

INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES FOUND IN A MONTESSORI PRIMARY CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY IN GAUTENG

by

**SHAKIRA AKABOR
768367**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the Faculty of Humanities

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

JOHANNESBURG

MARCH 2015

**SUPERVISORS: DR YASMINE DOMINGUEZ-WHITEHEAD
DR ELIZABETH WALTON**

ABSTRACT

In order to explore the way in which pedagogical practices are identified as being inclusive and might appear as they are used by teachers in Montessori settings, this instrumental case study is focused on finding nine inclusive pedagogical practices. The identified practices were clustered according to the themes of promoting collaboration, access to the curriculum and the recognition and acceptance of learners. Using direct observation in classrooms and individual teacher interviews as data collection methods, four teachers in Montessori primary classrooms were the main participants in this study. A combination of deductive and inductive methods was used to analyse the data. This study is set within a theoretical framework that includes Florian and Black-Hawkins' rights-based interpretation of inclusive education in the management of a variety of learning needs among learners. The study also examines the relationship between the Montessori Method and inclusive pedagogical practices found in order to understand the extent to which the Montessori Method had an influence on the practices. The findings of this study indicate that elements such as the classroom setup, multi-age groupings and a strong focus on the individual learner had some influence on the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices observed.

Keywords: inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy, inclusive practices, Montessori.

DECLARATION

I, Shakira Akabor, hereby declare that the work contained in this research report is entirely my own unaided work. It has been submitted exclusively to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, for the degree of Master of Education (by Coursework and Research Report). It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

SHAKIRA AKABOR

Student Number 768367

Protocol Number 2014ECE014M

Signed on this 11th day of March in the year 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the following people for their assistance in the completion of this study:

- My supervisors, Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead and Dr Elizabeth Walton, for your support and commitment throughout the research process. Having you both as supervisors was a privilege.
- I am indebted to the organisers of the Whitmore Richards Bursary without which this research would not have been possible.
- My dear husband Ridwaan for your encouragement, support and belief in me.
- My dearest children Zahra, Johara and Ahmad. I appreciate your patience, love and understanding for the days and nights I spent away attending classes and writing.
- The principal of the Montessori school for kindly allowing me to conduct my research at your school.
- The participants in the study for allowing me into your classrooms and giving of your time to share your insights and experiences with me.
- The staff at both the Wits and Unisa libraries for always assisting me with a smile.
- Barbara, for editing the report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	1
1.1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1.1.WHY MONTESSORI?	2
1.1.2. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.3. PURPOSE STATEMENT	4
1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
1.5. AIM OF THE STUDY	5
1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	5
1.7. CLARIFICATION OF RELEVANT TERMS	6
1.7.1. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.....	6
1.7.2. MONTESSORI METHOD	6
1.7.3. MONTESSORI SCHOOLS.....	6
1.7.4. PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES.....	7
1.7.5. ORDINARY SCHOOLS.....	7
1.7.6. LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.....	7
1.7.7. LEARNERS WITH BARRIERS TO LEARNING.....	7

1.8. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	10
2.2. DEFINITION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.....	10
2.2.1. CRITIQUE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.....	11
2.2.2. MOVE FROM INTEGRATION TO INCLUSION.....	12
2.2.3. CHANGE FROM MEDICAL MODEL TO SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY...12	
2.2.4. DISABILITY CLASSIFICATION IN EDUCATION.....	13
2.3. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	14
2.3.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.....	15
2.3.2. CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION...16	
2.3.3. THE BELIEF IN THE “SPECIALNESS” OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.....	17
2.4. INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES AND PRACTICES.....	18
2.4.1. PEDAGOGY.....	18
2.4.2. INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGIES.....	19
2.4.3. INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	21
2.4.4. IDENTIFYING PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AS BEING INCLUSIVE.....	22
2.4.4.1. CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING.....	24
2.4.4.2. PEER TUTORING.....	25
2.4.4.3. CO-TEACHING.....	26
2.4.4.4. WHOLE CLASS INSTRUCTION.....	27
2.4.4.5. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION.....	27
2.4.4.6. DIRECT INSTRUCTION.....	28
2.4.4.7. REFLECTIVE TEACHING.....	29
2.4.4.8. TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS.....	29

2.4.4.9. LEARNER-SELECTED WORK.....	30
2.5. MONTESSORI AS A MODEL FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.....	31
2.6. CONCLUSION.....	33
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	35
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	35
3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH.....	35
3.3. INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY DESIGN.....	36
3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	37
3.5. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS.....	38
3.5.1. DIRECT OBSERVATION.....	38
3.5.2. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS.....	39
3.6. SITE AND PARTICIPANT SELECTION.....	41
3.6.1. SITE SELECTION.....	41
3.6.2. PARTICIPANT SELECTION.....	41
3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	42
3.7.1. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY.....	43
3.7.2. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW.....	43
3.7.3. INFORMED CONSENT.....	44
3.8. DATA CAPTURE AND ANALYSIS.....	45
3.8.1. DEDUCTIVE ANALYSIS USING PATTERN-MATCHING.....	45
3.8.2. INDUCTIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	48
3.9. CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	48
3.9.1. CRYSTALLIZATION.....	49
3.9.2. MEMBER CHECKING.....	50
3.9.3. WORKING WITH A SUPERVISOR.....	50

3.10. REDUCTION OF BIAS IN THE STUDY.....	50
3.11. CONCLUSION.....	51
CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS	52
4.1. INTRODUCTION.....	52
4.2. ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM OBSERVATIONS AND INTERVIEWS.....	52
4.2.1. EXPANSION OF TABLE AND EXAMPLES OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES.....	53
4.2.2. PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE COLLABORATION.....	55
4.2.2.1. CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING.....	55
4.2.2.2. PEER TUTORING.....	57
4.2.2.3. CO-TEACHING.....	58
4.2.3. PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM.....	58
4.2.3.1. WHOLE CLASS INSTRUCTION.....	59
4.2.3.2. DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION.....	60
4.2.3.3. DIRECT INSTRUCTION.....	62
4.2.3.4. REFLECTIVE TEACHING.....	63
4.2.4. PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE.....	65
4.2.4.1. TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS.....	66
4.2.4.2. LEARNER-SELECTED WORK.....	67
4.3. THE INFLUENCE OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD AND ENVIRONMENT ON THE INCLUSIVITY OF THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES.....	68
4.3.1. THE CLASSROOM SETUP.....	70
4.3.2. MIXED AGE GROUPING.....	71
4.3.3. MONTESSORI MATERIALS AND METHOD.....	73
4.3.4. HIGHLY INDIVIDUALISED PROVISION.....	74
4.4. FIGURE OF INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ON THE INCLUSIVITY OF THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES.....	74

4.5. CONCLUSION.....	76
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	78
5.1.INTRODUCTION.....	78
5.2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	78
5.3. ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	78
5.3.1. WHICH INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES, AS IDENTIFIED BY THE LITERATURE, CAN BE FOUND IN A SOUTH AFRICAN MONTESSORI PRIMARY CLASSROOM?.....	79
5.3.2. WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE REGARD AS INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES?	79
5.3.3. WHAT DO THESE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES LOOK LIKE AS THEY ARE EMPLOYED BY TEACHERS?	80
5.3.4. DOES THE MONTESSORI METHOD HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ON THE INCLUSIVITY OF THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES FOUND?.....	80
5.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	81
5.4.1. LIMITATIONS IN DESIGN.....	81
5.4.2. LIMITATIONS IN EXECUTION.....	81
5.4.3. LIMITATIONS IN THE FINDINGS.....	82
5.5. STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY.....	82
5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	83
5.6.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS	83
5.6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS.....	83
5.6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	84
5.7. CONCLUSION.....	84
REFERENCE LIST.....	86

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 1: INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES.....	24
TABLE 2: PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND DETAILS.....	42
TABLE 3: GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES....	46
TABLE 4: EXPANSION OF TABLE OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICES.....	54
FIGURE 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MONTESSORI FACTORS AND INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES	75

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL.....	95
APPENDIX B: INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORMS TO THE TEACHERS, INCLUDING CONSENT TO BE AUDIO-RECORDED.....	98
APPENDIX C: INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORMS TO THE PARENTS, INCLUDING CONSENT TO BE AUDIO-RECORDED.....	101
APPENDIX D: INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORMS TO THE LEARNERS, INCLUDING CONSENT TO BE AUDIO-RECORDED.....	104
APPENDIX E: TEACHERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.....	106
APPENDIX F: EXTRACTS FROM THE DATA.....	107
APPENDIX G: ETHICS APPROVAL.....	109

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMS:	American Montessori Society
DoE:	Department of Education
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
JP:	Junior Primary
IPAA:	Inclusive Pedagogical Practices in Action
SAMA:	South African Montessori Association
SIAS:	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SGB:	School Governing Body
SP:	Senior Primary
Y1:	Year One (learner/s)
Y2:	Year Two (learner/s)
Y3:	Year Three (learner/s)

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Background

1.1. Introduction

“Inclusion works best with teachers who understand and demonstrate effective teaching and learning practices”

(Loreman, Deppler and Harvey; 2010, p.5)

The above quote highlights that at the heart of inclusive education lies the effective practice of teachers. Since its inception, teachers in South Africa continue to experience problems with the implementation of inclusive education (Sayed & Soudien, 2007; Mitchell, de Lange & Thuy, 2008; Pather, 2011; Walton, 2011). The White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001, p. 18) states that teachers are required “to improve their skills and knowledge and also develop new ones” in order to deal with a diversity of learners in the classroom, among whom are learners with special education needs. South Africa has thus adopted a “needs-based” approach to inclusive education, which is substantiated by terms such as “learners with barriers to learning” as well as subsequent policy documents on inclusive education, namely the *National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* (SIAS; DoE, 2008), *Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools* (DoE, 2009) and *Guidelines for inclusive teaching and learning* (Doe, 2010). However, Makoelle (2012) argues that whilst South Africa has adopted inclusive education policies, there has been no significant change to teachers’ beliefs and practices. One explanation provided for this is Meltz, Herman and Pillay’s (2014, p.2) argument that the belief in exclusion became “entrenched in the national psyche” due to the lack of exposure to learners with special needs pre-1994 that the majority of South African teachers teaching in ordinary schools today have had. This has resulted in teachers not knowing how to practice inclusive pedagogy (Makoelle, 2012) with the diversity of learners that are in ordinary classrooms today. Based on insights gleaned from the recent inclusive education conference held in Johannesburg, Walton (2015) argues that this is not a problem unique to South Africa, but rather one that pervades countries worldwide.

1.1.1. Why Montessori?

In discussing ways in which inclusion can be constructed, Thomas and Loxley (2001, p. ix) argue that we should be guided by the simple truths about teaching, learning and thinking that were “laid down by the great educators of yesteryear – Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Montessori...” My own interest in Montessori schooling stems from the search for an English-medium school for my children in the new suburb that we moved to three years ago. After observing first-hand the way teaching and learning occurred in the Montessori environment, it occurred to me that a variety of teaching practices employed in the Montessori classroom could be considered inclusive, particularly the Montessori Materials and collaboration between learners in vertical age groupings. An inclusive classroom refers to the environment where all learners regardless of their abilities and differences are taught together (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004).

Frequently described as an alternative to regular schooling (Lillard, 2005), the Montessori Method offers an approach to learning and teaching that is different from traditional methods currently used in ordinary South African classrooms. The Montessori philosophy on education is primarily based on respect and the fundamental belief that a child learns optimally within a social environment that supports the unique development of the child (Lillard, 1972). Conceptualised by Dr Maria Montessori’s careful observation of Italy’s poorest children at the turn of the twentieth century, the Montessori Method has gained popularity worldwide as an effective means to teach young children. The beginning of Montessori education was Dr Montessori’s responsive teaching model for learners with special education needs (Orem, 1969). Contrary to popular belief that the Montessori classroom allows learners to do as they please, Lillard (2005, p. 21) argues that Montessori education is “tightly structured and organised to the core”. Each and every material and tactile tool has its place on the low shelves that are characteristically found in Montessori classrooms, and contrasts sharply with traditional classrooms where “learning results mainly from the use of texts” (Lillard, 2005, p. 20).

An increasing number of American parents are choosing to send their children to Montessori schools (Saracho & Spodek, 2003). According to the American Montessori Society (AMS), there are in excess of 4000 private Montessori schools

and over 400 public Montessori schools in the USA. There are currently no statistics available for the total number of Montessori schools in South Africa, however Charl du Toit, ex-president of the South African Montessori Association (SAMA) confirmed that there were 127 schools registered with SAMA (C. du Toit, personal communication, May 2013). Since then, the number of schools registered with SAMA has increased to 161 listings (I. Pringle, personal communication, March 2015). In South Africa, Montessori schooling is predominantly known for the provision of early childhood education which is the 3-6 year age category, however in recent years there has been a growing number of Montessori Primary schools that go beyond the preschool phase. Montessori Primary schools include grades one through to grade six or seven. There are currently 41 Montessori Primary schools registered with SAMA, majority of which are situated in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Montessori schools in South Africa are independent or privately funded schools (I. Pringle, personal communication, March 2015).

1.1.2. The Context of the Study

This study is based on data derived from a Montessori primary school in Gauteng and attempts to offer insights into an alternative view of pedagogical practices. I am acutely aware of the current discourse that pervades the South African literature on inclusive pedagogy, particularly the needs-based approach as emphasised by Makoelle (2012). The geographical context of South Africa has been used extensively in this report. However, the context of this study does not relate to specific concerns such as overcrowding in classrooms, second-language English speakers, rural schooling or poorly-trained teachers. Rather, this study offers insights into an interpretation of a rights-based approach to inclusion as opposed to a needs-based approach in an attempt to broaden understandings of inclusive pedagogies in South Africa.

1.2. Problem Statement

Although there is an abundance of literature on inclusive education at both international and local levels, very little focuses on inclusive pedagogy (Nind, 2005; Makoelle, 2012). In South Africa, Makoelle (2012) argues that teachers are in the dark about what constitutes an inclusive pedagogy. Thus a gap has been identified

in the literature on pedagogies for inclusion. Similarly, Vetiveloo (2008) calls for more research into the Montessori Method as an inclusive tool. Although the roots of Montessori schooling are grounded in education for learners with special needs (Orem, 1969; Lillard, 2005), recent research suggests that the Montessori Method can be used successfully as a model for inclusive education (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012; Cossentino, 2010). However, little is known about the inclusive pedagogical practices employed by teachers in a Montessori classroom. A study into a South African Montessori classroom can serve to shed more light on this. To date there has been limited research on Montessori education in a South African context (Moll, 2004; Jamieson, 2005; Nel, 2010). Of these studies only one focuses on the remediation of learners with special needs (Jamieson, 2005). However none of these studies looks at the possible inclusivity of the Montessori Method in South Africa. A study into the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices found in a Montessori classroom may broaden understandings of inclusive pedagogy for South African teachers in ordinary classrooms.

1.3. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to examine possible inclusive pedagogical practices that might be evident in the Montessori classroom, focussing particularly on pedagogical practices identified by the literature as being inclusive. The findings of this research could serve three purposes:

- It can expand on the body of literature on inclusive pedagogical practices in South Africa.
- This study could assist in providing understandings into Montessori education in a South African context, an area in which little research exists.
- The findings of this study could be a source of insight on inclusive pedagogy for South African teachers in ordinary classrooms. In order to achieve this purpose, the following research questions were formulated.

1.4. Research Questions

The main research question that guides this study is:

Which inclusive pedagogical practices, as identified by the literature, can be found in a South African Montessori primary classroom?

In order to answer this question, the following three sub-questions were formulated:

- What does the literature regard as inclusive pedagogical practices?
- What do these pedagogical practices resemble when they are employed by teachers?
- Does the Montessori Method have any influence on the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices found?

1.5. Aim of the study

In the light of these research questions, the overall aim of this research is to determine what inclusive pedagogical practices are evident in a Montessori primary classroom. The research aimed to:

- Discover what the body of literature regards as inclusive pedagogical practices.
- Determine which of the identified inclusive pedagogical practices are found in a South African Montessori classroom.
- Describe what these inclusive pedagogical practices resemble as they are presented by teachers in a South African Montessori classroom.
- Determine in what ways the Montessori Method influenced the inclusive pedagogical practices found.

1.6. Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study that followed an instrumental case study design that uses a bounded case of the Montessori classroom to examine the existence of nine identified inclusive pedagogical practices. Four participants were purposefully chosen according to the following two criteria:

- they had to be teachers in either the Junior Primary or Senior Primary phase in a Montessori Primary School and;
- their classes had to comprise of a variety of learners with additional support needs.

In order to provide accurate descriptions of the pedagogical practices in action, data collection took place via direct observations and was supplemented with individual teacher interviews. Data analysis techniques used in the study were a combination of deductive and inductive techniques. These are elaborated upon in more detail in Chapter three.

1.7. Clarification of Relevant Terms:

1.7.1. Inclusive Education:

Inclusive education is a contested term and many definitions of inclusion exist. There are both broad and narrow definitions of inclusive education, but for the purpose of this research, inclusive education will be narrowly defined as “enabling schools to serve all children, especially those with special education needs” (UNESCO, 1994, p iii).

1.7.2. The Montessori Method:

The Montessori Method refers to a system of teaching and learning founded on the principles developed by Dr Maria Montessori. It is essentially a learner-led pedagogy in a class environment filled with stimulating and tactile materials (Lillard, 2005) typically arranged in classrooms comprising of vertical age groupings. The Montessori Method is known for respecting the individuality of each learner, promoting a culture of respect, fostering a sense of community among the learners, and consists of an arrangement of learners in vertical groupings of three-year developmental age groups, namely 3-6 years, 6-9 years and 9-12 years (Lillard, 2005).

1.7.3. Montessori schools:

In South Africa, Montessori schools are independent schools using the Montessori principles of teaching and a large majority of these cater to the 3-6 year age group (pre-primary). There are presently 41 Montessori primary schools (up to grade six/seven) in South Africa, most of which are situated in Gauteng and the Western

Cape. There are only five Montessori high schools in South Africa, and two of these schools are in Gauteng (SAMA, n.d.).

1.7.4. Pedagogical practices:

Pedagogy, as described by Alexander (2004) refers to “the act of teaching and the body of knowledge, argument and evidence in which it is embedded and by which particular classroom practices are justified” (2004, p. 10). Thus the pedagogical practices referred to in this study are those practices that teachers use that are justified by the body of knowledge in education.

1.7.5. Ordinary schools:

Ordinary public schools (as opposed to special schools) in South Africa occur in both rural and urban settings, and are mainly funded by the government. Regular independent schools are funded mainly by private organisations; however some independent schools are partially government-funded. Although the preferred term in South Africa is “ordinary schools” as per White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), the international literature, particularly Montessori literature, uses the terms “regular”, “mainstream” and “general” schools interchangeably. All regular schools are encouraged to be responsive to learner diversity (E. Walton, personal communication, July 2013).

1.7.6. Learners with Special Educational Needs:

The term learner with Special Educational Needs (LSEN or SEN) is a broad category often used in the international literature, particularly in the UK (Norwich & Lewis, 2005; Florian, 2008) and refers to learners with either physical, mental or other disabilities that affect learning. The SEN categories can be further broken down into more specific categories that describe the type of disability and the accompanying support required in the classroom (See Norwich & Lewis, 2005).

1.7.7. Learners with Barriers to Learning:

Learners with Barriers to Learning (BtL) is the preferred South African term as opposed to SEN for learners who experience difficulties that impact on their learning. These include (but is not limited to) learners who have a learning disability, learners

with a physical disability and/or mental disability, learners that come from lower socio-economic sectors, previously disadvantaged learners, second-language learners, learners that are HIV positive, etc. All learners with Barriers to Learning require additional support in the classroom (Walton, 2011).

1.8. Overview of the Study

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This chapter provides a brief introduction and background to the study, highlighting the problem within which this study is situated. The research questions are provided, to lead to the aims that this study hopes to achieve. Thereafter, an explanation of the relevant terms used in the research report is given, in order to prevent any uncertainties or misconceptions regarding specific terms employed in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter, the relevant literature pertaining to inclusive education both abroad and in South Africa, are considered. The chronological development of inclusive education is outlined first as a worldwide movement, and then its emergence and implementation in South Africa is reviewed. This leads to the topic of inclusive pedagogy, which is explored and elaborated on, both in global terms and in the South African context. The chapter concludes with a brief look at the Montessori Method and its relevance to inclusive education.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter identifies and discusses the methodology of the study, providing justifications for the use of instrumental case design, data collection methods and hybrid data analysis techniques. The criteria for site and participant selection are discussed and details of ethical considerations are provided. Lastly, the chapter elaborates on the issues of validity and reliability.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study, presenting data analysed from the direct observations and individual interviews using tables and figures followed by a detailed discussion.

Chapter 5: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter summarises the findings of the research report. It is the concluding chapter of the report and provides a summary of the main findings from the interpreted data, as well as reviewing the strengths and limitations in the design and execution of the study. The chapter outlines the significance of the study to the field of inclusive education by offering recommendations for teachers, schools and further research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The study is concerned with inclusive pedagogical practices that might be evident in a Montessori primary classroom and how researching these practices could add to the body of knowledge on inclusive pedagogy in South Africa. Since this research will be viewed through the lens of inclusion, I shall begin by exploring some of the key concepts and debates surrounding inclusive education, inclusive pedagogy, inclusive pedagogical practices and the Montessori Method. Following Slee's (2011, p. 153) proposition of "identifying and dismantling educational exclusion" as the starting point towards achieving inclusion, my arguments will cover the chronological development of inclusive education, beginning with a critique of special education. Then, a discussion of inclusive education in South Africa follows. Thereafter, the literature of inclusive pedagogical practices will be discussed, as this is the main focus of the study. Ending the chapter is a discussion of the Montessori Method.

2.2. Definition of Inclusive Education

In its simplest form, and for the purposes of this study, inclusive education can be described as the education of all learners by addressing learners' needs without discrimination on any basis. Numerous definitions of inclusive education exist; many of which are highly detailed and contextualised. Some refer to inclusive education as a process, for example, Booth and Ainscow (2011, p.40) describe inclusive education as "a never-ending process involving the progressive discovery and removal of limits to participation and learning." Others describe inclusive education as robust activism. For example, Corbett and Slee (2000, p.134) refer to inclusive education in terms of activism, stating that "inclusive education is an unabashed announcement, a public and political declaration and celebration of difference." It can also be described in terms of social justice, illustrating that inclusive education is a world-wide issue, Swart and Oswald (2008, p. 92) contend that inclusive education is currently a major issue facing education systems throughout the world. In terms of social justice, Slee (2011, p.39) maintains that "inclusive education commences with the recognition of the unequal social relations that produce exclusion". Similarly, Loxley and Thomas

(2010, p. 124) state that “inclusion is about comprehensive education, equality and collective belonging.” The common theme in these varied definitions is the idea that inclusive education goes beyond the discourse of incorporating learners with special needs - it is a movement that is radically different to current norms, it is embedded in social justice and it has gained momentum as a world-wide agenda. As aptly described by Mitchell (2005), inclusive education is a notion resisting a universally-accepted definition as it tends to be a complex, multi-dimensional and problematic concept. Before exploring the topic of inclusive education further, I shall begin by looking at why special education became a problematic issue internationally.

