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Investigating teachers' experiences of support for learners with hearing impairment at a special school in Pretoria

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University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

Research Report for Master of Education (M Ed)
Inclusive Education

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Date: June 2023

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Title of Study: Investigating teachers' experiences of support for learners with hearing impairment at a special school in Pretoria.

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

School of Education

SENATE PLAGIARISM POLICY

Declaration by Students

I Lesetja Johannes Molala (Student number: 2598497) am a student

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry explored teachers' experiences of support for learners with hearing impairment (HI) in a special school in Pretoria. Through a qualitative approach, data were collected and analysed to better understand teachers' experiences in providing appropriate instruction and support to learners with HI. Thus, using the interpretivism paradigm to inquire about the teachers support experiences for learners with HI was a logical step. I used Florian's' theory of inclusive pedagogy to interpret the findings and draw conclusions I used qualitative methods such as interviews to collect data. A purposeful selection of participants was made to ensure the research questions were answered adequately. Thereafter, semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand each participant's perspectives in the study sample of six teachers. The interview schedule was designed to allow reflection by participants into their unique teaching experiences openly and candidly, providing invaluable insight into the dynamics of the study sample.

All conversations were recorded verbatim to ensure accuracy. The recordings of the conversations were then transcribed for further analysis. This enabled me to easily recognise patterns and themes in the data. I then analysed the data to identify key themes and patterns. The findings revealed that teachers found the support they received instrumental in helping them effectively implement the curriculum and address classroom challenges. The study suggests that parents are actively involved in their children's education which benefits all involved. In addition, the school must update its language policy to ensure that learners with HI receive instruction in sign language. Therefore, it is recommended that the school revise its language policy to incorporate sign language as a language of teaching and learning to promote learner success. To create an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all and ensure that learners with HI are supported, this policy should also be extended to include sign language in the classroom.

***KEYWORDS**:* Hearing impairment, teacher support, pedagogy, inclusive education, teaching experiences, special school.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background

Although the educational landscape in South Africa has changed, the transition from an exclusive education system to one that caters for all learners has not been without challenges. In attempting to cater for all learners in the education system, the government introduced inclusive education (Negash, 2017). According to the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural organisation (UNESCO, 2008, p. 8) "IE is a process of strengthening the education system's capacity to support and reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve Education for All. "The implementation of inclusive education (IE) in South Africa must be viewed in the country's broader context of social, cultural and political developments since 1994, particularly the systematic and progressive transformation of education in congruence with constitutional values and ideals" (Engelbrecht, 2020, p. 1). Therefore, in conformity with international inclusion standards on support, IE has been embraced as a vehicle for transforming education. Particularly for marginalised learners including those with HI. In ensuring that all learners are adequately supported in the classroom, the government should strive to minimise barriers to learning experienced by learners with HI. There are a number of barriers to education experienced by learners with HI, despite inclusive education's commitment to education for all (Lehloa, 2019). As a result, teaching learners with HI becomes a challenge for teachers. In response to the many discussions surrounding the best way to teach learners with HI, the democratically elected government revised policies and recognised South African Sign Language (SASL) as the appropriate language to teach learners with HI (Magongwa, 2020). Although SASL has been recognised as the language of teaching and learning for learners with HI in special schools, some teachers continue to experience challenges in teaching these learners (Magongwa, 2020). Learners with HI cannot hear and thus communicate using South African Sign Language (Mokala, 2021). As a result of their impairments they require varied and innovative pedagogical practices. Hence the researcher sought to investigate teachers experiences of support . learners with HI.

Through the introduction of IE, the government aimed to maximise learner participation through the provision of individualised learning support programmes (DoE, 2001). In light of this, learning support refers to how special schools and teachers organise themselves to accommodate learners with HI and respond to their varied learning needs. According to Mosia (2019, p. 4) "learner support develops high self-efficacy in learners and empowers them to maximise their academic potential". As a result, this inquiry aimed to establish how support is provided to learners with HI to maximise their potential. Furthermore, this study investigated the teachers experiences of supporting learners with HI in Pretoria. Teacher skills, training, and ways of interacting with learners with special needs reflect their perception of the learners' impairments as well as their willingness to help them break through boundaries (Mokala, 2021). In addition, the study explored the approaches and teaching methods teachers employ to teach learners with HI, along with the support they need to address the challenges (Mokala, 2021). Following this, the study examined teachers' roles in supporting learners with HI in a special school. Next, I discuss the problem statement.

1.2 Hearing Impairment and Special Needs Education

According to Majoro (2021), limited research exists in African countries on teachers' support experiences for learners with HI. In the case of learners with HI, they cannot hear, thus they use sign language to communicate. Due to the additional support needs of learners with HI in

understanding what they are taught, they require special education. During apartheid "The education system failed to accommodate learners with HI" (Kelly et al., 2020, p. 3). They were taught in different schools and segregated according to their race (Kelly et al., 2020). The disruptions caused by segregation created a gap in the support provision, further placing learners with HI at a disadvantage in receiving support (Kelly et al., 2020). Currently, learners with HI are catered for under special education, hence this inquiry. In the upcoming section, I discuss learning support.

1.2.1 Learning support

"The concept of education support is highly contestable by various interest groups in education because of differing opinions of what makes effective education opportunities" (Mosia, 2019, p. 3). Inclusion is about expanding teachers' reach in the classroom by ensuring all learners are catered for. "Learning support involves all the additional activities aimed at improving and enhancing the academic experiences of learners with HI" (Hay et al., 2021, p. 53). Teachers in special schools face numerous constraints in supporting learners with HI (Subramoney, 2017). These are support services within schools tailored to learners' individual needs. According to Buys (2017), all learners in schools need appropriate support. Learners have distinct context-specific needs (Mosia, 2019). Inclusive institutions, such as special schools, provide holistic support for all learners. Next, I discuss inclusion and relevant policies.

1.2.3 Inclusion and policies

Inclusion refers to pedagogical practices teachers employ in catering to the specific needs of learners in spite of their impairment, race or circumstance (DoE, 2001). It is difficult to implement inclusion (Zhu, 2019). Inclusion refers to efforts focused on creating equitable opportunities for learners to succeed (Mokala, 2021). The effort includes redressing past injustices, including developing policies that provide ongoing support (Majoro, 2021). As part of the implementation of IE, various policies have been introduced. Since the introduction of the White Paper of 1995, there has been a shift in views on differences (Engelbrecht et al., 2020). Phala (2019) indicates that the SIAS policy was introduced in 2014. The SIAS policy aims at enabling learners to overcome barriers that prevent learning from taking place. The overarching policy document on inclusion is the Salamanca Statement. Engelbrecht et al. (2020, p. 12) postulates that the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education imbued inclusion "as a guiding principle the development of education for all arguing that all learners should be catered for in schools regardless of their physical, intellectual, linguistic, social, or emotional needs and differences" (UNESCO, 1994). A principle that enforces every child's right to meaningfully participate in education (Engelbrecht et al, 2020; Moleme, 2020; Mokala, 2021). This section dealt with inclusion and policies. In the next section, I explain the trends in IE internationally.

1.2.4 Inclusive education trends internationally

Formal definitions of IE stress the right to education for all learners, which shows that IE is strongly value-driven (Haug, 2017; Engelbrecht, 2020). Governments all over the world have introduced legislation regarding what IE should encompass. Although IE has not been fully realised, some progress has been made in ensuring that all learners receive the same education. Australia has since experienced a rise in special needs education (Mbelu, 2020). The USA became one of the first countries to introduce IE legislation (Agrawal et al., 2019; Mbelu, 2020). Furthermore, in the USA, learners with disabilities can receive free public education

that meets their needs (Symeonidou, 2018). This demonstrated the US government's commitment to creating a universal learning environment. The Canadian government has also implemented measures to accommodate all learners (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). This move is significant for schools across the globe. Therefore, IE is regarded as a model of transformation in changing teachers' attitudes to ensure holistic development and full engagement of all learners in the curriculum. In what follows, I discuss IE in developing countries.

1.2.5 Inclusive education in developing countries

In many African countries, impairment is often associated with 'curses', 'sinful behaviour' or disobedience to religious expectations (Phasha et al., 2017, p. 38). These misconceptions about impairment affect how IE is implemented in many developing countries. Namibia embraces inclusion and accepts learners with HI. Each province supports learners individually. Although some of these countries have made significant progress in developing inclusive policies and frameworks for all, it has not been fully realised. According to Mabaso (2019), IE in Zimbabwe involves identifying and removing barriers to learning embedded in traditional settings. While in Namibia, IE implementation has been challenging, since stakeholders such as teachers, parents and policymakers are confused about inclusion principles (Ekandjo, 2018). Since 1996, the Ugandan government has been committed to addressing the needs of learners with impairments (Mokala, 2021). A paradigm shift is necessary if developing countries are to be truly inclusive. Next, I discuss full-service schools.

1.2.6 Full-service schools

South Africa's government introduced full-service schools (FSS) to provide education to all learners regardless of background, disability, gender or creed. FSS were designed to respond to learners' needs (Ayaya et al., 2018; Maphumulo, 2019). They were envisaged to provide relevant support to the individual learner regardless of their impairment (Hay et al., 2021; DoE, 2010). "The capacity of these schools is built on support provision" (Mokala, 2017, p. 15). These schools were classified as resource centres by the district-based support teams (DoE, 2001). In light of this, these schools should assist neighbouring schools with IE implementation (DoE, 2001). The succeeding section discusses mainstreaming.

1.2.7 Mainstreaming

Mainstream schools are schools that receive support from full-service and resource centres. Swart and Pettipher (2011, p. 7) indicate that Mainstreaming offers students with disabilities the opportunity to experience life in the same manner as other members of society, if not the same. This is the educational equivalent of the normalization principle. (Bell & Swart, 2018, p. 4). It involves utilising existing systems and infrastructure in education to respond to learners' demands (Mabaso, 2019). The goal of mainstreaming is the integrated education of all learners (Bell & Swart, 2018). Following this, I discuss the motive for selecting special schools as a focus for this study.

1.2.8 Why special schools?

According to (WHO, 2011b) special schools were opened to serve learners with impairment. Special schools are relevant in this inquiry as I intend to investigate teachers' support experiences. According to Mokala (2021), learners with HI have unique communication needs.

This includes the interpretation and delivery of curriculum in sign language, which is unique to special schools. In the realisation of IE, the same curriculum should be accessible to learners with HI as it is for other learners. Therefore, teachers employed in special schools need specific competencies to ensure IE can be effectively implemented. This argument is further strengthened by Mokala (2021), who indicates that IE prioritises changing teachers' attitudes. This can be achieved through special schools, as they provide education based on learners' specific needs. Next, I discuss the problem statement.

1.3 Problem statement

Since democracy, South Africa's government has faced challenges supporting all learners. “According to research, special education teachers face several challenges” (Mandyata, 2018, p. 5). These include inefficient skills and abilities to support and teach learners with HI (Thuketana, 2018). Special education teachers were inadequately trained to teach learners with HI, leading to inadequate support (Buys, 2017). Thus, it is evident that IE's successful implementation has not been fully achieved. On closer inspection, IE policies tend to become ambiguous with no clear implementation strategies. “Policy documents such as the Education White Paper 6 and the South African Schools Act and the implementation guidelines have made it difficult for learners to receive high-quality and relevant education" (Engelbrecht, 2020, p. 6). Only a few studies have been conducted to date on teachers' experiences of support for learners with HI (Bell, 2013; Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2013; Bamu et al., 2017; Patrick 2017; Rosa et al., 2017; Mandyata & Kamukwamba, 2018; Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021, Mokala, 2021). Only one study on the list focused on the South African context (Bell, 2013). Therefore, this inquiry explored teachers' experiences of support for teaching learners with HI in Pretoria, South Africa, in an attempt to fill this gap. Thus, I attempted to contribute to this still unexplored area with the current study. In the section that follows, I discuss the rationale for this inquiry.

1.4 Rationale for the study

Limited research exists on the teachers' support experiences in special schools since IE was introduced (Dreyer, 2017). This inquiry investigates teachers' support experiences for learners with HI in a special school in Pretoria. The significance of investigating teachers' support experiences is necessitated by my desire to understand how teachers provide support within the special school context in the realisation of IE. Although South Africa has introduced some of the most advanced IE policies, gaps still exist between policy and implementation. This results in learners' needs not being fully addressed (Dreyer, 2017). This inquiry aimed to establish how teachers fill this gap by investigating how they execute IE practices. Within this context, I argue that a thorough knowledge of teachers' inclusive classroom practices is essential. It can provide policymakers and curriculum developers with the necessary assistance in implementing IE, particularly in the special education field. Research findings of this inquiry cannot be generalised. Despite this, they are crucial to further research. Next, I outline the inquiry's aims.

1.5 Aims of the study

This inquiry investigates teachers’ experiences of supporting learners with HI at a special school in Pretoria. The study further aimed to achieve the following objectives:

a. To investigate the support experiences of teachers in the execution of inclusive pedagogical practices.

b. To investigate teaching methodologies employed by teachers to accommodate the demands of learners with HI.

c. To identify strategies teachers employ to enhance the learning experiences of learners with HI.

1.6 Research questions

The overall research question guiding this study is:

What are teachers' experiences of supporting learners with HI at a special school in Pretoria?

Supporting research questions:

a. What are teachers' support experiences for learners with HI in a special school?

b. What teaching methodologies are employed by teachers to accommodate the demands of learners with HI?

c. What support strategies do teachers employ to enhance the learning experiences of learners with HI?

After outlining the research questions, the following section deals with the study's theoretical framework.

1.7 Theoretical framework

This inquiry is premised on the Florian Framework for Inclusive Pedagogy (Florian, 2017). "Due to confusion about what constitutes IE, Florian has conceptualised an inclusive pedagogy framework for teachers to help teachers understand its application" (Mokala, 2017, p.15). This framework proposes that teachers should move away from seeing deficits in learners and instead acknowledge the challenges they experience in their practice (Florian, 2017). A focus on differences is more likely to reinforce rather than solve differences dilemmas. The significance of Florian's framework in this inquiry is that it rejects traditional beliefs about impairment and the perception of teachers that some learners' progress is to the detriment of others. I find this framework relevant to my study because it advocates for a change in attitudes and perceptions of teachers about providing support. Teachers' attitudes are one of the contributing factors to the failed IE agenda in South Africa (Mokala, 2021). Therefore, this framework encourages teachers to support all learners instead of some or most (Florian, 2017). In the next section, the research methodology for this study is discussed.

