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Teachers' experiences of giving support and implementing inclusive education in a township school in Kimberley, Northern Cape

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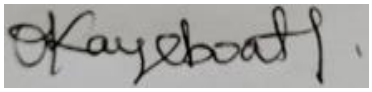
DECLARATION

I, *Adu Yeboah*, student number 1250496, declare that this dissertation is my own original work. I am aware of and embrace the fact that plagiarism is wrong. As a result, I now certify that the accompanying research report is my own. I have appropriately cited any direct quotations and paraphrased ideas or content. As required by the APA technique of citing, I have also included a comprehensive, alphabetized list of references. No one has been permitted to imitate my work with the goal of passing it off as their own, and I will not permit it. I am aware that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if it is determined that this is not my original work or if I fail to cite the source of the ideas or words used in my writings. As a graduate student, I am aware that any violations or dishonesty in my citation practices will not be tolerated by the university.



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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife (Mrs Dorcas Yeboah) for her persistent prayers for me to be successful in life and to live right in the sight of God.

ABSTRACT

Implementation of an inclusive education policy in South African schools was a major milestone because it corresponded with the advancement of the theory of Ubuntu, which is at the heart of South Africa's educational framework. The policy's implementation in schools was also consistent with the right to education for all, as enshrined in the Republic of South Africa's Constitution of 1996. However, despite the initiatives on inclusive education, the level of implementation is still below expected standards. The study aimed at examining the experiences of teachers in giving support and implementing inclusive education in a selected mainstream township public secondary school in the Frances Baard education district of Kimberley, Northern Cape.

The study adopted a case study design within the qualitative research approach. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of 12 teacher participants from one mainstream public secondary school in the township of the Frances Baard education district of Kimberley. Semi-structured individual interviews were used to collect data from the 12 teacher participants, and the collected data was thematically analysed. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory and Social Model of Disability guided the studies

According to the findings of the study, teachers implemented a variety of inclusive practises; however, teachers perceive inclusive practises differently, and how they are implemented varies. Furthermore, the findings revealed that some teachers are unable to implement the inclusive education policy due to barriers related to the teachers themselves, barriers within the school system, and barriers emanating from the community in which a school is located.

It was also revealed that teachers used a variety of support strategies to assist students, such as changing seating arrangements, implementing remedial lessons, and allocating extra reading time to struggling students. In contrast, some teachers prefer to work collaboratively with learners' parents to provide needed support, whereas others prefer to work alone.

The study concludes that, in terms of implementing inclusive education in South Africa, there is a mismatch between what is happening on the ground and what is supposed to happen in the classroom. Despite this, pockets of success have been recorded in the implementation process. The study recommends that the Department of Education consider retooling teachers, instituting teacher training programmes, raising awareness, investing in the policy, and adopting a collaborative approach.

Key terms: *teachers' experiences; inclusive education; barriers; disabilities; township school; support*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATP:	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
DOE:	Department of Education:
DBST:	District-Based Support Teams
EWP6:	Educational White Paper 6
FET:	Further Education &Training
GET:	General Education &Training
HOD	Head of Department
IEP:	Individualized education plan
LST:	Learning support teachers
NCESS:	National Committee on Educators' Support Services
NCSNET:	National Commission on Special Needs in Education Training
PWD:	People with Disability
SBST:	School-Based Support Teams
SIAS:	Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
UPIAS:	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
UN CRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UDL:	Universal Design for Learning
RSA:	Republic of South Africa

CHAPTER ONE
1.0: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Background of the study

Inclusion education refers to the practice of accommodating students with diverse abilities and backgrounds within mainstream educational settings, aiming to provide equal opportunities, access to quality education, and an environment that fosters collaboration, understanding, and mutual respect among all learners (Smith & Jones, 2010; Johnson et al., 2015).
In the same vein, inclusive education is also seen as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education" (UNESCO, 2017). The goal is for the entire educational system to foster learning environments in which teachers and students embrace and welcome the challenge and benefits of diversity. An inclusive education approach fosters learning environments in which individual needs are met and every student has a chance to succeed (UNESCO-IBE Director-Acedo, 2011). The term "inclusion" is not only about placing learners with impairments in regular classrooms. It's about transforming that classroom into a place where all learners learning needs are recognized and served without requiring them to be labelled as disabled. In this view, inclusion is intended for all children, not just those who have previously been excluded from regular schools due to a disability. The goal is to remove all forms of social exclusion caused by attitudes and policies toward diversity in race, class, ethnicity, religion, or gender, as well as ability (Köpfer, Powell & Zahnd, 2021).

On their part, Hardy and Woodcock (2015) reported on the Salamanca Statement as a key statement in the field of special needs education. Though the Salamanca Statement does not solely place emphasis on special needs education, as Adewumi and Mosito (2019) put it, it places emphasis on the constitutional right and access to a high-quality education for every child. By 2030, the world should *"ensure inclusive and excellent education for all and encourage lifelong learning,"* according to the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Furthermore, according to Rambla, Xavier, Langthaler, and Margarita (2016), Goal 4 of the SDG on inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all focuses on eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons

with disabilities. Furthermore, the proposal calls for the construction and improvement of school facilities that are child-, disability-, and gender-sensitive, as well as providing safe, nonviolent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all. In the same vein, it is UNESCO's vision and policy on Inclusive education is to get more people involve in learning, cultures, and communities and reduce the number of people who are left out of school in order to meet the different needs of all learners. It further expresses that, this vision involves making changes in content, concepts, structures, and practices with a coherent objective that covers all children of the acceptable age range and the belief that the regular system should empower all children (UNESCO, 2005).On their part, McGhie-Richmond, Irvine, Loremen, Lea Cizman, and Lupart (2013) noted various teacher-related variables as influencing the implementation of inclusion in rural Alberta, Canada. Parasuram (2006) also thought that young teachers with less experience are more likely to think positively about inclusion and be ready to use their skills and resources to help put India's inclusive policy into action.

