes to complete.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

For the purposes of this study, basic descriptive techniques were used to capture and summarize the data pertaining to the School Survey Checklist, and thematic content analysis was used to analyze the data gathered from the interviews with the principals. Thematic content analysis is defined as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). Thematic content analysis is used to organise the data collected by identiying 'patterned responses' that are meaningful to the study, and developing themes based on these responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

An inductive approach to thematic content analysis was used as the data collected (by way of interviews with principals from government primary schools) was for the specific purposes of this study, and the themes identified emerged from this data. Furthermore, themes were identified at the semantic level, whereby the surface or explicit meanings were captured, and then explored to determine their broader meanings and implications for the present study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clark's (2006) six phase process of conducting thematic content analysis was followed in analysing the data. This involved the transcribing of data from the interviews into a written format, followed by careful reading and re-reading of the transcript so that the researcher became extensivley familiarized with the data and could begin to search for patterns. Codes were then developed and assigned to meaningful groups of data as they began to emerge. Thereafter codes were sorted into potential themes and these themes sorted and refined so that they fitted together in a coherent manner and covered the range of meaningful data. Once the themes had been refined they were named to capture the 'essence' of each particular theme, and the data for each theme analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### 3.7. Researcher Reflexivity

*Researcher reflexivity* can be defined as "(a) the acknowledgement and identification of one's place and presence in the research, and (b) the process of using these insights to critically examine the entire research process" (Underwood, Satterthwait, & Bartlett, 2010, p. 1585). Thus as the researcher, I aimed to enter into the present study being continually aware of my active role in the research process as well as being aware of any personal assumptions or biases that may come up in the research process. A reflective diary was used to capture these processes throughout the duration of the research. By acknowledging and being self-aware of the influence I may have on the outcomes of the research, I was able to monitor this and strive to create quality research that truly reflects the voice of the participants. As stated by Underwood et al. (2010), "the challenge is not to eliminate bias, but to use it as a focus for more intense insight" (Underwood et al., 2010, p. 1586).

Furthermore, a process of crystalization was used, in which data is viewed from as many angles and sources as possible, in an attempt to provide true and accurate results (Seabi, 2012). This was achieved through the process of the re-reading of the themes, the discussions held with the researcher's supervisor regarding the data collected and the emergent themes, and the use of a reflective diary. It was hoped that through this process, the findings of the study would reflect a true and accurate representation of participants' perceptions.

### 3.8. Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Human Research Committee (School of Human & Community Development) associated with the University of the Witwatersrand (see Appendix 6), as well as permission from the GDE (see Appendix 7) to conduct the present research study.

Principals that participated in this study received a Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 1) explaining the aims and objectives of the study, as well as two consent forms (see Appendix 2 & 3), one for consenting to participate in the current study and be interviewed, and the second for consenting to the recording of the interview.

It was made clear to the principals that their participation in the study would be entirely voluntary and that there would be no negative consequences should they not wish to participate. Furthermore participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time should they so wish, and that they could choose not to answer specific questions should they not wish to answer. Confidentiality was also ensured as only the researcher and her supervisor had access to the audiotape recordings and transcripts, and the participants were ensured that no identifying information would appear in the final research report. Principals were informed that all interview material (transcripts and audiotapes) would be kept safely in a locked cabinet for the duration of the research, and that all audiotapes would be destroyed on completion of the research report.

Furthermore, participants were informed that on completion of the research report, a summary of the research report and its findings would be sent to each principal that participated and on request, would be sent the full research report. Lastly, participants were informed that the research report may be used for publication in the form of a journal article.

# Chapter 4
# Results

This chapter aims to present the findings of the current study based on a qualitative analysis of the data obtained. Results obtained from the School Survey Checklist were discussed previously in the methodology section of the report. This section of the report provides an in depth description of the emerging themes obtained from the interviews conducted with the principals.

From the semi-structured interview used to gather data on principals' perceptions of inclusive education and the related curriculum policy developments, the following research questions will be addressed in this chapter:

i. What are principals' views and understanding of inclusive education?
ii. What do principals perceive the benefits, if any, of inclusive education to be?
iii. What do principals perceive the disadvantages, if any, of inclusive education to be?
iv. What are principals' perceptions regarding the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education?
v. What are principals' perceptions regarding curriculum policy development related to inclusive education?
vi. What are principals' perceptions regarding the implementation of curriculum policies related to inclusive education?
    a. What are principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that facilitate the implementation of inclusive education?
    b. What are principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that hinder the implementation of inclusive education?
vii. What are principals' perceptions regarding the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6?

A table of the emergent themes is presented below, which is followed by an in depth discussion of each theme.

| Research Question | Sub-Questions | Themes | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) What are principals' views and understanding of inclusive education? | What are principals' understandings of inclusive education? | Theme 1 | Inclusive education refers to the *inclusion of all learners* |
| | | Theme 2 | Inclusive education refers to the *inclusion of certain learners* |
| | What are principals' views on inclusive education? | Theme 1 | Inclusive education is *a good idea in theory* |
| | | Theme 2 | Inclusion *depends on the school and the 'cutoff' point* |
| | | Theme 3 | Inclusive education *cannot work due to an already problematic education system* |
| | | Theme 4 | There are *too many changes required for inclusive education* |
| | | Theme 5 | There is *confusion* around inclusive education |
| 2) What do principals perceive the benefits, if any, of inclusive education to be? | | Theme 1 | Learners experiencing barriers to learning *feel included* |
| | | Theme 2 | Provides *equal opportunities* to learners experiencing barriers to learning |
| | | Theme 3 | *Creates an awareness and acceptance* of learners experiencing barriers to learning |
| | | Theme 4 | *Other benefits* to third parties |
| 3) What do principals perceive the disadvantages, if any, of inclusive education to be? | | Theme 1 | Learners experiencing barriers to learning *may not be getting the support they need* |
| | | Theme 2 | *Negative attitudes* towards learners experiencing barriers to learning |
| | | Theme 3 | May have a negative impact on *learner's self-esteem* |
| | | Theme 4 | Inclusion may *affect other learners and parents* |
| | | Theme 5 | Inclusive education *require school restructuring* |
| 4) What are principles perceptions regarding the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education? | What are principals' perceptions regarding facilitators of inclusive education? | Theme 1 | Inclusive education is facilitated by *teacher training* |
| | | Theme 2 | Inclusive education is facilitated by *availability of resources* |
| | | Theme 3 | Inclusive education is facilitated by *collaboration* |
| | What are principals' perceptions regarding the challenges in the implementation of inclusive education? | Theme 1 | Inclusive education is hindered by *educators lack of expertise in the field* |
| | | Theme 2 | Inclusive education is hindered by *class size* |
| | | Theme 3 | Inclusive education is hindered by *teacher burnout* |
| | | Theme 4 | Inclusive education is hindered by *lack of resources* |
| | | Theme 5 | Inclusive education is hindered by *pressure to achieve at schools* |
| 5) What are principals' perceptions regarding curriculum policy development related to inclusive education? | | Theme 1 | Curriculum policy developments *not seen as related to inclusive education* |
| | | Theme 2 | Curriculum policy developments related to inclusive education seen as *nothing new* |
| 6) What are principals' perceptions regarding the implementation of curriculum policies related to inclusive education? | What are principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that facilitate the implementation of inclusive education? | Theme 1 | Curriculum provides *some accommodation* in relation to inclusive education |
| | | Theme 2 | Curriculum provides *no accommodation* in relation to inclusive education |
| | What are principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that hinder the implementation of inclusive education? | Theme 1 | Curriculum hindered by *language barrier* |
| | | Theme 2 | *Too much to cover* within the curriculum |
| | | Theme 3 | Curriculum seen as *performance driven* |
| 7) What are principals' perceptions regarding the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6? | | Theme 1 | There has *not been that much progression* in terms of inclusive education |
| | | Theme 2 | May be *progression in terms of attitude but not in successful implementation* |
| | | Theme 3 | There has been *regression* in terms of inclusive education |

## 4.1. Principals' Understanding and Views of Inclusive Education

### 4.1.1. Principals' understanding of inclusive education

Two primary themes emerged from principals' understanding of inclusive education, that being inclusive education as meaning the **inclusion of all learners** into a mainstream school no matter how diverse their learning capabilities may be, and inclusive education as meaning the **inclusion of certain learners** into a mainstream school, depending on the severity of their difficulties.

The first theme of inclusive education as referring to the **inclusion of all learners** can be divided into two subthemes based on the terminology used to describe the learners; that being inclusive education as referring to the **inclusion of learners with differences**, ensuring *"education availability to all learners regardless of their differences"* and *"including all children with different learning capabilities and styles and accommodating them in a mainstream class",* and secondly **the inclusion of learners with disabilities,** in which mainstream schools *"accommodate children with both physical and learning disabilities"*.

The second theme that emerged from principals' understanding of inclusive education was the **inclusion of certain learners** into a mainstream class, depending on the severity of their difficulties, with the view that *"children with more severe problems will still have to go to special schools"*.