1.8 Research methodology

Qualitative research methodology "involves an interpretive approach rather than a statistical one" (Selepe, 2019, p. 28). In light of this, I investigate what strategies teachers use to support and ensure meaningful learning opportunities for learners with HI. Qualitative research methodology is relevant for this inquiry as it is descriptive and relates to people's experiences.

The qualitative approach allowed me to obtain detailed data from participants. The qualitative methodology provides me with an insider's perspective into teachers' support experiences, which is the problem of this inquiry (Mokala, 2021). Qualitative research believes that individuals assign meaning to their experiences to create reality. Participant experience is unique and influenced by their experiences. Moreover, this inquiry sought to establish the efficacy of the support provided by teachers. Therefore, their views and opinions are of paramount significance to this study (Mokala, 2021). Qualitative studies purport that reality is socially constructed (Bell & Swart, 2018). Qualitative research allows us to observe and understand how teachers assign meaning and understanding to their practice. This was useful for analysing the study's findings. Research methodology has been discussed. The following section describes the research paradigm of this inquiry.

1.8.1 Research paradigm

The research paradigm guiding this inquiry is interpretivism. The reason I chose the interpretive paradigm is that it allows knowledge to be constructed through the values, beliefs, and self-understanding of the phenomena, rather than observation only. Due to the subject under investigation, this inquiry follows an interpretive approach. This allows for insights into teachers' views of IE, including how their practices address inclusion in the classroom. Therefore, this inquiry not only explored teachers' support experiences for learners with HI in a special school. Instead, it also observed the interaction between them. Next, I discuss the research design.

1.8.2 Research design

Research design can be described as the strategy that outlines how the researcher plans on carrying out the investigation from conception to completion (Mokala, 2021). This study utilized the case study research design. It is through the interpretive lens that links with the case study design that allows me to investigate teachers' support experiences. A case study design focuses on understanding the phenomenon in depth. It further examines participants' behaviour to gain insights. The case study design enables me to observe teachers in their natural settings. This inquiry utilises a case study design due to its proximity and alignment with the inquiry objective. Next, I discuss data collection methods.

1.8.3 Data collection methods

In this case study, data was collected through interviews, document analysis, and observation. As a result, this technique provided me with the opportunity to understand teachers' IE practices. It also enables me to probe ideas and follow up on responses. Semi-structured interviews allow spontaneous responses. In this study, semi structured interviews are preferred since they allow the interviewer to clarify questions when the respondent may not provide a clear response (Selepe, 2019; Mokala, 2017). Non-participant observations were made, allowing me to experience reality as a participant. Document analysis includes scrutinising documents relevant to the study (Henning et al. 2017), which in this inquiry enabled me to observe the participants in their natural environments. Document analysis included education White Paper 6, SIAS document, teacher intervention programmes, work schedules (timetables), tools of assessment, and records of learners experiencing barriers. These provide rich information and insights into participants' experiences. This inquiry explores and narrates inclusive classroom practices. The next section discusses sampling techniques.

1.8.4 Sampling technique

In this inquiry, participants with certain characteristics were identified. In qualitative studies, The likelihood that a sample will be useful to the researcher is taken into consideration when selecting samples. Teachers were selected based on certain characteristics, including qualifications, teaching experience, and employment in a special school. The participating teachers for this inquiry were chosen based on their experience teaching learners with HI and their insights. As a result, one special school in Pretoria was purposely chosen. Next, I discuss the process of selecting participants.

1.8.5 Selection of participants

It is prudent to note that participants must be employed at a special school as a teacher. The identified special school is within 30 km of my workplace. The school is chosen based on its unique identity, historical context, and the relatively large number of learners with HI enrolled. As a result of financial constraints, there are only a limited number of participants (Six) were drawn as a sample for this study. Teachers have varied experiences and provided different information whilst sharing insights into teaching learners with HI. As a result, teachers were selected based on certain requirements. These include qualifications and experience teaching learners with HI. Next, I discuss data analysis techniques.

1.8.6 Data analysis and interpretation

General inductive data analysis was utilised in this inquiry. Using the general inductive approach, qualitative data can be analysed in a systematic, reliable, and valid manner, resulting in reliable and valid findings (Xu, 2022; Henning, 2017). This enabled me to link the findings and objectives of the research outcomes (Theron, 2021). When the data collection process is complete, I analysed the data. An analysis of data involves organising, accounting for and explaining data (Mokala, 2017). It is a continuous and unsystematic process. When collecting data, the researcher audio recorded the interviews and transcribe these into Word documents. The researcher read the transcriptions over and over to increase understanding of the participants' views. The next section focuses on ethical issues.

1.9 Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained informed consent from the teachers. They were informed that involvement is voluntary. Before commencing the inquiry, participants must sign the consent form. For several years to come, the signed consent forms will be kept in a safe place. This issue is essential for participants' identities (Buys, 2017). Participants may be contacted once or for the entire research process. They must be aware of the benefits and potential harms of partaking in this study. Next, I detail issues of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy.

1.10 Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy

Due to the interaction I had with the participants, confidentiality was upheld. Confidentiality refers to the non-disclosure of participants' identities to anyone, including my supervisor. I must ask for authorisation from the principal of the special school where I intend to conduct my investigation. Therefore, I intend on writing a letter stating what my research is about, including how I plan on ensuring anonymity. Confidentiality involves not disclosing or sharing information about participants. Next, I discuss the researcher's role.

1.11 The researcher's role

As the researcher, I fulfil different roles throughout the inquiry. I intend on having face-to-face interactions with the participants. Data was collected through various methods including interviews. In conducting interviews, I remained neutral and pay attention to body language (Mokala, 2021).. To better understand teachers' inclusive classroom practices, I listened to their experiences. Next, I discuss researchers' reflexivity.

1.12 Reflexivity as a researcher

While conducting this research, I reflected on my role and how I interpret the data collected throughout the process. “Reflexivity involves acknowledging the effects of the researcher's presence on the research process” (Mokala, 2021, p. 92). The presence of the researcher may impact the findings of the data collected, so it is prudent to consider the impact on the inquiry findings. This is a result of the researcher gathering, interpreting and selecting data (Finlay, 2022).

1.13 Limitations of the study

Limitations of this inquiry include that I work with learners with HI in a special school. Certain limiting conditions are associated with qualitative research methodology and some are inherent in this study’s research design. As a researcher, subjectivity is a tendency. During this study, my supervisor reviewed the interview schedule. Any data that can easily be attributed to any participant was removed to ensure confidentiality. As a means of promoting inclusion, inclusive pedagogy eliminates provisions for some or most.

1.14 Action plan

TASK	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	Apr 2022	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jul 2022	Aug 2022	Sep 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan/ May 2023	June/ July 2023
Draft research proposal														
Literature review														
Supervisor Meetings														
Collecting data														
Data analysis														
Research Findings														
Proof reading														
Submission of report														

Gantt chart for a research report

This blueprint is a mechanism by which measurable goals and targets were set against realistic timeframes for finalising and submitting my research proposal. To achieve this, I have outlined a set of tasks to submit a proposal successfully. Central to these plans are meetings (Physical & Virtual) with my supervisor on dates agreed by both parties including communication via

email and WhatsApp. Feedback received from my supervisor served as a yardstick for evaluating progress and effecting changes. Provision has been made for online (virtual) methods of communication should there be travel restrictions or hard lockdowns put in place. This plan of action enabled me to adhere to all timeframes stipulated and agreed upon to successfully submit my report. Below is a tentative calendar of tasks to complete within a stipulated timeframe.

1.16 Preliminary outline of chapters

Following are the remaining chapters of the study:

Chapter One outlines the methodological approach adopted for the research, together with the data collection and analysis techniques employed for the purpose of the study. It explains how the findings of the inquiry were interpreted and how they contribute to existing knowledge in the field.

A review of the literature on IE, HI, inclusion and policies, both locally and globally, is presented in **Chapter Two**.

This study's research methods and methodology are described in **Chapter Three.**

An analysis of the findings of this study is presented in **Chapter Four.**

In Chapter Five, I discuss the study's findings, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

1.17 Conclusion

It is crucial to prioritise the support of learners with HI in order to ensure IE realisation. For this to be accomplished, particular attention must be given to special schools. This is critical as it can help shift perceptions about support provision. In addition, it can ensure continuous professional development programmes. This might enhance their knowledge and skills in support. To move towards IE, schools need to reform, interrupting the prevailing notions of how learners with HI are supported. Provincial departments should facilitate this process. As practitioners in institutions of learning, we are mandated to facilitate the provision of support to every learner in the schooling system. In the succeeding chapter, I discuss the literature reviewed for this inquiry.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Learners with HI still experience numerous barriers in accessing education (Engelbrecht, 2020). Furthermore, they are faced with challenges like the non-recognition of sign language as an official language, lack of teacher training and limited subject choices in schools (Kelly et al., 2020). I find it necessary to explore such issues as they negatively impact learners with HI's success. In this chapter, I outline the framework on which this inquiry is premised. This study is based on Florian's inclusive pedagogy framework. It challenges teachers to look beyond impairments in implementing inclusive pedagogical practices. This is followed by a discussion on HI and special needs education. Following that, I elaborate on learning support and IE policies.

In discussing inclusion and policies, I found it necessary to evaluate existing IE policies in South Africa. I then explain why special schools are best suited to supporting learners with HI. In evaluating the effectiveness of support systems provided in a special school, one must consider the effects of the many curriculum reforms that have engulfed education system. Following this is a general discussion of IE trends locally and internationally. I further discuss how IE is conceptualised in different contexts. I found it prudent to discuss the barriers experienced by learners with HI, particularly within a special education setting. Issues such as lack of appropriate teaching strategies, lack of support and inadequate teacher training harm learners' success. In conclusion, this chapter explores full-service, mainstream and special school offerings. In the next section, I discuss the theoretical framework.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This inquiry is premised on Florian's inclusive pedagogy framework. It highlights the importance of the teacher-learner relationship. I find this framework relevant to this study because it encourages teachers to view learning difficulties as professional challenges instead of deficits in learners (Florian, 2017). It further provides guidelines on how teachers should respond to human differences by including and supporting all learners. In light of the above, this framework challenges teachers to adopt non-deterministic views and endorse strategies that help them review their inclusive pedagogical practices to cater for all learners. This framework is relevant to investigating how teachers support learners with HI. Florian's inclusive pedagogy is explained below.

2.2.1. Florian's framework of inclusive pedagogy

The current study is based on Florian's inclusive pedagogy framework (Florian, 2012; 2014; 2015), which recognises that teachers must view differences in learning as strengths rather than dilemmas. Teachers' experiences of support in a special school for learners with HI were explored using this frame of reference for reasoning, reflecting, and reflecting (Kelly et al., 2020). For teachers to develop more inclusive practices, the framework suggests they must commit to continuing professional development (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian & Spratt, 2013). Considering the level of support teachers receive from their schools, was an important tenet of the study. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) believe an inclusive pedagogy provides all students with rich learning opportunities at once, rejecting the idea that a student is different from another. As the current study emphasises, teachers must strive to

accommodate all learners regardless of their differences. By exploring these concepts, the study investigated how teachers with HI experience support from schools.

Scholars around the globe cannot agree on a universally acceptable IE definition. Therefore, IE is conceptualised differently. Florian's framework of inclusive pedagogy in the context of these, advocates for different ways of thinking about support for every learner. It accepts that people are different. In reviewing teachers' inclusive pedagogical practices, this framework rejects the notion that learners have fixed abilities. Instead, it upholds that what teachers choose to do or not to do at the moment can alter a child's learning ability for the future. It asserts that teachers must acknowledge and accept that difference is a critical aspect of human development in learning. Therefore, in support provision, it is pertinent to highlight that Florian's framework proposes a change in teachers' attitudes to cater for all learners (Florian, 2017). It advocates for teaching practices that support all learners. Furthermore, this framework has as one of its cornerstones, the belief that teachers are suitably qualified to handle all learners and as a result, teachers can use varied approaches and relevant strategies to ensure learners with HI reach their full potential (Mukelabai et al., 2020).

In providing support to learners with HI, Florian (2017) argues that teachers should offer a wide variety of options available to everyone. This view encourages a positive view of the child and fosters learning to enhance their potential. This framework calls on teachers to embrace a holistic pedagogical approach to diversity in the classroom. Therefore, teachers are challenged to disregard their beliefs that the presence of some learners will harm others as these beliefs and attitudes impede IE implementation. This framework is based on the requirement for additional support for learners with HI in this study. A key purpose of inclusive pedagogy is to empower teachers in their concepts and practices and to work concepts towards social justice for all (Mukelabai et al., 2020; Mokala, 2021). This theoretical framework emphasises the importance of teachers as professionals who are equipped with the necessary training to handle all types of learners. Various methods of teaching can be used to help all learners reach their full potential within the learning context (Mukelabai et al., 2020; Mokala, 2021). Developing highly qualified teachers requires extensive training in pedagogy. This view is supported by Mukelabai et al. (2020, p. 886), who claimed that in comparison to those who have little or no preparation in pedagogy and practice teaching, teachers who are highly qualified have attained significantly higher levels of certification. Pedagogies that strive for inclusion instead of addressing education for all by offering most students similar experiences with additional or different experiences available to some are contrary to inclusive pedagogical practices, according to Florian and Spratt (2013). Accordingly, Florian proposes a new theoretical framework for inclusive education that revolves around three aspects (Mokala, 2017). It is imperative that the focus be shifted from specifically targeting those individuals who have special needs to including all children. Additionally, it rejects the notion that others will be held back by the presence of others with deterministic beliefs. As a result, they view difficulties in learning as professional challenges for teachers instead of deficits on the part of learners that contribute to developing new ways of teaching (Ravet, 2018). This framework is relevant in this inquiry because it focuses on teachers' role in providing support for inclusive pedagogical practices. Next, I discuss HI and special needs education.