Previous studies also indicate that different countries in Africa have implemented policies on inclusive education in schools at different levels. In Ghana, the inclusive education system has received overwhelming support from teachers since its inception (Opoku et al., 2019), but available information highlights the lack of understanding of the content of the inclusive policy by teachers as one of the challenges facing the implementation of the inclusive policy (Mantey, 2017). Botswana's Inclusive Education Policy (2011), like those of other nations, requires that all children, regardless of disability, have access to education in general education schools (Government of Botswana, 2011). However, Nthitu (2011) noted that this all-important goal is hampered by teachers' lack of understanding of inclusive education, resulting in many disabled children being denied equal access to inclusive education learning. In Zimbabwe, negative teacher attitudes and limited resources were also viewed as barriers to the implementation of inclusive education practices (Nkoma & Hay, 2018). Similarly, in a study done in Swaziland, Maseko and Fakudze (2014) concluded that teachers know how important inclusive education is and are willing to do their part to make it happen. However, this is not achievable if they lack the requisite knowledge and skills. Furthermore, a lack of in-service training on inclusion was identified as a major barrier to the implementation of inclusive education in Oyo State, Nigeria (Akanmu & Isiaka, 2016).

In South Africa, inclusive education incorporates the Ubuntu philosophy, which holds that everyone needs to be empowered and, once empowered, will be well-equipped to analyse

society and change people's perceptions (Masondo, 2017:38). Similarly, Lesteka (2012:49) contends that Ubuntu is at the heart of South Africa's educational policy framework, which necessitates its advancement by the education system. In accordance with Ubuntu, no individual or child should be discriminated against in the educational system because of their race, gender, colour, or disability. In 2001, South Africa adopted the guiding principles of The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) to address policies and practices that discriminated against children with disabilities. South Africa's Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (WP6) (DoE., 2001) also establishes a framework for implementing inclusive education in South African schools. In line with the policy, inclusive education is aimed at recognising differences, embracing them, and aiding all children to develop at their optimum level (DoE, 2001). For this purpose, the department of basic education introduced the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) policy, whereby learners are to be screened, identified, assessed, and supported by their teachers (DoE, 2014). Globally, it is a goal and requirement of nations to implement inclusive education, but many factors may hinder the process of implementation. This is why Frankel, Gold, and Andrews (2010) were of the opinion that to successfully implement inclusion anywhere in the world, teachers, who according to the SIAS are the main implementors, need proper inclusive content training, support, and above all, a positive attitude. However, despite the introduced policies on implementing inclusive education in schools, the level of implementation is still below the expected levels in South African schools (Ekins, Savolainen, & Engelbrecht 2016). Teacher education has also been found to be insufficient, with some programmes being criticised for being disjointed, too theoretically oriented, fragmented, and focusing on a deficit-oriented approach to learning difficulties (Engelbrecht, 2013). On their part, Engelbrecht et al. (2016) further argue that the White Paper 6 (2001) continues to rely on the medical approach to support learners with learning barriers, where those with minimal or low-intensive needs receive assistance in mainstream schools, those with moderate needs receive assistance in full-service schools, and those with high needs receive assistance in special schools. As a result, South Africa's inclusive education policy is characterized by ideological conflict and ambiguity (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

In South Africa in general, and in Kimberley in the Northern Cape province in particular, the implementation of inclusive education has been gradual and barely partial (Wildeman & Nomdo, 2007); this is even when the district support team and the specialists at the regional and district offices are oriented and trained to assist schools and teachers to effectively

implement the inclusive education policy (DoE., 2014). Based on the researcher's initial review of related literature, it was also found out that implementation of inclusive education remains a big challenge in South Africa despite the fact that several policies have been implemented. Moreover, no study had been conducted on the topic in the province in general or more specifically on township schools in the Frances Baard education district of Kimberley, where the study was done. This study was therefore aimed at investigating the experiences teachers in a selected mainstream township school in the Frances Baard district of Kimberley, Northern Cape Province, have been managing to provide support to learners with learning disabilities and implement inclusive education.

1.2: Problem Statement

The South African Department of Education has provided for a single system of education that is inclusive of everyone, creating opportunities for all learners, including those with special needs or disabilities. In White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), it is said that everybody has a right to equal education without any prejudice, which means learners with special needs can also learn in mainstream schools. However, studies conducted by Donohue and Bornman (2014) reveal that there are currently only a few schools in South Africa equipped to accommodate learners with special needs. This lack of available resources raises concerns about how these learners can receive proper support. Previous research conducted in South Africa has identified both internal and external challenges within the education system that hinder the achievement of this important goal (Mouton et al., 2013).

Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring that learners with specific impairments have the right to be educated in mainstream schools. However, studies have shown that teachers often find it challenging to support these learners (Harvey, 2005). This issue is particularly prevalent in Kimberly, where the current researcher has personally experienced difficulties in assisting learners with various degrees of impairments in the classroom due to the lack of inclusive education training, and support (Bagree & Lewis, 2013:2; Zimba, 2011:52; Fakudze, 2012:40; Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014:95). Previous studies also indicate that several inclusive education policies have been implemented. However, despite the existence of important policy documents, Van Rooyen, Le Grange, and Newmark (2002) argue that South African education policies contradict one another and fail to align adequately for the smooth implementation of inclusive education. Additionally, there is a discrepancy between the individual deficit and social paradigms in both policy and practise, with learners perceiving barriers to be either

within or outside of the learner, respectively (Pather, 2011). Despite these challenges, limited progress has been made in the actual practise of inclusive education. Furthermore, no similar study has been conducted in Kimberley.

In the end, since teachers are regarded as the main implementers of inclusive policies in the classrooms, it was interesting trying to understand their experiences regarding the implementation of inclusive education. It is for this reason that the researcher investigated teachers' experiences of giving support and implementing inclusion in a selected township mainstream secondary school in the Frances Baard education district of Kimberley, Northern Cape.

1.3: Rationale of the study

The study is very important, and the findings have varied implications for teachers and the department of education in South Africa. This study's findings would help with the implementation of inclusive policies in secondary schools, which is an important part of the field of inclusive education. Secondly, the findings would help the Department of Education design the best ways to implement inclusive education practices in schools. Moreover, the findings would assist in identifying the training needs of teachers in inclusive education. This study's findings would assist teachers to be equipped with better skills for implementing inclusive education practices in schools and to help all students learn and meet their needs in the classroom so that they can all get the most out of the teaching and learning process. However, previous research in South Africa indicates that there are problems both inside and outside of the school system that make it hard to reach this important goal (Mouton, et al., 2013). Moreover, it is mind-boggling to understand how learners can be supported when the means to do so are not available. The goal of the study is to help educational planners figure out how to develop and/or improve teachers' skills and working conditions, especially in South Africa. The study is a contribution to the knowledge base and existing literature. Finally, this study contributes to addressing the existing literature gap on the experiences of teachers in implementing inclusive education in Kimberley and the Northern Cape Province in general.

1.4: Aim of the study

The study aimed to examine the experiences of teachers in giving support and implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream township public secondary school in the Frances Baard education district of Kimberley, Northern Cape.

1.5: Research objectives of the study

The research objectives of the study were:
(i) To examine the practices of teachers in implementing inclusive education in classrooms in the selected mainstream township school.
(ii) To explore barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in classrooms in the selected mainstream township school.
(iii) To establish how teachers support learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in the classroom when implementing inclusive education in the selected mainstream township school.

1.6: Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:
(i) Which practices are implemented by teachers in inclusive education in classrooms in the selected mainstream township school?
(ii) Which barriers are experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in classrooms in the selected mainstream township school?
(iii) How do teachers support learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms when implementing inclusive education in the selected township school?

1.7: Clarification of Concepts

To understand the focus of the study and put it into context, the following concepts were defined:

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is defined as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education" (Dyson et al., 2004; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; UNESCO, 2015). In the present study, inclusive education is understood as a practice that creates an environment where all school-age children within the Frances Baard education district, regardless of their race, status, ability, or impairment, are provided with fair and proper assistance without any form of bias or isolation. This enables children to freely learn and achieve their life's purpose.

Inclusive Practices

In general, inclusive practices are viewed as an umbrella term encompassing all efforts performed to promote inclusive education. These practices encompass processes, procedures, ethos, school culture, and traditions, as well as pedagogical, assessment, and curriculum decisions, all of which contribute to inclusive practice (Salend, 2011).

Inclusive pedagogy refers to the utilization of various representational and instructional tactics that have been found to be more inclusive than less inclusive approaches. Examples of inclusive pedagogical strategies include differentiation, universal design for learning, and cooperative learning (Tomlinson, Kaplan, Renzulli, Purcell, Leppien, Burns, & Strickland, 2008; Rose & Meyer, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

In the present study, inclusive practices refer to all the processes that teachers in the selected township school in the Frances Baard district go through to ensure that all learners in their classrooms with specific learning needs receive the necessary attention and have the opportunity to be actively involved in their own learning.

Learning barriers

A learning barrier is anything that prevents learners from fully engaging in effective learning (Jeynes, 2010). Throughout their education, learners may encounter one or more learning barriers. Intrinsic factors are internal to the learner and include specific impairments that may hinder the learning process (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Extrinsic factors, on the other hand, refer to broader factors outside of the learner that may impact learning. These can include teacher lack of knowledge, inflexible curriculum, lack of resources, lack of support, and discrimination existing in the learning environment and the community (Salend, 2011; Artiles, 2003).

Township

In South Africa, township and location often refer to the frequently underdeveloped, racially divided metropolitan districts that were allocated for non-whites from the late nineteenth century until the end of apartheid. In a similar vein, Donaldson (2014) defines "townships" as locations designated by apartheid legislation for exclusive habitation by individuals classed as blacks, coloured's, and Indians. In this study, a township is defined as an area in the Frances Baard District of Kimberley where basic services are insufficient, roads are poor, schools are underfunded, and the majority of the population is black.