### 4.1.2. Principals' views on inclusive education

The following themes emerged from principals views on inclusive education: that it is **a good idea in theory**, it **depends on the school and the 'cutoff' point**, that inclusive education **cannot work due to an already problematic education system**, that there **are too many changes required for inclusive education**, and lastly that there is **confusion** surrounding inclusive education.

From the first theme, the majority of principals believed that inclusive education is **a good idea in theory**, and agreed with the principles and philosophies behind inclusive education. However although this may be the case, principals voiced their concerns about the practicality of it, as illustrated by one of the participants, saying *"in essence I think it is a very good idea, the plan is good but the implementation is the problem"*.

One of the major concerns regarding the practicality of inclusive education was elaborated upon by one of the participants; "*If there is the necessary manpower, and qualified teachers to accommodate these children in the schools then I don't have a problem with it. But if they are expecting the ordinary teacher who has taught in the mainstream all their life to be able to accommodate these learners with physical and learning disabilities, I have a problem with that".*

Related to the above theme, while a few participants valued the idea and philosophy of inclusive education, it was thought that practically inclusive education **depends on the school and the 'cutoff' point.** These two concepts are interrelated as principals felt that the extent to which they can include learners with difficulties depends wholly on the schools' resources and its ability to accommodate those children. This was evidenced by one of the participants who voiced, *"It has to work for the child as well as the school to include those children into the school. So we as a school look at it as yes we include the kids that can actually cope in our environment, we can include and assist them and give them the support, but not going beyond that where they are physically disabled, we don't have the facilities, for including being blind etc., there are just too many difficulties"*, as well as another participant adding *"It works to a point, it depends on the severity of a child's learning disability. So if it's a mild thing like dyslexia, then it can be included, but if it's a serious thing like if a child is blind, then no it doesn't, because the teachers don't have the expertise".*

The third theme that emerged related to the capability of schools to accommodate learners with barriers, was that while Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) as a policy document has been released, that there are **too many changes required for inclusive education,** specifically for implementation to occur as initially planned. One of the participants explained this using their school as an example, saying that *"our school isn't very inclusive, so if we had to include children in wheelchairs for example, the school would have to be modified to accommodate those children, the teachers would have to be trained for the children with learning disabilities or other disabilities, so it would bring about a huge change in mainstream schooling, and I don't see that happening".*

Although inclusive education is seen as a good thing in theory, some of the participants felt that it **cannot work due to an already problematic education system**; ***"****we first need to get our mainstream education up and running properly, before we can start thinking of inclusive education. Because its no good having a mainstream school where things are not running properly and then you still want to compound the problem by piloting inclusive education in our schools where things are already difficult"*. One of the participants also voiced that *"if you visit a number of schools you'll find that the learners don't have equipment, they don't have facilities, so the facilities are not enough to carry on with this type of system. I think the system is a failure, a dismal failure"*.

Lastly, there appears to be much **confusion** around inclusive education and what the implications thereof are, with questions being raised about *"when they talk about inclusion in White Paper 6, what exactly are they expecting of us? What are the expectations of the schools? What is it that they want us to do?",* as well as *"what exactly do they mean by inclusion? Where is the cutoff line? What is going to happen to my school? How exactly do we implement it?"*.

### 4.2. Principals' Perceptions of the Benefits of Inclusive Education

Four primary themes emerged from the responses provided by the sample of participants, regarding their perceptions of the benefits of inclusive education. The emergent themes are as follows: Inclusive education allows children to **feel included**, it provides **equal opportunities** to all children, it **creates an awareness and acceptance** of children with barriers to learning, and it may also provide **other benefits** for third parties.

Within the first theme, principals felt that one of the benefits of inclusive education is that children who had previously been excluded due to their learning difficulties and disabilities could now be included into the mainstream school and thus **feel included** in society. Principals reported that it allows children to *"feel normal"* and to *"to see themselves as part of the broader community"*. One of the principals voiced that *"children as a whole, human nature, doesn't want to be excluded, they want to be together because at the end of the day, they want to form part of society where they'll be living together"*. Furthering on this, one of the principals explained that the benefit

of inclusive education is *"the fact that the kids are included, whether you are different, you included so you not going to feel so different and isolated and put in a little box, so for me its about making all kids feel equal with their differences"*.

The second theme that emerged regarding a benefit of inclusive education was that it provides **equal opportunities** to all learners, no matter how diverse their learning needs may be. Within an inclusive school environment *"children get to socialize with 'normal children', if you want to term it like that, so their socialization is better, they get more opportunities, and they learn how to deal with the real world"*. Inclusive education provides *"the opportunity for the child they wouldn't have had before in an LSM school - because often children are overlooked in different areas, rural areas and things like that - and in an inclusive school they give them the opportunity to prove themselves and work towards something better"*.

A third theme arising on the benefits of inclusive education as perceived by the participants, is that it not only acts as a benefit for the child with a barrier to learning, but also **creates an awareness and acceptance** from the mainstream learners. Using an example of a learner with a physical disability, one of the participants explained *"maybe it would teach the other learners that don't have that disability more empathy, that they can gain an understanding of those children and realize they have the same abilities as they do, there is just something physically wrong with them"*. In addition to creating this awareness and acceptance of children with difficulties and differences within the classroom, it was also thought that this benefit could extend beyond the classroom walls and school grounds, so that *"in society when they see someone in a wheel chair they don't sort of point you know and make a big thing of it"*.

Lastly, **other benefits** of inclusive education were mentioned as an opportunity to develop educators' skills by learning to teach children with different abilities in the classroom and teaching learners that may have a specific difficulty. Furthermore, inclusive education was also seen as a potential benefit for the parents of learners with difficulties, as special education schools *"are not geographically easy to get to, they're limited in numbers, the classrooms sizes are a lot smaller and if you can get into them they are usually private. So obviously including your kid in a normal*

*environment is obviously a lot more beneficial to the parents"*. Because of the socio-economic state that many South African children live in, the possibility of sending a child with barriers to learning to a special school is reported to be a significant challenge for most parents, due to the lengthy procedure and costs involved.

### 4.3. Principals' perceptions of the disadvantages of inclusive education

Five primary themes emerged regarding principals' perceptions of the disadvantages of inclusive education, and these are: that children with difficulties or disabilities **may not be getting the support they need**, the possibility of **negative attitudes** arising from others, that it may negatively impact on the **learner's self-esteem**, that including these learners may negatively **affect other learners and parents**, and lastly that it would **require school restructuring**.

One of the possible disadvantages of inclusive education that emerged was that children experiencing barriers to learning **may not be getting the support that they need**. This was voiced by three out of the eight principals who said that *"children that really need help don't get it",* that children with difficulties *"don't quite get really what they need in mainstream"*. The primary reasons voiced for this were that these children often require individual attention and specialized education, and that this is often not available to them in mainstream education.

Furthermore, **negative attitudes** were listed as a possible disadvantage of inclusive education, coming from both that of the teacher and the peers. The majority of the principals believed that teachers in mainstream education are not ready for inclusive education and thus that a *"speed bump is the fact that the teachers can't get their minds around it, they can't see how they can bring children with differences into a classroom. So I think children might fall through the cracks, mainly because teachers are unsure of how to deal with them"*. This has resulted in many of the teachers feeling negatively about the concept of inclusive education, as well as towards learners with barriers to learning, as they simply are unsure of how to approach these learners. Furthermore, principals also reported that negative attitudes may also be experienced by the peers in a classroom or school, often leading to bullying, with one of the principals relating that *"children are cruel, they're very cruel, and if they know*

*that somebody's got disability they will pounce on it and they will they will be horrible".*

One of the major disadvantages of inclusive education, according to five of the eight principals, is the great possibility that a child with barriers to learning **may experience a low self-esteem** within a mainstream school. Principals voiced the concern that children are often very aware that they are struggling or different to their peers which can greatly impact their emotional functioning, and thus that *"if the child has a got a disability in a school like this he's going to have low self-esteem, he's going to lack in confidence because he's not going to be able to function at the level that the other children are functioning".* Alternatively, it was reported that if the child were to go to a smaller more specialized school, they would most likely grow in confidence as they realize that there are others like them and that they are not alone.

A further possible disadvantage that was voiced by half of the participants interviewed, was that the inclusion of a learner with barriers to learning **may affect others**, in terms of both the peers in that learner's class as well as the parents of the learner. The concern raised by principals was that if a teacher does provide the extra needed attention to the specific learner *"the other kids who also deserve attention don't get what they need"*, as well as the fact that because of the large class sizes, it may lead to a disruptive classroom because the other children feel that *"they can play up because they know the teacher's not giving them the attention they need".* Principals also voiced that it may be hard for parents as well, as children with barriers to learning often struggle to achieve academically in a mainstream school, with one of the principals reporting, *"It is an awful thing to watch parents sob because their kid failed every term".*

Lastly, a further disadvantage of inclusive education was also perceived in the **required restructuring of the school system**, both in terms of the physical aspects as well as in terms of the school organization as a whole. The physical restructuring of the school would be needed for the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities, such as those learners in wheelchairs, for which the principals voiced *"most of our schools have not been built to accommodate these learners"* and that it would *"cost a lot of money to make it wheelchair friendly".* In terms of the restructuring of the

school as an organization, principals reported that inclusive education would first and foremost require the retraining of mainstream educators, and that due to the resultant increase in number of learners in the school that they would *"probably have to, or end up breaking the children into different classes anyway depending on their disability"*.