2.2.1. Critique of Special Education

One of the prominent critiques of special education is that the quality of education provided by special schools is inferior to mainstream schools, and has far-reaching implications into adulthood. Oliver and Barnes (2010, p. 555) state that special education has “not provided disabled children with the qualifications and skills needed for adulthood”, therefore inadequately preparing them for life as full members of society. It can also be argued that special schools can set learners up for failure. Finn and Rotherham (as cited in Cook & Schirmer, 2003) describe special education as a “a cul-de-sac” in the road to life. Likewise, Tomlinson (1985) has criticised the growth of special education for placing children in schools that are the ultimate in non-achievement. According to Oliver and Barnes (2010), parents have to some extent challenged special education policies that separated their children from mainstream schools using irrelevant medical labels. As the relevance and necessity for segregated special education was questioned and critiqued, the need for a paradigm shift strengthened.

Another major critique of special education has been its resources-intense model, making it an unsustainable solution for every district requiring a special school. Not only was special education increasingly being scrutinized for its use of expensive resources (Daniels, 2006), questions arose about the necessity and beneficiaries of the use of highly trained professionals (Norwich, 2013; S. Tomlinson, 1985). In this regard, Daniels (2006, p. 5) believes that some highly trained professionals tend to further their own needs, noting that when professionals find complex needs confusing, they often rush to apply a category to solve their problems rather than the

child's. By the same token, Tomlinson (1985) raises similar concerns when she questions who benefits from special education, referring to the professionals that rely on special education cases in order to promote their own careers. From a cost and resources perspective, it is clear that special education did not offer the best value for learners with disabilities. The logical option would thus be to teach all learners both inclusively and cost-effectively, reinforcing the case for inclusive education.

2.2.2. Move from Integration to Inclusion

Endorsed by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), inclusive education offers a cost-effective way to achieve education for all. The actual notion of a single, unitary system of education however had occurred many years prior to the Salamanca Statement. Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 68) notes that the history of one-room schools at the turn of the twentieth century in the USA has recorded classes with mixed ability and ages “long before the language of ‘full inclusion’”, citing examples of inclusive practices such as “looping” (having the same teacher for more than a year) and multi-age classrooms. Whilst Sapon-Shevin (2007) provides a historical view of America's earliest indications of inclusive education, Dyson and Forlin (1999) claim that the roots of inclusion can be traced back to the 1960's ‘integration’ movement that occurred in Scandinavian countries. Integration describes the development that saw learners from special schools integrated into regular schools forming a single system of education. At a quick glance, integration and inclusion might appear similar, but upon closer inspection, it is clear that they differ considerably. Deppeler (1999) argues that ‘integration’ occurred from the outside, where learners were ‘normalised’ to fit into regular schools and classrooms. Inclusion on the other hand, is premised at the outset by embracing the diversity of all learners and goes far deeper than simply placing disabled learners within the same proximity as able-bodied learners. Over the next three decades the transformation from integration to inclusion slowly took place, resulting in a world-wide movement in the 1990's.

2.2.3. Change from the Medical Model to the Social Model of Disability

The 1980's saw a change in the way disability was viewed, with a definite shift away from the medical diagnoses that is linked to a deficit model of disability. The medical model of disability situates the problem ‘within the child’ reinforcing the archaic notion that children with disabilities are “ineducable” (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou,

2011) and must be removed and sent to different settings that catered to their specific diagnoses. This separation often resulted in exclusion and marginalisation of many learners, both from their peers and later, from participation in broader society. The social model of disability thus offered an alternative view that situated the problem away from the individual and towards the barriers that society has placed on people with disabilities. For instance, Oliver and Barnes (2010, p. 548) argue that the social model of disability “breaks the causal link between impairment and disability”, not by denying the reality of the impairment, but rather by repositioning disability as a result of the way society restricts their opportunities to participate in mainstream economic and social activities. In addition, Croft (2012) considers the social model of disability a “progression” from the medical model. The impact of the social model can be noted at schools too. As stated by Norwich (2013), disability is viewed in terms of the interaction between child factors (impairments) and contextual factors and how these factors limit the child’s full participation.

2.2.4. Disability Classification in Education

Learners with disabilities or *Learners with Special Education Needs* or the South African equivalent, *Learners who experience Barriers to Learning* are terms often used to refer to a broad category of children at school that require additional support. Whereas physical disabilities and medical diagnoses like diabetes and genetic abnormalities like Down’s syndrome can either be seen outwardly or show up positive in diagnostic testing, other classifications of learning disabilities such as ADHD and EBD (emotional and behavioural difficulties) tend to be grey areas with symptoms that are not always clearly defined. This prompts questions such as how disability should be classified and the usefulness of grouping forms of disability (physical, mental, learning, and emotional) under the umbrella term of ‘disability’ (Nowich, 2008). Disability classification in education is thus a hotly debated topic, with the most crucial aspect centering around the use of categorisations (Terzi, 2008; Croft, 2012). Croft (2012) argues that disability classification is problematic even in instances where there are visible physical disabilities, referring to complexities such as finding a category description for a child who is deaf as well as in a wheelchair. Furthermore, Norwich and Lewis (2005) believe that disability classification results in the unnecessarily high use of labelling.

Whilst it is widely accepted that labelling promotes discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation of learners at school, there are some researchers who argue that there are possible benefits to labelling children (Terzi, 2008). Norwich (as cited in Terzi, 2008, p.245) refers to the issue of disability classification as the “dilemma of difference”. The dilemma rests in the choice of identifying learners’ differences in order to ensure appropriate educational provision, with the risk of labelling and discriminating on the one hand, whilst on the other, highlighting learners’ similarities and offering common provision at the risk of not fully addressing learners’ needs. Similarly, Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010, p. 243) argue that labelling does have a positive side in revealing what is known about the learning needs of special groups. Labelling can be meaningfully used with discretion – without revealing sensitive information that might embarrass or belittle learners. In this regard, Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 179) believes that “if introducing someone’s label or diagnosis is not directly connected to our capacity to educate, then we should rethink our language.” Based on these arguments, it can be concluded that whilst labelling could provide valuable information resulting in a responsive education, there are many risks involved.

In the arguments above, I have explored the international literature on inclusive education, following the chronological developments of inclusion and related disability issues over the years as well as building a case against segregated schooling. My focus now turns to local perspectives and literature on inclusive education, and then to the development of inclusive pedagogies.

2.3. Inclusive Education in South Africa

The move towards inclusion in South African schools is a fairly recent development in comparison to international trends. Although the foundation for inclusive education in South Africa had been laid in the Constitution (1996), initially in Section 29 (1), where it is stated that “everyone has the right to basic education”, inclusive education as a discourse and policy in South Africa was introduced by the publication of *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (DoE, 2001). *Education White Paper 6* advocates a broad definition of inclusion, where the focus is not limited to learners with disabilities. Although *Education White Paper 6* was welcomed in South Africa as its policy is in

line with international concern for and a move towards inclusive education, it became clear that *Education White Paper 6* needed further clarification and expansion for it to be practically viable in South African schools. Subsequently, policy documents offering practical support of *Education White Paper 6* followed, namely the *National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* or SIAS (DoE, 2008), *Guidelines for full-service/inclusive schools* (DoE, 2009) and *Guidelines for inclusive teaching and learning* (DoE, 2010). Yet, there exists a sizeable implementation gap between government policy and the practices realised by schools and teachers (Makoelle, 2012), thus hindering the move towards inclusive education in South Africa.

Following Naicker's (1999) definition, inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. This is particularly relevant in the South African context that is underpinned by the need to address past inequalities. It is a widely known fact that the provision of education in South African schools was unequal, fragmented and classified according to racial lines pre-1994, leaving the current post-apartheid government with an inheritance of multi-layered inequalities (Sayed & Soudien, 2007; Walton, Hugo, Nel & Muller, 2009). These inequalities of the past are inextricably linked to the diverse needs of learners today. In South Africa, Mertz, Herman and Pillay (2014) carefully demonstrate how the social model of disability underpins the ideals of inclusive education, thus facilitating equity in education and society.

In its broadest sense, the discourse of inclusive education incorporates the South African goal of extending quality education to the whole population (Engelbrecht, 1999). Furthermore, Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin (2006, p.121) believe that an inclusive education system is consistent with the democratic principles underlying South Africa's nascent democracy. Similarly, Makoelle (2012) argues that inclusive education also works to promote a cohesive society. For this reason, Meltz, Herman and Pillay (2014) maintain that implementing inclusive education is therefore heavily relied upon in terms of educational transformation in South Africa.

2.3.1. Implementation of Inclusive Education

Far from being an overnight solution for transformation in South Africa, the implementation of inclusive education has faced many obstacles (and continues to

do so) since the adoption of *Education White Paper 6* in 2001. Ladbroke (2009, p. iv) offers a pragmatic view of inclusion and argues that the implementation of inclusive education is “idealised as the panacea for social transformation in South Africa”, highlighting the reliance on inclusive education to ‘fix’ the current education system. It is important to note that issues in the implementation of inclusive education are not limited to South Africa. Elsewhere in the world, notably the UK and the US, similar problems of policy implementation are experienced by teachers and practitioners (Norwich & Lewis, 2007; Corbett, 2001; Nind et al., 2005). Miles and Singal (2010, p. 11) argue that in order for inclusive education to be successful, it is necessary to develop a clear understanding of the concept of ‘inclusive education’ in the cultural contexts within the country in question. Since South African teachers have been exposed to inclusive education later than most other countries, it is for this reason that Pather (2007) advises the necessity of demystifying the term ‘inclusive education’ for teachers and schools before any real progress can be seen. Some of the most common challenges facing schools in South Africa in the implementation of inclusive education are discussed below.

2.3.2. Challenges in the Implementation of Inclusive Education

Among the major challenges facing South Africa in its implementation of inclusive education thus far have been issues of power decentralisation, funding constraints, the impact of HIV/AIDS as well as the variety of issues facing teachers in South African schools. Although the implementation of inclusive education in schools is enabled by decentralisation, Sayed and Soudien (2005) report that this decentralisation of power has resulted in new forms of exclusion since each School Governing Body (SGB), comprising parents, teachers, learners and school support staff, has the legal right and freedom to implement policies that could oppose the values of inclusion. Wildeman and Nomdo (2007, p. 10) report that funding constraints as well as “policy blind spots” are key factors that affect the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. In a participatory video-making initiative in rural KZN schools, Mitchell, de Lange and Thuy (2008) argue that HIV/AIDS is a direct threat to the success of inclusion, stating that the pandemic has resulted in dwindling teacher numbers that are affecting the number of staff in rural schools in particular. Mitchell et. al (2008) also cites the lack of professional upgrading of teachers as another major hurdle to inclusive education. Donohue and

Bornman (2014, p. 4) posit that the “general bewilderment in South African schools” regarding inclusion can be attributed to the prevailing negative attitude towards disability as well as a general lack of support and resources. Despite these challenges, Walton (2011, p. 242) argues that examples of inclusive schools in South Africa exist in a diversity of contexts, such as wealthy independent schools, inner-city schools and rural schools. A commitment of inclusion by the leadership of these schools as well as the African philosophical concept of Ubuntu is attributed to the successful implementation of inclusion (Walton, 2011).

In response to why inclusion is still a problem for many older teachers, D’Amant (2012, p. 54) contends that rural South African teachers struggle with the concept of inclusive education not simply as a change in pedagogy, but that inclusive education presents a “profound challenge to individual values and beliefs”. D’Amant’s (2012) findings concur with Walton’s (2011, p.243) argument that teachers need to learn not only inclusive teaching strategies but also to question value systems, structures and practices and beliefs that continue to perpetuate exclusion in South African society.

2.3.3. The belief in the “specialness” of Special Education

Many teachers in South Africa (and around the world) still believe that learners with special needs require teachers with training in special needs education (Welch, 2002; Eloff & Kgwele, 2007; Stofile & Green, 2007; Nind, 2005; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Pather (2007) attaches this mind-set to the fact that most teachers in South Africa were born and raised when the system consisted of a bifurcation in education. Prior to inclusion, teachers were either trained to teach in regular schools using ‘regular’ pedagogical methods, or in special schools, where they were trained in ‘special’ pedagogical methods (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). The belief in the specialness of special education tends to result in poor teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Ntombela, as cited in Donohue & Bornman, 2014). For this reason, Naicker (2005) places the reorientation of teacher-training as crucial in order for educational transformation to occur. Compounding the issues facing teachers in the implementation of inclusive education, Walton and Lloyd (2012) affirm that there is a paucity of literature on the subject of teacher professional development in inclusive education.

The perceived lack of skills and competence to implement inclusive education in classrooms is seen as the chief obstacle by teachers themselves. According to a qualitative study conducted by Eloff and Kgwete (2007, p. 352) teachers in rural Mpumalanga schools indicated a lack of skills and competence to accommodate diversity in inclusive classrooms as one of their main challenges. Later research, however, does show more promising teacher attitudes and a willingness to embrace inclusion (D'Amant, 2012; Walton, 2011; Swart & Oswald, 2008; Lessing & De Witt, 2007). A discussion of the literature covering inclusive pedagogy both abroad and in South Africa follows.

2.4. Inclusive Pedagogies and Practices

Although there is an abundance of literature on inclusive education at both international and local levels, Nind (2005) notes that very little focuses on inclusive pedagogy. Thus a gap has been identified in the literature on pedagogies for inclusion. This study aims to assist in addressing that gap, particularly in the local, South African context. Before establishing what inclusive pedagogies entail, it is necessary to look at pedagogy itself.

2.4.1. Pedagogy

Pedagogy can be described in a variety of ways depending on context and method. The term pedagogy as described by Alexander (2004, p.10) refers to “the act of teaching and the body of knowledge, argument and evidence in which it is embedded and by which particular classroom practices are justified”. Alexander’s (2004) description of pedagogy shows its multifaceted nature which is dependent on organisation, discourse and values. Norwich and Lewis (2005, p. 7) define pedagogy as “the broad cluster of decisions and actions taken in classroom settings that aim to promote school learning” whilst Hedges (2012) refers to pedagogy as the ‘moment-by-moment decisions’ that are characteristic of a teacher’s everyday interactions with learners whilst teaching.

Previously in South African schools, the dominant type of pedagogy was teacher-centred, but from the first post-apartheid curriculum change in 1996, learner-centred pedagogy was advocated. A look at South African literature on pedagogy reveals Hugo’s (2013) grouping of pedagogy into two main streams; ‘minimal’ and ‘optimal’

pedagogies. Hugo (2013; p.153) distinguishes *minimal pedagogy* as “a simple pedagogy that can only do one thing at one time in one way” whilst *optimal pedagogy* “can do many things at many times in many ways”. Following Hugo’s (2013) analysis, inclusive pedagogy can be described as an *optimal pedagogy* because inclusive pedagogy aims to reach an array of learners’ needs in a single lesson.

2.4.2. Inclusive Pedagogies

In much the same way that inclusive education is defined with a variety of interpretations, so too is the use of the term “inclusive pedagogies”. Several researchers offer what they believe to be an “inclusive” way of teaching. In the field of inclusive pedagogies, there is evidence of research from countries in the so-called developing world (countries in the South) as well as an abundance of research from countries in the so-called developed world. Some of the prominent literature pertaining to inclusive pedagogies in the developing world include the works of Miles (2009), Dei (2005) and Miles and Kaplan (2005).

Miles (2009) argues that the development of more inclusive pedagogies as well as the challenging of exclusionary teaching practices would benefit schooling in the Zambian context. Also arguing for a transformative education, Dei (2005) posits that pedagogy should be centred around educational reform and change. In his research on inclusive schooling using Ghana as a case study, Dei (2005) puts forward his suggestion that teachers acknowledge and respond to difference and diversity within the schooling population. Using reflection as a means to promote inclusive practices in the classroom, Miles and Kaplan (2005) conducted an action research study in Tanzania and Zambia and found that the use of photographic images were useful in allowing teachers to reflect on their use of inclusive practice.

Much research has been conducted in terms of inclusive pedagogies in the developed world. Some researchers have defined inclusive pedagogy by drawing on concepts and refining practices from special education (King-Sears, 1997; Kellet, 2004; Mitchell, 2008). However, Ainscow (as cited in Nind, 2005, p.2) believes that instead of “transplanting special education thinking” into ordinary schools, the starting point should be the best practice of ordinary teachers. In addition, Nind (2005) cites Mittler in arguing that inclusive pedagogy cannot be something additionally bolted on to existing poor pedagogy, the starting place must be good pedagogy; which can be

become good pedagogy for diverse learners. As discussed earlier, good pedagogy is synonymous with good teaching, which, following Alexander's (2000) definition, refers to teaching practices that are justified by thinking that is based on research and the best practices available.

Earlier contributions to the concept of inclusive pedagogies include Corbett's (2001) connective pedagogy and King-Sears' (1997) idea that inclusive pedagogies comprise a variety of practices derived from special education including differentiated forms of teaching and assessment as well as employing evidence-based practices. Aligning with King-Sears' (1997) is Mitchell's (2008) conceptualisation of an inclusive pedagogy that heavily supports the use of strategy instruction, a practice that is derived from special education. Other researchers however have shifted away from relying on special education as a basis for inclusive pedagogy.

In contrast, teaching inclusively, as Thomas and Loxley (2001) argue, is not special techniques that are needed but just the amount of help that is given and the sensitivity with which it is given, that differs for some learners. Likewise, Corbett (2001) describes a 'connective pedagogy' in which cognisance is given to learners who have emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and advise that teachers make a concerted effort to bond with learners. In addition, Norwich (2008) goes a step further and interrogates the relevance of special education categories to teaching and concludes that for the most part, learners with special education needs require more intensive and explicit teaching. After comprehensively researching the need for specialised pedagogy for different disability categories, Norwich and Lewis (2005) have concluded that for most categories, a specialist pedagogy is not required.

The position advocated by Norwich and Lewis (2005) is the general differences approach also referred to as the '*most and some*' approach, which is focused on an interconnectedness of common and specialised pedagogy. The '*most and some*' approach requires teachers to look at general differences that learners have and respond to those as a small group, rather than focussing on and responding to the individual differences of each learner. Similarly, and building on the Norwich and Lewis' (2005) approach, Croft's (2012) *interlocking gears model* groups learners in an inclusive setting into individual characteristics, group characteristics and common

characteristics. Croft (2012) further argues for a responsive education system, in which the teacher responds to individual learner's needs but without paying attention to diagnoses and/or labelling each particular learning disability.

In contrast to the position advocated by Norwich and Lewis (2005), Florian and Black-Hawkins' (2011) conceptualize inclusive pedagogies as the provision of rich learning opportunities for all at the same time, rejecting the notion of marking some learners as different which subsequently requires creating and responding to sub-groups within the classroom where the quality of the offerings differ. This 'for-everybody' approach to pedagogy follows a rights-based adoption of the social model of disability, and is characterised by the avoidance of labelling and the rejection of specialist pedagogies (Ravet, 2011). Although Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) reject the idea of marking learners as different, acknowledgement is given to the traditional model that is referred to as the 'additional needs approach' for learners who require more than what is provided in whole class teaching, by doing so in ways that maintain the dignity of the learners.

In critique of the additional needs approach, Norwich (2013, p.86) argues that the focus of the additional needs approach differs from the general differences approach in that the former views "group teaching" as exclusionary. As a result, individual differences are accounted for by fine-tuning what is generally available to all, which Norwich (2013) sees as problematic both conceptually and practically. Norwich argues that his 'continua of teaching strategies' should instead be used as a useful needs-based approach to inclusive pedagogy. Whilst there are merits and shortcomings to both the *additional needs approach* as well as the *continua of teaching strategies* as outlined above, I have aligned myself with the 'for everybody' view taken by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011). It is my understanding that this approach holds particular relevance to South African learners that were exposed to inequality and fragmentation, in generations past. This view comprises a rights-based interpretation of inclusive pedagogy that focuses on the provision for all learners without outwardly labelling learners as different, yet providing for their needs in ways that respect their dignity.

2.4.3. Inclusive Pedagogy in South Africa

Among the prominent voices of inclusive pedagogy in South Africa is Makoelle (2012). Makoelle (2012) argues that whilst models of inclusive pedagogic instruction exists in South Africa, the discourse is based on the influence of special needs education. By comparison, Florian (2014) argues that research on inclusive pedagogy from studies based in the UK over the last two decades has reached saturation point, thus it is time for theorization of inclusive pedagogy, via her proposal of the IPAA (Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action) framework. However, in South Africa, the situation is vastly different. Makoelle (2012) posits that despite clearly articulated policies (DoBE, 2010), inclusive pedagogy in South Africa is still a confusing concept for teachers, who hold a variety of interpretations of its meaning. Given that little research on inclusive pedagogy in South Africa exists, it follows that research in the field is still in its exploratory stages. In addition, Makoelle (2012, p. 99) believes that research on inclusive pedagogical practices thus far has not concentrated on the influence of environment, teaching approach and the support skills used by teachers on the learning process. This instrumental case study attempts to address that gap by offering insights into inclusive pedagogical practices that were found in the Montessori classroom with the intention that it might be of value to teachers and other practitioners in ordinary schools.

2.4.4. Identifying Pedagogical Practices as being Inclusive

Following the arguments above on the lack of information on what constitutes inclusive pedagogy (Nind, 2005), and the bleak state of inclusive pedagogy in South African schools (Makoelle, 2012), ways of identifying inclusive pedagogical practices will be explored. Attempts have been made, most notably by Florian (2014) to create a framework that allows inclusive pedagogy to be measured by observing pedagogical practices in action as they occurred across classrooms in the UK. This framework, called the IPAA (Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action) is based on earlier work, namely the *Participation Framework* (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011) that was initially created with the intention of allowing teachers to broaden their understandings of what constitutes inclusive pedagogy. Whilst I have adapted and used both the *Participation Framework* (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) as well as elements from the IPAA (Florian, 2014) for use in this study, this study does not aim

to theorise inclusive pedagogy (as is outlined by Florian as the reasoning behind the *Framework*). Rather I found the *Participation Framework* to be a useful tool, both in providing direction to the study as well as when gathering evidence. The ways in which the *Participation Framework* has been adapted will be discussed in further detail below, together with the pedagogical practices that I have identified as being inclusive.