Township schools

Township schools are the schools located in the township and do not have the basic facilities to adequately meet the learning needs of the learners. In the present study, township schools are the mainstream secondary schools, basically referred to as quintile 2 schools, mostly public, have larger learner class sizes, are not fully resourced, and have lower levels of inclusive education implementation. They are located in the Frances Baard education district in the township of Kimberley.

District-Based Support Team (DBST)

The district-based support team forms a key component in the successful implementation of an inclusive education support system. The DBST is responsible for supporting schools, parents, and the community to organize appropriate support for all learners. The role of the DBST in administering the screening, identification, assessment, and support (SIAS) of learners who experience barriers to learning can be found in the DBST Guidelines. Teachers in institutions will be helped by district-based support teams to make their teaching techniques and

assessments more flexible. They will also supply educational programs, learning assistance materials, and assessment tools. The DBST's primary mission is to strengthen the ability of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges, and higher education institutions. In the present study, the district-based support team comprised trans-disciplinary groups that had representation from respective units in the Frances Baard education district, such as the early childhood development (ECD) unit, the curriculum and assessment unit, the institutional development/education management and governance unit, the adult basic education and training (ABET) unit, the teacher development unit, and the inclusive education unit.

School-Based Support Team (SBST)

The SBST is critical in assisting teachers in managing students who are experiencing various barriers to learning. Teachers, parents, community members, and other stakeholders are all involved in meeting the needs of students, and so can be included in the SBST. These well-functioning support groups help to improve the lives of teachers, students, and parents in the community. The primary goal of these groups would be to establish well-coordinated learner and educator support services that will aid in the learning and teaching processes by identifying and addressing learner, educator, and institutional needs. Institutions should strengthen these teams as needed. In the present study, the school-based support team was comprised of representatives from the school governing body (SGB), the school management team, teachers, and a representative from the Frances Baard education district of the Norther Cape department of education, who could either be the social worker or the learning support specialist.

1.8. Structure of the Dissertation

This section gives a brief summary of what each chapter of the dissertation is about.

Chapter One

This chapter introduces and discusses the background of the study on the key concept of inclusive education and its implementation globally, on the continent, and specifically in the South African context. It further projects the problem statement, the rationale, and the aim of the study by stating the objectives for the research and the questions that the study addressed. It concludes with the clarification of some of the concepts of the study and the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two

Chapter two presents the literature review of the study. The literature has been reviewed on concepts such as inclusive education, inclusive education in South African schools, inclusive practices implemented by teachers in the classrooms, learning barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusion in the classrooms, and teachers support for learners who are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms. The chapter also presents the research gaps that have been identified in the reviewed literature.

Chapter Three

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the theories that serve as the foundation for the research, connected them logically, and related these concepts to the study. Two theories, namely, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and the social model of disability, which guided the study, have been discussed in detail, and justifications provided for the application of each concept or model in the study.

Chapter Four

Chapter four presents the research design and methodology of the study. It discusses the adaptation of the interpretative paradigm, which is closely linked to qualitative methodology. The chapter further explores the research design, site, research sampling, and data collection

methods adopted for the study. The chapter also discussed the trustworthiness of the data analysis for qualitative data and, finally, the ethical considerations in the study.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents the data analysis of the study. The results of the study are presented in line with the research questions of the study.

Chapter Six

This chapter discusses the summary of study findings in this dissertation, the discussion of results with literature, and the conclusion of the study. The chapter also presents recommendations for practice based on the study findings, the limitations of the study, and finally, suggestions for further research guided by the study findings.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Introduction

This chapter examined the following literature related to the purpose of the current study: inclusive education, inclusive education in South African schools, inclusive practises implemented by teachers in the classrooms, learning barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusion in the classrooms, and teachers' support for learners experiencing various learning barriers in their classrooms. Furthermore, the research gaps identified in the reviewed literature have also been presented.

2.2: Inclusive education

Inclusion is defined as a process involving the identification and removal of barriers to access, learning, and accomplishment for all learners (Ainscow, 2020). Schwab (2019) further argues that inclusion is about removing barriers to learning for all learners, as opposed to placing learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms. In Australia's state of New South Wales, inclusive education is described as *"all students, regardless of disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality, language, gender, sexual orientation, or faith, can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar-aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs"* (New South Wales Department of Education, 2021, p. 1). In the same vein, Ninan and Essandoh (2020) also indicated that *"Inclusion is the means by which individuals from all backgrounds are engaged, integrated, motivated, and valued".* From the perspective of the researcher, inclusive education is an initiative that creates a condition, an atmosphere, and the space for all learners, regardless of race, gender, poverty, class, impairment, or lack thereof, to be accommodated and supported in a mainstream school without any form of discrimination, dehumanisation, or labelling. It is not only about accommodating them; it is also about ensuring that each learner's learning needs are attended to and any possible barriers removed so that all the learners can benefit from the outcomes of the lesson in the classroom.