## 4.4. Principals' perceptions regarding facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education

### 4.4.1. Principals' perceptions regarding facilitators of inclusive education

Principals' perceptions regarding facilitators of the implementation of inclusive education revealed three primary themes, those being **teacher training**, the **availability of resources**, and **collaboration** from different parties.

Of the eight principals interviewed, six principals believed that **teacher training** would be the most important facilitator for the successful implementation of inclusive education. One of the principals explained that among the educators there is currently a *"one size fits all approach or belief, and you cannot have that anymore, not even in a lesson, nor can your assessment be based on a one size fits all,*" and that one would have to *"start with the teachers and get them ready for it, sending them on courses about multiple intelligences and how one would go about dealing with that in the classroom. I think that would be the first step, because they are not ready for it"*.

The **availability of resources** was also seen as an important facilitator to the successful implementation of inclusive education, in terms of funds to upgrade the school buildings where necessary (such as for the provision of wheelchair ramps) and the provision of special equipment and teaching materials, as well as in terms of manpower – the availability of support structures or organisations and a need for more teachers or specialized assistant teachers.

Lastly, **collaboration** was also seen to be a factor in the successful implementation of inclusive education with three subthemes emerging: collaboration was seen to be necessary **within the school**, from the **broader community**, as well as from the **Department of Education**. Within the school as a whole, collaboration was seen to

be necessary by all parties involved in the child's life to assist the child experiencing barriers, as well as well as a supportive and communicative management and school based support team. The leadership of the principal was cited as essential in facilitating this collaboration. Involvement from the broader community, especially the involvement of parents, was also seen as essential in facilitating inclusive education, as described by one of the principals *"if you going to have inclusive education, there is a lot more to just the educational side of the child that needs to be considered, we going to need a bigger support structure than we currently have"*. And lastly, proper policy planning and support from the government and Department of Education are seen as essential.

### 4.4.2. Principals' perceptions regarding the challenges in the implementation of inclusive education

Principals perceptions regarding the current challenges they are facing within schools that hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education are: **educators' lack of expertise in the field**, **class size**, **teacher burnout, lack of resources** and **pressure to achieve at schools**.

The biggest hindrance to the implementation of inclusive education, reported by all of the principals, was the fact that **educators lack the expertise** to teach children with barriers to learning. As reported by one of the principals; *"Well I think the biggest one is that teachers are not actually equipped to handle inclusive education. When teacher training takes place, they are trained in general teaching, they are not trained to specialize in children with problems"*. One of the principals also reported that in their school *"we have children with learning problems, children who are a bit slower and don't grasp information like 'normal' children do, and the only option we have for those children is to move them to special education, some of those children are not even special education children, they are remedial children, but because our teachers are not trained in remedial, we cannot fix those problems, and we don't have the support system to assist them"*.

Another factor that was considered a major hindrance to inclusive education by the majority of principals interviewed, is the increasingly **large class sizes** that educators have to teach. Principals expressed concerns that even if children with barriers are

included into mainstream classes, they may not in fact be receiving the best possible education for them due to the large number of learners in a class – *"You including the others by having a space for them, but I don't think they actually being educated. So to me the focus on quantity instead of quality is a major major hindrance"*. One principal expressed similar concerns by saying *"they are shoving children into a class, and how are you ever going to actually include those kids, there it's sink or swim, and its only your able kids who actually cope"*. Elaborating on the large class sizes, one participant asked the question *"If you just think of a normal classroom, say for instance you have a child who is hard of hearing, you have children who have problems with their eyes, you have children that are slow or have learning difficulties; how do you cater for every single learner?"*. Thus the question of whether children with barriers who are included in mainstream classes are actually receiving quality education and the necessary assistance that they need was raised.

A third theme that emerged related to the above mentioned theme, is that of **teacher burnout**. Principals reported that teacher burnout is very apparent in schools due to the increasing demands on teachers and thus that *"teachers can't cope with inclusive education, they are battling as it is with children with different abilities in the classroom who don't have disabilities, what are they going to do if they have children with other problems and disabilities? How they going to cope with those children?"*

While the availability of resources is considered an essential facilitator in inclusive education as discussed above, the **lack of resources** is considered a huge hindrance in the implementation of inclusive education, something that the principals reported is a current challenge for them. Again, principals referred to resources in terms of both funds and manpower. Principals provided examples of the current difficulties some of the schools are facing due to the inclusion of children with barriers to learning: in terms of the resources necessary to include learners with physical impairments, one principal reported *"if it's a physical impairment we don't have the structures, we don't have the structures here to be able to have children here with wheelchairs, crutches etc. like that. I mean our buildings were built by the government and they're four stories high!"* Furthermore, principals also voiced concerns regarding the lack of resources in terms of 'manpower' and the assistance needed for the inclusion of children with barriers. Referring to concessions, one principal reported *"a lot of*

*parents come and say 'I would like my child to have half an hour longer'; you know its all good and well saying you have to include these children and you have to include these concessions, where do you find the staffing etc.? When does the child get the extra half an hour while everybody else has moved onto the next lesson?"* A current challenge for many schools was also reported by one of the principals in saying that *"I think sometimes as a school you are unsure to deal with problems as they arise and how to accommodate these learners and that there is no immediate access to social workers or OTs or specialists at your school, so its always a long process where you have to refer children out. If there was a facility or resources available where we have all these people stationed at the school, then that would go a long way in making sure inclusive education would be successful."*

Lastly, three out of the eight principals also reported that the **pressure to achieve as a school** could also be seen as a great hindrance to inclusive education. The principals reported that there is huge pressure on schools to achieve and maintain a certain standard, and that through the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) schools are rated and ranked based on the outcome of the results. Schools that are unable to maintain a certain standard are classified as 'underperforming'. One principal expressed that there is *"huge pressure from the Department of Education, they are putting so much emphasis on this performance that where's your inclusivity? Where's your space for the child who has a learning disability? They couldn't care. It's now result driven"* A residual consequence of this pressure for schools to achieve was voiced in that *"with the introduction of ANAs, if children don't achieve the schools are punished for it – they are declared underperforming, so schools are less willing to help children that cannot achieve marks".*

### 4.5. Principals' perceptions regarding curriculum policy development related to inclusive education

For the majority of principals (seven out of the eight participants), the changes and development of the curriculum since 2001 are **not seen as related to inclusive education**. These principals reported that while there have been many changes to the curriculum; these changes are not seen to incorporate inclusive education. As reported by one of the principals, *"In terms of all the changes related to inclusion, I don't know if anything has really been done related to inclusion? In terms of inclusion*

*itself, I can't see how they have catered for it? So I don't know if they really have factored inclusion in".* Furthermore one principal reported *"My understanding of inclusivity with children is children with all problems, but I think maybe they think about it as children who have learning difficulties, and that is definitely not in the normal curriculum. The curriculum is definitely not making provision for children with learning difficulties. If they want to provide for those children within the curriculum, I actually think a whole new special curriculum must be written for those children. So no I don't think it makes any provision for those children".*

One of the principals reported that the changes in the curriculum that may be related to the ideal of inclusive education, in trying to accommodate the different needs of learners, is **nothing new**, in that *"there have always been kids at school who may struggle here and there, and we try and assist and accommodate them as best we can. So in terms of changes in the curriculum related to inclusive education, for me I don't think its anything new, its what we have always been doing, although I guess it does depend on the severity of the child's problem, because for some children there is only so much we can do".*

### 4.6. Principals' perceptions regarding the implementation of curriculum policies related to inclusive education

#### 4.6.1. Principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that facilitate the implementation of inclusive education

Principals' responses to the above question can be divided into those who believe the curriculum does lend itself to **some accommodation** that may facilitate inclusive education, and those who believe that the curriculum provides **no accommodation** to the idea of inclusive education.

Most of the participants (five out of the eight principals interviewed) thought that the current curriculum CAPS does lend itself to **some accommodation** for inclusive education, as the curriculum is said to have "gone back to basics". In this sense, it was reported that *"instead of having the curriculum so broad they've narrowed it a bit allowing you to go into further depth, and I think for inclusion that is vital because the broader you go, the more those kids become lost".*

However the remaining three participants did not believe that the current curriculum CAPS lends itself to inclusive education, arguing that **no accommodation** is made in the curriculum for children experiencing barriers to learning. One principal reported that *"I don't think right now that there are any aspects of the curriculum that facilitate the implementation of inclusion, I don't really think it is facilitating the needs of those learners, because you given this one size fits all, and I don't think there is anything built into the curriculum to look at it differently to accommodate or cater for those children"*. Furthermore, while the curriculum has been stated to become more 'specific' one of the challenges reported by the principals is the fast pace of the curriculum, and thus that *"there is so much expected of us in the classroom that there is no time for you to maybe remediate a child with a learning problem. I mean right now I don't even think CAPS allows for us to do any consolidation for the 'normal' child"*

### 4.6.2. Principals' perceptions of the aspects of the curriculum that hinder the implementation of inclusive education

Three themes emerged regarding specific aspects of the curriculum that hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education, and these are: the significant **language** barrier experienced in many of the South African schools, the fast paced nature of the curriculum in which principals feel that there is **too much to cover**, and lastly the fact that, according to principals, the curriculum is **performance driven**.