In determining whether pedagogical practices are inclusive or not, an important factor to consider is the teachers' beliefs about difference and about their own ability to teach all children (Florian & Spratt 2013; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Sapon-Shevin, 2007). Florian (2014, p.289) argues that teachers' decisions in the classroom are embedded in the principles that they uphold and has subsequently identified three principles that result in inclusive pedagogical practices in the classroom. These three principles are: difference should be accounted for as an essential aspect in any conceptualisation of learning; teachers must believe that they are capable of teaching all children; and teachers should continually develop creative new ways of working with others (Florian, 2014, p. 291).

Although there are many pedagogical practices that could be considered inclusive, it is not possible to list them all here. The list of inclusive pedagogical practices I chose is based on the *Participation Framework* (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). In the *Participation Framework*, three of the four broad categories were adapted for use. These are:

- practices that maximise participation of all learners in the classroom,
- practices that allow learners full access to the curriculum, and
- practices that are respectful and accepting of all learners

The fourth category from the *Participation Framework* was not used, as it relates to access, which is not the focus of this research. I have created a list in tabulated form (see Table 1) of nine pedagogical practices that I have identified as being inclusive and clustered according to these three broad categories.

I used the questions posed by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) to guide my choice of the nine practices which is focussed on the skills, strategies and problem-solving techniques that teachers use successfully. The questions that appear in the

Participation Framework by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) are: which teaching strategies and practices promote collaboration, which teaching strategies and practices promote access to the curriculum and which teaching strategies and practices promote recognition and acceptance of learners? The nine practices taken from the literature as being inclusive pedagogical practices are:

- Co-operative learning (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hattie, 2008; King-Sears, 1997)
- Peer tutoring (Mitchell, 2008; Hattie, 2008; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; King-Sears, 1997)
- Co-teaching (Gurgur & Uzuner, 2011; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Sapon-Shevin, 2007; King-Sears, 1997; Hattie, 2008)
- Whole-class instruction (Florian & Rouse, 2005; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Tomlinson et. al, 2003)
- Differentiated instruction (Wormeli, 2007; Walton, 2013; Tomlinson et. al, 2003; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010)
- Direct Instruction (King-Sears, 1997; Hattie, 2008; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010)
- Reflective Teaching (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Sapon-Shevin, 2007; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010)
- Teaching social skills (Florian & Rouse, 2005; Fenti, Miller & Lampi, 2008; Shoenfeld, 2012; Sapon-Shevin, 2007)
- Learner-selected work (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Hugo, 2013; Tomlinson et. al)

I have created the table below to guide my study and to narrow the focus on which pedagogical practices I researched during the data collection period.

Table 1. Inclusive pedagogical practices

Inclusive pedagogical practice
1. Teaching strategies and practices that promote collaboration: • Co-operative learning • Peer-tutoring • Co-teaching

2. Teaching strategies and practices that promote access to the curriculum:

- Whole-class instruction
- Differentiated instruction
- Direct Instruction
- Reflective Teaching

3. Teaching strategies and practices that promote recognition and acceptance:

- Teaching social skills by modelling
- Learner-selected work

Each practice is explored below with reference to the literature.

2.4.4.1. Co-Operative Learning

Co-operative learning is defined by structured classroom activities that allow learners to work together, either in pairs or in small groups. There is strong research support for co-operative learning as being a successful inclusive pedagogical practice (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Sapon-Shevin, 2007; King-Sears, 1997; Hattie, 2008). In Hattie's (2008) comparison of co-operative learning with individualistic methods, co-operative learning activities rank high ($d = 0.59$). Similarly, when co-operative learning activities was compared to competitive learning strategies, Hattie (2008, p. 215) notes that "co-operative learning proved to be superior ($d = 0.54$)".

In order that co-operative learning is used successfully in the inclusive classroom, Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) note that learners need to be taught social skills first on how to work together in a group and to relate to each other positively. King-Sears (1997, p. 5) mentions that co-operative learning as a pedagogical practice can be "heightened by the way in which teachers praise and provide feedback to students" but at the same time also cautions that teachers should be wary of interfering actively in group activities and lowering standards unnecessarily for some learners. When used correctly, co-operative learning as a pedagogical practice benefits learners in multiple ways. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) state that learners develop the following skills during co-operative learning activities:

promotive interaction, positive interdependence, individual accountability, group processing as well as interpersonal and small-group skills.

2.4.4.2. Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is a resource that is immediately available to teachers wishing to implement inclusive practices in the classroom. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) note that a useful example of inclusive practice is when children are encouraged by the teacher to support each other before asking for advice from an adult. Thus peer tutoring is demonstrated as being highly valuable in an inclusive classroom. Mitchell (2008) notes that peer tutoring not only benefits the learners who are being tutored, but benefit the peer tutors as well. The peer tutors benefit from the consolidation of their own learning whilst they are teaching others, as well as feeling a sense of improved self-esteem (Mitchell, 2008).

In addition, peer tutoring has been found to be more successful when cross-age tutors are used; referring to older learners that assist younger learners (Walton, 2013; Hattie, 2008). A significantly higher rate of success is noted when peer tutoring occurs in a class in which older learners tutor younger ones. In his meta-analysis of achievement in education, Hattie (2008, p. 187) notes that “cross-age tutors ($d = 0.79$) were more effective than same-age peers ($d = 0.52$)”, where $d > 0.4$ shows a positive effect on learner achievement. However, Walton (2013) advises that peer-tutoring should be used with caution, as learners who finish their tasks quickly should be supplementing their own learning with enrichment activities.

2.4.4.3. Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is a practice that involves more than one adult in the classroom teaching at the same time and its implementation can take a variety of forms in the classroom. Gurgur and Uzuner (2011) posit that co-teaching is an inclusive practice and is one way of providing support to learners with special educational needs in the general education classroom. When implementing co-teaching, Armstrong (as cited in Hattie, 2008) argues that co-teaching allows for more individual attention being paid to learners. In examining the effects of two variants of co-teaching, namely station teaching and team teaching in Turkey, Gurgur and Uzuner (2011) stress that co-teaching is accomplished through joint planning. Furthermore, co-teaching

demonstrates the modelling of collaboration by adults in the classroom (Loreman, Deppeler, Harvey, 2010) which is a valuable technique when illustrating the benefits of collaboration to learners.

Sapon-Shevin (2007) argues that co-teaching in inclusive classrooms is a necessity because of the professionals present in the classroom, such as occupational therapists, speech therapists, teacher aides and others. In most South African classrooms, however, such a scenario is less likely to occur. Professionals that form part of a multi-disciplinary team are usually outside the realm of what many South African schools provide. However collaboration and team-teaching arrangements can be formed with other adults and does not necessarily require professionals. Volunteers such as learners' family members, parents, peers, school personnel and members of the community can be used as a resource for teachers (King-Sears, 1997).

2.4.4.4. Whole-Class Instruction

Whole class instruction is a sound pedagogical practice that teachers are likely to be undertaking in their daily teaching already and is a manifestation of Direct Instruction. As Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue, it is not the choice of strategy but its implementation that is key to embodying inclusive pedagogical practices in the classroom. By definition, whole-class instruction is an illustration of an inclusive pedagogy as no learner is excluded from the lesson. Florian and Rouse (2005) link Whole-Class Instruction with teachers who are skilled at teaching inclusively. During Whole-Class instruction, all learners are participants of the general classroom activities. This approach ensures that all learners are paid equal attention without the marginalisation that often accompanies pre-determined separation of learners before the lesson begins (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). However, Tomlinson et. al (2003) cautions that sole reliance on whole-class instruction does not allow flexibility for teachers in the way that small group settings would, with the latter making it easier for teachers to address learner variance more suitably

Whole-class instruction can also be successfully combined with audio-visual presentations or take the form of an information-rich presentation in content-based subjects such as Geography or Natural Science. Depending on the subject content of the lesson, whole-class instruction can also be combined with Direct Instruction for

the initial introductory lesson. In subjects such as Mathematics, for instance, teaching the steps required for long division can be a successful combination of the two.

2.4.4.5. Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction refers to the implementation of activities that are pedagogically designed to deliver the curriculum to a wide range of learners (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010). According to Tomlinson et. al (2003, p. 121), differentiated instruction can be described as an approach to teaching in which the teacher “proactively modifies the curriculum, teaching methods, resources, learning activities and student products to address the diverse needs of individual students and small groups of students to maximise the learning opportunity for each student in the classroom”. Walton (2013, p.17) defines differentiation as “a key inclusive strategy” that has numerous benefits in the inclusive classroom. Although most researchers refer to Differentiated Instruction as an inclusive pedagogical practice and not a mind-set, it is worthy to note how Wormeli (2007, p. 11) stresses that the major component of differentiation is actually the mind-set – unless the mind “grasps this liberating emphasis [of differentiation]”, one cannot get to the craft of effective teaching. Furthermore, Wormeli (2007) argues for the careful planning of differentiated activities in order for it to be successfully executed in the classroom. Characteristics of effective differentiated instruction as described by Tomlinson et. al (2003, p. 18) are: differentiation as being proactive rather than reactive, as using small teaching-learning groups in a flexible way, as varying materials used by individuals and small groups of students in the classroom, and as being both knowledge-centred as well as learner-centred.

2.4.4.6. Direct Instruction

Direct instruction refers to the way in which teachers teach in a step-by-step manner by modelling the criteria required for success. According to Hattie (2008, p. 204) Direct Instruction has a surprisingly strong research base to prove its effectiveness. It is not a new method of teaching however and most teachers can be seen practicing Direct Instruction in their classrooms, particularly when teaching reading and Mathematics. In identifying the steps needed for successful Direct Instruction, King-Sears (1997, p.10) lists six critical features thus: an explicit step-by-step model, development of mastery at each step, processing of corrections for learner errors,

gradual fading from teacher-directed activities to learners' independence, the use of adequate, systematic practice with a range of examples and a cumulative review of newly learned concepts. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) list Direct Instruction as foremost in their list of inclusive, teacher-orientated instructional strategies.

Hattie's (2008, p. 205) meta-analysis of achievement in education places Direct Instruction as high on the scale of desired effects, and shows particularly strong effects with learners in special education ($d = 0.86$). This is congruent with King-Sears' (1997, p.11) argument that learners with disabilities benefit most from Direct Instruction. However, Hattie (2008, p.205) cautions that Direct Instruction should not be confused with didactic teaching, which is typical of the 'talk and chalk' methods of the past.

2.4.4.7. Reflective Teaching

Reflective teaching as described by Zeichner and Liston (1996, p. 77) refers to the practices of reflection such as "questioning the goals, values and assumptions that guide their work as well as to examine the context in which they teach". Reflective teaching can be considered an inclusive teaching practice as it provides teachers with a method of re-evaluating their actions to see what works and make adjustments as necessary. It is beneficial to teachers in perfecting their actual craft of teaching as well as in changing the traditional role of passive teachers as mere technicians or deliverers of content. In following the processes related to reflective teaching, teachers also take responsibility for their own professional development (Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

When considering reflective teaching as an inclusive pedagogical practice, teachers that are committed to studying their own teaching carry out self-evaluations of the way in which a lesson has been taught (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Sapon-Shevin (2007) maintains that by asking themselves questions such as "how could I do it better next time?" or "how could I include more learners in the school play?" teachers who teach reflectively become better at teaching inclusively over time. However, Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010, p.247) argue that simply spending time thinking about one's teaching is not sufficient, but that deliberate practice is required wherein teachers "identify elements of significance and work intently and specifically on them" that later results in a change of practice.

2.4.4.8. Teaching Social Skills

Teaching learners social skills is an important aspect of the curriculum that is fundamental to the successful implementation of inclusive education and has a strong research base (Florian & Rouse, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 2007; Shoenfeld, 2012; Fenti, Miller, Lampi, 2008). Social skills can be defined as those skills that learners require in order to communicate and interact with others positively. Shoenfeld (2012, p. 4) asserts that “by embedding social skills instruction in the regular classroom, we enable students who might otherwise be unable to access the curriculum due to social skill deficits to thrive and succeed in inclusive settings.” A longitudinal study conducted by Maleki and Elliott (2002, as cited in Shoenfeld, 2012) found social skills were positively predictive, and problem behaviours negatively predictive, of concurrent academic achievement in third and fourth grade students. Of the many social skills that can be taught to learners, Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 209) mentions that some of the most prominent social skills include being kind and considerate, helping others, encouraging others that are struggling, disagreeing respectfully and reaching for a decision that meets everyone’s needs. Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 209) further argues that it is rare to find such skills in learners without them having a teacher who models such behaviour. Thus an important inclusive pedagogical practice when teaching social skills is modelling the behaviour that learners are expected to display.

2.4.4.9. Learner-selected work

Giving learners the choice to select their own work from a variety of options that are created by the teacher in advance can be used as an inclusive pedagogical practice. Learner-selected work refers to the process whereby individual learners choose which tasks to complete without being directed to a particular choice by the teacher. Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011, p. 821) describe learner-selected work as an inclusive pedagogical practice and call it “work choice”. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011, p. 823) believe that this can reduce the way learners are stigmatised through teacher-determined differentiation.

In providing opportunities for learners to select their own work, not only do learners get to exercise their ‘voice’ by making choices that directly affect them, allowing learners to select their own work also shows learners that their decisions are valued

and respected. It is this active engagement with learners in aspects of their own learning that Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey (2010, p. 178) believe is fundamental to the inclusive culture of the classroom. Similarly, Schweinhart and Weikart (as cited by Tomlinson et. al., 2003) lists learner-centred classrooms as one of the effective methods of differentiation – as such classes are focused on the needs of students identified by themselves within the cognitive frameworks established by teachers.

When allowing learners to choose their own activities, there is a move towards an approach that is inclusive, democratic and learner-centred, embodying Hugo's (2013, p. 64) "open selection" stance. It is Hugo's (2013, p. 65) belief that because we currently live in an age of information where the current speed of change is rapid, we need to teach learners how to select content themselves. In doing so, Hugo (2013, p.63) argues that the focus shifts to "critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving and researching skills". However, Norwich (2013, p. 85) believes that trusting learners to select their own activities may not always work, arguing that learners might select inappropriate activities, those that are either too challenging or too easy.

Now that I have established my list of inclusive pedagogical practices, my focus turns to the Montessori Method as a model for inclusion. Furthermore, in providing literature focussed on an alternative method of teaching, namely Montessori, South African teachers can possibly increase their understanding as well as expand their repertoire of inclusive pedagogical practices.

2.5. Montessori as a Model for Inclusive Education

Much research has been conducted into the Montessori Method (Orem, 1969; Lillard, P., 1972; Lillard, A., 2005; Hughes, 2009; Loeffler, 1992; Hugo, 2013; Moll, 2004) as well as its viability as a model for inclusive education (Pickering, 2003; Hughes, 2009; Vettiveloo, 2008; Cossentino, 2010; McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012), having had its roots in special education. The earliest beginnings of the Montessori Method can be traced back to when Maria Montessori was tasked with teaching 'retarded' children in Rome at the turn of the twentieth century. This resulted in her development of materials that were designed to provide tangible ways to teach abstract concepts in many subjects, including Maths and Science. Lillard (2005, p. 12) describes the Montessori Method as a constructivist approach to learning, as

learners “construct knowledge out of their experience, within an information-rich environment.”

Today the Montessori Method is considered a model for inclusive education in many countries, including the USA, Ireland and the UK (Cossentino, 2010). In certain countries, teachers trained in special education are also trained in the Montessori Method – for example, it has been noted that “In some cases, such as Ireland, Montessori training and special education training have been explicitly combined” (Cossentino, 2010, p. 39). Furthermore, Vettiveloo’s (2008) qualitative action research in Malaysia revealed that there were inclusive qualities embedded within the Montessori philosophy and teaching method. Due to the fact that the teacher is teaching many children of differing age levels and competencies in a single classroom, Vettiveloo (2008, p. 179) states that “the Montessori Method also recognises the individuality of *all* children as a norm”. The core Montessori concept of “following the child” (Montessori, 1967) promotes responding to the individual needs of each learner in the classroom. As a result, Montessori classrooms are always learner-centred.

The tactile didactic materials that are found in the Montessori classroom are carefully designed with a ‘Control of error’ so that the child receives instant feedback as they work, allowing them to recognize, correct, and learn from their mistakes without adult assistance (AMS, 2015, para. 6). This places control of the activity in the child’s hands, strengthening their self-esteem, self-motivation as well as their learning. In addition, researchers often commend the logic and tangibility of the tactile tools used in the Montessori classroom (Lillard, 2011; Donabella & Rule, 2008; Hugo, 2013). For example, Hugo (2013, p. 23) mentions the use of the Montessori Golden Beads as “an astonishing combination of moving from the concrete to abstract and from simple to complex in the same breath”. The AMS website describes the Golden Beads used to teach the mathematical concept of the decimal system by working with beads grouped into units, 10s, 100s, and 1,000s. In an American case study of seventh grade learners from regular schools using Montessori manipulatives, Donabella & Rule (2008, p. 26) found that for their “struggling students”, the manipulatives motivated them and increased their interest and confidence in mathematics.

In exploring the suitability of the Montessori pedagogy for learners who experience barriers to learning, McKenzie & Zascavage (2012) focus on the four aspects of pedagogy identified by Mastropieri and Scruggs (as cited in McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012, p.32) as necessary for content coverage in special education, namely “scope and sequence, curriculum, pacing, and types of learning”. In all four instances, the Montessori Method fits the requirements for optimum content coverage for learners who have special education needs (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012). In addition, the Montessori sensorial curriculum works extremely well by awakening the senses of the child in the early years thus assisting in promoting higher cognitive processes as the child grows older. As Lillard (2005) states:

The quality of one’s sensory discrimination capacities is influenced by sensory experiences one has early in life. Since higher cognitive processes arise out of lower ones, cognitive organization early in development could have an important impact at higher levels of processing. (2005, p. 318)

Demonstrating the practicality of using the Montessori prepared environment to teach learners with ADHD, McKenzie and Zascavage (2012, p. 36) argue that “the Montessori classroom allows them to focus on tasks rather than on the conversation of others”. In addition, it is possible in a Montessori classroom to separate areas of the room using bookshelves and low tables, providing secluded workspaces for those that are easily distracted by others. Similarly, Pickering (1992, p. 90) describes the Montessori teaching approach and its appeal to learners with learning disabilities, stating that “at-risk children benefit from this Montessori structure, the procedures, and the curriculum”. The viability of the Montessori Method in the context of inclusion has been researched (McKenzie & Zascavage, 2012; Vettiveloo, 2008; Cossentino, 2010) and proven to have made noteworthy contributions in various countries. Vettiveloo (2008, p. 180) concludes her study with a call for more research into “the Montessori method of instruction as an inclusive tool”. Therefore I believe that examining the Montessori classroom for evidence of inclusive pedagogical practices might provide valuable insights for ordinary teachers in the South African context.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature. Research pertinent to inclusive education, and inclusive pedagogies both abroad and in South Africa have been

discussed, including inclusive education and pedagogy in the so-called developed and developing countries. A detailed discussion has been provided with respect to the nine outlined pedagogical practices that will be investigated in the study. Finally, the Montessori Method and its relevance to inclusive education is explored. The next chapter focuses on the methodological aspects of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This study sought to examine inclusive pedagogical practices that occur in classrooms in the primary school phase at a Montessori school in Gauteng. Data was collected using direct observations and individual teacher interviews in order to understand which of the identified inclusive pedagogical practices occur within the Montessori environment using the definition provided by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), which is the rights-based 'for-everyone' teaching approach. The chosen research methodology is the case study, which Corcoran, Walker and Wals (2004, p.11) claim "is a study of practice." An analytical process with a combination of deductive and inductive approaches was used, in what Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) refer to as a "hybrid approach". This approach was adopted due to the complexity of singling out inclusive pedagogical practices relating to learner support from the number of practices employed by the teacher that otherwise relate to classroom management, assessment and administration. In this chapter, I shall discuss the reasons for my choices relating to the methodology of the research. This includes the research approach, chosen research design, data collection methods and analysis. Finally I shall elaborate on the ethical considerations employed in this study and outline the processes followed to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

3.2. Research Approach

This study is concerned with examining pedagogical practices that are evident in a Montessori classroom, and as such, lends itself to qualitative research. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p.320) justify the use of qualitative studies when research may potentially contribute to both theory and practice, stating that "Qualitative studies can provide a detailed description and analysis of a particular practice, process or event". In this case, the detailed descriptions would be the inclusive pedagogical practices observed and recorded in the Montessori classroom. Moreover, choosing qualitative research over quantitative research in inclusive education is an ideal choice, following Barnes' (2003, p.10) argument

that the extent and complexity in inclusive education research is not fully captured when using quantitative research methods.

Also, this study is one that is “descriptive exploratory” which McMillan & Schumacher (2010, p.324) define as having three qualities: examining new or little known phenomena, adding to existing literature by building rich descriptions as well as giving directions for future research. This study, poses “what” and “how” questions, which Tellis (1997) maintains justifies the need for a descriptive exploratory study. The research questions in this study meets the criteria mentioned by Tellis (1997) and are listed below. The main research question is followed by bulleted sub questions.

What inclusive pedagogical practices, as identified by the literature, are found in a South African Montessori primary classroom?

- What does the literature regard as inclusive pedagogical practices?
- What do these pedagogical practices resemble when they are employed by teachers?
- Does the Montessori Method have any influence on the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices found?

Of particular interest in terms of the descriptive exploratory study is the Montessori environment itself, as Lillard (2005, p.330) notes that Montessori practices differ slightly within various contexts. Thus the highly contextualised Montessori environment lends itself to what Stake (1994) refers to as ‘thick descriptions’ that are characteristic of the case study approach.

3.3. Instrumental Case Study Design

This study uses a single-case design in order to fully examine the way in which inclusive pedagogical practices occur in the Montessori classroom. A case study is defined as “an in-depth exploration of a bounded system” (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.345) where rich descriptions are provided of a system within certain boundaries, which in this case refers to the Montessori classroom. Shulman (1986, p. 206) strongly supports the use of case studies for educational research, arguing that case studies are immensely useful in showing the ways in which teaching theory works out in practice. A case study is thus relevant to my

study as I intended to observe pedagogical practices in action. Furthermore, Corbett (2010, p. 667) argues that the “case study is a legitimate and important way to generate knowledge about [...] various pedagogical programs, techniques and interventions”. Therefore this study on pedagogical practices fits Corbett’s description above.

The unit of analysis is a critical factor in a case study and as Tellis (1997, p.2) argues is “typically a system of action rather than an individual or group of individuals”. The unit of analysis in this current study is the inclusive pedagogical practices, referring to a system of actions initiated by the teacher. This study is empirical as it uses a case study design to observe and record pedagogical practices in action as they occur in their natural settings. Tellis (1997, p.1) argues that when the procedures for case studies are adhered to “the researcher will be following methods as well-developed and tested as any in the scientific field.”