2.3 Hearing impairment and special needs education

HI can range from mild to profound, depending on the severity. It includes anything from mild hearing loss, which may not be noticeable, to severe hearing loss, which makes it impossible to understand speech without assistive devices. Depending on the severity, HI can impact the

ability of an individual to understand speech and communicate effectively (Sayed et al., 2019; World Health Organization, 1980). “In South Africa, learners with HI are among the most disadvantaged in terms of educational outcomes” (Kelly et al., 2020, p. 1). Several factors contribute to the unsatisfactory outcomes of learners with HI in special schools (Kelly et al., 2020). In providing support to learners with HI, the national education department introduced numerous policies. One such policy was the white paper 6. There are a number of issues dealt with in "Education White Paper 6", such as maximizing the participation of all learners and uncovering and removing the obstacles to learning (Mokala, 2021). Although strides have been made through the introduction of various inclusive policies, support for learners with HI remains a challenge. In addressing the challenges, one must consider the historical effects of segregation. During apartheid, the education system excluded learners with HI (Kelly et al., 2020, p. 2). A small proportion of learners with HI in the education system were segregated and taught in different schools according to their race (Kelly et al., 2020; Mbelu, 2020). The disruptions caused by segregation created a gap in support provision, further placing learners with HI at a disadvantage in receiving support (Kelly et al., 2020).

Currently, learners with HI are catered for under special education in South Africa (Williams, 2020). Special education is designed to provide an individualised learning experience tailored to the learners’ specific needs (Martinez, 2021). Learners with HI cannot hear and communicate using sign language. Thus, I contend that, due to the unique communication needs and challenges of understanding what they are taught, learners with HI require special education. This is affirmed by Williams (2020) who asserted that children experience learning difficulties during school. In light of this, “schools must find ways of educating all children” (UNESCO, 1994, p. 3). Special needs education focuses on sound pedagogical principles that can be applied to all learners (Williams, 2020). Therefore, the motive for focusing on a special school is derived from the adaptability to learning and teaching that these schools provide. To put it succinctly, due to the unique communication needs and barriers experienced by learners with HI in understanding what they are being taught, they require special needs education. I contend that special needs education is relevant to this study. Next, I discuss learning support.

2.4 Learning support

Learners with HI continue to experience numerous barriers. These include a lack of specialist training among teachers, lack of curriculum differentiation, limited subject choice offered and lack of support. Mosia (2019) argues that learner support encompasses specific remedial activities performed by a teacher. It includes the support teachers offer that helps learners feel understood (Kelly et al., 2020). “Learning support involves all the additional activities aimed at supporting and enhancing the academic experiences of learners with HI” (Hay et al., 2021, p. 53). As such, support in this context refers to all additional activities taken by special school teachers. These activities aim to enhance learners' learning experiences. Providing support holistically refers to the guidance and support teachers give to their students both in the classroom and in the classroom environment (Kelly et al., 2020). This can be achieved through effective learner support programmes. Teachers play a central role in effectively implementing programmes aimed at supporting learners with HI. All learners in schools need appropriate support (Buys, 2017), particularly learners with HI.

The concept of learning support is not new. “During apartheid in South Africa, support services were identified as psychological or auxiliary services” (Mosia, 2011, p. 3). Although learning support services during apartheid consisted of Danish and British professionals with similar backgrounds (Mosia, 2011), they only provided support to a small group of minority learners.

The government in South Africa has through various avenues attempted to bridge the gap created by apartheid. “In South Africa, education support was qualitatively different across racial groups with Whites getting better services than other races, Black, Indian and Coloured” (Mosia, 2011, p. 3). As a result, learners with HI could not benefit from education support services in schools. Although strides have been made in providing support for all learners in South Africa, not enough learning support has been given to learners with HI in special schools. Mosia (2019) asserts that White Paper 6 explicitly explains how education support must be understood and function at different levels. Support services within IE in South Africa are envisaged to provide coordinated professional services within an educational institution (Magongwa, 2020). Next, I discuss inclusion and relevant policies.

2.5 Inclusion and policies

In the context of this inquiry, inclusion refers to the reorganisation of learning institutions to cater for all learners (Artiles and Kozleski, 2017). There are many interpretations of inclusion according to context, which is influenced by policies, economic climates, traditions, globalization processes, and social conditions in which education is developed (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). Inclusion interpretations have led to varied inclusive pedagogical practices. Ultimately these variations in inclusive pedagogy result in compromised support provision for learners with HI. Support for learners is easier when learning barriers are addressed multidimensionally by an education system and its policies (Mosia, 2019, p. 7). In reducing learning limitations, support should be based on diversity.

Although numerous policies have been introduced, there is often a disconnect between policy and implementation that hinders support provision in schools (Hands, 2023). In South Africa, government policies such as the South African Schools Act 8 of 1996 and the Education White Paper 6 play an important role in providing education for all (Mokala, 2021). Furthermore, it must be noted that policies and legislation in education are politically influenced. The principles enshrined in the Constitution tend to inform reforms in South African education legislation and policies (Bila, 2019). As a result, several factors hinder IE implementation. A lack of coherence and understanding of the strategic intent and practical approach of the policies and guidelines for implementation, as articulated in Education White Paper 6, has impeded the quality and relevance of the education support each learner receives. As a result, gaps in policies and practices still exist.

As a result of the lack of adequate human, technical, and infrastructure resources in rural areas, more inclusive curriculums and learning support structures tend to indicate a clear disconnect between policy documents and school realities. Some school communities have negative perceptions of the economic and educational viability of implementing IE (Engelbrecht, 2020, p. 6). This lack of resources disadvantages learners with HI in receiving support in the classroom. “Some of the unintended findings of these weaknesses in policy and implementation guidelines include inconsistent and often contradictory implementation of policy, and in some cases continued reliance on traditional, more deficit-based linear-cause implementation strategies, developed in the pre-1994 era” (Engelbrecht, 2020, p. 6). A review of IE policies reveals that gaps continue to exist in classrooms. This is in contrast to the desired objective of creating an inclusive environment and expanding teachers' reach in the classroom by ensuring all learners are catered for. Next, I discuss IE trends internationally.

2.6 Inclusive education trends internationally

There is no single IE concept that applies across all contexts. It is a legal requirement in most countries to provide special education to children with special needs (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). Alternatively, it might be a mandatory or recommendatory law in other countries. There have been significant changes in developing countries' attitudes toward supporting learners with HI over the last few decades (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). These changes in attitudes have resulted in developed countries prioritising IE support. The Salamanca Statement in 1994 accelerated international support provision. It emphasised that all children must receive learning support (Engelbrecht, 2020). IE aims to adapt the educational programme and environment to cater for all learners (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018).

Governments all over the world have introduced legislation regarding how learners with HI should be supported in school. "Several international and national non-governmental organisations aim to achieve the goal of this movement by prioritising the provision of support to all learners" (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018, p. 1). Although IE has not been realised, some countries have made progress in ensuring that all learners receive learning support. There is no generally accepted definition of IE. Many scholars believe that IE is context-specific (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). In the quest to prioritise support provision for learners with HI, the need for an IE model has become increasingly urgent. Therefore, it is crucial to review other countries' support experiences and should strive to emulate this progress (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018; Mokala, 2017). In the section that follows, I discuss IE in America.

2.6.1 Inclusive education in the United States of America

In introducing IE legislation, the USA became a pioneer in catering to all learners. In advocating for all learners' rights, the USA provided free education which aligned with IE goals (Symeonidou, 2018). As a result, debates erupted between those who wanted change versus those who wanted things to remain the same. "Among the most prestigious special education schools, there is a confrontation between those who seek to preserve the already existing and hard-won modifications to traditional special education programmes and those who seek a full-scale restructuring of regular and special education into a more unified regular education system" (Vovk & Hryshchenko, 2018; Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). These differences endanger special education's pedagogical foundations. To reform the country's education system, the US government demonstrated its commitment by ensuring that all learners are catered for under an integrated and unified education system. This was an indication of the US government's commitment to creating a universal learning environment.

2.6.2 Inclusive education in Canada

The Canadian education system, which has its national peculiarities predetermining differences in educational reforms, has always supported the democratic movement for civil rights and anti-discriminatory attitudes in US education (Vovk & Hryshchenko, 2018: Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). Canadian education is child-centred. Its focal point is the learner. Since the 1980's the Canadian government introduced various IE legislation to restructure and reform its schooling system (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). "Several initiatives have been implemented, including school environments, peer teaching, increasing teacher professionalism and improving school efficiency " (Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018, p. 4). Adhering to the global inclusion agenda, the Canadian government has also implemented measures to accommodate all learners. Following this, I discuss IE in developing countries.

2.7 Inclusive education in developing countries

In a move towards IE, some countries have taken steps to ensure schools provide support for learners with HI. Although progress has been made in creating and providing support for learners with HI, some countries still experience challenges. Lesotho's educational system is based largely on the medical model by default, compared to countries that have experimented with the social or medical models (Mosia, 2019). The use of the deficit model of impairment denies people with impairment resources that would otherwise assist them in academic and social development (Mosia, 2019). In Lesotho, IE research on support provision highlights gaps in teacher training for inclusion (Majoro, 2021). Because of poverty and lack of basic resources in Lesotho, many learners fail to meet grade level objectives, including having a light at home to do homework, having a textbook, and coming to school hungry (Mosia, 2019).

In Zimbabwe, learning support involves identifying and removing barriers to learning embedded in traditional settings (Mabaso, 2019). In removing these barriers, the education ministry in Zimbabwe has committed resources to ensure the same education is provided to all learners. Mabaso (2019) contends that learner support implementation in Zimbabwe has been delayed by maladministration and a lack of adequate financial resources. Since 1996, the Ugandan government has addressed learner support. However, the lack of resources and ambiguity in policies has resulted in slow support provision progress. Learners with HI continue to experience challenges in numerous African countries due to traditional beliefs and misconceptions. “In many African countries, impairment is often associated with ‘curses’, ‘sinful behaviour’ or disobedience to religious expectations” (Phasha et al., 2017, p. 38). As a result, some parents in these countries often deny their children education due to their beliefs and perceptions. African countries face a major challenge in supporting learners with impairments. In Namibia, IE implementation has been challenging since stakeholders such as teachers, parents and policymakers are confused about what support entails (Ekandjo, 2018). Considering the above, various governments in developing countries should provide support and be committed to change. In the preceding section, I discussed IE in South Africa.

2.7.1 Inclusive education in South Africa

During apartheid, most learners with impairments in South Africa were excluded from the education system (Kelly et al., 2022; Zhu, 2019). As a result, learners with HI did not receive the necessary learning support to fully benefit from the IE system. Only a small fraction of learners with impairments were catered for. Those learners receiving an education were segregated and taught according to their race (Kelly et al., 2022). The implementation of IE in South Africa, therefore, points to teachers as the primary resource and agents to achieve IE (Ayaya et al., 2020). The expectation is that teaching staff should be well trained and have skills and knowledge that support multilevel, effective classroom instruction and inclusive teaching strategies (Ayaya et al., 2020). However, a study showed that the teachers lacked support on how to deal with learners who experienced barriers (Ayaya et al., 2020). This was supported by other studies that also found that teacher training was inadequate in preparing teachers for inclusive teaching (Ayaya et al., 2020; Makoelle, 2012; Micanovic et al., 2017).

In spite of the fact that South African teachers generally support the inclusion of IE for social reasons, many have serious doubts about their self-efficacy in implementing it, which raises questions regarding its educational value (Engelbrecht, 2020). Teachers are central to IE achievement and implementation. Therefore, their uncertainty regarding their abilities hampers support provision for learners with HI. As it is their attitude and willingness to support learners with HI that ultimately determines if schools are truly inclusive. Developing countries should prioritise support, especially for learners with HI in special schools. Within individual South

African schools, cultural-historical challenges have been identified, including negative attitudes toward impairment among broader school communities, difficulties relating to diversity, ineffective and authoritarian school leadership that limited teachers' agency, a lack of support within schools, and a lack of effective initial teacher education for inclusion (Engelbrecht et al., 2020). Although some of these countries have made significant progress in developing inclusive policies and frameworks for support provision, the vision for inclusive development has not yet been fully realised. Next, I discuss full-service schools.

2.8 Full-service school

South Africa's government introduced full-service schools. These were defined as schools that had the necessary resources to meet learners' needs (Maphumulo, 2019). They were envisaged to respond to diversity by providing appropriate support and education to the individual learner irrespective of impairment or differences in learning style or difficulties experienced (Hay et al., 2021). Ayaya et al. (2020) assert that the government has published several policies to guide teachers in full-service schools and s on how to teach diverse learners. It is also not known whether teachers in all full-service schools understand and apply these policies effectively, despite the policy documents' attempt to explore ways teachers can differentiate curriculum content (Ayaya et al., 2020). It is also unclear whether teachers understand how to implement the policy instructions following limited training sessions in the area (Makhalemele & Nel, 2021; Ayaya et al., 2020). Despite this, many South African schools still experience high failure rates, including full-service schools, with learners repeating grades without much improvement year after year (Ayaya et al., 2020; Grossen et al., 2017; Makhalemele & Nel, 2021;).

I contend that learners with HI do not receive the necessary support from teachers due to a lack of skilled personnel in full-service schools. Research findings indicate that many full-service schools still prefer to place learners with learning difficulties in separate classrooms (Engelbrecht, 2020). I contend that this is contrary to IE's goal. Contrary to one of the principles of full-service schools being to provide support irrespective of disability, teachers in full-service schools are not trained to teach and offer support to learners with HI. As a result, full-service schools do not cater to learning needs, particularly those with HI. These schools are built on inclusive principles, including support (Hay et al., 2021). Full-service schools are envisaged to render comprehensive inclusion services by collaborating with other resource centres. However, due to a lack of resources, these schools do not provide the support envisaged. These schools should help neighbouring schools by providing support and inclusive services. In the following section, I discuss mainstreaming.