One of the biggest barriers that children may face in South African schools today is a **language** barrier, due to the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the South African population. As stated by one of the principals *"language as a barrier is huge, because you have kids that have never been taught in that language and they come to school and are expected to be taught at such a high level in a language that is not their home language. These kids come in with English as their third or fourth language so they really battle to keep up with the curriculum"*. Although it was mentioned by one of the principals that the curriculum does take this into account and stipulates that these learners can be assessed in their home language or assessed as 'first additional language', however the principal stated that *"it is just not realistic"*.

The second theme that emerged regarding aspects of the curriculum that hinder that process of inclusive education is that within the curriculum there is simply **too much to cover** according to the principals. Principals reported that *"what the teachers have found with CAPS especially, although it has been simplified, is that there is just so much to do, so much work to cover, that there is no time for revision"* and that *"there is not really enough time to consolidate, especially for those children who do need a bit of extra time to grasp certain concepts"*. Thus because of the fast natured pace of the curriculum and the amount of work that is expected to be covered, according to principals, the current curriculum CAPS can be considered a hindrance to the implementation of inclusive education.

Lastly, a quarter of the participants (two out of the eight principals interviewed), felt that the curriculum itself is **too performance driven** and that what matters at the end of the day are the results achieved by the students. According to one of the principals *"there is no give and take, there is simply a set form of parameters and that is it"*; learners are rated on a scale based on their performance with no accommodation or leeway provided for those children who may be experiencing barriers to learning. This theme ties in with the previously mentioned theme of the extreme pressure placed on schools to achieve and maintain a certain standard.

### 4.7. Principals' perceptions regarding the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6?

Three primary themes emerged from principals' perceptions of the progression of inclusive education since 2001, these being that there has **not been that much progression**, that there may be **progression in terms of attitude but not in successful implementation**, and lastly, some of the principals feel that there has been **regression** in terms of inclusive education.

Within the first theme, half of the participants (four of the eight principals) believed that there has **not been that much progression** in terms of inclusive education since 2001, stating that *"White Paper 6 is not a reality, inclusion is not a reality at this point in time"*. Furthering on this, one principal stated, *"I really don't think we've come far, like I said I think it's a good document but we are still very very far from full implementation. In terms of funding, resources, we don't have basics, so I think*

*many schools are still ill resourced and so on, so we've got a long way to go".* Thus while some of the principals reiterated that the ideals of inclusive education may be great, that the process of implementation in terms of the stages and targets outlined have not been reached, with one principal stating that *"I think the 20 year plan is now kind of a 40 year plan, I cant see that they are going to reach their targets".*

In terms of the progression of inclusive education, a quarter of the participants (two of the eight principals interviewed), reported to believe that there may be **progression in terms of attitude but not successful implementation.** Principals expressed that attitudes towards inclusive education may have slowly changed over the past few years for the better, with people believing in the ideals of inclusive education and what it stands for, particularly in South Africa, however it was expressed that the implementation of inclusive education, according to the principals, has not been successful. One of the principals provided an example of 'inclusion' within their school and the challenges they are facing with this; *"in our school we have learners with disabilities, but because of lack of other things like resources and paraprofessional that goes along with that, we find it very difficult to include them in mainstream education".* It was also expressed that *"We certainly will listen and accommodate a child and take the child in, but if the child can't cope then the parents will have been informed right from the start that we'll give it a trial period, but if it doesn't work then the child must be removed and taken somewhere else. And that will be the case in most section 21 schools, which is ours, because section 21 schools are expected to perform".*

The above statement leads to the third theme that emerged, in which some of the principals expressed that they feel that there has actually been **regression** in terms of including learners experiencing barriers to learning within a mainstream school. Some of this regression was explained by the principals in terms of the current problems they are facing within their schools today, such as teacher shortages, leading one of the principals to report *"for example in my school we have two special education classes for children who are slow or who have difficulties, and we are going to close one of them next year".* Regression was also reported in terms a problem seen by principals that many of the special schools that were available to learners with barriers have closed down in the movement towards including these learners into the

mainstream, something that was reported by principals as a *"huge problem"*. Furthermore a point was raised that exclusion is even happening within LSM schools; *"So we taking these kids, putting them there and they actually saying, sorry, we also not inclusive, you must find another place. So I find it very interesting this whole 'inclusion'"*. A result of mainstream schools not being able to accommodate learners with barriers, whether due to a lack of resources or the pressure placed on schools to achieve, as well as the exclusion criterion found even within LSM schools is that there have been *"more and more private institutions opening up which cater for specific learning disabilities"* and that *"there is this huge increase in home schooling, and you'll find that most of the inclusivity today is taking a route of home schooling"*.

### 4.8. Additional comments added by principals regarding inclusive education in South Africa

Three themes emerged from the additional comments provided by principals regarding inclusive education in South Africa, and these were **inclusivity and the view on labels**, **no communication from government**, and lastly that a **poor needs analysis** was conducted in considering inclusive education.

An interesting remark made by two of the principals was the perception that there is a lot of negativity surrounding 'labels' and the diagnosing of a child with a certain condition, and the belief that inclusive education 'disallows' the use of labels in favor of the more politically correct term 'barriers to learning'. However as one principal expressed, labels can be *"empowering because we are able to know how to best work with a child"* as well as *"for a parent to understand this is the condition that exists, this is how we treat it, it's not life and death. I find it really empowering"*.

Principals also made additional comments regarding a lack of communication from the government in terms of the progress around inclusive education, which schools have become full-service schools, and where the progression stands in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). As described by one principal *"It seems to be very quiet and under the radar, about the progression, we haven't heard anything really about this is what has been done etc., you know we haven't received any documentation about it or about the full service schools"*. It was thus expressed that "*You need to have far more, open transparency*

*from the Department of Education, and clear guidelines on what is happening"* as principals, teaching staff and schools appear to have limited knowledge regarding the progression of inclusive education.

A big concern expressed by half of the participants (four out of the eight principals) is the perception that a poor needs analysis was conducted in terms of what it would take for the implementation of inclusive education to be realized and to be successful. As expressed by one principal *"the problem is that they bring in the policy, which of course they didn't take cognizance of what the needs are, so the problem is the needs, the needs are not yet being realized - What is necessary? What are the current conditions? What is required to implement this?"*. In introducing the policy of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) and inclusive education, it was voiced that a poor needs analysis was conducted in terms of communicating with those on the ground level; *"They just said this is what's going to happen. No asking the schools what do you think you would be capable of? Would the children really benefit? Did they look at children's best interest in the first place by doing this? Or was it really just to make it easier for them high up - to say we are catering for everybody; look what we are doing?"*. For many of the principals, as mentioned in an earlier theme, the perception seems to be that inclusive education may not be succeeding due to the current problems faced in South African schools, with the view that these problems must be addressed first before attempting to implement something as big as a wholly inclusive education system. As expressed by one of the principals *"I think the vision they had regarding inclusive education was good, the intention was good, I think they wanted to bring everybody forward, but I don't think that they have actually succeeded in what they set out to do. I think the reality of the problems we are experiencing in our schools today is far too overwhelming for the Department of Education to even think about inclusion and implementing White Paper 6"*.

### 4.9. Additional comments added by principals regarding curriculum policy development related to inclusive education in South Africa since 2001

In providing additional comments on the development of curriculum policies related to inclusive education, the two primary themes that emerged was that there have been **too many changes** in curriculum policy and that there has been **no consolidation at ground level** in considering the development of the curriculum.

All of the principals interviewed believe that there have been too many changes in curriculum policy and that the *"education system really needs to settle down in South Africa"*. As expressed by one principal, "*there has been some confusion with regards to the development of the curriculum, because they brought in curriculum 2005 which never worked, they brought in the National Curriculum Statement, which has never worked properly, they brought in the Revised Curriculum Statement which has never worked, in Gauteng they brought in the Foundation for Teaching and Learning which at the moment has been suspended, and now they have brought in CAPS, which also brings in some hassles"*. A particular challenge of CAPS is reported to be the great demands and pressure placed on educators at schools to keep up with the fast tracked nature of the current curriculum CAPS, as well as a reported overwhelming amount of paperwork for the teachers. On speaking on behalf of educators, one principal mentioned *"I think if they want to make White Paper 6 a reality they will have to change the curriculum once again, and let me tell you, teachers are sick and tired of change. There is no stability. Teachers are tired of all the change in curriculum, and if they had to change it again to be more inclusive, I don't know, teachers already have a negative view of inclusion*". Furthermore, it was stated that *"we are chopping and changing the curriculums too often, we shouldn't be looking at other countries to see what's not working with them and then taking their scraps basically. We need to see what curriculum suits us best, even if it means that we have to draw up a new curriculum for South Africa, not copy something from another country"*.