The design of this study can be further narrowed to an instrumental case study. In this regard, Creswell (2012, p.465) describes an instrumental case study as a “selected case” that “serves the purpose of illuminating a particular issue”. Thus, the current study falls under the instrumental case study category – the “particular issue” is the inclusive pedagogical practice found in the “selected case” which would be the Montessori classroom. In addition, Grandy (2010, p.474) elaborates that in an instrumental case study the focus of the study is more likely to be known in advance and designed around established theory or methods. Similarly this instrumental case study is based on the theory and methods used by Florian & Black-Hawkins’ study (2011), with slight modifications made to the *Participation Framework* (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

3.4. Data Collection Methods

Data collection took place during the span of a two week period. Since pedagogical practices are practiced and presented by teachers, the focus of this study was on “what teachers do and say” to extend to all learners what is generally available in a Montessori classroom. For this reason the data collection methods of direct observations and individual interviews were found to be most suitable. Both classroom observations and subsequent interviews were also used by Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011).

During the two-week period, the intention was to observe four teachers in total, two teachers in the Junior Primary (JP) classes, and two teachers in the Senior Primary (SP) classes. At the Montessori school, JP classes have only one teacher per class, whilst SP classes have two teachers per class. In order to observe two teachers in each phase, two classes were observed in the JP phase and one class was observed in the SP phase. Apart from providing a wider sample size, the choice to observe two teachers in each phase instead of one, was an attempt to ascertain whether the pedagogical practices were replicated across teachers in the same phase. The first week was devoted to observing two JP teachers in two classes. Each JP class consisted of a single teacher and 18 learners. The second week was devoted to observing two SP teachers. The SP class consisted of two teachers and 23 learners. All direct observations were recorded by me, mainly using handwritten notes that were at times supplemented by audio recordings.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

During the two weeks of data collection at the Montessori School, two data collection instruments were selected for use. These include direct observation as an outsider, as well as individual teacher interviews that allowed the teachers to explain their choice and use of inclusive practices. An audio recording device was used to assist in accurately collecting data during individual teacher interviews. In addition, the audio recorder was used intermittently during the times in which inclusive pedagogical practices were found to be used by teachers in the classroom. The use of the audio recorder served to provide more detail and supplement my handwritten notes, as a large amount of jotting would be required within a short space of time during activities that were occurring at a fast pace. The audio clips were later transcribed for data analysis.

3.5.1. Direct Observation

Inclusive pedagogical practices have been known to occur in classrooms, and it is for this reason that direct observations were selected. As stated by Macmillan & Schumacher (2010), using direct observation is the most accurate choice if the researcher plans to observe practices that teachers carry out in their classrooms, referring to the natural setting in which such events occurs. The non-participant

observer status was selected for this study, as was done by Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011) when researching the inclusive pedagogical practices in action using their *Participation Framework*.

Significant events were jotted down as they occurred in the classroom, with observations focussing on the nine pedagogical practices that appeared in the observation schedule (see Table 1 on page 24). As these significant events unfolded, my jottings and notes were captured using my own key words and phrases and abbreviations that I had generated and later expanded on. An example of this is Y1's, Y2's & Y3's meaning "Year 1 learners, Year 2 learners and Y3 learners" which I had expanded on in the analysis and reporting stages.

Using direct observation allowed me to report on events as they unfolded in the classroom, and when choosing which events to jot down, I used the guide provided in Table 1 on page 24. Whilst I looked for evidence of the nine identified pedagogical practices outlined in Table 1, and when I was unsure of whether it was an inclusive pedagogical practice or not, I jotted down events on the off chance that during the analysis stage such a practice might (or might not) turn out to be inclusive. In this regard, Yin (2011) advises that researchers allow the field to speak for itself, even if the initial study was based on a deductive stance. Similarly, Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995, p. 18) note that at times the researcher "self-consciously looks for events that should be written down for research purposes" because "the researcher may come to see deep theoretical relevance in a mundane experience or practice".

However there are limitations to using direct observation, which I tried to minimize where possible. Apart from direct observation being costly and time-consuming, Cresswell (2012) cautions researchers against observer bias, referring to the events chosen, or not, for observation. A recording device was used to curb observer bias; and during the transcribing process the observation notes were cross-checked with audio recordings wherever possible.

3.5.2. Individual interviews

A detailed, semi-structured interview with each of the four teachers was conducted after the observations to gain an in-depth view into the teacher's

knowledge and perspective of inclusion and to confirm whether indeed learners were being supported. No learners were interviewed. Leedy & Ormrod (2008, p.146) posit that individual interviews “yield a great deal of useful information”. Teachers were interviewed to gain a deeper sense into their reasoning behind the pedagogical practices that they use in the classroom, and to elicit information regarding their ways of providing for learners with additional support needs. An interview schedule was used to structure the interview, and is attached as Appendix E.

The use of individual interviews contributes to the in-depth nature of the case study, following Tellis’ (1997, p. 1) assertion that “case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants”. One of the benefits of using observations as well as interviews is that the two sources of data add to the validity of the data. Some of the limitations of interviews are that they are costly and time-consuming, as well as the interviewer bias that the researcher needs to be wary of (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2010). Here, the use of the audio recording device was used to assist in curbing interview bias.

The purpose of the teacher interviews was to provide depth to the data by gathering first-hand information from the Montessori teachers regarding their thoughts on inclusive pedagogical practices. The teacher interviews also served to determine the reasoning behind certain practices, such as Reflective Teaching. This is in line with Florian and Black-Hawkins’ (2011) *Participation Framework* that takes into account not only the observed practices found in the classroom, but also to uncover the reasoning behind the teachers’ choice to use those practices.

Expanding on the right questions that need to be asked in inclusive research, Allan (2007) refers to the Foucauldian perspective that knowledge and power are inextricably linked therefore care must be taken when posing questions to individuals during research so that power and control does not appear imbalanced in the researcher’s favour. In doing so, inclusive practices are maintained during the data collection process. I was mindful of asking open-ended questions that provided the teachers with an opportunity to explain and be listened to, with no judgement from myself in the hope that I was not displaying

exclusionary behaviour towards the teachers that I had interviewed. There were times when prompting and probing were necessary in order to get the teachers to the way certain pedagogical practices were employed in the classroom, but I would not classify these as exclusionary behaviour.

3.6. Site and Participant Selection

3.6.1. Site Selection

The site chosen for this study was a Montessori Primary school in Gauteng. It was purposefully selected as part of the “Theory or Concept Sampling strategy” (Cresswell, 2012, p. 208) based on the premise that the school offered Montessori schooling up to grade six, covering the primary phase of schooling. Due to the fact that most Montessori schools in South Africa only offer pre-school education, this school was an ideal choice. An important factor in choosing an appropriate school was based on the existence of a variety of learners with different learning abilities. In this regard, Creswell (2012, p.206) cites Patterson referring to purposeful sampling as intentionally selecting “information-rich” participants that help to “develop a detailed understanding”. The chosen school had a broad range of learners with a variety of learning abilities including learners with physical and mental disabilities. Following the site selection, the main participants were then selected.

3.6.2. Participant Selection

The main participants were the four teachers and were also selected via purposive sampling before data collection occurred. I had liaised with the school principal in advance, articulating my preferences for those teachers that were more likely to use inclusive pedagogical practices with learners who had additional support needs. Based on my request, the principal had chosen the two oldest and most experienced teachers in each of the JP and SP phases as sites for my research.

Participants in this study included the learners and teachers of two JP classes and the learners and teachers of one SP class. The JP classes, which is the 6-9 year age grouping in a Montessori school, comprises of Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 learners – which is the equivalent of the Foundation Phase in a regular school.

The SP class consisted of two teachers and 23 learners, ages ranging from 9-12 years (Years 4-6) and is the equivalent of the Intermediate Phase at a regular school. Some background details of the four participants can be found in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Participant Background Details

Participant	Phase	Qualifications	Teaching Experience
Teacher A	Junior Primary	4 Year Montessori qualification	15 years
Teacher B	Junior Primary	B.Ed. + Montessori qualification	15 years
Teacher C	Senior Primary	B. Prim Ed + Montessori qualification	20 years
Teacher D	Senior Primary	B.Ed. + Montessori qualification	18 years

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Conducting research in the presence of children, especially young children, presents new challenges – notably the challenge of the problematic ethical issues that involve researching with minors. Lewis (2005, p. 215) posits that although inclusive research involving child participants is conducted “in valid and reliable ways, it is more problematic than is often recognised”, referring to, inter alia, ethical considerations such as guaranteeing anonymity in small samples, obtaining assent from the child over and above the parent’s consent, issues of confidentiality and trust, as well as the possibility of the researcher initiating intrusion in children’s social lives at school.

Although this study did not involve interviewing children, there were nonetheless consensual issues surrounding their presence in the classroom during the time that the study was conducted. Some of these consensual issues involving the children’s presence included allowing a total stranger into their classroom as well as their presence during the times that I audio-recorded some of the pedagogical

practices. During this study, ethical considerations were afforded to all participants, including the learners. These considerations included their right to confidentiality, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw and informed consent.

3.7.1. Confidentiality and Anonymity

During this study, the confidentiality and anonymity of each participant, whether adult or child, was strictly guaranteed during the data collection and reporting of the research. During data collection, I recorded incidents using pseudonyms, but when reporting I chose to simply use the words “teacher” and “learner”. In order to guarantee anonymity to the participants in this small sample, I refrained from using pseudonyms during the reporting. As a result of the nature of the learning disabilities and special needs disclosed to me, I also ensured that whatever information the participants shared with me in the interviews will remain confidential within the school community. Naturally this information was shared with the supervisors in the study, but the participants’ anonymity was not compromised. It was also clearly stated that no reimbursement of any sort would be provided to participants in the study. Lastly, the participants were made aware that all data and interviews would be kept in a locked and safe place, and as per Kellet’s (2010) suggestion, destroyed three to five years after the completion of the study.

3.7.2. Voluntary Participation and the Right to Withdraw

From the outset, participants were notified that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw at any time with no consequences. In arguing that voluntary participation is a necessary precondition for ethical research, Macmillan & Schumacher (2010) state that the participants should be made aware that the study is for research purposes and that participating in such an activity is entirely voluntary. Each participant individually received a letter requesting their participation in the research study, (see Appendices C, D and E) making it clear that participation is entirely voluntary with no consequences for declining to participate. In addition, all participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences.

3.7.3. Informed consent

Informed consent as argued by Kellett (2010) was employed in this research study. A letter providing details of the research, informing future participants of their roles as well as the duration of the study and the option to opt out at any time was sent out to all possible participants. This included the four individual teachers as well as each learner present in the three classrooms that were observed. Kellett (2010, p.23) maintains that “before individuals can give their consent they need some understanding of what is involved and exactly what they are consenting to.” In this regard, the letters sent out were detailed (See Appendices B and C) and provided information that allowed parents and teachers to make informed decisions about their consent to the study.

Other ethical considerations that were adhered to included obtaining two different consents from each participant: firstly to participate in the research and secondly to be included in the audio recording. All the learners involved in this study were minors. As a result, consent from their respective parents/guardians/caregivers was required, as well as the consent of the four teachers of the classes in which the research exercises were conducted. Although the learners were not interviewed, written permission was obtained from the parents/caregivers for the learners to be present at the time that the research was conducted. Letters of consent were also given to each learner, explaining their participation in language that was age-appropriate. Little icons with a happy or sad face were provided at the end of each line. By circling the face that described their choice, it indicated their agreement/disagreement of participation in the study.

In addition, ethical considerations also included an awareness of the way teachers were interviewed so that they did not feel coerced or forced to answer (Allan & Slee, 2008). Teachers were made aware that they need not answer if they did not want to, or felt uncomfortable doing so. Similarly, cognisance was given to the fact that some parents did not grant consent for their child to participate and/or be audio-recorded. A total of four learners did not consent to participation in the study. A sticker system was used to identify learners who may or may not be included in the observation notes. Every child was given a little round yellow sticker, either with a 1 or 2 written on it. Those with the number

2 stickers were excluded from any mention in the study. In the SP phase, only one learner did not consent to the study, and the teacher made me aware of this learner on the first day.

3.8. Data Capture and Analysis

Data during this study was captured by means of handwritten field notes as well as audio recordings. In describing methods in which observations and field notes are taken, Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995, p.19-20) state that in some instances the researcher “makes a brief written record of these impressions by jotting down key words and phrases” that can be later written extensively to “construct evocative descriptions of the scene.” The field notes of the direct observation data were captured in a language similar to short-hand, in order to obtain as much information as possible during the information-rich times when pedagogical practices were observed. Thereafter, the key events were elaborated upon as well as corrected for grammar and spelling. However, the true essence of the events was always maintained and any elaborations made were purely to clarify descriptions.

Data analysis techniques used in this study included a combination of inductive and deductive thematic analysis. This was a replication of the analysis technique used by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) on their study of inclusive pedagogies. Using the deductive approach has a major limitation in that it tends to present information as reductionist (Florian, 2014, p. 289), thus a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches is favoured for research into inclusive pedagogy. Both the deductive and inductive analysis stages are described below. The following table was used as a tool to guide the identification of inclusive pedagogical practices during the analysis of the direct observations.

3.8.1. Deductive Analysis using Pattern-Matching

Analysis of the data arising from the direct observations was conducted deductively using a pattern-matching exercise. Pattern-matching refers to the comparison of two patterns to determine whether they match or do not match (Hak & Dul, 2010). An essential component of pattern-matching in theory-testing

according to Hak and Dul (2010) is that the expected pattern is specified before the matching takes place. The specifications that I used in my pattern-matching exercise appear in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Guide to identifying inclusive pedagogical practices

1. Teaching strategies and practices that promote collaboration:	What to look for:
• Co-operative learning	• Collaboration between learners as they worked together • Sharing of information / non-competitiveness • Positive engagement between learners • Working in pairs/groups
• Peer-tutoring	• Learners teaching each other • Teacher assigning/requesting learners to help other learners • Sharing of information / non-competitiveness • Positive engagement between learners
• Co-teaching	• Teachers working collaboratively to teach lessons together • Teachers demonstrating adult collaboration when assisting learners who require one-on-one attention
2. Teaching strategies and practices that promote access to the curriculum:	What to look for:
• Whole-class instruction	• Teacher teaches the whole class at the same time • Active teaching/presentation of a lesson • All learners are included in the lesson
• Differentiated instruction	• Multiple opportunities are provided to learn • Modifications of activities/instruction • Extra time given to learners without announcing it to others • Catering for individual needs without unwelcome attention to the learner
• Direct Instruction	• Six steps of Direct Instruction followed: explicit step-by-step model, ensuring mastery at each level, processing corrections, gradual fading from teacher-directed to learner independence, using sufficient examples for practice and a review of newly learned concepts. • One-on-one or group setting • Learners feel comfortable asking for help when required
• Reflective teaching	• Evidence of lesson being repeated/redone in a different way • Need supplementary data from

	interview to determine teachers' thoughts and feelings regarding reflection
3. Teaching strategies and practices that promote recognition and acceptance:	What to look for:
Teaching social skills	- Explicitly teaching ways of being helpful, empathetic and kind - Teacher models desired behaviour - Acknowledging learners by providing validation and praise when appropriate behaviour is displayed
Learner-selected work	- Availability of a variety of activities that learners can choose from - Choices are learner-directed with no input from the teacher - Activities are available to all learners - Learners' choices are respected

When coding my raw data, I used the above-mentioned table to guide the identification of inclusive pedagogical practices in action. Since the focus of this study was on pedagogical practices that the teachers employed, I did not pay attention to the management and disciplinary actions of the teacher, but focussed on the teaching and learning interactions between the teacher and learner/s. Similarly, when observing effective teaching practices, Jordan, Schwartz and McGhie-Richmond (2009, p. 536) noted that “non-academic interactions between the teacher and student such as managerial and disciplinary interactions are not coded.” Using coloured pens, each of the nine practices was assigned a number (1-9) and colour-coded accordingly. The data was then coded to match the colours of the nine practices wherever evidence of those practices were found as employed by the teacher. For instance, Co-operative Learning was assigned number 1 and underlined in pink, as shown:

The Y2 and Y3 learners are grouped together and given a task to imagine that they have discovered a fossil. They need to write a page of information detailing how the fossil lived, what animal it was, what it ate, etc.

This part of the analysis was theory-driven. It is also worth noting that during the analysis, a greater weighting was placed on the data generated from the observations than the data derived from the interviews. This is because the focus of the research is on the observable pedagogical practices in action, whilst the

interviews served to strengthen the reasoning behind some of the practices and thus enrich the findings.

3.8.2. Inductive Thematic Analysis

The analysis of the teacher interviews, however, was an inductive process and thus data-driven. Inductive processes are those which Macmillan & Schumacher (2010, p.367) define as “moving from specific data to general categories and patterns”. The interviews were analysed line-by-line and key words were flagged that showed correlations with the reasoning that informed inclusive pedagogy. Some of the themes arising from these interviews were the teachers’ beliefs regarding inclusive education, evidence of teacher reflections that form part of Reflective Teaching, acknowledgement of learner difference and the belief in the ability to teach all learners.

In terms of provision of learner support in a way that maintained the dignity of all learners the following sub-themes were identified from the data: ‘including all learners’, ‘providing choices’, ‘positive interaction between teacher and learner’, ‘respecting choices’ and ‘respond to various learners’ needs’. From these indicators, categories were formed, then overarching themes emerged in relation to these categories. Although the major theme is inclusive pedagogical practices, there were four sub-themes arising from this, in what Cresswell (2012, p. 251) refers to as “layering the analysis” which describes the way minor themes and major themes will be subsumed within broader themes. The four overarching themes arising from the above indicators were those that related to the Montessori Method, namely, Classroom Setup, Montessori Materials, Mixed Age Grouping and Highly Individualised Provision. The themes arising from the teacher interviews enriched the data derived from the direct observations.

3.9. Credibility and Trustworthiness

This study followed the processes of crystallization, member checking and working together with a supervisor to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. These will be explored in more detail below.

3.9.1. Crystallization

As argued by Tellis (1997, p.2) the case study is “known as a triangulated research strategy”. The purpose of triangulation, as described by Macmillan & Schumacher (2010, p.379) is “the cross-validation among data sources, data collection strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes” to ensure regularities in the data. Given that this study is focussed on the ways in which teachers use inclusive pedagogy, which are the ‘moment-by-moment decisions’ that are characteristic of a teacher’s everyday interactions with learners whilst teaching (Hedges; 2012), I have chosen to use crystallization instead of triangulation to fully explore the multiple facets of the data. Furthermore, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) posit that when examining inclusive pedagogical practices, it is necessary to explore the reasoning behind the actions observed, making crystallization rather than triangulation a more suitable choice. Whilst triangulation describes the arrival at the same findings following the analysis from various sources of data, triangulation does not address the issue of divergent or contradictory findings (Ellingson, 2008). In contrast, the use of crystallization provides another way of achieving depth, through the compilation not only of many details but also of different forms of representing, organizing, and analyzing those details (Ellingson, 2008). In essence, Ellingson (2008, p. 4) argues that “crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text whilst building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction”. In this instrumental case study, both inductive and deductive methods of analysis were employed that often resulted in divergent findings, lending itself to crystallization. Crystallization was thus achieved when the data analysed from the direct observations fit with the reasoning elicited from the teacher interviews. Although the findings were at times strengthened and validated by the information obtained from the teacher interviews, there were divergent views also elicited from the teacher interviews in relation to the classroom observations. In this way, crystallization rather than triangulation offered an appropriate choice to integrate the findings in this study, which tended to be complex and multi-dimensional.

3.9.2. Member Checking

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the data, the technique of 'member checking' was applied. As defined by Cresswell (2012, p.259) member checking is "a process in which the researcher asks one or more of the participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account." This involved taking back the transcribed interviews to the participants so that they could determine the accuracy of the data. Participants were offered an opportunity to voice their opinion on whether descriptions provided in the interviews were complete and realistic, and whether the interpretations are fairly represented. All teachers felt that the capturing of their responses was accurate and fair. The interviews were returned to me with minor changes from teachers: one provided corrections regarding their qualifications whilst another included a reminder to use pseudonyms when reporting. This study therefore complies with Barnes' (2003, p.12) assertion that the researcher's choice of data collection strategies as well as the research methodology "are logical, rigorous and open to scrutiny".

3.9.3. Working with a supervisor

Working together with a supervisor ensures that I do not present data that has been incorrectly interpreted therefore safeguarding against fabricated data. The supervisor thus performs the function of an external audit, which Cresswell (2012, p. 260) describes as "the services that a researcher obtains from an individual that is outside the study to review different aspects of the research, providing written communication about the evaluation of the study." In this study my supervisors offered constructive feedback at regular intervals which made valuable contributions to the final research report. Furthermore, I had the privilege of working with two supervisors; beneficially doubling the amount of feedback I received during every stage of the research process.

3.10. Reduction of bias in the study

Since the study is qualitative in nature and based primarily on the researchers' interpretations of the events observed, there are a number of biases that exist. Foremost of these is the bias of myself (as the researcher) as primary research instrument, as argued by Yin (2011). Naturally there would be the bias resulting

from my personal beliefs and knowledge that arguably has the greatest influence on the study. In order to reduce this bias, I have tried to adhere to conformability standards with regards to presenting the information as it appeared in its natural settings. Conformability refers to the degree to which the findings of a study can be confirmed by others (Gobi & Lincoln, 1989). In this study, most of my findings are not new and align with similar findings of other researchers, such as Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) and Vetiveloo (2008). I am also mindful of participant bias, in that my presence in the classroom would likely have influenced the way teachers behaved, as they were aware of my observation of their practice. In an attempt to overcome this, I chose to observe two teachers in each phase. In terms of reducing interviewer and interviewee bias, I have tried to keep a neutral stance, by allowing the teachers to express their views and opinions freely with no judgement on my behalf.

3.11. Conclusion

This qualitative study was designed to achieve the aim of examining the inclusive pedagogical practices in the Montessori classroom as well as determining the extent to which the Montessori Method influenced the practices found. Using an instrumental case study design, this study provided rich descriptions of the events viewed in an attempt to expand the body of literature on inclusive pedagogies in South Africa. In this chapter, I have provided justifications for my choice of research methods, data analysis, and selection of participants, data analysis strategies as well as the various ethical considerations that have been employed in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Findings

4.1. Introduction

This study seeks to examine the inclusive pedagogical practices in a South African Montessori classroom at primary school level. This chapter reports on the findings of the study and presents data to the reader using tables, a figure and a detailed discussion. Firstly, the data presented will provide examples of inclusive practices, and then a discussion of each inclusive practice follows, detailing what makes the practice inclusive. Secondly, the influence of the Montessori Method factors will be explored. Lastly, I will conclude with a summary of the findings.

4.2. Analysis of Data from the Observations and Interviews

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first stage of analysis from the direct observations was deductive, using a pattern-matching exercise. Data drawn from the interviews followed an inductive approach, which was used to support and enrich the findings from the direct observations. The information derived from the deductive analysis was then subjected to an inductive approach in which thematic analysis of the effects of the Montessori Method were coded and collapsed into four themes (discussed later in section 4.4.). The first stage of data analysis resulted in an expansion of the table that was used as an observation tool. This is explored in 4.2.1. below.