Moreover, based on international human rights treaties such as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there has been ongoing activism for inclusion, as well as a universal

commitment to promote and improve education for all (Ainscow, 2020). This inclusion transformation was further enhanced by Engelbrecht (2020) asserting that, the Salamanca Declaration accelerated the international shift toward inclusive education by expanding the original focus on learners with learning barriers to learners of all backgrounds. The Salamanca Statement further underlined the importance of all learners having access to mainstream schools and participating fully in all of their activities, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, qualities, or learning needs (UNESCO, 2018).

As a result, many countries have already passed legislation requiring inclusive education (CRPD, United Nations 2006). For instance, Al-Attiyah and Hassanein (2017) reported that, Qatar had issued a set of laws and modern legislations and policies aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to ensure the right of access to the maximum independence that allows them to realize their full potential and actively participate in society. In the same vein, Valeeva (2015) in his article ‘‘The Current State of Special Needs Education in Russia: Inclusive Policies and Practices’’ asserted that, In April 2010 the Moscow City Duma passed the "On Education of Persons with disabilities in the City of Moscow" law (Moscow City Law No.16, 2010). The new law ensures the execution of the constitutional right to education for people with disabilities and the development of the conditions necessary for them to get an education tailored to their unique requirements. The document provides the system for organizing the training and education of individuals with disabilities in comprehensive, special education, and home-based schools, as well as any other educational institution (Moscow City Law... 2010).

The Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (DoE, 2001) is the primary policy document for the implementation of an inclusive education system throughout South Africa, where this study was done. In 2001, the document was released. It gives a brief description of what inclusive education and training systems involve as well as the plans and techniques the National Department of Basic Education had for developing one (Links, 2009:51). According to EWP6, inclusive education means: i) recognizing that all children and youth can learn and will require support; and (ii) acknowledging and respecting the fact that learners have a variety of needs due to differences in age, gender, ethnicity, HIV/AIDS status, disabilities, language, and socioeconomic status.

Accepting that, in order to ensure equal human experiences, these various needs must be valued and not discriminated against; iii) empowering educational institutions, practices, and

structures to accommodate all learners; iv) going beyond formal schooling by recognizing that learning takes place not only in classrooms but also in the community and at home; and
v) changing attitudes, behaviours, teaching techniques, curricula, and environments to maximize it. It underlined the importance of eliminating imbalances throughout the system, notably in the special education sector (DoE, 2001; EWP6,2001).

Additionally, White Paper 6 stated that the education system needed to change to accommodate the complete spectrum of obstacles to learning and development (such as intrinsic obstacles to learning brought on by organic or medical causes) as well as requirements brought on by systemic obstacles (e.g., poverty and poorly trained teachers). Although the core tenet of EWP6 is a social rights-based approach to education, it appears that when support for various learning barriers was suggested, it still relied on a medical perspective. It made a distinction between students who needed low-intensive help who would attend regular schools, students who needed moderate support who should attend full-service schools, and students who needed high-intensive care who would continue to attend special schools for their education (DoE, 2001; Engelbrecht & Van Deventer, 2013).

To achieve access, equity, quality, and social justice in education, full-service inclusive schools should also strive to: provide quality education for all learners by meeting the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner; foster a sense of belonging so that all students, staff, and families feel valued members of the learning community; and respond to diversity by offering a variety of programming (DoE, 2010:7).

EWP 6 places a strong emphasis on empowering teachers to accommodate a variety of learning requirements by emphasizing teaching and learning strategies that will assist all students who encounter learning obstacles. Teachers must be qualified in order to support and assist learners with a wide range of learning needs (Nel et al., 2011). They must concentrate on effective teaching and learning activities, activities, and efforts for all students who have barriers to learning. The advice to stop using vocabulary like "special needs" and "disabilities" in labelling terminology was one of the major problems covered in White Paper 6. (DoE, 2010). In order to avoid using a medical model approach, "learners facing barriers to learning" was chosen as the new recognized terminology (DoE, 2001:24).

The researcher contends that making a student fit into the educational system should not be the objective of inclusive education but rather, in order to meet the unique and varied learning needs of each learner, it should instead concentrate on evaluating and changing the system and how it relates to social justice and equity. Transforming education and schools should be the goal of inclusive education. All educational institutions must be committed to the idea of equal access for all learners, including those who face learning barriers. Chances in society are frequently compared to different ways of thinking, such as the two dominant paradigms of disability and educational support. The community, society, and various stakeholders may play a significant part in helping children with learning barriers by giving them the support they need at school to get over their barriers. Above all, the Salamanca Statement calls on the global community to embrace inclusive educational practices and the growth of special-needs education as an essential component of all educational initiatives. It particularly asks for assistance from the World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO, and UNICEF.

To conclude one cannot overlook the benefits of the inclusive policy as McGovern (2015) asserts that, it aids learners from diverse backgrounds more effectively than segregated educational approaches do in meeting their future objectives. In the same vein, studies conducted by Staub (2005) found that partnerships between learners with learning barriers and learners without learning barriers assist them in developing greater pleasant feelings, which are typically seldom witnessed in restrictive school contexts. In this way, inclusion enhances the general wellbeing of learners with barriers. Likewise, research studies have shown that social interactions experienced by learners with learning barriers in inclusive classrooms favourably enhance their psychological state and boost their overall effectiveness. Furthermore, inclusive settings enable learners with special needs and their families to integrate into the community. Being active in a regular classroom can help learners with special needs integrate more readily into society in the future. Inclusion helps learners acquire important socialisation skills, independence, and autonomy. It is especially important during early childhood development because students go through a significant stage of cognitive, emotional, and psychological development while attending primary school and becoming aware of their social, personal, and academic roles; it is the time when children form the competencies required for future success (Pasta et al., 2013). Because an inclusive classroom environment means the existence of significant differences in the skills and requirements of learners, it enables teachers to acquire more practical experience and attain a better degree of skill. From engagement with different

learners, teachers learn about learners' growth and become more informed of their particular requirements (Pasta et al., 2013).