Lastly, in considering all the developments in the curriculum policies, principals expressed that there is **no consolidation at ground level,** something that they believe would be instrumental in the development of a curriculum policy specifically designed for South Africa. It was expressed that *"there hasn't been much consultation. Teachers by and large have not been involved in the process of the drawing up of curriculum activities. It's just been made, they've drawn up a little committee as such of people that they've appointed to draw up a new curriculum and they haven't involved the people at a base line level in the drawing up of the curriculum, they haven't at all"*. Furthering on this it was expressed that in considering curriculum policy developments *"more consultation with the teachers on the ground is needed, and to take this seriously, as they are the ones who work with*

*the children, they know what the challenges are. So listen to us on the ground, so you can make an informed decision before you try and change the curriculum".*

# Chapter 5
# Discussion

This chapter provides a summary of the results found within this study in relation to the aims and research questions that were investigated. This will then be followed by a discussion of the implications of the results of the study, as well as an exploration of the limitations of the current study and suggestions for future research.

## 5.1. Discussion of Results

### 5.1.1. Research question 1: What are principals' views and understanding of inclusive education?

Findings from this study indicated that principals' understanding of inclusive education vary, with some principals perceiving inclusive education to mean the inclusion of all learners no matter how diverse their needs may be, while others believe that inclusion refers only to certain learners whose barriers are not too severe. Furthermore, principals who understood inclusive education as referring to the inclusion of all learner, were also found to differ in the terminology used to describe learners with barriers, with some principals referring to learners as having 'difficulties' while others referred to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development as having 'disabilities'.

In terms of principals' views towards inclusive education, principals' responses were found to be divided along the lines of viewing inclusive education as a policy and viewing it in terms of practice within the schools. This finding replicates the results found in the studies conducted by Bailey and du Plessis (1997), Conrad & Brown (2011) and Ngwokabuenui (2013). Despite the varying understanding of the term 'inclusive education', the majority of principals agreed with the philosophy and ideals of inclusive education, however there was much concern raised regarding the practicality of inclusive education and the procedures needed to implement such a system. Principals from the current study perceived that the successful implementation of inclusive education would *depend on the schools resources and 'cutoff' point* in terms of the severity of barriers experienced by learners included in the school. This finding is similar to the results found in the studies conducted by Bailey and du Plessis (1997), Conrad & Brown (2011), Ngwokabuenui (2013),

Praisner (2003), and Brotherson et al., (2001). Four primary themes that emerged, representing principals reservations regarding the practicality of inclusive education, within the current study were: that inclusive education *cannot work due to an already problematic education system*, that there are *too many changes required for inclusive education* to be implemented fully, and that there is still much *confusion* around what inclusive education actually means and how it will affect schools.

From the current study, principals reported that one of the challenges to the implementation of inclusive education is an already problematic education system, in which many schools are already struggling with providing resources to even the 'typically developing' learners. This aligns with the current debate around inclusive education in South Africa, due to current socio-economic climate of our country, as described by Muller (2013) and Oswald and de Villiers (2013). Furthermore, within this theme, one of the principals mentioned that current challenges within the education system need to be addressed before "piloting inclusive education in our schools", highlighting the confusion around inclusive education and its current level of implementation, as it is in fact a policy that should be implemented in all schools. The confusion reported around inclusive education also highlights the fact that the goals set our in Education White Paper 6 in 2001 (Department of Education, 2001), may in fact not have been successfully achieved. This will be discussed in more detail further on in this chapter.

### 5.1.2. Research question 2: What do principals perceive the benefits, if any, of inclusive education to be?

Four primary themes emerged from principals reports on perceived benefits of inclusive education, these being: that inclusive education allow children to *feel included*, that it provides *equal opportunities* to all children, that it *creates an awareness and acceptance* of children with barriers to learning, and that it may also provide *other benefits* to third parties (such as to the educators and parents).

The emergent themes and responses provided by participants of the perceived benefits of inclusive education reflected the global philosophies and ideals that led to the transformation and avocation for inclusive educational settings; that all individuals have the right to equal opportunities no matter their diversity; that diversity should be

celebrated and differences accommodated. Principals reported that inclusive education allows learners experiencing barriers to feel 'normal' and form part of a society. These views expressed conceptualize the ideals and values set forth in both international policies (Convention Against Discrimination in Education, 1960; Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, 2012), 2012; The Salamanca Statement, 1994) and South African policies (Department of Education, 2001; South African Schools Act, 1996), and with specific reference to South Africa, are representative of the values of a free and democratic society (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1966).

Within this study, principals reported that inclusive education provides an awareness and acceptance of diversity by those not experiencing barriers to learning, a finding similar to that found in the study conducted by Frederickso et al., (2007). Furthermore within these themes, principals reported the benefits if inclusive education not only at the level of the school, but at a community level as well, indicating that instilling a sense of acceptance of diversity creates a world view within the learner for their everyday interactions within society. Inclusive education was also reported by the participants in this study to have other benefits to third parties. Participants reported that a further benefit of inclusive education would be increasing educators' skill development – something that is necessary in the implementation of inclusive education and the successful accommodation of learners with barriers (Ali et al., 2006; Department of Education, 1997; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Green, 2001; Hay et al., 2001). Participants also reported potential benefits of inclusive education for parents who may not be able to place their children experiencing barriers to learning in specials schools, due to geographical or financial reasons.

### 5.1.3. Research question 3: What do principals perceive the disadvantages, if any, of inclusive education to be?

The five primary themes that emerged from participants' responses of perceived disadvantages of inclusive education were: that children with difficulties or disabilities *may not be getting the support they need*, the possibility of *negative attitudes* arising from others, that it may negatively impact on the *learner's self-esteem*, that including these learners may negatively *affect other learners and parents,* and lastly that it would *require school restructuring.*

Principals reported that one of the perceived disadvantages was learners with barriers to learning may not be receiving the support they need within mainstream schools, thus eliciting the debate reported by Green (2001) on whether these learners are then truly receiving quality education. This finding was also present in the study conducted by Bailey and du Plessis (1997). One of the factors contributing to the above mentioned concern is a lack of specialized resources available within schools (such as occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists) (Bailey & du Plessis, 1997; Brotherson et al., 2001; Green, 2001; Meier, 2005; Muller, 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). As found in the current study, three of the eight schools involved in the study had access to a psychologist, although not always based at the school, while none of the schools reported to have speech therapists or occupational therapists easily available. A second factor that may contribute to the above mentioned concern is that of a lack of educator training in teaching learners with various barriers to learning (Brotherson et al., 2001; Conrad & Brown, 2011; Edmunds et al., 2009; Hay et al., 2001), as well as a lack of specialized attention often due to the high numbers of learners per class (Muller, 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013).

Alternatively, principals perceived that a disadvantage of inclusion may be that the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development may disrupt or negatively affect their 'typically developing' peers. This concern was also reported by Bailey and du Plessis (1997), Frederickson et al., 2007, and Frederickson, 2010. Additionally, participants perceived that negative attitudes towards learners with barriers – by both peers and educators – may form a disadvantage of inclusion, as well the possibility of learners with barriers developing a low self-esteem forming a disadvantage. This concern reflects the debate in the literature, reported by Edmunds et al. (2009), Frederickson et al. (2007), Frederickson (2010), and Salisbury (2006) on whether learners with barriers are at risk for being bullied or victimized. Although there are studies that advocate for and against this concern, Frederickson (2010) reports that intervention strategies aimed at educating learners and educators about barriers to learning can form a protective factor against the development of negative attitudes.

Lastly a further disadvantage reported by the participants of the current study was the need for school restructuring for the implementation of incusive education. This

finding was also found in the studies conducted by Bailey and du Plessis (1997), Brotherson et al., (2001) and Conrad and Brown (2011). Simple factors such as the physical restructuring of the school for learners in wheelchairs was mentioned, and as shown from the findings of the current study, none of the schools involved in this study were reported to have ramps for wheelchairs.

### 5.1.4. Research question 4: What are principals' perceptions regarding the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of inclusive education?

Principals' perceptions regarding the facilitators and barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education were found to be intricately linked, as factors reported to facilitate implementation were also often the factors considered to hinder implementation when lacking or absent. From the findings, three primary themes emerged regarding principals perceptions of facilitators to the successful implementation of inclusive education, these being: *educator training*, the *availability of resources*, and *collaboration* between different parties.

The majority of principals reported that one of the most important facilitators perceived in the successful implementation of inclusive education would be that of educator training. As the literature indicates, educators are considered to form the cornerstone within inclusive education, as it is they who teach and interact with learners with barriers on a daily basis (Ali et al., 2006; Hay et al., 2001), and it is thus essential for eduactors to be aware of the different barriers to learning and different approaches available to accommodate the diverse learning needs of these individuals (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Furthermore, while the importance of the educator in inclusive education is clear, principals reported that educators do not feel ready to take on the role prescribed to them through policy in the implementation of inclusive education. Thus a lack of educator training in which educators do not have the skills necessary to provide quality education to learners experiencing barriers to learning forms a significant hindrance to the successful implementation of inclusive education. This finding concurs with other international studies (Conrad & Brown, 2011; Edmunds et al., 2009) as well as with South African research (Amod, 2003; Hay et al., 2001) in which teachers were reported to feel unprepared and thus

apprehensive about including learners experiencing barriers to learning within their classrooms.