Although the data revealed that eight of the nine identified inclusive pedagogical practices were found in the Montessori classrooms, the following should be noted too. Firstly not all teachers displayed evidence of all eight pedagogical practices. For instance, evidence of practices such as Direct Instruction, Differentiated Instruction, Learner-Selected Work and Peer Tutoring were consistently found as they were used by all four teachers in their classrooms, whilst Co-operative Learning, Reflective Teaching, Whole Class Instruction and Teaching Social Skills were found in the classrooms of some teachers but not others. No evidence of Co-Teaching as an inclusive pedagogical practice was observed. Secondly, some teachers used the pedagogical practices in a way that was more inclusive than other teachers. This finding is congruent with Florian

and Black-Hawkins (2011, p. 819) who noted that sometimes teachers were found to “engage in practices that are less inclusive”. However, for the purposes of highlighting inclusive pedagogical practices in action, only salient examples of such practices were selected.

Thirdly, the findings in this study derived from the direct observations and the individual teacher interviews tended to be divergent and multi-faceted due to the complexity of establishing the reasoning behind pedagogical practices. This too, has been noted by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011); however Florian’s (2014) later work attempted to address this by streamlining the inclusive pedagogical tool via the *IPAA Framework*. As discussed in Chapter 2, inclusive pedagogies is still in its exploratory stages in South Africa, therefore the earlier *Participation Framework* (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011) is better suited to the South African context.

4.2.1. Expansion of Table and Examples of Inclusive Practices

I have expanded on the Table of Inclusive Practices (from chapter 2) by providing examples of the nine practices that I observed during my study. The stance that I have taken in terms of the manifestation of inclusive pedagogy is similar to that of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), which is based on learning for all, and providing support in a way that is respectful to all. Based on the work of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), the pedagogical practices can be grouped into three large themes:

1. practices that promote collaboration,
2. practices that promote access to the curriculum, and
3. practices that promote recognition and acceptance.

All three themes above promote inclusivity in the classroom. The first theme of **Collaboration** involves working together effectively, sharing, non-competitiveness and positive engagement between learners. The second theme of **Access to the Curriculum** involves flexibility, providing for learners’ individual needs and offering multiple opportunities to learn. The third theme of **Recognition and Acceptance** involves validation, approval and acknowledgement of the learners as well as providing and respecting the

learners' choices. These themes will be discussed under the headings of each of the nine pedagogical practices following the discussion of the table below. Regarding the choice of examples presented in the table below, it is worth noting that not every instance of the recorded pedagogical practice can be mentioned here, as there are numerous examples. However, for the purposes of illustration, I have selected the most salient examples that I felt best describes the pedagogical practice in the Montessori setting.

Table 4: Expansion of Table of Inclusive Practices

Inclusive Pedagogical Practice	Examples of such practice observed in the Montessori environment
1. Teaching strategies and practices that promote collaboration:	
• Co-operative Learning	- Teacher splits the class into 4 groups for writing activity where each learner has a specific function within the group as they work together. - Two learners work together on the floor doing their Long Chains, taking turns to add the beaded bits, doing addition together.
• Peer Tutoring	Y2 learner helps Y1 learner to work on a word-matching activity.
• Co-Teaching	Not applicable.
2. Teaching strategies and practices that promote access to the curriculum:	
• Direct Instruction	- Teacher uses DI steps to teach Y1 lesson on parsing sentences. - Teacher uses DI methods to teach Y1 learner (who has ADHD). The learner sits next to the teacher on the floor working on a Montessori Manipulative called the Snake game to complete his Subtraction exercise.
• Whole-class Instruction	Not applicable.
• Differentiated Instruction	- Teacher hands out work to all the learners who are in their respective year groups, with some learners getting different work within the same year group. - Teacher modifies the method of calculation for a Y4 learner with disabilities, providing a calculator that allows the learner to participate in the long division lesson.
• Reflective Teaching	- Redoing the 'adjectival phrases' lesson in different formats (from a short skit to written exercises on the whiteboard to finally providing notes and a comprehension article) as the learners did not respond well to the first 2 lessons. - Changing the poetry writing from an individual to group activity because the Y1 and Y2 learners were unable to work by themselves.
3. Teaching strategies and practices that promote recognition and acceptance:	
• Teaching Social Skills	- Teacher models good social skills by praising each child after reciting poems and the rest of the learners imitate her behaviour. - Teacher whispers (modelling) as he reminds the Y5s to be quiet and not to disturb those that are working as they return from their snack break.
• Learner-selected Work	- Two Y4 learners choose to use "racks and tubes" to work out their long division sums. - Y2 and Y3 learners choose which language activities to work on from the selection available on the low shelves in the classroom.

With regards to the information provided in the table above, the Co-Teaching block appears with the words “Not Applicable” in the table. This is because there were no examples of Co-Teaching recorded during the two week period. All the inclusive pedagogical practices mentioned here occurred in both the JP and SP phases.

4.2.2. Practices that Promote Collaboration

From the three broad groupings taken from Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), I will discuss the first one, namely, **Practices that Promote Collaboration**. Collaboration here refers to the learners being able to interact with each other positively and work together effectively, thus allowing a manifestation of inclusion in the classroom to occur. This is facilitated by non-competitiveness that results in sharing of knowledge and skills among learners in the classroom and creating a sense of community. Within this grouping, the pedagogical practices of Co-operative Learning, Peer Tutoring, and Co-Teaching will be discussed.

4.2.2.1. Co-operative Learning

Co-operative Learning refers to a pedagogical practice that respects and highlights each individual’s abilities as well as the sharing of authority and responsibility. Two examples of Co-operative Learning observed in the Montessori classroom will be discussed here. The first one focuses on mixed age-groupings that add a different dimension to Co-operative Learning. Naturally, the dynamics of having older and younger learners working together on an activity in a co-operative way differs from that of same-age peers. The following example illustrates this:

The teacher divides the class into 4 groups. Each group has a Y1, Y2 and a Y3 learner. They have 20 minutes to write an acrostic poem using FOSSIL as the acrostic. Since there are 16 learners present that day, each group has 4 learners represented by an Y1, Y2 and Y3 learner. The teacher asks the Y3 learner to write, but everyone is encouraged to contribute. As the lesson progresses, the teacher observes the interactions of each group. She reminds

the Y3s not to intervene and to allow the younger learners a chance to be heard.

The oldest learners (Year 3) are given the task of writing. The others have to contribute to the content of the poem, but are not given the task of writing. In addition, the intervention by the teacher shows that she is aware of the possibility of marginalisation of the younger learners in certain groups. Whilst the older learners are given opportunities to display their strengths and age-appropriate abilities (such as writing), the teacher tries to ensure that individuals within the group settings are not isolated and that everyone gets a chance to participate in a meaningful way. The teacher observes each group and intervenes when necessary. In doing so, the teacher tries to encourage interpersonal skills between the learners in each group. This is congruent with the small group skills and interpersonal skills mentioned by Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) that “learners gain from collaborative learning activities”. Another example of Co-operative Learning is provided here:

The teacher gathers the learners around her for the “Long Chains” activity, which is a Montessori Material used to explain multiplication as well as cubes. The teacher asks the learners to pair up for the activity. Each chain has 2, 3, 4, or 5 beads on it and learners work together in pairs to build up their Long Chains.

In this instance, learners are working together in pairs to build their “Long Chains”, adding the numbers as they go along. In the activity, the Montessori Material (beaded chains) is used to enhance the understanding of complex abstract concepts by providing tangible materials that are also high in visual appeal. Again, the learners illustrate that they are active participants in the classroom, as the teacher asks them to choose and pair with their own partners. They also decide how long their chains will eventually be, and continue to take turns in adding beads and keeping a running total of the sum of their beads. In doing so, the learners demonstrate that they are able to work together, take turns to add up the beads and then share their sum totals as they progress onto longer chains. The sharing of information of the sum totals promotes inclusivity as learners work collaboratively rather than competitively. These two incidents indicate that inclusivity is maintained both by the use of the Montessori Material that provides an opportunity for learners to work collaboratively, as well as the

decisions made by the teacher that attempt to inculcate interpersonal skills among learners.

4.2.2.2. Peer Tutoring

Peer Tutoring refers to the pedagogical practice that involves two learners working as tutor-tutee, where tutees are the learners receiving instruction from the tutor. In the Montessori classes, the Peer Tutoring that I observed was child-led. I noted that learners helped each other when they saw a younger learner struggling. The example below illustrates this:

A Y1 learner sat on the carpet with a Matching activity that required matching the correct picture with the corresponding word. Then a Y2 learner walked past and noticed the Y1 looking at the cards and moving them about, without any matched pictures and cards. The Y2 learner asked the Y1 learner what he was doing and whether he needed help. The Y2 learner then read out the words on the cards and the Y1 learner started matching the cards correctly. The two learners worked together for the next few minutes till the activity was complete.

From this example, I noted the positive engagement between the two learners whilst they worked together to complete the activity. The Y2 learner serving the role of a tutor as he taught the learner new words. In addition, there is collaboration and the sharing of information, as the Y2 learner shares his information with the Y1 learner, allowing him to complete the activity. In this case, the manifestation of Peer Age tutoring involving an older learner tutoring a younger learner is known as Cross-age tutoring. Hartley (as cited in Hattie, 2008, p. 187) argues that “cross-age tutors are more effective than same-age peers”. As in the previous instance of Co-operative Learning, the learners were observed working together in a non-competitive way, and in the case of Peer Tutoring, assisting the younger classmates. The older Y2 learner was familiar with the requirements of the activity having completed the activity himself in the same class in the previous year. As a result, he was able to assist the Y1 learner without any intervention from the teacher. The next pedagogical practice identified under Collaborative Practices is Co-Teaching.

4.2.2.3. Co-Teaching

Co-Teaching refers to the way in which two teachers work together in the classroom teaching collaboratively. There were no recorded incidents of Co-Teaching noted in either phase. The JP phase had an arrangement of one teacher per class, therefore providing no opportunity for Co-Teaching to occur. Whilst the arrangement of two teachers in each SP classroom lent itself to enable co-teaching, there were no indications of Co-Teaching taking place in a collaborative way. Different subjects were presented separately at opposite ends of the room by each of the two teachers present in the class. The following description shows that whilst there was evidence of two teachers teaching at the same time, collaborative teaching was not observed.

Each teacher executes a lesson at the same time at either ends of the classroom. Whilst one teacher does Maths to the Y4s and Y5s, the other Language with the Y6s. The above instance can be considered a non-example of Co-teaching as an inclusive practice. This is because the observed instances did not indicate that the teachers worked collaboratively to teach a lesson together, as described by Gurgur and Uzuner (2011) whereby teachers are able to do the same lesson together at the same time, as a result of working together in both the planning and execution phases. Whilst both SP teachers in their interviews mentioned that they did, the lessons observed were executed separately. The next group of pedagogical practices to be discussed are those that promote access to the curriculum.

4.2.3. Practices that Promote Access to the Curriculum

In the second grouping of pedagogical practices the following four practices will be discussed: Direct Instruction, Whole Class Instruction, Differentiation and Reflective Teaching. Promoting access to the curriculum for all is about ensuring that inclusivity is maintained whilst still meeting the needs of all the learners in the classroom. Sapon-Shevin (2007) argues that sensitivity is key to ensure that all learners' needs are met in way that does not single out or embarrass the learner. Access to the curriculum for all is enabled by offering multiple

opportunities for learners to learn, thus providing for learners' individual needs. It should be noted that during the analysis, overlaps existed between Direct Instruction in a one-on-one setting and Differentiated Instruction; as the former can be considered as an example of the latter. However, I have included all incidents that consisted of Direct Instruction in a one-on-one setting to be Direct Instruction and not Differentiated Instruction. The first pedagogical practice to be discussed in this category is Whole Class Instruction.

4.2.3.1. Whole Class Instruction

Whole Class Instruction is a manifestation of Direct Instruction and includes all learners in the classroom as they are taught together. By definition, it is an inclusive practice, as no learner is excluded from the lesson. Although the data revealed instances when the whole class sat around the teacher on the floor, not all examples observed of Whole Class Instruction were used in an active teaching context, which is one of the criteria in Table 3 (page 43). I also noted that in the Montessori classroom, the Mixed Age Grouping limits the execution of this practice. Taking into consideration that all three years of each of the JP and SP years are represented in one classroom, it is not likely that Whole Class Instruction would be a common practice. There were two instances that illustrate the examples that were observed. The first example is as follows:

The teacher is sitting cross-legged on the floor and explaining the use of homonyms to the Y2s who are also seated on the floor.

In terms of an inclusive pedagogical practice, this can have two possible interpretations. I have interpreted the following as an example of Whole Class Instruction as the entire complement of the Y2 learners are present during the lesson. In another instance, the teacher does have all the learners around her in the morning, but she is not actively teaching:

The teacher greets everyone and the whole class is seated in a circle on the floor around her. She asks whether the readers have been signed off, takes the register and then reminds the class of the visiting dentist presentation taking place later that day.

Again, the example above does not fully constitute Whole Class Instruction. Given that it is an aspect of the morning routine when class matters are discussed, there is no evidence that could qualify as "instruction", as there is no

active teaching taking place. However the physical act of having all the learners circle the teacher can form part of a wider culture of inclusion within the classroom. Thus I have interpreted the practice to be an example of Whole Class Instruction. The next pedagogical practice to be discussed is Differentiated Instruction.

4.2.3.2 Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated Instruction was observed in several instances both in the JP and SP phases. In the example below, the teacher is demonstrating Differentiation via the activities she provides:

The teacher explains the activities to the Y1s, based on their level of understanding: they must draw fossils, and those that can write should write six lines about their fossil, below their picture.

The teacher allows the learners to do the activity based on their individual abilities. It is interesting to note that she leaves the learners to decide for themselves who should only draw fossils, and who should write as well as draw. Apart from providing and respecting their choices, the teacher avoids causing embarrassment to any of the learners as she does not single out learners to write and/or draw. From the scenario above, I have noted that there are multiple opportunities for learners to learn and that a choice of different tasks is offered to learners. In another example below, I found it difficult to ascertain which of the learners are receiving support in terms of differentiated class activities, as there were a variety of tasks in both Language and Maths that were handed out at once:

The teacher sits on the floor and calls the learners in each of their year groups (first Y1s, then Y2s and then Y3s) to collect their work for the day. There is different work allocated to different learners, even within the same year group. Some are doing Language activities whilst others are doing Maths activities.

At times, there were several activities within different subjects occurring simultaneously so I was pleased that I had an audio-recorder to assist me in capturing the events. Here the data is presented from both the interviews and the observations in order for me to understand what was actually happening in the classroom and that the worksheets were not randomly handed out in the

above-mentioned incident. An indication of prior planning on the teacher's part is alluded to, as the teacher knew which worksheet was to be completed by whom. Within each subject (Language and Maths) and year group, two different worksheets were prepared. The teacher called up the learners in their groups and handed out specific worksheets to particular learners. Later on that day, the teacher mentioned that the group planning sessions that all the JP teachers worked on together incorporated a variety of learning needs. She had this to say:

"Planning takes place once a term and all (5) of us JP teachers plan together. Teachers are free to move at a slower or faster pace depending on the learners' progress in their classes and can even go into the next term if they want to... Sometimes the learners get so interested in a particular theme that out of interest for that theme we may stretch it into four weeks instead of an initial planned 2-3 weeks for instance. We do share resources for each theme and take turns to create the resources... It means that all 5 teachers do not proceed at the same pace or the same time..."

The information provided by the teacher above shows that learners' needs are met and there is no expectation for all learners to work at the same pace, but rather that they follow the needs and interest of the learner. This is accentuated by the loose time frames associated with the Montessori Method, enabling accommodations and multiple opportunities to learn. In another instance of Differentiated Instruction, the teacher is re-teaching Long Division to the Y4s and modifies the activity for one learner in order to include him. Below is an extract:

The teacher is going over long division (a repeat lesson) with the Y4s and asks for their input at every step, using the whiteboard to show the result. One of the Y4 learners with a mental disability is also working with the rest of the Y4s, but he uses a calculator to assist him to do the long division sums. The teacher has given him a calculator to include him in the lesson with the rest of the Y4s.

In the above scenario detailing the Long Division activity, a modification in the activity is made, allowing the use of an assistive device. This allows the learner with a disability to be a part of the Maths lesson with the rest of the Y4 learners working out their long division sums using mental calculations. Differentiating the activity not only allowed the learner access to the curriculum but has met the

needs of all the learners during a single lesson without having to separate the learner from the rest of the class or exclude the learner from the peer group. The next pedagogical practice to be discussed is Direct Instruction.

4.2.3.3. Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction is an explicit way of teaching that comprises a step-by-step approach in which the teacher ensures mastery and guides the learner to working independently (see chapter 2 for more on Direct Instruction). Direct Instruction can take a variety of forms, such as Whole Class Instruction (which has been discussed in 4.2.3.1.), small group settings or one-on-one instruction. In the Montessori classroom, Direct Instruction lessons that were observed during the two week study took place in small group settings and in one-on-one settings. In the following example, the steps of Direct Instruction are demonstrated as the teacher teaches the Y1s a language lesson. Evidence of the steps can be seen as follows:

- 1. Teacher sets out a farmyard poster on the floor and the Y1 learners help to place the animals on it. She introduces the lesson and explains that they will start with naming baby animals then move on to parsing sentences.*
- 2. Teacher asks the learners questions and prompts the learners to get the right answer*
- 3. Teacher engages in modelling by writing answers on her own handheld whiteboard*
- 4. Then she asks the learners to parse a sentence and checks that everyone knows what to do*
- 5. Finally, learners are allowed to work independently with their own whiteboards under the teacher's supervision.*

In the above extract, the teacher teaches the learners the lesson and then allows the learners time to complete a parsing exercise. The teacher demonstrates all the steps required for successfully executing Direct Instruction. With regards to providing multiple opportunities for learning, the following example is when the teacher uses Direct Instruction methods to do one-on-one teaching, and then lets the learner use a Montessori manipulative to enhance her reinforcement of the Subtraction concept. Here is evidence of the 'guided independent practice' which occurs once the initial steps of Direct Instruction have already been followed:

After the teacher uses Direct Instruction methods for a one-on-one session with a Y1 learner who struggles to concentrate, she ensures the learner understands each step and then allows the learner to work independently whilst she keeps checking on the learner. The learner sits next to the teacher on the floor working on a Montessori Material called the Snake Game to do a Subtraction exercise. The learner does not ask the teacher for help, but rather keeps working and correcting the exercise as the learner proceeds with the exercise in the book.

The data showed that the teacher made use of the tangible and brightly coloured Snake Game, which is a Montessori Material made up of colour-coded beads that are used to teach addition and subtraction. Given that the Snake Game has a built-in control of error, the learner is able to work independently, relying on himself/herself to provide the self-correction in the crucial feedback stage of Direct Instruction whilst the teacher monitors his/her work. In addition, the use of the Snake Game in the last stages of the Direct Instruction step facilitates the way that one-on-one support is given to the learner by providing an opportunity to use a tangible game that keeps him/her interested in the concept. This shows that Direct Instruction can be enhanced by the use of an appropriate Montessori Material. The next pedagogical practice to be discussed is Reflective Teaching.

4.2.3.4. Reflective Teaching

Reflective teaching refers to the series of reflection sessions undertaken by the teacher after teaching a lesson. This usually results in personal self-assessment by the teacher about the way the lesson went and reflecting on how it could be the next time. Usually it follows that the teacher the lesson if the initial lesson/s successful. Given that Reflective Teaching covers a series of events, some of which occur outside the classroom, it was necessary for me to interview the teachers in order to shed light on any reflections that did occur. Here I have presented the data from both the observations and the interviews. The following are examples of lessons observed that indicate re-teaching of the lesson subsequent to self-reflection:

After the Atlantis discussion, the teacher says she would like to go over the adjectival phrases and clauses because it seems many Y6 learners are having trouble with it. The learners agree.

Then,

The teacher gives the Y6s another opportunity to work on their adjectival phrases in a role-play exercise. Initially it was meant to be a short-story writing exercise, but the learners request that they enact it.

The teacher's use of reflective teaching above is highlighted (and confirmed by the teacher interview). The teacher realised that the method she used did not work well and she felt that the learners did not grasp the concept of adjectival phrases the first time. Another opportunity at adjectival phrases was provided to the learners, which occurred the day after the first lesson. In her interview, the teacher said the following when asked whether she engaged in reflective teaching:

"Yes absolutely. Maybe I could have taught it in a different way, or made it more interesting for the kids. Like the lesson on adjectival phrases. I could see that the learners were just not getting it right, so I let them do the story/drama today. I will see how that goes...if they still don't understand then I might have to spend more time on it..."

By putting herself under scrutiny and evaluating her own lesson later on that day, she concluded that the lesson did not go well because the learners were not sufficiently engaging with the content and she resolved to redo it in a way that the learners would find interesting. The ability to self-reflect and the willingness to try new things showed her commitment to *what* was being taught rather than to *whom* it was being taught. This resonates with Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) suggestion of implementing inclusive pedagogy, which focuses on the *what* and *how* rather than the *who*.

In addition, it was noted that the Y6 learners requested that the teacher allow them to act out their written sketch on adjectival phrases, to which the teacher agreed. The fact that their choices are respected and accepted by the teacher further contributes to the inclusivity of this pedagogical practice. Corbett (2001, p. 59) emphasises that "listening to and valuing what children have to say is fundamental to inclusive learning". In another instance, the teacher changes the individual poetry-writing exercise to a group activity when the Y1 learners do not respond favourably.

The teacher changes the poetry writing exercise to a group activity (incorporating the Y2s and Y3s) a few days later when she realises that the Y1 learners are not able to work by themselves.

The teacher also mentioned the following in her interview when asked about Reflective Teaching:

“Often at night, I think about what worked and what didn’t. For instance, in yesterday’s group work with the Y1s on acrostic poems, it was the first time that the Y1s were exposed to this. Last year we had done acrostic poems in a group setting quite a few times, so that the others [Y2+Y3s] knew what to do. I should have spent a bit of time talking about poems in general, as well as other types of poems, so in a way I kind of threw them into the deep end.”

The teacher’s admittance to the way the lesson went and her reflection on how she had successfully done such a lesson in the past reveals that she analysed her lesson and was aware that the lesson did not go well. As a result, she acted upon her reflections and chose to redo the lesson thus providing another opportunity for the learners to gain knowledge of poetry-writing. The above two examples highlight the inclusivity of the practice of Reflective Teaching and how it was used to provide multiple opportunities to learn, thus promoting access to the curriculum. The next group of pedagogical practices to be discussed promote recognition and acceptance of learners in the classroom.