2.9 Mainstreaming

According to the South African Schools Act, learners requiring high levels of support within an inclusive framework can attend mainstream schools (Kelly et al., 2020). Mainstreaming involves utilising existing systems and infrastructure in education to meet learners' needs (Mabaso, 2019). Learners with HI are most disadvantaged by curriculum access. In practice, learners with HI in mainstream schools follow a common language-based curriculum (Majoro, 2021). Due to mainstream schools being unable to offer support to learners with HI through delivering content in sign language and curriculum differentiation many learners with HI find themselves in special schools. Thus, in supporting learners with HI, several considerations must be made (Majoro, 2021).

learners with HI must be able to communicate easily with subject teachers in mainstream schools in order to access the curriculum (Majoro, 2021, p. 3). This, I contend can only be provided by special schools. Furthermore, mainstream schools conduct lessons orally as if all pupils in the classrooms are hearing learners. I contend that the language-based curriculum in mainstream schools excludes sign language as the tool of communication for learners with HI. With mainstreaming, the learner is expected to fit into the system, which is contrary to the goals of support provision in IE (Mokala, 2017). Embedding inclusion in an education system is a central responsibility of the curriculum (UNESCO, 2016). I contend that mainstream schools are not equipped to support learners with HI. In the next section, I discuss the motive for selecting special schools for this study.

2.10 Why special schools

In a special school, learners with severe learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or behavioural issues are provided with services designed to meet their needs (DoE, 2010). Thus, special schools are those schools that accommodate learners with special needs. IE is relevant even in special schools for learners with HI. Education for learners with HI is more appropriate in special schools rather than in mainstream schools, as articulated in the global founding document of IE (UNESCO, 1994; Mokala, 2021). In light of this, I contend that learners with HI are better educated and supported in special schools (UNESCO, 1994). Against this backdrop, Mokala (2021) asserts that taking learners with HI out of special education would not be in their best interests, since mainstream schools might not be a suitable learning environment for them. I concur with Mokala (2021) in that given the unique learning environment a special school provides, they are relevant for learners with HI.

Mosia (2019, p. 8) indicates that "the white paper 6 outlines the role of special schools in support provision". According to (WHO, 2011b) several special schools were established for learners with impairment (Mokala, 2021). Although scholars internationally debate whether segregated schooling is still relevant, special schools still exist in South Africa (Kelly et al., 2020). This is in line with the cultural and linguistic viewpoint. Kelly et al. (2020) argue that in line with the South African Schools Act, learners with HI who require high levels of support have the option of attending ordinary public schools. Due to the unique communication needs of learners with HI, special schools provide critical support for them to really comprehend the material they are learning (Mokala, 2017). South African Sign Language (SASL) is the language of instruction for learners with HI in schools. Learners with HI are provided with sign language services in special schools. This has led to a high proportion of learners with HI attending special schools (Kelly et al., 2020).

Although IE policies are explicit on how special schools should be supported, there is no legislation on how training should be conducted for teachers in special schools. "Teachers of learners with HI in South Africa are, at present, not required to have any specialist training to teach learners with HI" (Kelly et al., 2020, p. 6). Consequently, many teachers arrive at special schools without prior knowledge of how to support learners with HI (Magongwa, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020). NGOs, private sector providers, or the provincial education department may organize or facilitate workshops to address this lack of pre-service training for teachers of learners with HI (Kelly, et al., 2020). In spite of this, Magongwa (2020, p. 49) notes that learning how to communicate and educate learners with HI is not a skill taught in a two-day or one-week workshop. Teachers need continuous stakeholder engagement to facilitate sustainable plans. This ultimately fosters teamwork and ultimately lead to effective support. The training of teachers of students with HI is imperative in curriculum differentiation and

addressing learning barriers, but it's just as important in developing relationships with students who have HI, an area of teacher education often overlooked (Kelly et al., 2020). Therefore, in extending the reach of support services, learners with HI must continue to be educated in special schools as they bridge the communication gap by teaching them sign language. Next, I discuss the research methodology.

2.11 Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by summarising what was discussed. In the present section, I focused on HI learners' support experiences in South Africa. I concluded by asserting that support provision for learners with HI requires equal attention. I then opined that this can be achieved by ensuring teachers have the competencies which include the key competencies. In addition, they need training in teaching learners with HI. As a result, teacher education must be strengthened to ensure teachers can effectively address individual requirements. Subsequently I discuss the research approach of this inquiry.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

I describe in this chapter how the data were collected and analysed in this study. The literature review provided a basis for my exploration of this inquiry. Furthermore, this chapter examines the research question, the hypotheses, and the research design of the current study. I also explain data analysis and sampling techniques, including data collection methods. I conclude this section by explaining ethical considerations when conducting research. This inquiry investigates teachers' support experiences for learners with HI. Following this, I describe the methodology.

3.2 Research methodology

The interpretive paradigm is the basis for understanding qualitative research conducted for this inquiry. To ensure a more complete assessment, this approach was adopted to extend knowledge into the teachers' feedback and gain an understanding of the underlying feelings, values, and behaviours. This current study was relevant for the use of qualitative methodology since it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' narratives of their teaching experiences with learners with HI (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The interpretive paradigm focuses on providing a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena (Mapepa & Magano, 2018). By using this approach, the research topic can be explored in a more comprehensive way, as well as increased knowledge of teachers' subjective experiences and perspectives. Moreover, it allows for more flexibility and creativity in the inquiry. Additionally, qualitative research methodology enabled me to investigate teachers' support experiences for learners with HI which is the focal point of this inquiry (Bell & Foiret, 2020). Qualitative research methodology is ideal for an in-depth exploration of the topic. It allows for the exploration of human behaviour and experiences, which is relevant to understanding the support experiences of learners with HI.

Qualitative research allows the exploration of people's experiences and motivations in a way quantitative research cannot. This context has provided me with valuable insight into the phenomenon. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, provides valuable insight into people's lived experiences (Roberts, 2020). Through interviews, I narrated their experiences verbatim to ensure the inquiry's trustworthiness. To ensure that my interpretations were valid and reliable, I used an iterative approach. This involved revisiting the data several times and reflecting on my analysis to refine it. I also discussed my interpretations with my supervisor to gain further insight and check for any potential blind spots. As a result, this inquiry provided methods that enabled the participants to reconstruct their ideas about support provision. Through this, I argue that it is essential to explore how individuals interpret their environment, rather than just quantifying what exists externally. By emphasising the importance of understanding the subjective interpretation of the environment and the meanings individuals attach to it, this study identified meaningful insights into how teaching strategies are formed and adapted.

In this study, the qualitative study was more applicable because it gave me a better understanding of what constitutes inclusive pedagogy, based on the perceptions of the teachers. Consequently, it improved understanding of human behaviour and experience, promoting self-understanding and increased insight into the human condition. It has been suggested that qualitative studies fall into the constructivist paradigm by Creswell (2003). This inquiry

investigates teachers' support experiences for learners with HI in a special school. Through this inquiry, I aimed to discover how teachers support learners with HI in a special school. I also wanted to explore how this contributes to inclusive pedagogy. To uncover these experiences, I conducted semi-structured interviews, exploring teacher-learner interaction dynamics. This further established how pedagogical practices can be improved by focusing on the unique needs of learners. This emphasises the importance of tailoring teaching and support to the learner's needs. Through this process, I found that by focusing on the individual learner's needs and adapting support provision to those needs, teaching and learning can be improved. Having outlined the research methodology, I now discuss the research paradigm.

3.2.1 Research paradigm

An interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this inquiry because it can provide insight into the subjective experiences of those involved in the inquiry, as well as their motivations and beliefs (Mahlo, 2017). The interpretive paradigm is well-suited to this inquiry because it focuses on understanding people's meanings and interpretations and how they develop an understanding of their environment. (Pham, 2018). This approach was suitable for the research questions posed in this inquiry. The interpretive paradigm provided additional insight into the research topic. It enabled me to explore the underlying complexities not easily revealed by other research paradigms. Interpretivism allowed me to uncover the tacit knowledge and values that underlie teachers' beliefs and practices in a special school. This interpretive paradigm allowed me to observe teachers in their natural environment and gain insight into how they interact with their learners and the environment. By doing this, I gained insight into the underlying values and beliefs that shape teacher actions and decisions. This inquiry investigated teachers' views on supporting learners with HI in a special school. Further, I sought to discover how SASL impacted teachers' teaching practices in providing support to learners with HI in a special school. The interview questions sought to identify the teacher's beliefs, values, and approaches to learning.

Despite being subjective interpretations, Creswell (2014) notes that context still influences participants' interpretations of their experiences. Creswell (2014, p. 24) further advises that my role as a researcher was to be "sensitive to power imbalances during all the facets of the research process." To understand the meanings they attach to their own teaching world, my research study aimed to situate the teachers' views within their own school setting. This means that my aim was to interpret how teachers narrate their teaching experiences and from those stories, I identified the patterns of their meanings.

The interpretive paradigm enabled me to better understand teachers' motivations and values, which are often hidden from view in other research paradigms (Moleme, 2019). I gained insight into the context in which teachers make their decisions, as well as the reasons behind those decisions. In research, paradigms play the critical role of guiding the research process and protocols to be used by those who choose to follow a particular research paradigm route (Mokala, 2021; Sefotho ,2018). This understanding was facilitated by the research paradigm I used. The interpretive research paradigm enabled me to understand the underlying principles of the research process and how to apply the appropriate methods. It allowed me to develop a clear strategy for obtaining, organising, and analysing the data, and to explain the findings in a meaningful way. Following this, I discuss the study design.

3.2.1.1 Ontology

On the basis of the interpretive paradigm underlying this study, I adopted a critical realist ontological perspective. Based on the assumption that reality is a social construction, I chose this ontological lens (Maree, 2016). As a result, I believe it is essential to view teachers' teaching experiences within the context of their own social context in order to better understand them. Thus, this research study shares Morris (2006) and Blake et al. (2003)'s view that critical theory assumes that participants' points of view should be considered (Mokala, 2021). In this research study, therefore, I adopted the above assumptions as my ontological position. Next, I will explain the study's epistemological position in the following.

3.2.1.2 Epistemology

A multifaceted approach to epistemology is assumed in this study. The various research methods used to collect data in this study reflect this (Kern 2022). Epistemology deals with the question: How do we know?

In an epistemological assumption, the relationship between the knower and the known is analysed, in order to investigate the origins of knowledge. A researcher's epistemology signifies how he or she views reality as expressed in an ontology based on the chosen paradigm (Sefotho, 2018). In order to interpret the experiences of teachers in special schools, I needed to understand and interpret their experiences. The next section features a presentation of the research axiological position of my research study.

3.2.1.3 Axiology

The axiological stance guiding my study is that research participants are very important and must be treated with respect. The current study, by nature, pursues a social justice agenda. Therefore, the importance of pursuing this research study was to give a voice to a group of people who contribute to implementing policies to enhance the teaching and learning of learners with HI. For this reason, my focus was on how the participants understand their world and what they value as important as well as giving a privilege to their voices. Axiology focuses on the values held by participants. Sefotho (2018, p. 24) asserts that “axiology is a science of human values, and it provides researchers with a focus on the ethics of conducting value-driven research”. This, therefore, was a call for me to respect the participants and understand that they are knowledge bearers, and the success of this study depended on their opinions and perceptions of their own teaching experience. The participants were also treated with the utmost respect by considering what they say, do and feel as well as how they make meaning out of their teaching experiences (Maree, 2016). The following section explicates the research design of my study.

As such, epistemological assumptions serve to explain the relationship between the knower and the known, which is the origin of knowledge. According to Sefotho (2018, p. 220), “epistemology is a philosophical stance, perspective or position about how a researcher knows reality as expressed in ontology, based on the chosen paradigm”. It was therefore imperative for me to understand and interpret the experiences of teachers working in a special school. In the next section, I will discuss the research design of the study.

3.3 Research design

From beginning to end, the research design describes how the researcher intends to conduct the study. The research design should also include a plan for ensuring the integrity of the data

collected and a description of expected findings. Additionally, it should include timelines and ethical considerations associated with the research. This is critical to ensure that the researcher can collect the data they need to verify that the inquiry is conducted validly and reliably. A research design represents the clear direction of what the researcher aims to achieve, therefore facilitating an inquiry plan, as argued by Babbie and Mouton (2001). Additionally, the research design should be tailored to the specific research questions being asked, taking into account any constraints or limitations present. Bell and Swart (2018) indicate that a research design makes inquiry plans possible.

By carefully selecting a research design that was relevant to the questions I wanted to answer, I identified the most efficient way to collect and analyse data relevant to my research. This ensured that I did not waste time or resources on irrelevant data. Research design is the overall planning of research (Mabaso, 2019). Through research design, I gained greater insight into the research problem and the phenomenon being studied. To understand teachers' subjective experiences within a special school context, I adopted an interpretive lens for the inquiry. Additionally, the case study research design provided insight into teachers' day-to-day challenges and strategies. Through the case study design, I built relationships with the teachers. This enabled me to holistically understand the teachers' strategies, practices and beliefs about teaching learners with HI. This gave me insight into their pedagogical choices.

Developing a research design is crucial for a study's success, ensuring reliable and valid findings. Research design is an essential component of any research study, as it ensures research findings are accurate and reliable. Phasha et al., (2017) affirm that research design gives direction to the researcher on how to proceed throughout the research process. Research design connects researchers' ideas with collected data. Hay et al. (2021) assert that research design offers ways of guarding against alternative interpretations of findings. To this end, researchers must carefully consider research design to ensure accurate and reliable research findings. I addressed the research questions by utilising case study research design in a more meaningful way. Subsequently, I explain case studies.

3.3.1 Case study

The focal point of this inquiry was teachers' perspectives and how they adapted their pedagogical practices to respond to learners' needs. Drawing on the teacher's perspective, this inquiry sought to better understand their unique challenges. It also sought to understand the strategies they employ to ensure educational needs are met. This approach allowed me to investigate the issue from the inside out, rather than relying solely on quantitative data or theoretical frameworks. By hearing directly from the teachers, I better understood their experiences when providing support to learners with HI. Furthermore, the case study approach provided me with a broader perspective of teachers' support experiences. Through the case studies, I experienced how teachers overcame adversity and succeeded. This in-depth analysis provided a comprehensive view of what makes an excellent teacher, which may not have been fully exposed through more conventional research (Bell & Swart, 2018).

Therefore, using a case study enabled me to explore teachers' views and perspectives in a meaningful way. I interviewed my participants to generate comprehensive data. Additionally, the collected data was analysed through grounded theory to draw out meaningful patterns and connections. This provided extensive knowledge of the research topic. As a result, this inquiry uses one case from which data was collected. Thus, I better understood how teachers at this site are implementing inclusive pedagogical practices. As a result of choosing a qualitative

approach to my research, the case study was an appropriate addition to my strategy. It enabled me to comprehensively grasp the subject at hand while incorporating valuable perspectives of the research participants. The case study method provided insights into the relationships between the key variables. It also provided in-depth information about the topic to create a detailed understanding of the issue. Subsequently, I discuss the methods of collecting data in this inquiry.