Another essential factor reported for the successful implementation of inclusive education is that of the availability of resources. Participants expressed that for a school to be fully inclusive, availability of resources would be needed in the form of: funds to upgrade school buildings where necessary (such as for the installation of wheelchair ramps), the provision of special equipment and teaching materials as well as in terms of manpower (the availability of support structures or organizations, a need for more educators and specialized teaching assistants). At policy level, the need for these resources was acknowledged and highlighted as essential in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Department of Education 1997; Department of Education 2001; Salamanca Statement, 1994). Participants also reported that a lack of these resources forms one of the significant hindrances to the implementation of education, and is currently a great challenge faced by most schools in South Africa ("Freedom is a mirage", 2013; Muller, 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). This finding is similar to those found in the studies conducted by Brotherson et al., (2001), Conrad and Brown (2011), Ngwokabuenui (2013), and Hay et al., (2001), in which participants indicated lack of resources as a significant challenge to the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Lastly, collaboration was seen as a third essential factor in the implementation of inclusive education. Collaboration was voiced by principals to be essential among school personnel within the school, as well as from the broader community and the Department of Education. This was found by Brotherson et al. (2001), Conrad and Brown (2011), and Schmidt and Venet (2012), to be a particular concern among schools and thus represented a great barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. The importance of adopting a collaborative approach has been highlighted in the literature (Amod, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Mentz & Barrett, 2011; Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Schmidt & Venet, 2012) in which principals, educators, parents and specialists work together in creating a successful inclusive school environment. Principals furthermore addressed a strong need for specialists (learning support specialists, psychologist, occupational therapists and speech therapists) within

schools so assist with identifying and addressing barriers to learning and development.

*Large class sizes* and *teacher burnout* were also listed by participamnts as significant challenges hindering the process of implementation. Within South Africa, particularly among government schools, large classess have been found to be a particular challenge within the education system (Muller, 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). Participants within the current study posed questions relating to whether learners with barriers are truly receiving the best possible education for them, as the high number of learners per class often prohibits the educator to provide extra or specialized attention to the individual who is struggling. Large class sizes were also listed a concern in the studies conducted by Edmunds et al., (2009) and Hay et al., (2001). Furthermore, participants within the current study also reported teacher burnout as a hindrance to the implemntation of inclusive education. Educators have been reported to be under increasing depmands due to the current state of the education system, and the changing policies and curriculums used, and as a result, teacher burnout has been found to be on the increase (Muller, 2013). Principals within the current study reported that educators are already struggling with teaching so many learners, all of whom have differing learning abilities even if they are not experiencing a particular barrier to learning. Studies have found that as a result of all of this, educators are feeling frustrated, tired and overworked (Brand, 2013; Muller, 2013). This finding indicates a desperate need for educator assistance in the classrooms, especially in classrooms accommodating learners with barriers to learning.

Lastly, some participants also reported a great deal of *pressure to achieve as a school* as a significant challenge to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Responses from the principals indicate incongruence between what policy states – a philosophy of inclusion and accommodation – and what Government wants in current practice. This indicates the 'gap' between policy and classroom practices reported in the literature (Grous et al., 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). Principals reported that there was great pressure placed on them as schools by the Department of Education, to achieve and maintain a certain standard of education. This standard was reported by principals to be based on the outcome of results. Principals reported that this pressure often resulted in them being wary of including learners with barriers into

their schools. This finding is consistent with that found in the study conducted by Ngcobo and Muthukrishna (2011).

### 5.1.5. Research question 5: What are principals' perceptions regarding curriculum policy development related to inclusive education?

From the findings of this study, the majority of principals expressed the view that while there have been many changes and developments to the curriculum since 2001, these developments were not seen to be as a result of, or related to, inclusive education. Participants expressed that they did not really believe that the current curriculum CAPS makes provision for learners with barriers, especially learners with specific learning difficulties. Only one participant mentioned that if the changes in the development are related to inclusive education, that it is in fact nothing new, as it was reported that there have always been learners struggling in different areas in schools and that school personnel and educators have always tried to accommodate them, irrespective of the curriculum. This finding illustrates a reported concern by Brotherson et al. (2001), Grous et. al (2011) and Oswald & de Villiers, (2013) regarding the gap between policy and what is actually implemented within schools, and that it is essentially up to school personnel to put methods into place to accommodate the diverse learning needs of individuals (Ali et al., 2006; Hay et al., 2001). Furthermore, this hints to a possible need of a revision of the curriculum, a finding also reported in the study conducted by Conrad and Brown (2011).

This is clearly in contradiction to the theory at policy level, in which one of the motivating factors behind the curriculum development has been reported to be in favour of creating an inclusive education system (Department of Education, 1997; Department of Education, 2011; Naicker, 2006; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). This then seems to imply that either government has not yet been successful in creating a curriculum that is fully inclusive and can be seen at face level as accommodating the diverse needs of all learners, or alternatively this finding may suggest that principals are not fully aware of how all the curriculum policy developments are related to inclusive education. If so, it may suggest a failure of collaborative interaction and communication between government and school personnel regarding curriculum development and its relation to inclusive education. This finding also points to a need

for both pre-service and in-service training regarding the curriculum and its relation to inclusive education.

### 5.1.6. Research question 6: What are principals' perceptions regarding aspects of the curriculum that facilitate or hinder the implementation inclusive education?

Principals responses to perceived aspects of the curriculum that facilitate the implementation of inclusive education can be divided along two lines, with some participants believing that the current curriculum CAPS provides *some accommodation* for learners with barriers to learning, while some participants felt there was *no accommodation* provided for learners with barriers in the current curriculum CAPS. This again appears to be a finding incongruent with existing policy documents such as *Education White Paper 6* (Department of Education 2001) and *Guidlines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom through curriculum and assessment policy statements* (Department of Education, 2011) in which a detailed explanation of possible methods and approaches are given to accommodate learners with barriers through the current curriculum CAPS. It is interesting that in answering the question on perceived facilitors of inclusive education within the curriculum CAPS, not one principal mentioned strategies such as curriculum differentiation or differentiation of assessment methods (Department of Education, 2011); an approach outlined within CAPS for the specific reason of accomodating the diverse learning needs of all individuals.

In terms of aspects of the current curriculum perceived by principals to hinder the process of inclusive eduaction, three primary themes emerged: the significant l*anguage* barrier experienced in many of the South African schools, the fast paced nature of the curriculum in which principals feel that there is *too much to cover*, and lastly the fact that, according to principals, the curriculum is *performance driven.*

Within South Africa, language as a barrier represents a significant challenge in the implementation of inclusive education, as many of the learners entering into mainstream schools are being taught in a language that is not their home language. O'Connor and Geiger (2009) reported that not only does this put these students at a disadvantage, but that it also leads to a breakdown of learning due to linguistic

difficulties. Although provision is reported to be made within the curriculum to accommodate this barrier (such as assessing learners in their home language or assessing them as 'first additional language' (Department of Education 2011), principals reported that this is simply 'not realistic', again highlighting the gaps between policy and what is actually happening or possible on ground level (Grous et. al., 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013).

In addition to this barrier, participants reported that the fast paced nature and extensive amount of content to be covered also formed a significant hindrance to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Principals reported that educators are struggling as it is to cover all the prescribed material within the current curriculum, and thus have no time for revision or the consolidation of concepts. Furthermore, related to the previously mentioned theme regarding the pressure placed on schools to achieve, participants voiced that another significant hindrance within the curriculum, for the successful implementation of inclusive education, is that the curriculum itself is too performance based. Principals reported that emphasis is placed on outcomes and results of assessment and thus in that way that the curriculum does not lend itself to an inclusive education system.

This again brings up the debate around whether learners experiencing barriers are truly provided with the best possible education for them (Bailey and du Plessis, 1997; Brotherson et al., 2001; Engelbrecht et al., 2006; Green, 2001; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013). Furthermore while the intention of the development curriculum policies may have been in part to address some of the barriers posed by the older curriculums (Department of Education 2001; Department of Education 2011), this finding indicates a current barrier to learning resulting from the current curriculum CAPS.

### 5.1.7. Research question 7: What are principals' perceptions regarding the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6?

Three primary themes emerged from principals responses to the perceived progression of inclusive education since 2001, these being: that there has *not been that much progression*, that there may be *progression in terms of attitude but not in*

*successful implementation*, and lastly, some of the principals even reported to feel that there has in fact been *regression* in terms of inclusive education.