4.2.4. Practices that Promote Recognition and Acceptance

In this grouping, the focus is on the pedagogical Practices that Promote Recognition and Acceptance of all learners in the classroom. Recognition and acceptance refers to the validation, approval and respect that is given to learners’ choices (Sapon-Shevin, 2007) allowing the learners to feel included in the classroom. Validation is facilitated by praise and recognition of learners’ talents, whilst respect for the learners’ choices contributes to the feeling of acceptance within the classroom. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) state that maintaining the dignity of learners in the classroom promotes recognition and acceptance. Within this grouping, the pedagogical practices of Teaching Social Skills and Learner-Selected Work will be discussed.

4.2.4.1. Teaching Social Skills

Social skills refer to a broad category of skills that can be taught to learners to ensure appropriate social behaviour. Behaving appropriately contributes to the way inclusivity is maintained in the classroom with learners of varying abilities (Fenty, Miller & Lampi, 2008). The data revealed evidence of social skills being taught in the Montessori classroom. In many instances, the teachers observed modelled the kind of behaviour they would have liked to see in their learners. Learners in the younger phases especially, readily imitated the teacher. The following example provides more insight:

The whole class is sitting in a circle around teacher B on the carpet. The learners are taking turns to stand up and recite their poems; each year group gets a different poem. Some learners do not know the whole poem as is evident by the hesitating and moments of quiet in the middle of the recital. Other learners help by prompting the first few words of that stanza. There is no mocking and no jeering. The class applauds every learner's recital – not just for perfect recitals. Teacher B praises each learner with a “well done (learner's name)” and the learners mimic teacher B's praise.

In the above extract, the class notices that the teacher applauds and praises each learner after their recital, therefore they do the same. By modelling the appropriate response, the teacher shows the learners how they should behave. Even when a learner was in a vulnerable situation such as not remembering the initial lines of the poem, the teacher provided validation at the end of the recital (applause and praise). This is what makes the practice inclusive – all learners were praised, and no distinction was made for those that were unable to recite their poetry perfectly from those that were able to. Similarly, in the extract below, the teacher exhibits to the learners that they need to be quiet. The teacher does this by modelling the learners' behaviour, speaking to them in a whisper.

Teacher C whispers as he reminds the Y5s to be quiet and not to disturb those that are working as they return from their snack break. They walk in quietly and sit down at their tables.

Again, Teacher C displays the behaviour that he expects the learners to follow, which was to remain quiet. Moreover, the inclusivity in the practice – which was the choice to whisper to the learners – indicated the gentleness with which the message was communicated. In doing so, the dignity of the learners in the

classroom is upheld, which Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) stress as being important when deciding which pedagogical practices are inclusive.

Social skills can be taught in numerous ways and there is no set way to teaching the learners social skills. However, it has been noted that social skills are necessary for inclusive classrooms to function (Fenty, Miller & Lampi, 2008; Sapon-Shevin, 2007). Seeing that the Montessori Method is centred on respect, learners are explicitly taught how to be helpful, empathetic and kind from the preschool stage (Lillard, 2005). This kind of preparation in modelling good behaviour carries through to the later years, and is facilitated by older and younger learners belonging to the same classroom. The next (and final) practice to be discussed in this category is Learner-Selected Work.

4.2.4.2. Learner-Selected work

One of the characteristics of a Montessori classroom is the learners' freedom to choose their own work, sometimes under guidance from the teacher. A variety of activities with varying levels of difficulty appeared in marked boxes (some according to year group) on low shelves. Amongst the activities available were the Montessori Materials. Here is evidence of learners choosing activities:

Y2 and Y3 learners choose which language activities to work on from the selection available on the low shelves in the classroom.

The data revealed that when the learners selected their work, they were at liberty to choose which exercises they wanted to do, with no direction from the teacher. A similar finding of "work choice" was noted by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) during the poetry-writing activity and referred to as an example of inclusive pedagogy being practiced.

What makes Learner-Selected Work an inclusive pedagogical practice is that the learners are given the liberty to choose their own activity from a selection of pre-determined activities. The fact that the materials are available to all is stressed by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) as what defines the inclusivity in accommodating for individual differences. The availability of tasks and activities for the learners covered a variety of learners' needs but were ultimately left for the learner to decide which activities they would like to do.

In another example, two Y4 learners choose to use a Montessori Material called “Racks and Tubes”, which is used as a tangible manipulative to calculate long division sums. This material has multiple uses and it is used in the Montessori JP phase for simple calculations and for more complex calculations in the SP phase. Therefore the SP learners are familiar with the way the material is used, and know when to use the appropriate material to assist themselves.

Two Y4 girls walked up to the shelf and chose to use “racks and tubes” to work out their long division sums.

Allowing learners to select their own work allows learners to exert their independence. By providing learners with a choice of materials that they could use, the teacher does not choose which learners should use the materials and which learners should not, thereby accommodating a variety of learners’ needs in a discreet manner. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011, p. 822) note a similar finding when learner provision is catered for without outwardly marking learners as different as long as “the outcome is that learners’ needs are met but individual students are not marginalised”.

In this section I have shown how each pedagogical practice was used, or not used (in the case of Co-Teaching) in an inclusive way by the teacher. In the following section the focus shifts to factors from the Montessori Method itself that have influenced and/or enabled some pedagogical practices to be employed by the teacher. This will be discussed in further detail in the section below.

4.3. The Influence of the Montessori Method and Environment on the Inclusivity of the Pedagogical Practices

Inductive thematic analysis of the data revealed that the Montessori Method influenced the way pedagogical practices were presented and implemented by the teachers. I have identified four broad themes relating to the influence of the Montessori Method. These four themes are:

1. Classroom Setup
2. Mixed Age Grouping
3. Montessori Materials and Method

4. Highly Individualised Provision

The **Classroom Setup** consists of large, open spaces with low shelves and interconnecting rooms, allowing learners free movement between these different spaces. The **Mixed-Age Grouping** refers to the three-year bands in which learners are grouped per class. In JP classrooms, there are learners aged 6-9 years, and in the SP class there are learners aged 9-12 years. These environmental aspects form part of Montessori classrooms that “typically share many features” (Lillard, 2005, p.18). The first two themes (the Classroom Setup and Mixed Age Grouping) are environmental and relate to those elements that the teacher finds within the classroom and that s/he has little control over. The **Montessori Materials and Method** refer to the way in which the various manipulatives are typically used in Montessori classrooms, such as the Golden Beads, the Short Bead Stair and the Geometric Solids etc. to enhance efforts at meeting the learning needs of all learners. Lastly the fourth theme is the manifestation of Montessori’s core concept of “following the child” (Montessori, 1969). The theme of **Highly Individualised Provision** relates to the way in which learner support is viewed in a Montessori classroom. The distinguishing factor of individualised provision is to follow the interest of the learner, whilst the teacher serves as a guide that assists the learner to choose what can be learned and how. The third and fourth themes relate to the Montessori Method and both of these can be highly variable as the teacher has a greater degree of control over how the Montessori Materials and Method are used, as well as to what degree the teacher “follows the child”.

Some of the factors affecting the way pedagogical practices are carried out are environmental, such as the Classroom Setup and the Mixed-Age Grouping. Others are related to the Montessori Method, such as the availability of visually-appealing, concrete manipulatives that are colour-coded according to specific criteria. Yet other factors appear as a result of the emphasis on respecting the child by following their individual interests. The existence of an egalitarian atmosphere in which the children and adults are equally important members of the classroom is brought about by Montessori’s concept of “following the child”. Some of the ways in which the teachers stood out as being inclusive is the way in which teachers were respectful of the learners and the level of freedom given

to the learners when making decisions about their learning. These are discussed in further detail below.

4.3.1. The Classroom Setup

The Montessori Environment, or the “prepared environment” (Cossentino, 2010) appeared structured and neatly organised with colour-coded activities set out in boxes and baskets on low shelves. ‘Prepared’ refers to the selection of pre-determined activities available to all the learners. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) describe the availability of tasks and activities that learners can choose from as being an inclusive way of accommodating a variety of learners’ needs whilst avoiding stigmatisation and marginalisation. The data revealed that some activities were available for specific year groups and are labelled accordingly, such as the comprehension cards (see 4.2.2.2.), whilst others such as the Long Chains (see 4.2.2.1.) are available to all.

The arrangement of the JP Montessori classroom had ample open, carpeted areas, with steps leading down into an adjoining Cultural room, filled with Montessori Materials and books arranged neatly on low, easily accessible shelves. These two areas were separated by a large glass sliding door and learners were able to move freely from one space into another. There was no chalkboard in the classroom, only a small whiteboard used for notices and reminders. Thus most of the teaching was done on the floor with the learners. There were tables and chairs available in the classroom for the learners to sit and work. The freedom of movement facilitated the inclusivity of the classroom as learners were given the choice to work wherever they felt comfortable.

In the SP classroom, there were two entrances into the room. On one end there was a carpeted area with shelves filled with Montessori Materials, on the other, a large table with eight chairs and a whiteboard. In the centre there were learners’ desks and chairs. Next to the large table there was a reading corner, with two bookshelves and two desks next to each bookshelf. These two desks are for learners who want to work alone and undisturbed. This type of arrangement enabled the teacher to move freely between the learners as well as provide a few secluded spots for those that needed a place to work alone. The following two examples are instances in which the environment can be

seen as influencing the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices. In the first instance below, the arrangement of the classroom can be seen as a positive contribution towards meeting the needs of a child with a short attention span:

A learner in Y4 who struggles to concentrate sits and works undisturbed at the table which is situated between the two bookshelves.

Providing predetermined quiet areas away from stressful classroom situations for learners with ADHD is stated by Du Paul and Stoner (as cited in Cooper, 2005) as a useful strategy for ADHD learners. In the second example, the environment enhanced the execution of Whole Class Instruction:

The teacher sits on the carpet together with the learners in a circle

This contribution to the inclusivity of the teacher sitting in the centre of a large open carpeted area and surrounded by the learners. Sapon-Shevin (2007) describes the circular arrangement of the learners around the teacher as being one that is learner-centred rather than teacher-centred. The link between the inclusivity and learner-centeredness of the class can be seen in the physical arrangement. Corbett (2001, p. 57) argues that an overtly child-centred approach does not make an anarchic school, but rather makes learners “feel safe, comfortable and confident”. I noted that the learners were free to choose where they were most comfortable to work, demonstrating the learner-centeredness of the classroom. The next theme in the contribution towards inclusive pedagogical practices is the Mixed Age Groupings.

4.3.2. Mixed Age Grouping

The Mixed Age Grouping refers to the practice of placing learners within similar age bands together in the same class. As a result of the vertical age groupings, there are a variety of activities relevant to each age group occurring simultaneously in the classroom at any given time. It has occurred to me that when there are outside interventions for some children who received additional support, it is less noticeable due to the Mixed Age Grouping. This was confirmed by one of the teachers interviewed who said the following:

Teacher: "Also... because there is a 3-year age grouping, it is not easy for learners to see which learners are receiving support".

The three-year age groupings also mean that the same teacher is with the same child for a period of three years, allowing the teacher to get to know the learner very well and thus respond to the learners' individual needs. As one teacher remarked:

"There are learners we have come to know very well as the years have progressed and because of this we know who would need what from the outset".

Here the teacher is referring to Y2 and Y3 children that have been with her in previous years. The familiarity between teacher and learner allows the teacher to immediately respond to additional needs of the learners as she has taught them in previous year/s. Although not an inclusive pedagogical classroom practice, this is known as "looping" as is considered a school-wide inclusive practice (Nevin, Cramer, Voigt & Salazar, 2008). When asked if the Mixed Age Grouping had any effect on the provision of support, one teacher said the following:

"There are times when the older ones support and look out for the younger ones, and other times that the younger ones help the older kids out".

The Mixed Age Grouping thus enables a sense of community as the learners learn and support one another in their environment. As discussed earlier in the previous section, the Mixed Age Grouping adds a new dimension to pedagogical practices such as Co-operative Learning and Peer Tutoring, which provides opportunities for Cross-age tutoring in the Montessori classroom. At times the Mixed Age Grouping can be useful, as can be seen in the form of Cross-Age tutoring where experienced older learners tutor the younger ones. Not all the differences are positive, however. The Mixed Age Grouping could add a new set of concerns to the way Co-operative Learning is used, for instance. This is because there would be older and younger learners within the same group, creating a situation that might allow marginalisation of the younger learners to occur (see 4.2.2.1.). In addition, the Mixed Age Grouping reduces opportunities for Whole Class Instruction, given that there are three different year groups in the same classroom that require teaching at three different

levels. The next theme in the contribution towards inclusive pedagogical practices is the Montessori Materials and Method.

4.3.3. Montessori Materials and Method

The Montessori Materials facilitate the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices by allowing the learners to work independently. King-Sears (1997) argues that inclusive teaching strategies should guide learners towards independent learning. In addition, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) advocate for the learners' dignity to be maintained and respected whilst providing support inclusively. Many of the Montessori Maths manipulatives have a control of error built in, so learners know when they are doing something incorrectly without having the teacher point it out to them, reducing unwelcome attention. This also enhances their ability to work independently. One of the teachers had this to say:

"Many of the Montessori Materials are self-correcting, so we don't need to correct the child..."

In the Montessori classroom, some of the materials have been previously introduced to the learners in the preschool class and learners are knowledgeable in its use, for example the Golden Beads and the Long Chains. Given that the materials are readily available in each classroom within reach of the learner, the learners are able to access them easily as required. When interviewed, one teacher mentioned the use of the Montessori Materials in the provision of support in Maths. This is what the teacher had to say:

"The Montessori Materials are used to assist the learners, particularly in Maths. Many of the children use them when they need to... to work out their sums, to count and things like that".

Since the learners are aware of how the materials are used, they are able to help themselves to the appropriate materials when they require it. This means that learners got up and walked to the shelves for materials at any time. As I observed this, the classroom always looked busy. I also noted that learners had different activities to complete, even within the same year group. This brings me to the next theme, which is Highly Individualised Provision.

4.3.4. Highly Individualised Provision

The strong focus on the individual learner appears to be a defining characteristic of Montessori classrooms (Vetiveloo, 2008). All the teachers interviewed confirmed that the school takes in learners who have special education needs. This is typical of Montessori schools, following Lillard's (2005) description of the Montessori belief that all children have the potential to learn and that every learner has interests that they must be allowed to pursue. One of the teachers had this to say:

“As Montessorians, we are expected to see each child’s individual capabilities and work with those”.

A commitment to teaching each and every learner can be seen in the teacher's statement above. The “commitment to the support of all learners is an outcome of underlying assumptions of inclusive pedagogy” when teachers believe that they are capable of teaching all children, as argued by Florian and Spratt (2013, p.124). In the Montessori classroom, the emphasis is always to ‘follow the child’ and this ensures a learner-centred classroom. The data revealed many instances where learners were respected as full members of the classroom and allowed to make their own choices. This is congruent with Hugo's (2013) assertion that learner-led pedagogies are optimal pedagogies, which allows the teacher to do many things at the same time. In addition, teachers provide learners with a variety of options, and have a work schedule that allows for both compulsory and optional work. With regards to the optional work, individual learners choose what and how they want to learn. When they require assistance and support, they either approach the teacher or fellow classmates.

4.4. Figure of Influential Factors on the Inclusivity of the Pedagogical Practices

Following the discussion above, the following figure is a diagrammatic representation of the factors arising from Montessori settings (four blue ovals) that were observed to have an effect on the identified inclusive pedagogical practices (eight peach rectangles). The effects of the four identified Montessori themes can be seen by the arrows that match the theme with each identified pedagogical practice. Co-Teaching does not appear in the figure, since no

evidence of Co-Teaching as an inclusive pedagogical practice was found in the Montessori classroom. A description of the figure follows the image.

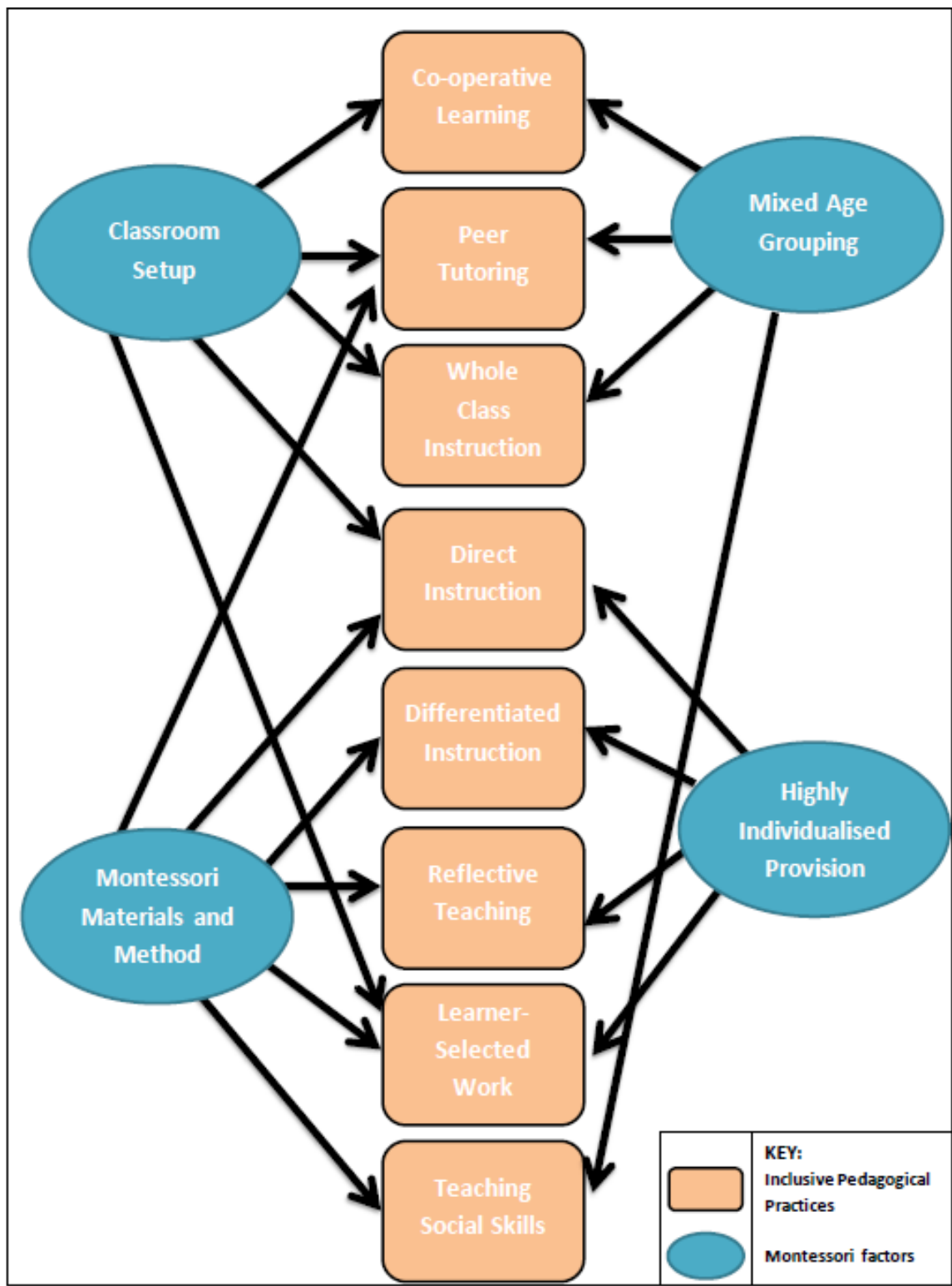


Figure 1: Relationship between Montessori Factors and Inclusive Pedagogical Practices

The influence of the **Classroom Setup** indicated that the use of open spaces within the physical environment promoted the inclusive pedagogical practices of Co-Operative Learning, Whole Class Instruction and Direct Instruction. In addition, the materials that appeared within easy reach of the learners enabled the pedagogical practices of Peer Tutoring and Learner-Selected Work.

The **Mixed Age Grouping** influenced the way the inclusive pedagogical practices of Co-Operative Learning, Peer Tutoring and Whole Class Instruction manifested in the classroom. By having three age groups within the same class, opportunities existed for the older and younger learners to learn from each other during Peer Tutoring, Teaching Social Skills and Co-operative Learning. In this way collaboration rather than competition is emphasised as learners worked together in the classroom community. However, the Mixed Age Grouping appeared to limit the use of Whole Class Instruction as the teacher would not actively teach all the year groups simultaneously.

The **Montessori Materials and Method** facilitated the provision of choices for learner activities in Learner-Selected Work, allowed learners to work together during Peer Tutoring, encouraged the respectful concepts that enhanced the Teaching of Social Skills, facilitated the use of Direct Instruction by having a self-correcting feature in many materials, promoted the use of Differentiated Instruction and Reflective Teaching by providing multiple opportunities to learn.

The **Highly Individualised Provision** adheres to the concept of “following the child” and had an influence on the way in which Direct Instruction often appeared in sessions between the teacher and one learner, Differentiated Instruction appeared in a variety of instances and daily activities, Learner-Selected Work that catered for individual interest of the learners, as well as Reflective Teaching which allowed for all learners’ needs to be met by enabling multiple opportunities to learn.

4.5. Conclusion

From this discussion, I have drawn several conclusions. Firstly, there were a number of examples of identified inclusive pedagogical practices found across the four Montessori classrooms. Out of the initial nine identified practices,

evidence of eight practices was found. This suggests that overall the four teachers observed in Montessori settings did engage in inclusive pedagogical practices. Secondly, the Montessori environment allowed some pedagogical practices to be articulated in ways that differ from those described in the literature (where evidence is mainly derived from mainstream classrooms). The most notable differences were recorded in the manifestation of practices such as Peer Tutoring and Learner-Selected Work, which were noted to be learner-directed rather than teacher-directed. Thirdly, the Montessori environment, its setup and materials, enabled and facilitated many pedagogical practices that are inclusive, but it is up to the teacher to use them effectively. As a result, not all teachers displayed the same pedagogical practices even though the tools in the classroom might have allowed them to do so. This ties in with Vetiveloo's (2008) findings that the Montessori environment can be used as an inclusive tool. Lastly, there is an indication that some of the classroom practices found fall within a wider culture of school-wide inclusive practices. However, more research is required to explore these school-wide practices within Montessori settings.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This study has examined the inclusive pedagogical practices that were evident in a South African Montessori classroom in the Primary Schooling phase. A case study design was used and data analysis took place via a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, as discussed in Chapter 3. The findings and analysis of the pedagogical practices were detailed in Chapter 4. This chapter will summarize the general conclusions and address the implications of the study. The strengths and limitations of the study will also be discussed. Then, recommendations for both primary schools and teachers will be made, as well as recommendations for further study.