3.3.2 Methods

To gain insight into the topic, semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of the research process, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of the topic. The interviews were conducted with six participants. For analysis, I recorded and transcribed the interviews. The findings were then used to inform the research conclusions. Through interviews, key insights into the case study were identified and explored. The interviews provided an extensive narrative of each participant's story and perspective. The case study enabled me to verify the findings' accuracy with increased confidence. Furthermore, the case study offered a more holistic perspective, allowing me to identify the links between the participants' stories. The combination of these two methods enabled me to draw more reliable conclusions, which are then presented in the research report.

The teacher's personal experience and knowledge of learners was invaluable; they gave me specific examples and stories that allowed me to understand the issues and successes related to teaching learners with HI. This process provided me with greater insight into teachers' challenges, as well as the strategies they used to overcome them. As a result, interviews were best suited to this inquiry. The motive for interviewing the six teachers was to familiarise me with their inclusive pedagogical practices, including how they support learners with HI. Furthermore, I explored teachers' perspectives on pedagogical approaches, philosophies and goals through interviews. It was explained to participants that interviews would be recorded and transcribed so that data analysis could be carried out. Next, I discuss sampling techniques.

3.3.2.1 Sampling and population description

This inquiry selected participants purposefully to ensure the sample reflected the target population. Mapepa and Magano (2018) contend that by employing a purposeful sampling method, this study ensured that the sample accurately represented the target population. This method is specifically beneficial for qualitative research, as it allows the researcher to gain insight from knowledgeable sources. This includes the questions used in the inquiry, the objectives of the inquiry, and the backgrounds of the teachers. The teachers were chosen for their multiple years of experience and qualifications, as well as their familiarity with learners with HI in a special school. Their different perspectives allowed thorough understanding of the research questions, contributing to my in-depth knowledge of the study's findings. This meant that the knowledge of teachers was invaluable in understanding the impact of the inquiry. Their input was essential in forming an accurate picture of the inquiry’s findings. Thus, the selection of the school was based on careful consideration of available options. This further highlighted the importance of teacher involvement, as the data from their school helped to provide a clear knowledge of the research findings. Furthermore, teachers in a special school are relevant to this inquiry as they provide information-rich cases (Hay et al., 2021). Teachers are a prime source of information, as they have unique insight into the inquiry topic and offer especially valuable information.

According to Maree (2019), the purposive sampling method allows researchers to select people who they believe will offer the most accurate insights into their research topic. This method of sampling gives the researcher extensive control over the types of respondents they include in their study. This ensures the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings. Theron (2021) opines that in purposive sampling, by identifying respondents knowledgeable about the area being studied, the researcher can obtain more accurate data. This inquiry selected a purposeful sampling method for its accessibility and ease of use. Additionally, the sample was selected based on the criteria I deemed necessary for the research's success. This ensured trustworthiness of the study's findings. Furthermore, the school was selected for its capacity to provide adequate resources and support staff for learners with HI. As Maree (2019) indicates, the school's convenient location, combined with its specialised staff, resources and support, made it an optimal choice for these learners. In conclusion, the school's suitability for learners with HI was established, and the chosen sample produced the desired findings. In the next section, I discuss meetings with participants.

3.3.2.2 Meetings with the participants

In ensuring success in the research project, I met with the participants to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding. Establishing a positive relationship with teachers is imperative for gaining their trust, understanding their perspectives, and achieving a successful study outcome. This is critical for a successful study outcome. This is echoed by Nkoma and Hay (2018, p. 91) who argued that qualitative research requires ethical negotiations between researchers and participants in order to maintain ethical rigor. To ensure the best outcome of the research, it is essential to foster an environment of trust and understanding with the participants. This ensures ethical rigour in the research. Next, I explain how interviews were conducted.

3.3.2.3 Interviews

Interviews were conducted as the primary means of collecting data in this study. Interviews allowed me to build rapport with the teachers and form a trusting relationship. This was essential to gain access to their more personal teaching experiences. Additionally, conducting interviews in person allowed me to probe further on certain topics and ask follow-up questions, which was not possible with other methods such as questionnaires. Participants' beliefs, perceptions, or accounts of a particular topic were captured using semi-structured interviews (Hay et al., 2021). They offered insights into the thoughts and feelings of teachers about the topic in question. However, they left me to control the conversation. Furthermore, the semi-structured format allowed me to probe further while allowing the teachers to elaborate on their ideas and opinions. As a result, I gained comprehensive knowledge of teachers' perspectives and experiences in a controlled and organised fashion.

Despite their utility, it is pertinent to consider any limitations posed by interviews when deciding how appropriate to approach a particular study. It is critical to assess if any of these limitations hinders the accuracy of the data collected, before using interviews as a primary source. For instance, an individual's response to a question may be influenced by their current state of mind. This may be due to the way they view the researcher or how the question is asked. Additionally, there may be some bias in the data as individuals may not be completely honest or forthcoming in their responses. As such, researchers must be cognisant of their biases and limitations to ensure their interviews do not result in unequal power dynamics or oppressive interactions. To counter this, I was determined to be respectful, transparent, and

humble in my interactions with the interviewees. This helped create an atmosphere of trust, leading to a more meaningful and open dialogue. In the subsequent section, I explain note use.

3.3.2.4 Notes

By taking regular and immediate notes, I gained insight and a personal understanding of the data and documented my perceptions, feelings and discoveries. This practice allowed me to develop a holistic and meaningful approach to data, as Symeonidou (2018) argued. The notes highlighted the importance of capturing informal conversations to gain further insights into the observed phenomena. Deggs and Hernandez (2018) indicate that field notes must provide observations and descriptions of the physical environment. They should also include interactions between participants, and the researcher's reflections on these observations. Moreover, the field notes should be analysed to draw out the implications of the observed events and any patterns that may exist. This informs the research findings. By making notes immediately after my interactions with participants, I captured a more detailed picture of what was discussed and how participants responded. This enabled me to reflect more deeply on the data and better understand the nuances of the interactions. Additionally, by reaching out to the participants, I validated my notes and ensured that I was accurately capturing the nature of our conversations. Next, I discuss the data analysis and interpretation.

3.3.3 Data analysis and interpretation

The process of data analysis involves systematically searching and sorting data. In order to make sense of the introduction of these materials, field notes and other materials were provided in preparing reports for analysing the data. The activities include organizing the data into manageable units, determining what will be learned, and deciding what will be included in the report. A qualitative research investigation follows six steps according to Creswell (2014), namely:

1. Organisation and preparation of data for analysis.
2. Reading or looking at all the data.
3. Classification, categorisation, coding of all the data.
4. Description of information on people, places or events and categories and themes for analysis.
5. Explanation of how the themes will be arrived at and represented in the qualitative narrative.
6. Interpretation of the meanings of data from the researcher's culture experiences and knowledge from literature and/or theories, representation.

In conducting data analysis, I aimed to investigate teachers' support experiences for learners with HI in a special school in Pretoria. In understanding support provision for learners with HI, I sought to uncover what teachers found meaningful in their own teaching experiences. Theron (2021) noted that general inductive analysis can provide insights into research objectives, and create connections between data and pre-existing theories. I applied a range of more rigorous analysis techniques to uncover patterns and correlations to increase my understanding. The method began with the transcription of interview data into word-processed documents. I then used general inductive analysis to identify themes in the data and compare them with existing theories. After this, I analysed the data to determine if the categories applied to the themes and if any themes contradicted each other. Finally, I synthesised my findings to form a coherent understanding of the overall themes in the data.

For the purpose of this study, general inductive data analysis was used. According to Thomas (2006), general inductive analysis enables researchers to summarize their findings and link them to their objectives in order to establish a connection between them. Transcribing the data from the interviews and entering it into word processing documents was the first step of general inductive analysis. I then read the transcriptions repeatedly in order to increase my understanding of the participants' views. Once this was complete, I grouped the data into smaller meaningful units, and then after, compared it to build, refine and modify categories. According to Creswell (2013), reading the data, breaking it down into small meaningful chunks, analysing it several times, and getting a sense of the contents of the text is the first step to analysis. Organizing words, phrases, and paragraphs into meaningful chunks is part of the data analysis process. According to De Vos et al. (2011), themes helped me develop theories that correspond to them. While conducting the data analysis, I kept in close contact with my supervisor. It was very useful to have her input at that stage, as she made several suggestions while I noted them down. I would go back to my data and it was only after we agreed I had reached data saturation in the coding process that I began writing the analysis chapter. In qualitative research, data analysis is an ongoing, emerging interactive or non-linear process. Therefore, it is important that data analysis is done immediately after the first data collection process to discover if there is any information that is necessary or missing. I engaged with data from the very first day I started the data collection process, identifying the codes and putting them into categories. The coding process must be thorough, as stated by Charmaz (2011). My interpretation of the patterns led me to identify patterns through this process. Through coding, I categorised data. Having done this, I reviewed the codes and reorganised them into themes (De Vos et al., 2011).

Drawing upon Dreyer's (2017) recommendations, I reviewed the data multiple times to identify themes from the smaller meaningful units. In the end, I synthesised my findings for a better understanding of the data. By doing so, we analysed data in a deeper, more meaningful way and identified new patterns not previously noticed. Furthermore, I created a narrative that accurately explains the relationships between the themes and the data. This demonstrates the importance of thematic analysis for interpreting data meaningfully. My supervisor provided critical insight into how themes are interconnected. This allowed me to identify patterns and draw more conclusions. Additionally, I used the data saturation point to determine when I had collected enough information to continue the analysis. I employed a systematic approach to confirm that my data was comprehensive and accurate, following Henning's (2017) advice that the process should be exhaustive. This enabled me to draw reliable conclusions and uncover meaningful trends in the data. Through coding, I categorised the data. By following a rigorous coding system, I ensured trustworthiness. This allowed me to identify patterns in the data and draw valid conclusions from them. With this in-depth analysis, I became confident in interpreting the data and developing meaningful insights. Subsequently, I explain the research process.

3.4 Research process

The literature review indicates that Further research is needed to explore the depths of this topic more fully. This formed the basis of the research proposal. The proposal was developed to address identified knowledge gaps and build on existing information. This ensured that the proposal was both relevant and ethical; as Williams (2020) asserts, research is only truly valuable when conducted with integrity. By obtaining ethical clearance from the university, I ensured that my research proposal was compliant with accepted ethical standards and protocols. This allowed me to conduct my research with integrity. Furthermore, I provided the participants

with an information sheet outlining the research purpose. I also outlined the potential benefits and risks, and the procedures for data anonymity, storage, and destruction. As soon as I obtained the necessary clearance from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), I began the research, making sure all participants were fully aware of the details.

To safeguard their privacy, I further ensured that their identities could not be established from the research findings. To ensure full transparency, I clarified the research objectives and methodologies for the participants. Then, to finalise the agreement, I scheduled individual meetings with them. By meeting with the participants face-to-face, I provided a clear picture of the inquiry's process and confirmed that all parties were fully informed and comfortable. Additionally, I allowed the participants to ask questions and express any hesitations they had. This furthered transparency and a healthy partnership between myself and the participants. To ensure the participants felt informed and comfortable, I provided detailed explanations of the study and allowed open dialogue to address any concerns they had. This approach promoted trust and collaboration, which Wheeler (2019, p. 33) claims are essential for successful research. In addition, I emphasised the importance of participant feedback throughout the research process, which further strengthened trust and collaboration between us. With this emphasis on participant feedback, it is crucial to consider the ethical implications of the inquiry. As such, I now explore the ethical considerations of this research.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Qualitative research involves a deep exploration of participants' experiences and feelings, which can be emotionally vulnerable for them. As such, the researcher must ensure that participants' rights are respected and that their safety and well-being are never compromised. To ensure adherence to ethical standards, the researcher must obtain approval from the relevant institutional Ethics Committee before commencing the study. To further emphasise ethical conduct, I sought and secured professional clearance from Witwatersrand University. This demonstrates my commitment to research requirements. Moreover, I obtained research permission from the Gauteng Department of Education. The purpose of this measure was to maintain ethical standards. Furthermore, I verified that participants gave their consent voluntarily and that the data collected was kept confidential. I also took steps to ensure participants' rights were respected and privacy remained intact. All data collected was secure and confidential, and any identifying information was removed to protect participants' identities. In the next section, I discuss informed consent.

3.5.1 Informed consent

To be certain that all participants knew their rights and obligations, I provided consent forms and a detailed information letter. To ensure complete data collection, teachers signed and returned consent forms and information letters. Consent forms ensure ethical research. The teachers' signature on the consent form was a sign of understanding and agreement to partake in the study and its associated risks (Buys, 2017). This served to reinforce their knowledge of their rights and responsibilities. Additionally, the participants' signatures assured them that they were aware of the research aims and informed about the process involved. Furthermore, the teacher's signature guaranteed that they had been fully briefed on the research goals and implications. This underlines the importance of my role in communicating the objectives and potential risks of the study as highlighted (Kumar, 2018). This emphasis on participants' rights and protection further emphasises the importance of a well-informed decision when signing consent forms. Following this, I discuss confidentiality and privacy.

3.5.2 Confidentiality and privacy

In order to prevent the participants' identities from being compromised and that it remains confidential and their responses anonymous, no identifying information was included in my discussions of the research. To emphasise this commitment to protecting participants' privacy, all data was stored on a secure server, and access was restricted. Furthermore, to maintain the research materials' security, confidential codes were assigned to participants, making it impossible to identify anyone. These practices echo Maree (2019)'s advice to safeguard participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. By doing this, I guaranteed the safety of the materials used in the inquiry and that the participants would not be easily identifiable. This included storing it in an encrypted format and limiting access to only my supervisor and myself. To further ensure participants' data protection, I followed Greaves' (2019) advice and refrained from sharing confidential information. Next, I discuss anonymity.