Most of the participants reported that they did not believe that there has been much progression in terms of inclusive education since 2001. Principals reported that currently, many schools are struggling as is, in terms of the basic resources available to the learners, let alone in terms of providing additional or specialized services to learners with barriers to learning. For many of the principals, 'inclusive education' was perceived simply as a policy document that has not yet truly come into effect in terms of its implementation. This indicates that, from the views of the principal, the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) according to a specific timeframe, have not yet been achieved. According to White Paper 6, the implementation of inclusive education should be in its final stages (the goals outlined for 2009-2021), however thirteen years down after the release of this policy document, it appears that the implementation of inclusive education may still be in its early phases.

Some of the participants in the current study reported that while there may not be much progression in terms of the implementation of inclusive education, some progression may be seen in the attitudes of individuals and communities. Principals perceived that attitudes towards inclusive education and learners with barriers may have slowly changed in a more favourable direction over the past few years, with many individuals adopting and agreeing with the values and philosophies behind inclusive education. This report is similar to the results found in the study conducted by (Frederickso et al., 2007) in which the awareness of, and education about learners with barriers, were found to promote favourable attitudes. However, although there may have been progression in terms of attitudes, this does not seem to have had a direct affect on the progression of the implementation of inclusive education.

Lastly some participants even voiced the opinion that there has in fact been a regression in terms of inclusive education. This was largly reported to be due to the current problems faced within South African schools, such as teacher shortages and a lack of resources, as well as due to the extreme pressure placed on schools to perform. As a result of this, it was reported that there has been a great increase in private

instituations aimed at learners experiencing barriers to learning, as well as an increase in home schooling. This again is indicative that the practice of inclusive eduaction in South Africa is not where it is meant to be.

### 5.1.8. Additional comments provided by principals regarding inclusive education and curriculum policy development in South Africa.

Principals provided a number of additional comments regarding inclusive education and the curriculum policy development in South Africa. A brief additional comment made by a few principals was regarding the use of labels; with the reported perception that inclusive education can be seen to cast a negative view on the use of labels, in favour of the more politically correct term 'barriers to learning. However some participants reported that they believed labels can in fact have en empowering quality, for both parents and educators as well as the learners themselves, as it provides an indication of where the difficulty may lie and how best to move forward to address this difficulty. This reported viewpoint was reiterated in the by (Frederickson, 2010), who reported that the notion that labeling a child can lead to bullying or victimization has been overemphasized, and that the label and knowledge around it can provide a protective factor.

Principals also voiced that there was a significant lack of communication from the government and Department of Education regarding inclusive eduaction and its progression in terms of implementation. Principals reported a need for greater communication between between role players at 'ground level' and those in government level. Furthermore principals reported that a significant reason why inclusive education is not on par with the proposed goals outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) is that a poor needs analysis was initially conducted when considering inclusive education within South Africa and how best to implement it. Prinicpals believed that careful consideration was not given to all the factors (current conditions of schools, resources, funds, physical restructuring of schools) that would be needed for the successful implementation of inclusive eduaction. Again participants pointed to a lack of communication and collaboration between those on groundlevel and those responsible for policy making as a significant contribitor to this. As emphasized earlier on in the report, collaboration between all parties is considered one of the most significant factors in the successful

implementation of inclusive education (Amod, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Mentz & Barrett, 2011; Ngwokabuenui, 2013; Schmidt & Venet, 2012).

The above mentioned challenge of a lack of collaboration and consolidation between government officials and role players on the ground level was also mentioned with specific reference to the development of curriculum policies in South Africa. Principals expressed that no collaboration or consultation is formed in the development of new curriculum policies, something that they perceived would be extremely beneficial, as educators could provide valuable insight into what is or is not working within the curriculum and what the challenges are. Furthermore, principals reported that there have been far too many changes in curriculum policy, which has led to much confusion and frustration, and an increased demand and pressure on educators. Principals reported the need for curriculum policy development to 'settle down' within South Africa.

### 5.2. Implications of the Findings

From the findings of the current research study, it was found that there appears to be a lack of clarity and confusion surrounding what inclusive education actually means; how will it affect their schools? Where exactly is the 'cutoff' line when including learners with barriers (in terms of severity of barriers to learning)? A major implication of this lack of clarity and confusion could be in the principals' role in aiding the implementation of inclusive education. As principals play such a vital part in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Amod, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Salisbury, 2006; Edmunds et al., 2009), can they really fulfill this role if principals are reserved about, and have a lack of clarity surrounding, the implementation of inclusive education? Furthermore, in this sense, can they support educators, reported to be the cornerstone of inclusive eduaction (Ali et al., 2006; Hay et al., 2001) in their role of inclusive education?

Many of the challenges reported by the participants in the implementation of inclusive education, highlight the current needs that must be met for the envisaged inclusive education system to be successfully implemented, needs that principals perceive are currently not being met, and these are:

a) A need to first address the *current challenges facing our education system* (poor facilities, limited resources, insufficient number of education facilities, educator shortages, under qualified educators, and so forth) (Department of Education, 1997; Donald et al., 2010; "Freedom is a mirage", 2013; Green, 2001; Muller, 2013; Oswald & de Villiers, 2013).
b) A need for *educator training* around the different types of *barriers to learning* and strategies and approaches available to accommodate these learners. Educator training in this regard should occur both at a pre-service level as well as at an in-service level.
c) A need for *educator training*, at both the pre-service and in-service level, regarding the *curriculum and its relation to inclusive education.* Specifically in relation to methods of curriculum differentiation that are available to accommodate the diverse learning needs of individuals.
d) A need for the *provision of resources*, such as: provision of specialized equipment and learning materials, funds for physical restructuring of schools required (such as for wheelchair ramps), educator assistance in classrooms, the availability of specialists at schools (learning support specialists, psychologists, occupational therapists and speech therapists).
e) The need for *specialists* (learning support specialists, psychologists, occupational therapists and speech therapists) at schools or more readily available access to these specialists, may indicate a need for the system of support to be reconsidered.
f) A need for *collaboration* among all parties involved within the inclusive school setting (school personnel, specialists, parents and Department of Education).
g) A need to *close the gap* between policy and what is actually implemented in classrooms – a need for a stronger partnership to exist between government, policy makers, the various levels of the government education system (national, provincial and district levels of the Department of Education), and the principals and educators at the grassroots level of the school.

Furthermore, findings from the current study suggest that the current curriculum CAPS may not be as accommodating to learners experiencing barriers than is indicated in policy. For example, factors such as the reported performance and

outcome driven nature of CAPS, the large content needed to be covered limiting time for revision and consolidation, and the fast paced nature of curriculum, all hinder the curriculum in its ability to accommodate learners with barriers. This has implications for policy makers, as thought must be given again to whether the current curriculum is best suited for a truly inclusive education system for all.

Lastly, results from the study indicate that the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), in terms of progression of inclusive education and its implementation in South Africa, have not been successfully achieved. According to this policy document and the goals outlined therein, inclusive education should be well on its way to the expansion of inclusive education institutions to a targeted number of 500 full-service schools and district support teams, 380 resource centres/special schools and the provision of these to the 280 000 out-of-school children (Department of Education, 2001). From the findings of the current study, in which the majority of principals reported the challenges faced in in the implementation of inclusive education, it appears that in terms of its progression, inclusive education is not on par with the goals initially outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001). Findings from the study indicate that the implementation of inclusive education may in fact still be its early phases, falling within the short-medium goals as outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

### 5.3. Limitations of the Study

A possible limitation of this study is in the generalizability of the results, as while the sample size for this research report was adequate, as saturation was reached, the sample consisted specifically of principals from government primary schools in the Johannesburg-north region of Gauteng. Thus findings from this study cannot be generalized to larger populations in differing contexts (such as to independent schools or schools situated in more rural and underdeveloped parts of the country). Thus due to the qualitative nature of the study, external validity is considered to be low (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005).

Another possible limitation to qualitative studies is in the subjectivity involved in collecting and interpreting the data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). In order to

lower subjectivity on the part of the researcher, a reflective diary was used by the researcher as a tool of self awareness, as well as consultations held with the researcher's supervisor who was not familiar with the participants of the study and who did not play an active role in the data collection procedure.

### 5.4. Suggestions for Future Research

As the current study was conducted with the specific sample of principals from government primary schools in the Johannesburg-north area, future research could add to the findings of the current study by conducting research in other areas of Johannesburg. Furthermore, future research could also be conducted in more rural areas of Johannesburg and a comparison of perceptions regarding inclusive education made between more rural and urbanized schools. Along similar lines, future research could also compare principals' perceptions from independent and government schools to ascertain whether there is a difference in perceptions regarding inclusive education among the two, and furthermore whether there is a difference in perception among the inclusivity of the different curriculums used. Future research in this field, aimed at varying sample groups, could then provide a fuller and more holistic picture of perceptions towards inclusive education, its implementation, and its progression since the release of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

An interesting area of future study would also be in the investigation of differing perceptions among principals from mainstream, full-service and special schools within South Africa. This could identify the perceptions of inclusive education that would provide insight into possible strategies for the successful implementation of inclusive education and the South African education curriculum.