In order to promote social equality, inclusive education is critical. Inclusion encourages learners who face no barriers to recognise diversity, be more sensitive, and respond appropriately. The inclusion of learners with special needs in regular classes may influence their peers more positively. The school is an essential institution that provides the skills and knowledge required for the advancement of all aspects of life as well as the promotion of healthy social practises. The classroom is a micro-social context in which learners learn about widely held values and ideas, which influence their personal identities, decisions, and actions. Currently, when many prejudices about disability, gender, or race are both explicitly and implicitly promoted through a variety of information sources, inclusion may be viewed as critical to attaining maximum academic achievement for learners with disabilities and the advancement of a more inclusive and pleasant community.

2.3: Inclusive Education in South Africa

It is realized that, the legacy of apartheid in South Africa created massive inequalities in educational provision for learners defined as having ‘special needs, particularly African learners (Mda & Mothata, 2000, p. 108). These inequalities developed because of unfair, inadequate and inappropriate provision created by political and economic priorities of the apartheid”. As a result, there was the need for a shift from education policies and thinking associated with racial segregation to an inclusive education system based on human rights and dignity, valuing equal rights to quality education without discrimination (Andrews, 2020; Stofile, Green & Soudien, 2018).

In South Africa, regulations and policies concerning inclusive education were developed during the post-apartheid era, and hence place a heavy emphasis on equality and human rights (Savolainen et al., 2013). Staden (2015) further argues that, as a result of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Educators' Support Services (NCESS) reports in 1997, the movement for more inclusive education began in South Africa in 1996, the Minister of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Educators' Support Services (NCESS) to create a policy that would allow inclusive

education to be implemented successfully. The Department of Basic Education ultimately issued a combined report of these two groups in 1998, (Staden, 2015). According to the report, the "education and training system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive learning centres that would enable all learners to actively participate in the education process so that they can develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society" (DoE, 2001:7).

On the basis of this report, the researcher argues that the report concurs with the then-global call for all persons, irrespective of class, gender, race, or disability, to have equal access to education without any form of barriers or impediments so that all persons can have an equal chance to achieve their educational objectives and become useful members of the community. The report also indicated that teacher training and education, the classroom environment, or educational facilities or structures needed to be amended to be in line with the call for inclusivity in the educational system.

Moreover, Staden (2015) continuous to argue that, they created the basic framework for inclusive education in this paper, which added to our understanding of the spectrum of learning barriers in the South African setting. This paper also advocated the use of appropriate and polite terminology to communicate issues in inclusive education. Several pieces of legislation and policies affected the development of inclusive education in South Africa, and the South African Constitution, which affirms human dignity, equality, and the advancement of human rights (RSA 1996a, section 1(a)), freedom from discrimination (RSA 1996a, section 9(4)), and the fundamental right to basic education (RSA 1996a, section 29(1)), influences all education policies. The right to an education is codified in the South African Schools Act. The South African Schools Act, passed in 1996, establishes "universal norms and criteria for the instruction of learners in schools" (Preamble, South African Schools Act, RSA 1996b). It provides for an inclusive education system in South Africa by including the following provisions:

- Public schools must admit learners and "serve their educational requirements" without discrimination (Section 5 (1));
- No admission test may be used to determine a learner's admission to a public school (Section 5 (2));
- Where learners have "special education needs," the rights and wishes of the parents must be taken into account when determining their placement (Section 5 (6));

- Learners with "special education needs" shall be served in the mainstream where "reasonably practical," and suitable support should be provided for these learners (Section 12 (4)); and
- Physical amenities at public schools should be made accessible to handicapped learners (Section 12 (5)). (Staden, 2015)

In contrast however, up to date in South Africa there are only few schools that can accommodate learners with special learning needs (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Parents are not provided with clear step-by-step guidelines on how to choose appropriate mainstream schools for their children. In practice, the right to education in South Africa does not include the right to choose a specific school in the child's home area. This means that, while students have the right to attend any school in their neighbourhood, nothing can be done if those schools refuse to accept them (Ghergut & Grasu, 2012).