5.2. An Overview of the Study

This study focussed on the inclusive pedagogical practices that were examined in the Montessori classroom, at primary school level. The study aimed to assist in addressing the issue of the paucity of literature on inclusive pedagogy in South Africa (Makoelle, 2012) as well as providing practical examples of how some teachers maintained inclusivity in the Junior and Senior Primary phases of the Montessori classroom. Interviews and direct observations were carried out on four teachers during the two week data collection period at a Montessori primary school in Gauteng. The observed practices were analysed deductively using the pattern-matching technique against a table of nine pedagogical practices defined in the literature as being inclusive. In order to enrich the data obtained from field notes, the teacher interviews were analysed to find corresponding evidence of the reasoning behind the use of pedagogical practices.

5.3. Answering the Research Questions

The overarching question guiding this study was “Which inclusive pedagogical practices, as identified by the literature, can be found in a South African Montessori primary classroom?” with three sub-questions, “Which pedagogical practices are

identified by the literature as being inclusive?”, “What do these pedagogical practices look like as they are employed by teachers?” and “Does the Montessori Method have any influence on the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices found?”. In this section, the answers to these questions are provided.

5.3.1. Which inclusive pedagogical practices, as identified by the literature, can be found in a South African Montessori primary classroom?

Teachers in the Montessori classroom were found to be using eight of the nine inclusive pedagogical practices that were identified from the literature. One pedagogical practice that had the possibility of being executed in the Senior Primary phase, but of which no examples were found, is Co-Teaching. Evidence of the remaining eight inclusive pedagogical practices was found in the Montessori classroom in both the JP and SP phases. These included Co-operative Learning, Peer Tutoring, Whole Class Instruction, Direct Instruction, Differentiated Instruction, Reflective Teaching, Teaching Social Skills and Learner-Selected Work.

5.3.2. What does the literature regard as inclusive pedagogical practices?

The pedagogical practices identified as being inclusive in this study were those that related to collaboration, access to the curriculum and the recognition and acceptance of learners. Whilst by no means exhaustive, I have identified the following nine practices as being inclusive for this study.

1. Co-operative learning (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hattie, 2008; King-Sears, 1997)
2. Peer tutoring (Mitchell, 2008; Hattie, 2008; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; King-Sears, 1997)
3. Co-teaching (Gurgur & Uzuner, 2011; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Sapon-Shevin, 2007; King-Sears, 1997; Hattie, 2008)
4. Whole-class instruction (Florian & Rouse, 2005; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Tomlinson et. al, 2003)
5. Differentiated instruction (Wormeli, 2007; Walton, 2013; Tomlinson et. al, 2003; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010)
6. Direct Instruction (King-Sears, 1997; Hattie, 2008; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010)

7. Reflective Teaching (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Sapon-Shevin, 2007; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010)
8. Teaching social skills (Florian & Rouse, 2005; Fenti, Miller & Lampi, 2008; Shoenfeld, 2012; Sapon-Shevin, 2007)
9. Learner-selected work (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey, 2010; Hugo, 2013; Tomlinson et. al)

5.3.3. What do these pedagogical practices resemble when they are employed by teachers?

Most of the practices look similar to the way pedagogical practices are described from literature that is based on mainstream classrooms. Six of the eight inclusive pedagogical practices found, appeared as per descriptions in the literature, namely Whole Class Instruction (2.4.4.4. in chapter two), Direct Instruction (2.4.4.6. in chapter two), Differentiated Instruction (2.4.4.5. in chapter two), Reflective Teaching (2.4.4.7. in chapter two), Teaching Social Skills (2.4.4.8. in chapter two) and Learner-Selected Work (2.4.4.9. in chapter two). Two practices that differed slightly from those described in the literature were Peer Tutoring (2.4.4.2. in chapter two), and Co-operative Learning (2.4.4.1. in chapter two). Peer Tutoring was perceived to be learner-led rather than teacher-directed. The differences in Co-operative Learning were minor in the way that it was executed with learners of different ages as opposed to learners that are same-age peers. I also noted that the variation in peer ages during Co-Operative Learning had unique characteristics that were specific to having older learners and younger learners working together co-operatively.

5.3.4. Does the Montessori Method have any influence on the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices found?

The data showed that there was an influence of the Montessori Method in the way inclusivity was maintained in the pedagogical practices of the teachers. Four broad themes were identified as having influenced the pedagogical practices found. These four themes are the Classroom Setup, Mixed Age Grouping, Montessori Materials and Method as well as Highly Individualised Provision. These four themes were found to mostly enable and facilitate the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices in a variety of ways, but not all the influences of the Mixed Age Grouping were positive.

The Classroom Setup consisted of large, open spaces with low shelves and interconnecting rooms which provides ample space for freedom of movement of the learners. The Mixed Age Grouping referred to the vertical age groupings of each class and it had both positive and negative effects on the pedagogical practices. The Montessori Materials and Method were also noted to have a positive effect on the pedagogical practices. The Materials refer to the tangible items found in the classroom that facilitate the grasp of concepts, whilst the Method refers to the Montessori system from which the pedagogy is derived. Highly Individualised Provision refers to the learner-centred view that teachers possess and stems from the core Montessori belief of “following the child”. Teacher interviews revealed that teachers treated each learner as being able to learn, even when the learner had a disability that they felt they were not trained to manage. This finding is consistent with Florian’s (2014) assertion that teachers need to believe that all learners can learn as it forms the basis for inclusive pedagogy.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

In order to provide an objective perspective, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of the study. Limitations in the design, execution and findings are mentioned below.

5.4.1. Limitations in Design

One of the major limitations of the case study design relates to the issue of generalisation. Case studies by definition make no assertions of being typical therefore there are no expectations to the generalisability of the study. I have presented the data that I found in the primary Montessori classrooms of one school but due to the contextual nature of Montessori schooling, using this study I cannot generalize that the findings would be the same across other Montessori schools in South Africa.

5.4.2. Limitations in Execution

There were three limitations with regards to the execution of the study. The first relates to the time frame of the data collection period. Whilst it was presumed that the Montessori Method of teaching was used in *all* classes throughout the day, this was not the case. Certain subjects such as Music, Physical Education and French

classes were taught by outside providers that did not use the Montessori Method. Thus, those classes were not observed, resulting in a shorter data collection period than was initially envisaged.

The second limitation in the execution of the study was the way in which the interviews were carried out, seeing that only one of the four participants knew what inclusive education was. This meant that as the interviewer, I had to explain what certain practices referred to. In doing so, the teachers might have been inclined to answer in a way that elaborated on their positive aspects and might have tried to “sound inclusive”.

The third limitation relates to the sample size, particularly the size of the classes observed. There was a maximum of 23 learners in the SP class, whilst there were only 18 learners in each of the JP classes observed. The class size could have affected my findings and the outcomes might have been different with a larger class size. Seeing that the small class sizes are not representative of South African classrooms in ordinary schools, it cannot be concluded with certainty that the practices observed can be successfully replicated in other, larger classes.

5.4.3. Limitations in the Findings

Given that it would not have been possible to record every pedagogical practice that might occur in a Montessori classroom, this study focused on examining nine inclusive pedagogical practices that were identified in the literature as being inclusive prior to the study. Therefore the findings of this study were limited to these nine pedagogical practices, with the possibility that other pedagogical practices that were not part of the nine identified practices might have been excluded from the findings. Despite this, there were some strengths to the study, and these are discussed below.

5.5. Strengths of the Study

Whilst the limitations of the case study have been acknowledged above, this is not to say that the knowledge and insight provided by case studies cannot be useful. One of the major strengths of a descriptive case study is that new insights are presented in detail, providing a deeper understanding rather than a generalization. Seeing that a study that looked at a combination of inclusive pedagogical practices in Montessori

settings was not conducted in South Africa before, the vivid descriptions of *how* inclusive pedagogical practices are implemented can be a valuable source of information particularly to practitioners. A further strength of the study is that it has expanded on the body of literature in the field of inclusive pedagogy, which is an area of little research in South Africa (Makoelle, 2012).

5.6. Recommendations

The findings of the study indicate that there a number of elements from the Montessori Method that contribute to the inclusivity of the pedagogical practices found. There are some elements that can be immediately implemented such as non-competitiveness, respect for the individual learners and the learner-centeredness of the classes, and can be of benefit to both primary schools and teachers in achieving inclusivity in the classroom. Recommendations for further research will also be made.

5.6.1. Recommendations for Primary Schools

Changing the physical environment of schools can be costly and impractical, but schools can rework their existing classrooms to include spaces that facilitate rather than obscure the teacher's ability to promote inclusivity within the classroom. Features such as large, open spaces can assist in the successful implementation of pedagogical practices like Co-operative Learning and Learner-Selected Work. Primary schools might also want to consider the physical environment and how it can be optimised for inclusion, by providing options of working spaces for learners, as opposed to only working at a desk.

5.6.2. Recommendations for Teachers

It is likely that some of the practices mentioned in this study might already be part of a teacher's repertoire, but the descriptions provided in this study could perhaps enhance those efforts. Descriptions of eight of the nine inclusive pedagogical practices found in this study (Co-operative Learning, Peer Tutoring, Whole Class Instruction, Differentiated Instruction, Direct Instruction, Reflective Teaching, Teaching Social Skills and Learner-selected Work) can assist teachers with practical examples of inclusive pedagogy in action. These descriptions can enhance the

implementation of pedagogical practices by teachers who seek to be more inclusive in their classrooms.

Whilst there are many ways in which teachers can use these easy-to-implement and valuable inclusive practices, the practices that the teachers in this study engaged in revealed the importance of a teachers' attitude towards the learners: all learners are respected and treated as equal, active members of the classroom. Of the inclusive pedagogical practices that were observed in the Montessori classroom, most related to upholding the dignity of the learners as well as the freedom that the learners were afforded, highlighting the learner-centeredness of the classes observed. This recommendation is similar to that of Corbett (2001) who advocates for a learner-centred interpretation of inclusive pedagogy. Therefore the implication from this study for teachers that would like to enhance their inclusivity in the classroom would be to encourage their classes to be more learner-centred. This can be done by providing opportunities for learners to make choices and then respecting those choices, recognising and acknowledging learners by providing appropriate validation and approval, and providing learner support in a way that maintains the dignity of the learners.

5.6.3. Recommendations for Future Research

This study involved the balancing of two very large conceptual bases, Inclusive Education and the Montessori Method. Combining these two conceptual bases in this way means that I have simply scratched the surface and more research is required to fully explicate this topic in the South African context. In light of this, similar studies with a larger sample of Montessori schools, perhaps in other areas in South Africa, might affirm or reject the prevalence of inclusive pedagogical practices in other South African Montessori schools. In contrast, comparative studies of inclusive pedagogy that focuses on Montessori schools balanced against ordinary South African schools could provide greater depth of inclusive pedagogy. Given that inclusive pedagogy is a scarcely researched topic in South Africa, it is hoped that future research would focus on more "glimpses" into the classroom that would shed light on the ways in which teachers use inclusive pedagogical practices in a variety of contexts.

5.7. Conclusions

Examining inclusive pedagogical practices that were found in the Montessori classroom provided new insights on how certain established practices are found in an alternative context. Since the focus of the research was on the ways in which teachers used pedagogical practices inclusively within the Montessori classroom, this knowledge might prove useful to South African teachers in ordinary schools that are seeking deeper understandings as well as practical examples of inclusive pedagogy in action. In addition, a variety of ways in which the learner-centeredness manifests in the Montessori classroom is highlighted, which has a fundamental impact on the inclusivity of the practices following a rights-based interpretation of inclusive pedagogy.

Reference List

- Allan, J. (2007). *Rethinking inclusive education*. Chapter 10. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Allan, J. & Slee, R. (2008). *Doing Inclusive Education Research*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Alexander, R. (2004). Still no pedagogy? Principle, pragmatism and compliance in primary education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 34(1), 7-33.
- Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A. & Spandagou, I. (2011). Inclusion: by choice or by chance? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15 (1), 29-39.
- Barnes, C. (2003). What a Difference a Decade Makes: reflections on doing 'emancipatory' disability research. *Disability and Society*, (18) 1, 3 -17.
- Cook, B. & Schirmer, B. (2003). What is special about special education? Overview and Analysis. *The Journal of Special Education*, 37 (3), 200-205.
- Cooper, P. (2005). AD/HD. In A. Lewis and B. Norwich (eds). *Special Teaching for Special children?* (pp. 123- 137). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Corbett, J. (2001). Teaching Approaches Which Support Inclusive Education: A Connective Pedagogy. *British Journal of Special Education*, 28 (2), 55-59.
- Corbett, M. (2010). Pedagogy and Case Study. In A. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*. (pp. 665-669). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Corcoran, P., Walker, K. E., & Wals, A. J. (2004). Case studies, make-your-case studies, and case stories: a critique of case study methodology in sustainability in higher education. *Environmental Education Research*, 10(1), 7-21
- Cossentino, J. (2010). Following all the children: Early intervention and Montessori. *Montessori Life*, 22 (4), 38-45.
- Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational Research*. Fourth Edition. Boston: Pearson.
- Croft, A. (2012). Promoting access to education for disabled children in low-income countries: Do we need to know how many disabled children there are? *International Journal of Educational Development*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.08.005>.

- D'Amant, A. (2012). Within and between the old and the new: Teachers becoming inclusive practitioners. *Perspectives in Education*, 30 (1). 53-60.
- Daniels, H. (2006). The dangers of corruption in special needs education. *British Journal of Special Needs Education*, 33 (1), 4-9.
- Dei Sefa, G. (2005). The Challenge of inclusive schooling in Africa: A Ghanaian case study. *Comparative Education*, 41 (3), 267-289.
- Department of Education. (2001). *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Donabella, M. A., & Rule, A. C. (2008). Four seventh grade students who qualify for academic intervention services in mathematics learning multi-digit multiplication with the Montessori Checkerboard. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 4(3) Article 2.
- Donohue, D., & Bornman, J. (2014). The challenges of realizing inclusive education in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 34 (2), Article 806.
- Ellingson, L. (2008). *Engaging Crystallization in Qualitative Research*. Santa Clara University: Sage.
- Eloff, I. & Kgwete, L. (2007). South African teachers' voices on support in inclusive education. *Childhood Education*, 83 (6), 351-355.
- Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I. & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Field notes Second Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Engelbrecht, P. (1999). A theoretical framework for inclusive education. In Engelbrecht, P., Green, L., Naicker, S. and Engelbrecht, L. (Eds). *Inclusive education in action in South Africa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Engelbrecht, P., Oswald, M. & Forlin, C. (2006). Promoting the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in South Africa. *British Journal of Special Education*. 33(3). 121-129.

- Fenty, N. S., Miller, M. A., & Lampi, A. (2008). Embed social skills instruction in inclusive settings. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 43(3), 186-192.
- Fereday, J. & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5 (1), 80-92.
- Florian, L. & Rouse, M. (2005). Inclusive Practice in Secondary Schools. In M. Nind, J. Rix, K. Sheehy & K. Simmons (Eds.). *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Inclusive Education: Values into Practice*. Oxon: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Florian, L. & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring Inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(5), 813-828.
- Florian, L. & Spratt, J. (2013). Enacting inclusion: a framework for interrogating inclusive practice. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 28 (2), 119-135.
- Florian, L. (2014). What counts as evidence of inclusive education? *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 29 (3), 286-294.
- Hak, T. & Dul, J. (2010). Pattern Matching. In A. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research*. (pp. 663-665). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Grandy, G. (2010). Instrumental Case Study. In A. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research*. (pp. 473-476). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook for qualitative research* (pp. 105-107). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hughes, S. J. (2009). Montessori education, neuropsychology and the child with special needs: referral, assessment and intervention. *NAMTA Journal*, 34(2), 74-138.
- Hugo, W. (2013). *Cracking the Code to Educational Analysis*. Cape Town: Pearson.

- Jamieson, N.Y. (2005). *The contribution of the Montessori approach to multisensory approaches to early learning disabilities*. (Masters' Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)
- Jordan, A., Schwartz, E., McGhie-Richmond, D. (2009). Preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25 (2), 535-542.
- Kellet, M. (2004). Intensive Interaction in the inclusive classroom: using interactive pedagogy to connect with students who are hardest to reach. *Westminster Studies in Education*. Vol. 27(2), 175-188.
- King-Sears, M. E. (1997). Best academic practices for inclusive classrooms. *Focus On Exceptional Children*, 29(7), 1-22.
- Ladbrook, M.W. (2009). *Challenges experienced by educators in the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in South Africa*. (Masters' Research Report, University of South Africa, Pretoria)
- Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2008) *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. (8th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Lewis, A. (2005). Reflecting on interviewing children and young people as a method of enquiry in exploring their perspectives on integration/inclusion. In K.Sheehy, N. Nind, J. Rix, and K. Simmons (Eds.) *Ethics and Research in Inclusive education*. (pp. 215-228). Milton Park: Routledge.
- Lillard, A.S. (2011). What Belongs in a Montessori Primary Classroom? *Montessori Life*, 23 (3), 18-32.
- Lillard, A.S. (2005). *Montessori: The science behind the genius*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lillard, P.P. (1972). *Montessori: A Modern Approach*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Loreman, T.J., Deppeler, J.M. & Harvey, D.H. (2010). *Inclusive Education. Supporting diversity in the classroom*. (2nd Ed) London: Routledge.
- Loeffler, M. H. (1992). *Montessori in Contemporary American Culture*. New York: Heinemann.

- Macmillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Enquiry*. Seventh Edition. New Jersey: Pearson.
- Makoelle, T.M. (2012). The State of Inclusive Pedagogy in South Africa: A Literature Review. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 3 (2), 93-102.
- Mastropieri, M.A. & Scruggs, T.E. (2004). *The inclusive classroom: Strategies for effective instruction*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- McKenzie, G. & Zascavage, V. (2012). Montessori Instruction: A model for inclusion in Early Childhood Classrooms and beyond. *Montessori Life*, 24(1), 32-38.
- Meltz, A., Herman, C., & Pillay, V. (2014). Inclusive education: a case of beliefs competing for implementation. *South African Journal of Inclusive Education*, 34 (3), 1-8.
- Messiou, K. (2006). Understanding marginalisation in education: the voice of children. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 21 (3). 305-318.
- Miles, S. and Singal, N. (2010). The Education for All and inclusive education debate: conflict, contradiction or opportunity? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14 (1), 1-15.
- Miles, S. (2009). Engaging with teachers' knowledge: promoting inclusion in Zambian schools. *Disability and Society*, 24 (5), 611-624.
- Miles, S. and Kaplan, I. (2005). Using images to promote reflection: an action research study in Zambia and Tanzania. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 5 (2), 77-83.
- Mitchell, C., de Lange, N., & Thuy, N., (2008). "Let's not leave this problem." – Exploring inclusive education in rural South Africa. *Prospects*, 38(1), 99-112.
- Mitchell, D. (2005). Introduction: Sixteen propositions on the contexts of inclusive education. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *Contextualising Inclusive Education*. (pp.1-22). London: UK. Routledge.
- Mitchell, D. (2008). *What really works in special and inclusive education. Using evidence-based teaching strategies*. London: Routledge.

- Moll, I. (2004). Towards a constructivist Montessori education. *Perspectives in Education*, 22(2), 37-49.
- Montessori, M. (1967). *The Absorbent Mind*. (C.A. Claremont, Trans.). New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Montessori Terminology* (2015). Retrieved from <https://amshq.org/Family-Resources/Montessori-Terminology>.
- Naicker, S. M. (1999). *Curriculum 2005: A Space for All. An Introduction to Inclusive Education*. Cape Town: South Africa. Tafelberg.
- Naicker, S. M. (2005). An emerging pedagogy of possibility. In D. Mitchell (Ed.), *Contextualising Inclusive Education*. (pp.230-251). London: UK. Routledge.
- Nel, A. (2010). *An integrated learning programme for the Knysna Montessori School*. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth)
- Nevin, A.I., Cramer, E.D., Voigt, J., & Salazar, L. (2008). Instructional modifications, adaptations, and accommodations of co-teachers who loop: A descriptive case study. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 31 (4), 283-297.
- Nind, M. (2005). Introduction: models and practice of inclusive curricula. In M. Nind, J. Rix, K. Sheehy and K. Simmons. (Eds). *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Inclusive Education*. London: UK. Routledge.
- Norwich, B. (2013). *Addressing Tensions and Dilemmas in Inclusive Education*. Oxon: UK. Routledge.
- Norwich, B. (2008). Perspectives and Purposes of disability classification systems: Implications for teachers and curriculum and pedagogy. In L. Florian and M.J. MacLaughlin (Eds). *Disability Classification in Education: Issues and Perspectives*. Corwin: Thousand Oaks, pp. 129-152.
- Norwich, B. & Lewis, A. (2005). How specialised is teaching pupils with disabilities and difficulties? In A. Lewis and B. Norwich (Eds). *Special Teaching for Special children?* (pp. 1-14). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

- Oliver, M. & Barnes, C. (2010). Disability studies, disabled people and the struggle for inclusion. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. (31) 5, 547-560.
- Orem, R. C. (1969). *Montessori and the Special Child*. New York: Putnam.
- Pather, S. (2011). Evidence on inclusion and support for learners with disabilities in mainstream schools in South Africa: off the policy radar? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2011.555075
- Pather, S. (2007). Demystifying Inclusion: implications for sustainable inclusive practice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 11 (5/6), 627-643.
- Pickering, J. S. (1992). Successful applications of Montessori methods with children at risk for learning disabilities. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 42(1), 90-109.
- Pickering, J.S. (2003). Montessori and Learning differences. *Montessori Life*, 15(1), 13.
- Ravet, J. (2011). Inclusive/exclusive? Contradictory perspectives on autism and inclusion: the case for an integrative position. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15 (6), 667-682.
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Sapon-Shevin, M. (2007). *Widening the Circle: The power of inclusive classrooms*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Saracho, O. & Spodek, B. (2003). Recent Trends and Innovations in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum. *Early Child Development and Care*, 173 (2–3), 175–183.
- Sayed, Y. & Soudien, C. (2005). Decentralisation and the construction of inclusion education policy in South Africa. *Compare*, 35(2), 115-125.
- Shoenfeld, N. (2012). *Social Skills as Part of Class Instruction*. Module 18, Virginia Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ttacsd.gmu.edu/my_files/Social_Skills_-_Shoenfeld_Sup_Doc.pdf

- Shulman, L.S. (1986). Those who understand. Knowledge growth in teaching. In *Educational Research*, 15 (2), 4 – 14. Reproduced in L. Shulman (2004). *The Wisdom of Practice: Essays on teaching, learning and learning to teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Slee, R. (2011). *The Irregular School*. London: Routledge.
- South African Montessori Association. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.samontessori.org.za/listings/list-of-schools/item/acorn-to-oak-montessori-pre-primary.html>
- Stake, R. (1994). Case Studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.236-247). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tellis, W. (1997). Application of a case study methodology. *The Qualitative Report [Online serial]*, 3 (3). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/tellis2.html>
- Terzi, L. (2008). Beyond the dilemma of difference. In L. Florian and M.J. MacLaughlin (Eds). *Disability Classification in Education: Issues and Perspectives*. Corwin: Thousand Oaks, pp. 244-262.
- Thomas, G. & Loxley, A. (2001). *Deconstructing Special Education and Constructing Inclusion*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Tomlinson, C., Brighton, C., Hertzberg, H., Callahan, C., Moon, T., Brimijoin, K., Conover, L. & Reynolds, T. (2003). Differentiating instruction in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile in academically diverse classrooms: A Review of the Literature. *Journal for the education of the Gifted*, 27 (2/3), 119-145.
- Tomlinson, S. (1985). The Expansion of Special Education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 11 (2), 157-165.
- UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Vettiveloo, R. (2008). A critical enquiry into the implementation of the Montessori teaching method as first step towards inclusive practices in early childhood settings specifically in developing countries. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 9(2), 178-181.