### 5.5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the recent curriculum policy developments in South Africa. Over the past few decades, there has been growing movement all over the world towards a philosophy of inclusion of all individuals no matter how diverse they may be. Specifically, there has been a growing movement towards inclusive education, in which learners with barriers to learning are not only included within schools, but are accommodated, thus allowing them the opportunity to form part of society. This study investigated the

perceptions of principals from government primary schools located in the Johannesburg-north region of Gauteng.

Results from the study indicated that although the majority of principals interviewed agreed with the philosophy, ideals and values behind inclusive education, all principals had reservations regarding its successful implementation within schools. While principals voiced both benefits and possible disadvantages of inclusive education, many factors were found to impede the successful implementation of inclusive education. The most significant factors being: an education system already riddled with challenges (many of them due to the socio-economic climate of South Africa); a lack of educator expertise in the field of barriers to learning, thus indicating a great need of educator training at both the pre-service and in-service levels; a lack of specialized resources and materials available; a lack of specialists available to many schools; and a lack of collaboration between government and policy makers and the role players on the ground level.

Furthermore, results from the study showed that many of the principals did not perceive that the curriculum policy developments since 2001 had significant reference to inclusive education. In line with this, principals also reported that they did not believe the current curriculum CAPS leant itself to the successful accommodation of learners with barriers to learning and development. Due to all of these factors, results from the study indicate that, according to the perceptions of the principal, there has been limited progression made in the implementation of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

The ideals and values behind inclusive education reflect a global consciousness based on human rights and equality. South Africa has formed part of this global consciousness and has taken the initial steps into making it a reality - in creating an education system for all, and in fostering a belief in acceptance and inclusion no matter a person's race, culture, language, circumstances or ability. While this may be the case, there still appear to be many challenges in the road a head for South Africa and the successful implementation of inclusive education. It is hoped that this study provided some insight into inclusive education and the recent curriculum policy developments, through the lens of the school principal.

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# APPENDICES

Appendix 1 **Participant Information Sheet**

**Principals' Perceptions towards Inclusive Education and the Recent Curriculum Policy Development in South Africa**

Good day,

My name is Anke Lampen and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining my Masters Degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The aim of this research is to explore principals' perceptions towards inclusive education and the recent curriculum policy development in South Africa.

In 2001, the South African Department of Education released the policy document Education White Paper 6, in a movement towards building an inclusive education system for all learners. This policy document provided a 20 year framework for the goals of the implementation of inclusive education to be achieved. Thus, it is this study's aims to explore the perceived progress made in the implementation of inclusive education in the last 12 years, through the eyes of principals.

I would thus like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation in this study will involve an interview with the researcher (myself) where you will be asked questions related to the above-mentioned topic. The interview will last for approximately 50 to 60 minutes and, with your permission, will be recorded (audiotaped) to ensure accuracy. Once the interviews have been conducted, thematic content analysis will be used to analyze the data retrieved in an attempt to explore all emerging themes that may arise from the answers provided in the interview.

Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not in this study. All interviews will be kept confidential as only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to them. Specifically, all interview material (transcripts and audiotapes) will only be seen and heard by the researcher and her supervisor. No identifying information will be included in the final research report or in any publication that may follow. All transcripts and audiotape recordings will be kept in a

locked cabinet for the duration of the research, and all audiotapes will be destroyed on completion of the research report. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, and you may choose not to answer specific questions should you not wish to. Due to the nature of this study, there are no inherent risks or dangers to you or your school as a result of participation in this study. If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent forms.

On completion of this research, a brief summary of the findings will be provided. A copy of the full research report can be provided on request. If you have any questions regarding this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself.

Thank you for considering participating in this research.

Kind Regards

_____

Anke Lampen

Contact Details:
Anke Lampen (the researcher)
082 601 3555
ankalampen@hotmail.com

Dr Zaytoon Amod (supervisor)
011 717 8326
Zaytoon.Amod@wits.ac.za

Appendix 2

## Participant Consent Form (Interview)

I, _____, having read the participant information sheet, consent to participate in the above specified study and be interviewed by Anke Lampen. In doing so I understand that:

- My participation in this interview is completely voluntary
- I may withdraw from the study at any time
- I may choose not to answer any questions I do not wish to
- No identifying information will be included in the research report
- My responses will remain confidential, although I may be quoted in the research report
- My interview transcript will be subjected to analysis
- My interview transcript will be kept in a safe place (a locked cabinet)
- There are no inherent risks to my self or my school as a result of participation in this study
- I am aware that the results of this study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Master of Educational Psychology, and may be published in a scientific journal

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3

## Participant Consent Form (Recording)

I, _____, having read the participant information sheet, consent to participate in the interview and have my interview recorded by Anke Lampen. In doing so I understand that:

- My participation in this study is completely voluntary
- I may withdraw from the study at any time
- My interview will be recorded (audiotaped)
- My interview recording will be confidential
- My interview recording will be subject to an analysis
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report
- My recorded interview will only be heard by the researcher and her supervisor
- My recorded interview will be kept in a safe place (a locked cabinet)
- My recorded interview will be destroyed on completion of the research report
- I am aware that the results of this study will be reported in the form of a research report for the partial completion of the degree, Master of Educational Psychology, and may be published in a scientific journal

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4

## School Survey Checklist

School Name: _____

Number of Learners in the school: _____

Teacher pupil ratio:

| Below 1 : 30 | 1 : 30 – 1 : 35 | 1 : 35 – 1 : 40 | 1 : 40 – 1 : 45 | Above 1 : 45 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

* Please check next to the features that are currently present in your school

| | |
|---|---|
| Blackboards | |
| Overhead Projectors | |
| White Boards | |
| Smart Boards | |
| Library | |
| Computer Centre | |
| Computer per student in class | |
| Printers | |
| Internet Access | |
| Fax machines | |
| Photocopy machines | |
| Scanner | |
| School based support team | |
| Learning support specialist | |
| Psychologist | |
| Speech therapist | |
| Occupational therapist | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Parent involvement in school | |
| School governing body | |
| Supportive district support team | |
| Sporting equipment | |
| External sport coaches | |
| Swimming pool | |
| Tennis court/netball court | |
| Cricket/soccer field | |
| Textbooks | |
| School readers | |
| Workbooks supplied to students | |
| Tuckshop | |
| Classroom per teacher | |
| Substitute teachers | |
| School hall | |
| Bathrooms per 3 grades | |
| Ramps for wheelchairs | |

Appendix 5

## Interview Schedule

1) What is your understanding of inclusive education?

2) What are your views on inclusive education?

3) What do you believe are the benefits, if any, of inclusive education?

4) What do you believe are the disadvantages, if any, of inclusive education?

5) What do you believe facilitates the implementation of inclusive education?

6) What do you believe hinders the implementation of inclusive education?

Since the implementation of Education White Paper 6 in 2001, the curriculum used in schools has undergone a number of changes in order to ensure a system aimed at education for all.

7) What are your views regarding the curriculum policy development related to inclusive education?

8) What aspects of the curriculum do you believe facilitate the implementation of inclusive education?

9) What aspects of the curriculum do you believe hinder the implementation of inclusive education?

The implementation of inclusive education, as stated in Education White Paper 6 in 2001, was estimated as a 20 year project. Timelines were proposed for the goals of the implementation of inclusive education to be reached.

10) What are your views regarding the progression of inclusive education in terms of the goals outlined in Education White Paper 6 in 2001?

11) Are there any other comments you would like to add regarding inclusive education in South Africa?

12) Are there any other comments you would like to add regarding the development of curriculum policies since 2001 related to inclusive education?

Appendix 6

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG**

**HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

| | |
|---|---|
| **CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** | **PROTOCOL NUMBER: MEDP/13/002 IH** |
| **PROJECT TITLE:** | A Pilot Study on Principal's Perceptions towards Inclusive Education and the Recent Curriculum Policy Development in South Africa |
| **INVESTIGATORS** | Lampen Anke |
| **DEPARTMENT** | Psychology |
| **DATE CONSIDERED** | 19/03/13 |
| **DECISION OF COMMITTEE*** | Approved |

**This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application**

**DATE: 09 May 2013**

**CHAIRPERSON**
**(Professor A. Thatcher)**

cc Supervisor: Dr Z. Amod
Psychology

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**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)**

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

**This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2015**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix 7

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**For administrative use:**
**Reference no. D2013/314**

# GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date:** | **1 March 2013** |
| **Validity of Research Approval:** | **1 March 2013 to 20 September 2013** |
| **Name of Researcher:** | **Lampen A.** |
| **Address of Researcher:** | **P. O. Box 97136** |
| | **Petervale** |
| | **2151** |
| **Telephone Number:** | **011 463 3569 / 082 601 3555** |
| **Email address:** | **ankalampen@hotmail.com** |
| **Research Topic:** | **A pilot study on principals' perceptions towards Inclusive Education and the recent curriculum policy development in South Africa** |
| **Number and type of schools:** | **EIGHT Primary Schools** |
| **District/s/HO** | **Johannesburg North** |

## *Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research*

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

**The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:**



**Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research**
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

2013/03/04

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
4. *A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
12. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

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Dr David Makhado
Director: Knowledge Management and Research

DATE: 2018/03/04



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