Another important policy document which has already been discussed at length in section 2.1 of this chapter is the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) which was created in response to the findings and recommendations of the 1998 NCSNET and NCESS Reports. This White Paper is the foundational policy document for South Africa's implementation of an inclusive education and training system The document was first published in 2001 (Staden, 2015).
The following are other policy documents for South Africa, that originated from EWP6; (Nel *et al*, 2012:8):

- Republic of South Africa. Department of Education. 2002. *Draft conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. Department of Education. 2005. *Conceptual and operational guidelines for special schools as resource centres.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. Department of Education. 2005. *Conceptual and operational guidelines for full service schools.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. Department of Education. 2005. *Conceptual and operational guidelines for district based support teams.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. Department of Education. 2005. *Guidelines for inclusive learning programmes.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

- Republic of South Africa. Department of Education. 2005. *Draft national strategy on screening, identification, assessment and support.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. 2007. National Education Policy Act (27 / 1996): *national policy on assessment and qualifications for schools in the general education and training band.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. 2008. Department of Education. *National strategy on screening, identification, assessment and support.* Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa. 2009. Department of Education (DoE). 2009. *Guidelines for full service / inclusive schools.* Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Republic of South Africa. Department of Education (DoE).2010. *Guidelines for inclusive learning programmes.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

The policy documents listed above depict the goals, objectives, processes, and guidelines outlined in the Education White Paper 6. They outline strategies for developing one, such as recognising and respecting diversity of needs, empowering educational institutions, practises, and structures to accommodate all learners, eliminating imbalances, and changing attitudes, behaviours, teaching techniques, curricula, and environments. The policy documents also emphasise the importance of providing a quality education to all learners, matching the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner, and fostering a sense of belonging in all students.

In spite of all the above important policy documents, Van Rooyen, Le Grange, and Newmark (2002) argue that South African education policies are contradictory to one another and do not align well enough to allow for the smooth implementation of inclusive education. On his part, Pather (2011) also asserted that, in both policy and practice, there is a tension and contradiction between the individual deficit and social paradigms, which see barriers as being within and outside of the learner, respectively. Again, although the government has rules in place to ensure that learners with special needs have access to school, it is unclear how inclusive policies are applied by educators to ensure that all learners have access to education (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). This emphasises the fact that the fight for education as a human rights agenda may not be over. In view of this, Pather (2011) further suggested that the inclusion policy in South Africa be revisited on a regular basis in order to fine-tune mechanisms for inclusive implementation. Despite these and other challenges, encouraging positive developments

include the national government's continued support for an inclusive education agenda and the gradual transformation of teacher education for inclusion. It is therefore critical to recognize that the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa is a constantly evolving process that must be contextually relevant and responsive to the social and economic realities of specific school contexts (Engelbrecht, 2020).

2.4: Inclusive Practices implemented by teachers in the mainstream classrooms

Inclusive practice is a teaching method that acknowledges learner diversity and uses it to guarantee that all learners are treated equally, have equal chances, and are respected. Adopting inclusive methods is critical for ensuring that all children, regardless of origin or identity, have an equal chance to achieve. Inclusive practices therefore include the ability to change and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of different types of learners and to set individualised goals that are right for each learner's profile. Dally et al. (2019) asserted that, to implement inclusive education, teachers need not only skills, knowledge, and inclusive attitudes but also the ability to support and meet the needs of learners who are different. However, how inclusive education may be properly implemented is a constant concern; according to Loreman (2017), for successful implementation of inclusive education, teaching and learning must be a critical issue. Teachers must modify their instruction to meet the new standards in order to be inclusive (Decristan et al., 2017). Suprayogi, Valcke, and Godwin (2017), on their side, also believe that a single teaching approach may not suit the particular needs of individual learners. As a result, options must be provided in order for learners to learn properly and attain their highest potential academic achievement (Tomlinson, 2014).

Moreover, inclusive teaching strategies have a didactic dimension that includes the teachers' subject knowledge, teaching competencies, and knowledge about the learners' various learning abilities. Teachers' ability, time, and willingness to adjust and differentiate instructions, as well as clear learning objectives and both ongoing and systematic assessment, are critical in ensuring that all students participate (Hattie, 2009; and Nordenbo et al., 2008). However, complications can arise when teachers believe that children with "special educational needs" require additional assistance to be included in their mainstream classrooms (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). This can create a negative perception of a student's potential, making it more difficult for them to be included (Ainscow et al., 2019). It is essential that teachers receive

assistance in developing truly inclusive practises (Ainscow, 2020) and have confidence in their own ability to help all learners learn (Florian & Spratt, 2013).

However, learning and teaching activities that are inclusive are those that are sensitive to learners' diversity (Ainscow, 2020). That is, learning experiences are created with the specific talents and needs of students in mind, and thought is given to how all students might be enabled to actively and meaningfully participate in their learning while also being suitably challenged (Ainscow, 2020). All through this planning and implementation, a strengths-based approach should be addressed, which means that there should be a heavy emphasis on students' talents rather than 'deficits' (Florian & Spratt, 2013). Difference and diversity should be celebrated and favourably responded to (Finkelstein et al., 2021). Learners' learning and participation barriers are recognised and addressed (Dally et al., 2019), and the lessons learned are used to support the learning and involvement of others (Booth & Ainscow, 2002; 2011). Assessment of learner learning is intended to be responsive to and supportive of all students' progress, and both collaborative and individual accomplishments are rewarded (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

Furthermore, Finkelstein et al. (2019) reported that inclusive practises used in classrooms by teachers included collaboration and teamwork, determining progress, instructional support, organisational practises, and finally social, emotional, or behavioural support. According to Schwab et al. (2019), inclusive practises such as differentiation and personalization are rarely used in classrooms. Coubergs et al. (2017) reported in another study that practises such as differentiated instruction and multifaceted teaching are seen as measures to address the needs of students with varying educational needs. The study's findings revealed the following inclusive practises implemented by mainstream township teachers in the Frances Baard education district of the Northern Cape Department of Education:

According to the South African Constitution, every child has an equal right to a good basic education. This means that all children should be able to participate on an equal footing with their peers in order to reach their full learning potential. Some students may require additional accommodations in order to participate equally. Reasonable accommodation of learners with disabilities is one of the inclusive practises used by some teachers in the Frances Baard township mainstream public schools. Adjustments or changes to processes, surroundings, or the way things are usually done that allow individuals with disabilities to participate in an academic programme on an equal footing are referred to as reasonable accommodations (U.S.