- Walton, E., Nel, N., Hugo, A. & Muller, H. (2009). The extent and practice of inclusion in independent schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 29(1), 105-126.
- Walton, E. (2011). Getting inclusion right in South Africa. *Intervention in School and Clinic*. 46(4), 240-245.
- Walton, E. & Lloyd, G. (2012). From clinic to classroom: A model of teacher education for inclusion. *Perspectives in Education*. 30(2), 62-70.
- Walton, E. (2013). Learner Support through differentiated teaching and learning. In Nel, N., Nel, M. & Hugo, A. (Eds.) *Learner Support in a Diverse Classroom*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. Chapter 5.
- Walton, E. (2015). Global Concerns and Local Realities: The “Making Education Inclusive” Conference in Johannesburg. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 50 (3), 173-177.
- Welch, T. (2002). Teacher education in South Africa before, during and after apartheid: an overview. In Adler, J., & Reed, Y. (eds). *Challenges of teacher development*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. Chapter 2.
- Wildeman, R. & Nomdo, C. (2007). Implementation of inclusive education: How far are we? *Occasional Papers: IDASA – Budget Information Service*. 1-35.
- Wormeli, R. (2007). Differentiation from planning to practice grades 6-12. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). Qualitative Research from Start to Finish. New York: Guildford Press.
- Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. (1996). *Reflective Teaching, an Introduction*. New Jersey: Routledge.

**INFORMATION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL
APPENDIX A**

[Date to be filled in]

The Principal
(Schools name)

Re: Permission to Conduct Research at Your School

My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a Masters student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on finding inclusive pedagogical practices that occur in a Montessori classroom, with a specific focus on the 6-9 year age group. The title of my research is ***Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study.***

It is my understanding that there are not many Montessori primary schools in Gauteng, and this is the reason for your school being selected. Your school's involvement in this case study is of vital importance but is however completely voluntary and refusal for your school to be involved or choosing to discontinue involvement during the study will not be held against your school in any way. I would however require your assistance in purposively selecting two classes in the Junior Primary phase (6-9 years) that I may invite to participate in the research, which is a case study. Thereafter it would be greatly appreciated if you could assist in facilitating the process of privately contacting and meeting each teacher individually to ensure that they are happy to participate in this project from the onset.

Participation will require that each of the two classes, including the teacher and learners, with their consent as well as their parents' / guardians' / caregivers' consent, agree to allow me to observe the classes as they occur over a period of one week each. Apart from me taking notes by hand, the observations shall be audio-taped and transcribed. In addition to this, the two teachers, with their consent, will partake in a maximum total of five interviews lasting about 30 - 40 minutes which will be audio-taped and transcribed. All expenses incurred will be covered by myself. The data collection process will take place during the school term that is most convenient for you, however I would like to suggest either the first or second term giving me time to analyse and code the data thereafter. Although I will be an observer in the classroom, I do not intend interrupting any contact time neither will I interfere with the day to day running of the school.

The data will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings and therefore your school's name will never be divulged and all participant details will be strictly confidential. Please be assured that all participants' names and identities will not be mentioned at any point within the research report or any other academic publications. To ensure this confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used. All school participants may also refuse to participate; refuse to answer any questions in the interviews conducted; and may also choose to withdraw their consent at any time during the research study without any negative

consequences. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and no form of remuneration will be offered to participants.

All research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be completely destroyed within 3 – 5 years after completion of the project.

Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on (012) 654 000 or 082 111 0000, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com. Alternatively you may contact my supervisors:

Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on (011) 717 3283 or via yasmine.dominguez-whitehead@wits.ac.za or Dr Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za.

A summary of the research report and findings will be made available electronically upon finalization in February 2015 should you wish to receive one.

I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,
Shakira Akabor

Principal: Acknowledgement of information sheet and proposed research study

Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please acknowledge receipt of the information sheet requesting permission to conduct research in your school.

You will be acknowledging that:

- Involvement is completely voluntary and selected participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw their consent at any given time without any negative consequences.
- You have read and understand the information sheet and acknowledge its contents.
- The school's name and participant's information will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity.
- Learners' and their parents' / guardians' / caregivers' consent will be obtained before data collection begins.
- If upon entering the field it becomes evident that the participants' parents / guardian / caregiver is unable to read and/or understand the information and consent forms, I undertake to have them translated at my own expense. Alternatively I will arrange a home visit with a translator to ensure that parents / guardian / caregivers are aware of what they are consenting to.
- The data collection process will not interfere with the day-to-day running of the school, nor will it interfere with the learners' schoolwork.
- It is envisaged that the research findings will be used for academic purposes including books, journals and/or conference proceedings.

I, _____ (*Principal's full name*) acknowledge the information stated above and grant permission for Shakira Akabor to conduct research within

_____ (*school's name*) in 2014.

Please provide details should you wish to receive an electronic summary of the research findings.

E-mail address: _____

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

[Date to be filled in]

Dear (Teacher's name)

Re: Information letter regarding participation in research study

My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a Masters student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on finding inclusive pedagogical practices that occur in a Montessori classroom, specifically on the 6-9 year age group, which is the Junior Primary phase. Inclusive practices refer to the ways in which the Montessori classroom makes provision for everyone to learn, regardless of their ability level or any special needs that they might have. The title of my research is ***Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori primary classroom: A Case Study.***

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. Participation entails my observing your class for the duration of one week (five school days). Your involvement in this case study is of vital importance but is however completely voluntary and refusal for you to be involved or choosing to discontinue involvement during the study will not be held against you in any way. Additionally, any observations I make will be for the purposes of research and will not be used in any way to evaluate you as a teacher. No information generated from the study will be used against you in any way.

Participation in this study involves allowing me to sit and observe you and the students in your classroom for the duration of one school week (five days). Apart from me taking written notes, the observations shall be audio-taped and later transcribed and brought back to you for verification of authenticity. This is to ensure accurate observation of the events. All expenses incurred will be covered by myself. In addition, I would like to ask you a few questions in the form of a short reflection session at the end of each school day, if you agree. This reflection session, consisting of three open-ended questions, should take 10-20 minutes. On the last day of the study (Friday), I would like to interview you to gain your input and insight on inclusive pedagogical practices that might be occurring in the Montessori classroom. This interview should last approximately 30-40 minutes and will not take place during class time, but after school. Although I will be an observer in the classroom, I do not intend interrupting your class in any way.

Your input will be vital to my study and greatly appreciated. Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study, such as journal articles, conference papers etc. Pseudonyms will always be used. Your individual privacy and anonymity will be maintained in all published and written data

resulting from the study. If you change your mind about agreeing to the study, you may say so and there will be no repercussions either for you or the children in the class. Please do remember that there will be no payment of any kind. Apart from the inconvenience of sharing your time with me for reflection sessions and an interview, there are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and no form of remuneration will be offered to participants.

All research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be completely destroyed within 3 – 5 years after completion of the project.

Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on (012) 654 000 or 082 111 0000, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com. Alternatively you may contact my supervisors: Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on (011) 717 3283 or via yasmine.dominguez-whitehead@wits.ac.za or Dr Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za

The research report and findings will be made available electronically upon finalization in July 2015. Please do provide an email address should you wish to receive a copy.

I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Shakira Akabor

=====

TEACHER'S INFORMATION SHEET: Acknowledgement of information sheet and audiotape consent for proposed research study *"Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study."*

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please acknowledge receipt of the information sheet requesting permission to conduct research in your school.

By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you understand what it will mean to consent and participate in this study:

- My participation is completely voluntary and may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any punishment or negative consequences. I will also not be advantaged, disadvantaged or paid for participating.
- My name and all information about me will be strictly confidential in all academic writing including books, journals and conferences by using a fake name (pseudonym).

- I have read and understood the information sheet and acknowledge its contents.
- Learners' and their parents' / guardians' / caregivers' consent will be obtained before data collection begins.
- The data collection process will not interfere with the day to day running of the school, nor will it interfere with the learners' schoolwork.
- The research findings will be used for academic purposes including books, journals and/or conference proceedings.
- The audio recordings will be used to make sure the researcher uses exactly what I answered in the interview questions.
- I acknowledge that all audiotaped and transcribed responses will be safely kept in a locked cabinet and completely destroyed between 3 – 5 years after completion of the project.

I, _____ (*Teacher's full name*) acknowledge the information stated above and grant permission for Shakira Akabor to conduct research within my classroom in _____ 2014.

E-mail address: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

[Date to be filled in]

Dear [Parent / Guardian / Caregiver]

My name is Shakira Akabor, and I am a Masters student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my degree I am conducting research within the field of inclusive education with a focus on finding inclusive pedagogical practices that occur in a Montessori classroom, with a specific focus on the 6-9 year age group. The title of my research is ***Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study.***

You are receiving this letter as your child's class has been purposefully selected as one of the two classrooms in which I shall carry out my study. Although your child will not be directly interviewed or involved in the study, he/she will be present at the time that the research is conducted, and is thus invited to partake in the research study. Participation is completely voluntary and there are no negative consequences should you or your child choose not to participate. Participation will involve your child's presence in the classroom during the time that I shall be observing the teaching practices.

The observations will, with your permission, be audiotaped and transcribed to ensure accurate recording and analysis of the teacher's practices. In agreeing to your child's participation, please be advised that you will not incur any expenses and your son/daughter will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way, nor will he/she be given any money for participating. He/she will be reassured that he/she may choose not to participate or choose to withdraw his/her permission at any time during the research study without any penalty or punishment.

The data will be documented in a research report and it is envisaged that the research findings be used for academic purposes including books, journals and or conference proceedings and therefore it is of utmost importance that your child's details as well as the schools details be kept confidential. In no way will your child's name and identity be mentioned at any point within the study or research report. His / her individual privacy will be maintained at all times. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used to ensure that no-one would be able to recognise your child in any publication or presentation arising from the research. A summary of the findings will also be made available should you be interested.

I guarantee that all research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed within 3 – 5 years after completion of the project. Should you require further information throughout the course of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me on (012) 654 000 or 082 111 0000, or via Shakira.akabor@gmail.com. Alternatively you may contact my supervisors:

Dr Yasmine Dominguez-Whitehead on (011) 717 3283 or via yasmine.dominguez-whitehead@wits.ac.za or Dr Elizabeth Walton on (011) 717 3768 or via elizabeth.walton@wits.ac.za.

Please complete and sign the attached consent forms and return it to me via your child's class teacher no later than 31 January 2014.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,
Shakira Akabor

Participation in the research project:

Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study.

Parent / Guardian / Caregiver: Informed consent for presence in classroom during study

I, _____ (parent / guardian / caregiver's full name) **Give consent / Do not give consent for my child to participate in the research project by being present in the classroom during the time in which the observations are to be conducted.**

I acknowledge that:

- I have read and understand the information sheet.
- My child's participation is completely voluntary and he/she may choose not to participate or choose to withdraw from the study at any time without there being any negative consequences. He/she will also not be advantaged, disadvantaged or reimbursed in any way.
- The researcher will keep my child's identity and all information strictly confidential in all academic writing including books, journal and conferences by using a pseudonym (fake name).

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participation in the research project: *Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study.*

Parent / Guardian / Caregiver: Informed consent for audio-recording and transcribing classroom observations.

I, _____ (parent / guardian / caregiver's full name)

Give consent / Do not give consent to have my child's classes audiotaped and transcribed for the duration of one week in which the researcher will be conducting direct observations of the way the classes are conducted.

I acknowledge that:

- My child's participation is completely voluntary and may choose not to participate or choose to withdraw from the study at any time without there being any negative consequences. He/she will also not be advantaged, disadvantaged or reimbursed in any way.

- The researcher will keep my child's identity and all information strictly confidential in all academic writing including books, journals and conferences by using a pseudonym.
- The audio recordings will be used for data collection and to ensure accurate recording and analysis of observations.
- My child's audio recorded and transcribed classes will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and destroyed between 3 – 5 years after completion of the project.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (LEARNERS)
APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

[Date to be filled in]

Dear [Participant's full name]

My name is Shakira Akabor and I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand School of Education. As part of my degree, I need to do research within the field of inclusive education and I will be sitting quietly in your classroom for one week, whilst taking notes on the special way in which Montessori classrooms work.

My research is called ***Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study***. This means that I am interested in seeing how your Montessori-trained teachers teach you and how you respond to their special way of teaching.

You are receiving this letter because you are part of the classroom in which I have chosen to study for one week. I shall not disturb your classroom in any way, you will see me taking notes in my notebook whilst your lessons are going on. I am asking your permission to allow me to sit and observe your class.

Remember, you can decide if you are happy with me sitting and observing you in class. You will not get into trouble if you say no. Since you are not yet 18 years old, I will also be asking your parents / guardian / caregiver for permission if you would like to participate. If you and your parents / guardian / caregiver agree, participation will involve your presence in the classroom during the one week in which I shall be observing your class. The observations, with your and your parents' / guardian's / caregivers' permission, will be audio-taped to make sure accurate information is used.

Please choose one of the following faces to show that you agree. Circle the face you agree with.

1. I am 😊/😞 to allow Shakira to sit and view my classroom and take notes.
2. I am 😊/😞 to allow Shakira to use an audio recorder to help her take notes.
3. I know that I will not get into any trouble during this project. 😊/😞
4. I am 😊/😞 that my name or the name of my school will not be used in this project.

Please understand that your participation is very important in this study but you will not be forced to participate. This is not a test or for marks so if you agree to participate, you will not be advantaged, disadvantaged or paid in any way.

Participation in the research project:

Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study.

Teachers' informed consent for audio-recording and transcribing individual interviews.

I, _____ (participant's full name)

Give consent / Do not give consent for all interviews to be audiotaped and transcribed

Please tick either the yes or no block to show that you understand what it will mean to consent and participate:

· My participation is completely voluntary and I may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any punishment or negative consequences. I will also not be advantaged, disadvantaged or paid for participating.

Yes / No

· My name and all information about me will be strictly confidential in all academic writing including books, journals and conferences by using a fake name (pseudonym). Yes / No

· The audio recordings will be used to make sure the researcher uses exactly what I answered in the interview questions. Yes / No

· All audio recorded and transcribed responses will be safely kept in a locked cabinet and completely destroyed between 3 – 5 years after completion of the project. Yes / No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E***Inclusive Pedagogical Practices found in a Montessori classroom: A Case Study.*****Teachers Interview Process and Question Schedule****INTERVIEW ONE (semi-structured interview)****Introduction**

Introduce myself as the researcher and explain the purpose of the research. Exchange contact information to keep in contact throughout the duration of data collection and thereafter if needed.

Remind the teachers of the interview protocols:

- What the interview will entail.
- Their right to withdraw from the study at any given time.
- Re-assure participants of confidentiality and that a pseudonym will be used. Allow them the opportunity to select a pseudonym.
- Their right to refuse to answer any questions they are not comfortable answering.
- Their right to withdraw any information given during the course of the study.

Proceed with interview questions

This will be a semi-structured interview and the following questions will be used as a guide. Instances may arise where probe questions will be asked to provide clarity of the teachers' responses.

1. What do you understand by inclusive education?
2. Do you consider this school to be an inclusive school? Please elaborate.
3. What are your thoughts on the Montessori philosophy of teaching and inclusive education?
4. How are learners needs catered for during the planning of lessons?
5. Do the learners see any other professionals, such as OT's, speech therapists, etc. at school?
6. Is there is a special way to teach learners with disabilities?
7. What are your thoughts on the 3-year age grouping: is it useful (or not) in the classroom?
8. How are learners supported if they do not understand their work?
9. What are your thoughts on reflective teaching? Please elaborate.

Thank the teachers for their time and for allowing me the opportunity to interview them. Answer any questions that the teachers may have for me.

APPENDIX F: THE FOLLOWING TWO PAGES ARE EXTRACTS FROM THE RAW RESEARCH DATA. (TRANSCRIPT OF ONE TEACHER INTERVIEW AND AN EXTRACT OF A CLASSROOM OBSERVATION IS ATTACHED)

We got different children here, like [redacted] was here last here, with Down's, and years ago I had a child in my class with Cerebral Palsy. At the moment there are all types of children in the school, some with ADHD, also there are some with other learning disabilities.

Me: Do you plan for different learning abilities when planning lessons?

Absolutely. There are a few learners who we have come to know very well as the years have progressed and because of this, we know exactly who would need what from the outset. Also, as the lessons are being taught, we look out for those that are struggling with particular concepts or take longer to grasp.

Me: Is there a special way to teach learners with disabilities?

Yes I think that teachers trained in special education are better suited to teaching children with disabilities. They know how to handle it and what to do. I did two courses in Inclusive education during my B Ed. It has definitely helped me understand how to approach learners with disabilities.

Me: How do you plan your lessons? Are the different learning abilities thought of?

Yes, all the JP teachers plan together as a phase. The Montessori materials are used to assist the learners particularly in Maths. Many of the children use them as needed in order to work out their sums, to count and things like that.

Me: How are learners supported if they don't understand or struggle with work?

They know that they must come to me and ask for help. Often I can predict which child might find a certain activity challenging and I will work with those kids separately.

Me: Do you think the 3 year-age groupings is useful to you as a teacher, or does it complicate things?

I don't think it is complicated, I'm used to it. I also think it is very good for the older and younger children to be together and learn from each other. There are times when the older ones support and look out for the younger ones, and other times that the younger ones help the older kids out.

Me: Do you engage in reflective teaching? (I elaborate on what this means, as [redacted] requests me to)

Yes, definitely. I always ask myself how I could have improved what I did or said, or if there was a way to approach the subject better for a specific child. I do do this often. Often at night, I think about what worked and what didn't. For instance, in yesterday's group work with the year 1's on acrostic poems, it was the first time that the year ones were exposed to this. Last year we had done acrostic poems in a group setting quite a few times, so that the others knew what to do. I was a bit apprehensive with this group of year ones, but I felt it went very well and they enjoyed the experience. I do think that before introducing the acrostic poems to the year ones, I should have spent a bit of time talking about poems in general, as well as other types of poems, so in a way I kind of threw them into the deep end. Last year I did a background of poetry with the year 1's and 2's (now Y2's and 3's) so they knew what it was.

Handwritten notes:
 - severe disabilities.
 - huge variety of learning abilities.
 - learning disabilities
 - u.d??
 - looping??
 - firm belief in special teaching for special children
 - use of Mont. materials as a tool to provide support.
 - clear knowledge of the child.
 - 3 years spent with one of the child.
 - sense of community
 - positives when
 - evidence of reflective teaching

Day 1 Observations

Date: 19 May 2014; 9am.

Teacher: [redacted] class; JP XX

→ Another Mon. Effect ??

(4)? [redacted] is sitting cross-legged on the floor, with the whole class around her in a circle. She is explaining each year group's tasks. She then calls all the Y1's to her and sends the rest away to work. Kids are very excited and come over to greet and smile at me. This class seem to be very willing and eager to be watched.

→ Description environment

[redacted] has all the Y1's in a circle around her. They each have work that she is checking on, and advising them on how to proceed. She then explains to [redacted] how to fix his mistakes. She watches as he does it correctly then she moves on to the next learner. Then [redacted] follows learners to help them wherever they are seated around the classroom. If they are seated on the floor, then she too sits on the floor next to them. Everyone is busy with work, but the class is not quiet. Occasionally a child will ask a question loudly, or there would be a quiet chatter going on between two learners whilst others are working. I noticed that this classroom has the tables set in small groups of 4 and two of 5, whilst [redacted] class has a large U-shaped arrangement. Learners move in and around the classroom with ease and no permission required. Two of them move outside to the adjoining "cultural" room and decide to sit and work there. The cultural room is like a reading corner, it is carpeted, filled with shelves and cushions to sit on, with large windows overlooking the garden. Because there is no library at the school, each class has its own reading corner in the cultural room.

Description Mon. Environment

Steps of D.I. 6

→ Effect of Montessori
→ Montessori → egalitarian → child-centred
→ unique to Montessori

Year 1's are currently seated around [redacted] on the floor. They are all discussing dinosaurs and how fossils were created. [redacted] is explaining the various activities to them, based on their level of understanding: they must draw fossils and if they cannot remember what to draw, then they must ask a year 2 or 3 to assist them. The rest of the class is busy working quietly on their own as [redacted] is discussing the fossils exercise with the Y1's. Again, I note that the older kids (Y2+Y3) get up and help themselves to the Montessori materials that they need to assist them in Mathematics and Language. Kids are free to dress however they wish, there is no school uniform. They are also free to wear socks/shoes/remains barefoot within the classroom, as they wish. Once [redacted] sends the Y1's away to work, a Y2 learner, [redacted], stands up and calls out to her saying she is confused.

Montessori effect? (1) (3)? (8) Description Environment

→ Mon Materials.

?? (5)

[redacted]: [redacted] stay there let me finish up and I will come to you.

[redacted]: ok

(A few minutes pass).

[redacted]: What can I help you with? What's confusing you my girl?

[redacted]: the abacus. Im not sure what it should look like.

[redacted]: See the different coloured beads. What do they mean?

[redacted]: I'm not sure.

[redacted]: okay let's have a look here. The green beads are units, all right. The blue beads are tens, and the red ones are in the hundreds. Do you see [redacted]?

[redacted]: yes.

[redacted]: and on the side, it tells you 1's, 10's, 100's. Ones mean units. It's the same thing, see.

[redacted]: Can I do the sum again [redacted]?

[redacted]: of course you can, let's see how you do it.

[redacted] is confused about the abacus and has mixed up the beads value. [redacted] asks her to do it again, and tries to show her where she went wrong. After a few attempts, [redacted] seems to get her mistake. She still looks a bit unsure of herself, but [redacted] encourages her to work independently. She eventually gets it right.

Steps of Direct Instruction 6

→ Montessori → egalitarian / child-centred

Continuation of D.I. 6

APPENDIX G: ETHICS APPROVAL

Wits School of Education



27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

Student Number:
768367

Protocol Number:
2014ECE014M

17 April 2014

Dear Shakira Akabor

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Inclusive pedagogical practices found in a Montessori classroom: A case study

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Matsie Mabeta'.

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

011 717 3416

Cc Supervisor: Dr Y Dominguez –Whitehead