3.5.3 Anonymity

To protect participants' identities and maintain anonymity, I referred to individuals by pseudonyms rather than their true identities throughout the research. Anonymity involves the researcher not knowing the identity of the participants, to guarantee privacy is maintained (Maree, 2019). This ensured participants' identities remained anonymous, even to the researcher (Maree, 2019). Furthermore, all findings were presented in aggregated form to preserve confidentiality (Mahlo, 2017). I took additional measures, such as encryption and password protection, to guarantee data security and confidentiality at all times. As such, I obtained the necessary consent from the participants, as well as the school principal. This was to guarantee that the data collected would remain private and not be used in any way that could cause harm. Additionally, I anonymised all collected data to further safeguard my participants' confidentiality and information. Access to this information is limited to myself and my supervisor. To ensure the integrity of the data collected, all participants signed written agreements confirming their understanding of the inquiry's protocols. In the next section, I discuss how participants are protected from harm.

3.5.4 Protection from harm

I took steps to ensure that any potential risks were highlighted and mitigated to protect participants' safety and well-being. This included giving detailed information about the study and its potential risks, as well as outlining the benefits of becoming part of the research. Furthermore, If desired, participants could revoke their consent at any time during the study. (Theron, 2021). To this end, I went above and beyond to confirm that participants were adequately informed of any risks involved. As such, I took extra care to ensure all the necessary measures were taken to protect them. This included asking sensitive questions clearly and appropriately. Additionally, I continuously monitored the participants' comfort levels throughout the study to ensure their safety and well-being were maintained. I went one step further and provided a supportive environment for the participants. This created a space for them to discuss any apprehensions they may have had about the inquiry. Following this, I discuss voluntary participation.

3.5.5 Voluntary participation

In this inquiry, participants could withdraw their consent without adverse ramifications. I explained that participation in the inquiry was voluntary. Additionally, I assured teachers that

their privacy would be protected and that their decision to withdraw from the study would be respected. Furthermore, I assured teachers that their decision to withdraw from the research process would be respected and their privacy maintained. As a result, ethical considerations should be considered throughout the research process. Following this, I discuss the researchers' role.

3.6 The researcher's role

As the researcher, I directed the overall study and remained responsible for the whole research process. This included data gathering and analysis to report findings. Additionally, I sought to learn more about the teaching environment for learners with HI through conversations with teachers (Williams, 2020). I took care to understand the teachers' perspectives and experiences to accurately capture the nuances of the teaching environment for learners with HI. I focused on their lived experiences and perspectives (Wheeler, 2019). Through this inquiry, I gained insight into the impact of the teaching environment on learners with HI. I focused on teachers' lived experiences and perspectives. To gain a complete picture, I complimented the interviews with relevant documents. The interviews were used to paint a comprehensive picture, and I remained impartial whilst noting participants' body language. Next, I discuss reflexibility as a researcher.

3.6.1 Reflexivity as a researcher

Upon reflecting on my role as a researcher, I became aware of the importance of understanding my own biases in interpreting the data I collected. As a result, I took notes to reflect on my school experiences. By doing so, I assessed the events more objectively and identified potential areas for improvement in the research process. I took this approach to critically examine my observations and interpretations of the events. I was aware of potential biases, which allowed me to analyse the research objectively and with more precision. Reflecting on the study, I recognised the importance of self-reflection and the need for continued dialogue with myself, as this is a crucial part of being a researcher (Mokala, 2021). To further solidify my research engagement, I reviewed my notes, journal entries, and objectives frequently. This regular review and reflection also helped me recognise valuable insights or adjustments during the process. This enhanced my research quality. Utilising my reflections, findings and records, I identified areas that needed to be addressed and was able to track the progress of the research, providing more insights into the data. This allowed me to better understand and interpret and analyse the data (Berg, 2019). It informed my role where I employed reflexivity to evaluate my research understanding. Subsequently, I discuss trustworthiness and credibility.

3.6.2 Trustworthiness and credibility

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the data, it is imperative to not just assess its accuracy and relevance, but also ensure its consistency with the research findings (Mabaso, 2019). This is a crucial criterion to evaluate qualitative research, as it contributes to credibility, dependability and transferability. Therefore, taking the necessary steps to demonstrate trustworthiness is essential for qualitative research and application. To emphasise trustworthiness, Mahlo (2017) indicated the need for rigorous methods such as classroom observations and conversational interviews. This is to establish qualitative research trustworthiness. The researcher must also ensure that the data collected is robust and credible by employing appropriate data analysis techniques (Mahlo, 2017) and supporting the research findings with evidence that verifies the accuracy of their findings (Hay, et al., 2021).

This inquiry sought to investigate teachers' support experiences for learners with HI in a special school in Pretoria. Furthermore, I employed Maree's (2019) suggestion of using overlapping methods such as interviews to increase my findings' credibility. I validated my findings through interviews with teachers who authenticated their teaching experiences (Hay et al., 2021). By interviewing these teachers, I ensured the credibility of my research as they could attest to their teaching experiences first-hand (Hay et al., 2021). This was especially significant as credibility is a crucial metric for trustworthiness. Having teachers participate in the interviews gave the researcher real experience, but also credibility. Thus, the inclusion of teachers in the interview process ensured the research was credible and could be replicated, ensuring the findings were

I also obtained written permission from the interviewees to ensure their rights and privacy were respected. I further corroborated the analysis's credibility by including the participants' direct quotes and reflections in the process. This validated their perspectives and respected their rights and privacy. To truly appreciate their views, it is essential to put yourself in their shoes. The participants provided me with insight into their individual experiences and confirmed the accuracy of the research findings. This assured me that the case outcomes were reflective of the theories put forth by Dreyer (2017). Therefore, I was confident that my conclusions were reliable and applicable to the case study. Consequently, I was convinced that my findings were trustworthy and relevant to the case study. This method also ensured ethical conduct, increasing the trustworthiness of the findings of the inquiry. Additionally, this ensures research findings are trustworthy, as evidenced by Hay et al. (2021) encouraging researchers to recognise repeated themes and examples in their research. In the subsequent section, I explain transferability.

3.6.3 Transferability

To demonstrate transferability, the investigator must provide evidence that the original findings are applicable and meaningful in the updated context. As Mahlo (2017) explains, transferability can be established by showing how the original findings are generalisable or relevant to other contexts. By considering the context surrounding the initial research, I verified that the findings were meaningful and transferable to other contexts. To ensure effective transferability, I considered the outside context to show the relevancy of the original findings to other environments. To illustrate this further, I also discussed the similarity between the participants' teaching experiences and the findings of the inquiry. This was to ensure accurate transfer between different contexts. This discussion enables readers to recognise the transferability of the findings to different situations (Theron, 2021). The findings may still be useful in other settings, as the findings were compatible with the teachers' teaching experiences, indicating the potential to be transferred to other contexts. Next, I explain the study's dependability.

3.6.4 Dependability

To ensure the accuracy and dependability of the inquiry, it should be structured to be independently verified. The study should be conducted in a replicable manner, allowing researchers to replicate the study under the same conditions and arrive at the same conclusion (Andrews et al., 2017). Additionally, I ensured that all data was properly documented and that the methodology for data collection was transparently reported (Hay et al., 2021). I was careful to confirm that the process of collecting data was precise and replicable, thereby affirming the dependability of the study and its findings (Hay et al., 2021). Moreover, the focus on dependability provided better insight into the study's context, which directly impacted the accuracy of the findings. This strategy provided rich insight into pedagogical approaches used.

This enabled me to delve deeper into inclusive pedagogical approaches applied in a special school setting. Next, I focus on consistency.

3.6.5 Consistency

In ensuring the consistency of the inquiry, I maintained the same data collection techniques throughout and monitored the quality of the data collected. This enabled me to guarantee the consistency of the findings and their potential to be reproduced in a similar study. Through my dedication to consistency, I accurately reflected the context of my research in the findings. To reinforce this, I monitored the processes of collecting data and the quality of the data. This helped me ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, as well as their consistency, as Mahlo (2017) highlighted. Additionally, I ensured that all participants were given the same instructions and asked to use the same procedure for answering the questions. Furthermore, I conducted thorough reviews of the responses to determine their accuracy. Next, I summarise this chapter.

3.7 Summary

The methodology adopted in this inquiry was carefully selected and analysed to guarantee that the desired research were obtained ethically and legitimately. To ensure the methodology was appropriate findings, I considered the population, sampling techniques, and ethical concerns. These concerns were carefully considered to guarantee that research goals and objectives were achieved. To ensure I made the most of my research, I verified that each aspect of the study was properly addressed. An evaluation of population size and reflection was conducted to determine whether ethical standards were met. Having taken the necessary steps to establish accuracy and credibility in my research, I can now be sure that the conclusions I draw have a sound basis. I can also be sure that my decisions had a meaningful impact on the entire study. Knowing that my research is reliable and trustworthy, I am confident that the decisions I make based on my findings will be sound. Furthermore, I have confirmed that all procedures were conducted according to Witwatersrand University's ethics policy. Witwatersrand University's ethics committee approved my methods. Obtaining permission from the school principal and the Gauteng Department of Education was necessary so that I could conduct research at the chosen school. This assured me that I am operating within all applicable regulations. The subsequent chapter discusses the study’s findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the study's findings.

PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	QUALIFICATIONS	NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING
PT1	M	Post graduate certificate in education- Senior phase and South African Sign Language.	6
PT2	F	B.Ed. Honours special education.	7
PT3	F	B.Ed. Senior phase and FET.	10
PT4	F	B.Ed. Honours Science, maths and technology.	5
PT5	F	South African Sign Language Honours.	8
PT6	F	B.Ed. Honours FET and Senior Phase.	6

Table 4.1 Participants' information sheet

4.1 Presentation of thematic findings

This section provides an analysis of the inquiry findings and their implications. This inquiry investigates teachers' experiences of supporting learners with HI in a special school in Pretoria. I identified four themes from the data collected through interviews. The identified themes were: (1) teachers' experiences of support, (2) challenges experienced by teachers, (3) teaching methodologies and (4) support strategies employed. These themes provided insight into the distinct challenges and opportunities faced by teachers when supporting learners with HI. It is through verbatim quotations that I illustrate how the themes relate to the participants' experiences. The verbatim quotations provide a more detailed understanding of the themes and how they relate to the participant's experiences. Through this, I gained insight into how themes shape the experiences of participants. By synthesising their stories with the themes, I can draw meaningful conclusions about how the themes can influence people's experiences.

Using participants' perspectives, I explored the effects of the themes in greater depth. This, in turn, enabled me to identify the key themes in response to the research questions. I maintained the confidentiality of participants by using pseudonyms and obscuring all details that could lead to their identification. I used non-biased and non-identifying descriptors in the analysis. The participants were assigned numbers: PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4, PT5 & PT6. Furthermore, I ensured participants' anonymity by ethically conducting research. Next, I discuss the participants' experiences of working in a special school. A list of themes, subthemes, and categories is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Theme:1 Teachers' Experiences of Support.	**Theme 2: Challenges experienced by teachers.**	**Theme 3: Teaching methodologies.**	**Theme 4: Support strategies employed**.
Main question: What are the teacher's experiences of support for learners with HI at a special school in Pretoria?	What challenges do teachers of learners with HI experience in implementing inclusive classroom practices?	What teaching methodologies are used to accommodate learners with HI demands?	What support strategies do teachers employ to enhance the learning experiences of learners with HI?
• Ongoing in-service training • Collaboration with other teachers • Parental involvement.	• Lack of parental involvement • Language barriers-with signs • Difficulties in explaining concepts. • Curriculum differentiation.	• Use of visuals • Peer teaching (learner-centered). • Incorporation of technology • Using verbal communication and signing simultaneously.	• Using verbal communication and signing • Curriculum differentiation • Using videos in teaching- • Use simple words/terms.

Table 4.2 Themes, sub-themes and categories

4.2 Theme 1: Teachers' experiences of support

A study was conducted to find out how teachers support learners with HI at a special school in Pretoria. A summary of the findings is presented in this section. Conversational interviews with teachers provided the data to answer this research question. It was my primary focus to understand how teachers narrate their experiences of supporting learners with HI in special schools. It was also important for me to understand how teachers collaborate with other specialists. Additionally, I wanted to understand how they interacted with the parents. Each data collection technique was supported by my own interpretations. In this inquiry, the main theme is related to teachers' experiences of support. This theme aligns with the main research question: What are teachers' experiences of support for learners with HI at a special school in Pretoria?

Some of the participants described their experiences of support in the school, ranging from support received from their colleagues and management as a whole. Below I capture their experiences verbatim:

If I experience challenges with certain signs, I reach out to a fellow colleague on our foundation phase WhatsApp group, were you are able to reach out and say, listen, I need to do a poem, does anyone have videos of poems in sign language I can use? Then you can use the video as a resource to teach. (PT1).

In supporting us, the school organises sign language short courses from Wits for all teachers of learners with HI. We also receive training on how to implement the technical occupational

curriculum (TOC) and DCAPS. Its curriculum for learners with SID and MID in our school.(PT4).

One of the participants expressed her appreciation for the support she received from the therapists at the school. Her experience narrated below:

We have meetings with the therapists where they ask us if we experience any problems with the learners. Thereafter they explain how we can assist the learners for example, those using hearing aids and cochlear implants and what is the difference between the two. They also help us to identify those learners who can hear and how to support them. (PT3).

Emerging from some of the study participants, the school-based support team (SBST) collaborates in providing support to learners with HI. The SBST provides training for teachers to better understand the needs of learners with HI. Furthermore, the SBST also provides teachers with support in understanding how to accommodate learners with HI in the classroom. It also emerged that the school offers on-going in-service training to ensure inclusive pedagogical practices were implemented effectively and any issues were addressed. The inquiry further revealed that this was greatly appreciated by the participants, as it enabled them to better understand learners' needs. Next, I discuss ongoing in-service training and support.

4.2.1 Ongoing in-service training

Training and support provided by the school were found to be satisfactory by the participants. Their experiences are narrated verbatim below:

From time to time, the school organises training for us hearing teachers, to learn sign language to improve our teaching practices (PT5).

Every year we receive training from eDeaf, but this is just basic sign language training for teachers (PT3).

From the excerpts above, it is noted that as a result of the continuous training they receive, the participants felt confident and equipped to implement inclusive pedagogical practices. The participants further indicated that ongoing training enabled them to acquire the skills needed to effectively teach and support learners with HI. Participants reported that the ongoing training enables them to stay up to date with the latest teaching trends and techniques. Next, I discuss collaboration.

4.2.2 Collaboration and Teamwork

The findings of the inquiry suggests that some of the participants value collaborative working relationships. Their views are captured below:

Yes, I think sharing best practices and strategies with other teachers for supporting learners with HI is helpful because sometimes you can learn from how someone else is teaching (PT3).

I have a colleague that whenever she struggles with a particular sign comes to me as a sign language teacher to ask for help. I think she displays a very positive attitude in supporting learners with HI. (PT4).

One of the participants narrated her experiences with the therapists, her views are captured below:

The speech therapist also came and explained how to identify learners who can hear and how to support them. She indicated that to support learners who use hearing aids and can hear, I must use my voice and sign while teaching (PT5).

From some of the participants' responses, the findings of the inquiry revealed that collaboration among stakeholders was essential to building a safe learning environment. Furthermore, the inquiry further suggest that such collaboration guarantee learners with HI can access quality education and have their needs met in the classroom. Participants reported that collaboration allows them to identify and address any learning barriers their learners may be facing. They further revealed that they valued the school's collaborative culture. Following this, I discuss parental involvement.

4.2.3 Parental Involvement.

Parents' involvement was emphasised by some participants as being of paramount importance. Their views are captured below.

For me, it's very important that parents are involved in their children's education because we see a difference in behaviour and school work of those learners whose parents that are involved (PT2).

Parents of learners with HI can help develop their children's social and academic skills. This in my view can help them develop self-confidence and self-esteem through guidance and support. Therefore parental involvement is important for me (PT4).

Parental involvement has some significant benefits, as illustrated in the above excerpts. By knowing their children's progress, parents can identify areas where their children need more help and provide them with appropriate guidance. Establishing rapport also helps to create an open line of communication between the parents and the teachers. The inquiry further revealed that having parents involved also promotes healthy relationships between children and their teachers. As a result, this can benefit all parties concerned. In the subsequent section, I discuss the challenges teachers face.

4.3 Challenges experienced by teachers

The inquiry revealed that teachers experienced few challenges associated with supporting learners with HI. Despite the challenges, the participants expressed a commitment to providing the most effective education they could to support learners with HI. The challenges cited included difficulties with lack of parental involvement, barriers with signs and curriculum differentiation. Additionally, some participants noted that adaptations needed to be made to accommodate learners with HI. In the next section, I discuss the lack of parental involvement.

4.3.1 Lack of parental involvement

It emerged from this inquiry that some parents are not actively involved in their children's education. The extracts below reveal participants' views on parental involvement:

In terms of parental involvement, it's difficult because firstly, the parents don't know sign language. Some are not interested because you can see, for instance their children came here maybe at the age of 3, 4, 5 and now they are 18 but some of the parents still don't know sign language (PT4).

There is lack of parental involvement because parents don't know sign language, so, this creates a barrier at school and at home and that creates a barrier in terms communication (PT2).

Most participants reported their biggest challenge as the lack of parental involvement which had a negative impact on academic the performance of learners with HI. The participants lamented the lack of parental involvement and took it as a sign that parents do not really see a future in their children. Some participants reported that the lack of parental involvement is due to a variety of factors such as parents not knowing how to help their children with their homework, as some of them do not know sign language. In addition, some participants reported that other parents do not have access to the necessary resources to help support their children's learning. Some participants indicated that parents lack knowledge of their children's progress and as they rarely communicate with teachers. The extracts also showed that parents are unable to provide emotional support for their children. In the following section, I discuss language barriers with signs.

4.3.2 Language barriers-with signs

Some participants noted that they do not always understand the signs the learners use, making it difficult to interact effectively. Their responses are captured below:

I remember an experience with one of the learners whom I had asked a question in class, he intentionally used slang sign language. I could not understand what he is saying (PT5).

The barriers with some of the signs our learners use come from the fact that some of them are from Limpopo and Mpumalanga. So, they sometimes use signs that are specific to their areas which I'm not familiar with (PT2).

From the excerpts above, the inquiry revealed that the breakdown in communication between teachers and learners is due to the use of informal sign language by the learners. As a result, the inquiry found that there is a lack of understanding between the two parties. The inquiry revealed that teachers get frustrated, as they cannot effectively communicate. Next, I discuss difficulties in explaining concepts.

4.3.3 Difficulties explaining concepts

Some participants reported that sign language is a visual language where you need to show learners what you are talking about. Their responses are captured below:

In mathematics for example, a concept like division is difficult for a learner with HI to understand, multiplication is extremely difficult. If they don't understand multiplication having to bring it down to division becomes even worse. (PT2).

Sometimes we need to create our own resources in sign language for us to teach specific concepts to the learners. (PT5).

The participants cited limited availability of resources for their specific learning areas in sign language as a challenge. As a result, they resort to creating their resources through peer collaboration which they found effective. Furthermore, the participants pointed out that sometimes it becomes difficult to explain certain concepts. Differentiation of curriculum is discussed next.

4.3.4 Curriculum Differentiation

The findings of the study revealed that participants experience several challenges in differentiating the curriculum. Their experiences are captured below:

> *Also time management is another factor. It takes longer to each some concepts to our learners. So, when you adapt the curriculum, you end up not covering everything in the syllabus (PT2).*

> *We have challenges implementing the curriculum. Because we are given a curriculum for mainstream schools as well. Having to bring it here, we have to adapt the curriculum to fit our kids and the needs of our learners which sometimes becomes difficult very because our kids don't understand everything that is in that curriculum. (PT3).*

From the excerpts above, the inquiry revealed that the difficulties reported by participants in curriculum differentiation for learners with HI includes a lack of adequate teaching time and materials. In addition, there is limited access to learning resources, limited time for preparation. Difficulties differentiating curriculum were reported by some participants as a major challenge in supporting learners with HI. Additionally, it also emerged that participants felt that it is a challenge to explain the curriculum concepts clearly and concisely. Next, I discuss teaching methodologies.

4.4 Teaching methodologies

The findings in this section are guided by the research question, what teaching methodologies are used to accommodate learners with HI demands?

Some participants modified and differentiated activities differently depending on the learners' abilities, according to the study findings. The findings of this inquiry further revealed that to ensure all learners were engaged, some participants designed activities that allowed different approaches and levels of difficulty. Some participants noted that they had used simpler language for some learners or more challenging questions for more able learners. They also reported that they customised the activities to the individual needs of the learners, enabling more effective learning. This suggests that the participants understood the different learning styles, abilities, and needs of their learners and could tailor their activities accordingly. Next, I discuss the use of visual aids.

4.4.1 Use of visuals

The study revealed that some participants utilised visual aids to illustrate and explain complex ideas. Their experiences are captured verbatim below:

We share resources like videos of signs with each other so that we can help learners with HI. We get support from other teachers and staff in general. (PT1).

So if I don't have a sign, I'll go ask the teacher assistants and I'll get a couple of different signs, then ill record those signs and print those signs. Then I'll put it up for the learners to see, because there isn't a lot of resources for sign language or any other subject with signs. (PT6).

Learners with HI quickly forget the vocab they have been taught. So like sight words, they become a very daunting task. I have put up sight words up everywhere with the word and sign with the picture to make them understand (PT2).

Emerging from the above is the use of visual aids as an effective way for participants to implement their inclusive pedagogical practices. Moreover, the participants noted that visual aids such as videos and pictures in class helped make their points clearer and easier to understand for learners with HI. Participants indicated that visual aids helped illustrate complex ideas, and provided a better understanding of the topics. Next, I discuss learner-centred teaching.

4.4.2 Peer teaching

The participants were of the opinion that they implement inclusive pedagogical practices in various ways. Participants indicated that they often use peer teaching techniques to promote learning in a learner-centred environment. Their verbatim responses are captured below:

If I see that a child catches on fast, then I easily add on more work to that specific learner. From there on, I'll take that learner to explain to other learners what they don't understand (PT2).

When I teach a certain word like fertilisation to learners with HI, for them to understand I explain and show them a picture of what I am talking about. If they still don't understand, I ask one of them to explain to the rest of the class (PT4).

It is notable that the participants use varied pedagogical practices in supporting learners with HI. It was found that they did so through peer teaching. As a result, participants reported that this allows learners to learn from each other in an interactive setting. In addition, participants reported that peer teaching creates an environment where learners can share their knowledge and expertise.

4.4.3 Incorporation of technology

The findings of the inquiry suggest that teachers incorporate technology into their teaching more frequently. Some participants indicated that incorporating technology into their lessons helps them provide differentiated instruction and promotes collaboration and communication. Their experiences are captured verbatim below:

I'm responsible for my own material and resources. Luckily, we have SLED and Wits that help us with free online sign language material, which is helpful. You just log into your account and search whatever item you need signs for (PT3).

We have a foundation phase WhatsApp group where we share resources, like videos of poems and links to useful websites (PT1).

If there is a new sign that I don't know, I normally use the Deafinition app, it helps me a lot with new signs and has different videos in sign language (PT5).

It emerged from the inquiry that participants incorporated technology into their lessons by using digital tools such as laptops, tablets, projectors, and interactive whiteboards to enhance the learning experience. Participants further reported that technology makes learning more engaging and keeps learners interested in the material. Next, I discuss the use of verbal communication and sign language.

4.4.4 Using verbal communication and signing

The study revealed that participants utilise verbal communication and sign language when teaching learners with HI. Their experiences are captured verbatim below:

The speech therapist advised me that to support those learners who can hear, while teaching, I need to sign and voice (PT3).

Because some of our learners use hearing aids and some are completely deaf, when teaching, I talk and sign at the same time to cater for all the learners (PT5).

The participants reported using both verbal communication and sign language simultaneously to clarify concepts. It also emerged that this is due to some learners being hard of hearing and some lip reading. As a result, the participants noted that they use both methods simultaneously.

4.4.5 Curriculum Differentiation

Based on the findings of this inquiry, some participants modified and differentiated activities based on learners' abilities. Their experiences are captured verbatim below:

At some point during your lesson, you try to explain, while explaining you see that now you're confusing them. They don't understand, that's when you need to adjust the curriculum here and there so that it can fit in with the learners (PT3).

We have to adopt the curriculum to fit our kids and the needs of our learners which sometimes becomes difficult because our kids don't understand everything that is in that curriculum (PT6).

By providing resources, challenging tasks, and alternative activities, the inquiry found that participants could reach a wider range of learners. This includes those who need more support and those who were more advanced. Furthermore, the inquiry found that this diversification of approaches helps learners to succeed. As a result, tailored instruction as reported by some participants has emerged as a strong means of helping learners with HI reach their educational goals. Next, I discuss support methods.

4.5 Support strategies employed

Comments by the participants revealed that they employ various support strategies for learners with HI. From their responses, support strategies employed include modified teaching approaches and additional support. The participants further reported the use of scaffolding as a support strategy, offering individualised help and guidance, and utilising collaborative learning activities. Participants indicated that this helps learners with HI better understand the learning material. Next, I discuss the use of simple words.

4.5.1. Use of simple words

Majority of the participants alluded to using simple words and terms when teaching learners with HI as a support strategy. Their experiences are captured verbatim below:

You need to change certain terms because some terms are difficult so that they understand (PT6).

If I'm teaching NS for example, there's long complicated words, I need to come with a shortened explanation and change the words. You need to restructure the sentence (PT4).

In mathematics, maybe you are teaching addition, and you can see this strategy is not working, the learners don't understand. Then I simplify the words so that they understand (PT2).

In supporting learners with HI, some participants also reported how they break down complex concepts into smaller, more manageable chunks to ensure understanding. They further indicated that the reason is that learners with HI rely on visuals to understand the material. Furthermore, the inquiry revealed that by using simple words and terms, learners with HI can pick up the meaning of the material more easily. Next, I discuss curriculum differentiation.

4.5.2 Using verbal communication and signing

This inquiry revealed that some participants use signing and speech simultaneously in teaching to provide support for learners with HI. Their experiences are captured verbatim below:

The speech therapist also mentioned that to support learners who can hear, while you are teaching, you need to sign and voice (PT3).

When teaching you must also consider the interpreting, because when you teach, you also must allow the sign language interpreter to explain (PT1).

It emerged from the inquiry that teachers' combination of signs and speech provides an effective means of supporting learners with HI. Furthermore, it emerged that in differentiating the curriculum, teachers considered the time it took to translate what they are teaching into sign language. Following this, I discuss the use of videos in teaching.

4.5.3 Using videos in teaching

Teachers reported that visual stimulation positively impacted on learning and engagement for learners with HI. This suggests that visual stimulation is an effective teaching method. Visuals are very important to learners with HI when it comes to learning and comprehending concepts.

Therefore, incorporating visuals into classroom instruction can help learners with HI comprehend new material. Visual aids can be used to supplement instruction and bridge any knowledge gaps learners with HI may have, leading to improved learning outcomes. Their views are captured below.

They also encourage us to share videos with each other of content that can help learners with HI (PT4).

So, If I have to do a video of say, the little red hat, I'll use a video to explain.(PT1).

If I explain a concept and see that the learners are struggling to understand, I use video resources in sign language that they can watch as they are very visual (PT5).

The inquiry suggest that the participants used videos to give concrete examples, provide explanations, and illustrate concepts. Some participants reported that this was more engaging for those with HI than traditional teaching methods. The inquiry revealed that visual stimuli can effectively stimulate learners. It also emerged from some participants that utilising visuals as a key component to creating an inclusive learning environment for learners with HI. As a result, the inquiry found that this knowledge can be utilised in creating an environment that is effective for learners with HI. Next, I conclude the current chapter.

4.6 Conclusion

Participants' feedback in this chapter indicated that the teachers demonstrate their commitment to ensuring a successful learning experience for learners with HI. This was done through cooperation and collaboration. This unified approach highlights the importance of collaboration and the significant role it plays in the success of learners with HI. On the other hand, the school lacks some resources that can support learners with HI.

The participants noted that more emotional support would benefit their overall well-being. They are often left without adequate resources to cope with daily demands. To bridge these gaps, teachers should have access to appropriate resources that can help them meet emotional and psychological demands. The teachers further stressed that they need access to counselling services. They reported that this could provide the guidance and support they needed to remain balanced and equipped to teach. They, therefore, urge greater access to counselling services to ensure their mental well-being is addressed, allowing them to deliver better educational outcomes to their learners. In particular, this chapter provides critical insights into how research questions should be answered. The discussion of the findings will be discussed next.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the inquiry are presented providing further insight into the topic. The inquiry explored teachers' experiences of support for learners with HI in a special school in Pretoria.

A discussion and interpretation of the findings is provided in this chapter, in light of the research questions that guided this inquiry. The data collected showed meaningful correlations between the variables studied. The research questions were answered using these correlations. By analysing and interpreting the data, I concluded the relationships between the variables and the research questions. The findings were interpreted and understood within the context of the theoretical framework, providing a comprehensive understanding of the findings. This chapter is organised as follows: In the first part, I present teachers' experiences of support. Thereafter, I evaluate how teachers cope with challenges they experience. Afterwards, different teaching methodologies are discussed and their effectiveness is examined. Lastly, I conclude with a discussion on support strategies employed. Next, I discuss teachers experiences of support.

5.2 Teacher's experiences of support

The main research question of this study is: what are teachers' experiences of supporting learners with HI at a special school in Pretoria?

To better understand the complexities of this question, an in-depth qualitative study was conducted to explore individual teacher experiences. From the inquiry, it was discovered that teachers felt supported in their roles and received ongoing training on teaching learners with HI. This support is essential for the success of learners with HI, helping them reach their full academic potential. In addition, teachers were found to have high levels of confidence in their ability to effectively teach these learners. Teachers reported feeling better equipped to handle learners with HI due to ongoing professional development opportunities. In affirming the findings of this study, Bell and Swart (2018) indicated that through in-service training, teachers are better equipped to provide learners with an engaging, stimulating, and meaningful learning experience. Contrary to this inquiry, Magongwa's (2020) study found that teachers are not adequately supported. It is imperative that teachers remain current with their teaching methods and equipped to handle any issues that may arise in the classroom, Mokala (2021) emphasises the importance of in-service training. Following this, I discuss challenges teachers experience.

5.3 Challenges experienced by teachers

Findings on question 2

What challenges do teachers of learners with HI experience in implementing inclusive classroom practices?

It emerged from this inquiry that teachers experienced a few challenges associated with supporting learners with HI. Despite the challenges, the participants expressed a commitment to providing the most effective education they could to support learners with HI. A curriculum adjustment is necessary to meet HI's learning needs, based on findings from this inquiry. Majoro (2021) affirmed these findings, in her study, she revealed that in practice, learners with HI in mainstream schools follow a common language-based curriculum. It further emerged from this inquiry that teachers experienced barriers in communicating with learners with HI due to learners using informal signs to communicate. Confirming the findings of this study is Lehloa (2019) who affirmed that the language structure of learners with HI is different from spoken or written languages which creates barriers in communication with teachers. Some participants in the current inquiry revealed that parents were not involved in their children's education. The current study revealed that parents were not actively involved in their children's education. This finding suggests that there is an opportunity for parents to become more engaged in their children's learning experience. In contrast to the findings of the current study, A study conducted by Mokala (2021) found that parents were involved in their children's education. In the next section, I discuss teaching methodologies.

5.4 Teaching methodologies

Findings on question 3

What teaching methodologies are used to accommodate learners with HI demands?

The findings of this inquiry revealed that to ensure all learners were engaged, some participants designed activities that allowed different approaches and levels of difficulty. Some participants noted that they had used simpler language for some learners or more challenging questions for more able learners. They also reported that they customised the activities to meet the individual needs of the learners, enabling more effective learning. According to Greaves (2019), teachers don't use a variety of teaching techniques to facilitate learning, which is contrary to the findings of this inquiry. According to the study findings, some participants modified and differentiated activities and curricula according to learners' abilities. McKenzie et al. (2019) confirmed the findings of this study by concluding that curriculum differentiation was another major strategy used by South African teachers to address learning barriers. In contrast to this inquiry's findings, Lehloa (2019) indicated that teachers were not using different pedagogical approaches. In order to provide meaningful learning experiences for learners, Kelly et al. (2020) called for varied and effective teaching methods, which aligns to this inquiry's findings. To adapt and implement inclusive pedagogical practices, teachers, parents, and specialists must collaborate. Next, I discuss support strategies.

5.5 Support strategies employed

Findings on question 4

What support strategies do teachers employ to enhance the learning experiences of learners with HI?

It emerged that participants employed various support strategies for learners with HI. The support strategies employed included modified teaching approaches and collaboration among staff. It also emerged from this inquiry that teachers worked collaboratively in adapting the material to the needs of learners with HI to ensure equitable outcomes. It has been noted that

this collaboration creates an environment that promotes learning, self-reflection and critical thinking, values espoused by Florian's inclusive pedagogy framework. This framework emphasises the need for teachers to use available resources for the purpose of creating a conducive learning environment for all learners.

This study confirms the findings of Mokala (2017). In her study, Mokala (2017) points out the teachers are creative and use different ways to reach all. The results of this study indicate that teachers are competent in sign language, which is contrary to Majoro's (2021) findings which found that teachers with disabilities must be familiar with sign language in order to facilitate communication for curriculum accessibility. Following this, I discuss the limitation of this inquiry.

5.6 Limitations

It should be noted that the researcher works with learners with HI in a special school. This should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study, as the findings are limited to the learners with HI in the special school setting. Therefore, the findings should not be generalised to all learners with HI in all educational contexts.

5.7 Recommendations

The study sought to understand how teachers received support in addressing the learning needs of learners with HI. The recommendations are intended to provide guidance for future research, policy development, and implementation of best practices.

5.7.1 Recommendations for research

It emerged from this inquiry that to better understand the impact support services for learners with HI, further research should be done to evaluate the impact of teacher-led support programmes that learners with HI have gone through at the special school level. Such studies could provide insight into the experiences of learners with HI from different perspectives, such as how they are performing academically, the support they are receiving from their teachers and parents, and the measures taken by the Department of Education to ensure their learning needs are met.

5.7.2 Recommendations for Practice

This inquiry revealed that teachers were in need of psychological support in the form of counselling. It is therefore essential that the Department of Education arrange psychological support through counsellors or psychologists for teachers facing occupational challenges, especially those found in special schools. Additionally, internal support is regarded as satisfactory by teachers. Consequently, other schools could benefit from having the support of paraprofessionals in special schools. By adopting strategies similar to this, other special schools for learners with HI could take advantage of this expertise to empower teachers to teach learners with HI and meet their diverse needs.

5.7.3 Recommendations for Policy

To better equip teachers to handle students with special needs, this inquiry suggests that universities should revise their teacher training programmes to include modules about

disabilities and other obstacles that can impede learning. It is crucial for all teachers to understand and be trained on these modules to ensure they are adequately prepared to teach. This helps teachers to be capacitated in supporting learners with additional learning needs. Another recommendation is that teacher training programmes ensure that all teachers are competent in SASL to ensure that students with additional learning needs are adequately supported. This empowers teachers with the tools they need to successfully teach learners with HI. This will further their understanding of how to work effectively with people with HI. This helps to reduce the problems from inadequate pre-service training and lack of knowledge surrounding HI.

5.8 Conclusion

This inquiry explored teachers' experiences of support for learners with HI. The outcome of this inquiry demonstrate the significance of providing adequate support for learners with HI. This inquiry also highlighted the teachers' support experiences, as well as the challenges they faced. It also highlighted teaching methodologies employed and methods of supporting learners with HI. Collaboration and ongoing training are clearly key factors in fostering positive teaching experiences among teachers. Through the collaboration and ongoing training teachers received, it was evident that they had positive experiences. The lack of access to mental health services such as counselling for teachers has created a barrier which must be overcome. This is to ensure that teachers do not become overwhelmed and unable to perform their duties to the best of their ability. Parental involvement emerged as a challenge in this inquiry. It also emerged that the school does not provide parents with support to raise learners who have HI. To create a conducive learning environment, the study identified the need for support to enhance teaching and learning. Therefore, it is essential that schools provide parents of learners with HI with adequate support and resources to ensure successful learning outcomes. Therefore, the study suggests that the first step toward improving educational policies is taking into account teachers' support experiences. To truly make an impact, it is essential to understand the unique challenges that teachers face in different contexts and craft policies accordingly. By doing so, we can ensure that everyone has access to equal opportunities and resources. Based on my observations, the study has accomplished the research goals it set out to accomplish. In my view, the objectives and research questions set out at the beginning of the inquiry have been achieved. The findings of the study have more than fulfilled the expectations outlined out at the beginning, proving to be a journey of discovery.

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Appendix A: Letter to principal

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

My name is Lesetja Johannes Molala. I am a Master of Education (M.Ed.) student at Wits University. I am doing research on the teachers support experience for learners with hearing impairment in a special school in Pretoria. The data from this study will be published and will also be used to present at conferences and to write journal articles. I would like to get insights on how teachers who teach learners with hearing impairment in a special school setting narrate their teaching experiences. Through this study, I hope the teachers will tell their story about their teaching experiences. I am interested in finding out how they perceive their teaching experiences as well as how their perceptions shape their teaching approaches. The reason why I have chosen your school is because it is one of the schools for learners with hearing impairment in and it is in Pretoria which is my focus.

I am inviting your school to participate in this research which will benefit the school and the government when reviewing support provision for learners with hearing impairment in the future. Permission has been secured from the Gauteng Department of Education and Wits University. The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw from participation at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study. The names of the research participants and the identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Their individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be kept safely and destroyed between 3-5 years after the completion of the project. I humbly request that you assist me with the following:

1. Provide me with the names and contact details of teachers who are willing to take part in my study (6 teachers from any grade)

2. Assist with the distribution of the letters and questions to the teachers for them to prepare. Each person gets a letter, a question sheet and biographical data sheet.

3. Give me permission to contact the teachers to arrange the date and times for the interviews.

If there is any issue you need clarity on, please email me or SMS me on details below.

Yours Sincerely

Lesetja Molala

Ethical Clearance Number: **2023ECE012**

Appendix B: Information letter to teachers

PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant

This hereby serves as a request for your participation in a research study. I am student at the Witwatersrand University (Wits) under the supervision of Dr N.T Mokala. As part of the requirements for my degree in Education, I am conducting research on the teacher's experiences of support for learners with hearing impairment at a special school in Pretoria.

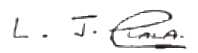
Thus, I am inviting you to participate in the study. Your participation is voluntary and your refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. There are no financial or material benefits for participating in the study. If you agree to take part, I shall arrange to interview you on a day, time and place most convenient for you. The interview will not be more than an hour long, they will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. Although the interview will be recorded, I shall also make notes during the course of the interview. The information received from you will be analyzed and used in the research report. Be assured that your personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying details will be included in either interview schedule or the final research report.

I am interested in gaining insights into your journey as a teacher who teaches learners with hearing impairment in a special school setting. Through this study, I hope you will tell your story about your teaching and support experiences. I am interested in finding out how you perceive your teaching support experiences as well as how your perceptions shape your teaching approaches.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study. I shall answer them to my best of my ability. I may be conducted on 012 793 1204 or 0768694842 or hlogimolala@gmail.com. Completion of the consent form will give indication that you agree to take part in the study.

Thanking you in advance

Lesetja Johannes Molala



Appendix C: Consent forms for teachers

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

I .... voluntarily agree to participate in the research study about investigating teachers' experiences of support for learners with hearing impairment at a special school in Pretoria. The purpose of the nature of the study has also been explained to me. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my full satisfaction. I am aware that I can ask questions if I have them at any point.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated with confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time without being penalised. I also understand that while my identity will remain anonymous in all writings, some of the information I provide may be quoted in the study. I also understand that I have to keep any information relating to this study private and therefore not to discuss this information with anyone.

I voluntarily agree to take part in the study.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

_____ _____

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to

.....

The participant was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation will be conducted in English.

Signature of Researcher .....

Date .....

Appendix D: Interview schedule for teachers

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Researcher: Mr. Lesetja Johannes Molala

Topic: Investigating teachers' support experiences for learners with hearing impairment at a special school in Pretoria.

Teacher's biographical information

Title	
Home language	
Gender and age	
On a scale of 1-6 "rate your SASL skills, where 1 is poor and 6 excellent	
Teaching qualification(s) and teaching subjects	
Years of teaching experience in a special school?	
Indicate what SASL in-service training you received.	
What formal training did you undergo with regard to SASL teaching?	
Any additional information about yourself that you would like to share (if any).	

Supervisor: Dr N.T Mokala

Participant: ……

Date: ……

Time: ……

Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of support for teachers in a special school?
2. What kind of support do you receive in teaching learners with HI in this school?
3. Which specialists do you have in the school?
4. What role do specialists in your school play in supporting you as a teacher ?
5. What obstacles do you experience in implementing Inclusive Education in teaching learners with hearing impairment?
6. What teaching methodologies do you employ to accommodate the demands of learners with hearing impairment?
7. What strategies could be used to enhance the implementation of Inclusive Education in a special school for learners with hearing impairment?
8. What support do you need to implement Inclusive Education?
9. How would you describe the importance of parental involvement in the school?
10. Please describe your experiences with parents.
11. Is there anything that was not asked that you want the researcher to know?

Appendix E: Ethics clearance



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2023ECE012**
PROJECT TITLE	Investigating the teaching and learning support experiences of learners with hearing impairment at special school in Pretoria.
INVESTIGATOR	**LESETJA JOHANNES MOLALA**
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	Wits School of Education
DATE CONSIDERED	06-Mar-23
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Low risk
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the Research Report
ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE	20-Mar-23
CHAIRPERSON	Dr. Batseba Mofolo-Mbokane

cc: Dr Ntsoaki Mokala

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

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

L Molala
Signature

20 / 03 / 2023
Date

Appendix F: Letter of approval

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

R/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**14 April 2023**
Validity of Research Approval:	**08 February 2023– 30 September 2023** **2023/136**
Name of Researcher:	**Molala LJ**
Address of Researcher:	**226 Ammolite Street**
	Zambezi Manor Estate
	Pretoria
Telephone Number:	**076 869 4842**
Email address:	**hlogimolala@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**Investigating teachers' experiences of support for learners with hearing impairment at a special school in Pretoria.**
Type of qualification	**Masters**
Number and type of schools:	**2 LSEN Schools**
District/s/HO	**Tshwane West**

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.

14/04/2023

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

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Appendix G: Classroom pictures