Department of Education, 2007). Children with disabilities have the right to attend their local public school and receive the necessary learning support under the right to education in an inclusive education system, such as the one we have in South Africa. The exclusion of disabled students from regular schools should be seen as the exception rather than the rule. Separating children in schools fosters exclusion and undermines the respect, acceptance, and tolerance required for wider community inclusion.

As noted early in this chapter, Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) defines reasonable accommodation as "necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UN-CRPD, 2006:4). For this reason, Article 24.2(c) of the UN CRPD places a direct obligation on state parties to ensure that "reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided." Failure to provide reasonable accommodation amounts to discrimination (Fina, 2017). Section 5 (1) of the South African School Act, 1984, states, "A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way" (South African Schools Act, 1996; Government Gazette, 15 November 1996 [No. 84 of 1996]—G 117579). As a result, the education system has a clear obligation, established in international and local legislative and policy frameworks, to comply with the requirement to provide reasonable accommodations. This means that when a child with a disability applies to a school, the school has a responsibility to admit the learner, immediately assess their support needs, and make the necessary accommodations. The Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support Policy (SIAS) outlines the process for providing support.

Section 12(4) of the South African Schools Act also states, "Where reasonably practicable, the Member of the Executive Council must provide education for learners with special education needs at ordinary public schools and relevant educational support services for such learners." The phrase "where reasonably practicable" is the only limitation to this duty. Where the support needs of the learner are not reasonably able to be met by the public school, referral by the school—through the SIAS process—to a special school may be considered. This is the case when the learner requires high-level, intensive, daily specialist support, as well as equipment and assistive devices that can only be provided by a school of this calibre. According to Section 29(1)(a) of the Constitution, the right to basic education is unqualified, not dependent on the

availability of resources, and thus must be implemented directly and immediately. As a result, financial constraints cannot be used to justify reasonable practicability. Despite this, many public schools have limited resources, which affects their immediate availability to provide reasonable accommodations. However, many reasonable accommodations are actually low-cost and easy to implement (Inclusive Education South Africa, 2018:02:2546).

In the same vein, the findings of this study show that teacher participants use individualised instruction as an inclusive practise in their classrooms. Warlick (2013) defined "individualised instruction as teaching techniques developed and implemented with an understanding of the individual learner's learning style, readiness, and interest. A rich set of institutionally and politically established competencies that are founded on basic literacies and that can be tested, measured, and transformed into data that is optimally accessible to teachers for refining instruction, he added, is an individualised curriculum. Warlick continues to argue that a learner should be accountable for their learning, take an active role in it, and be able to communicate what they have learned and express their own views on the material they are studying. This suggests that, in contrast to the traditional approach, which assumes that the learner must be a recipient, the learner is actually a contributor to the subject matter, instructional strategy, assessment, and final product of learning. In a similar vein, Waxman et al. (2013) defined individualised instruction as the belief that every learner learns differently and that teaching should be tailored to each learner's experiences, abilities, and interests in order to account for these differences. Moreover, a multi-age classroom is run via individualised instruction. In the same class, pupils of varied ages and skills are taught without regard to grade. This is frequently accomplished through carefully thought-out peer learning, cooperative small-group instruction, and individualised instruction that is centred on the needs and interests of the students (Hoffman, 2002).

The findings also indicates that differentiated instruction is another inclusive practice implemented by teachers in mainstream classrooms to support learners. In the first, differentiation is a philosophy of teaching that acknowledges learners' differences and the drive to help all learners thrive. Such ideas imply that teachers proactively modify curriculum, teaching methods, resources, learning activities, or requirements for learner products to better meet learners' learning needs (Tomlinson et al., 2003). Differentiated instruction is defined by Roy et al. (2013) as an approach in which teaching is varied and adapted to match the abilities of learners using appropriate processes for success in school. On

their part, Suprayogi and Valcke (2016:4) also argued that differentiated instruction is a teaching style that takes into account the diversity of learners by addressing it, adopting specialised teaching techniques, incorporating variation in learning activities, assessing individual student requirements, and aiming for the best possible learning outcomes. In a similar manner, Godor (2021:1) believes that differentiated instruction occurs when teachers adjust the content and process according to learners' levels of readiness, interests, and learning preferences, resulting in increased participation and educational outcomes. Most importantly, Reis and Renzulli (2010) postulate that teachers can increase learner engagement by focusing on individual learners' interests. However, Van Casteren et al. (2017) noted that although the concept of differentiated instruction is quite well-known, teachers have difficulties implementing it in their classrooms.

In view of this, Santangelo and Tomlinson (2012) suggested that these three essential issues need to serve as the basis for teachers' decisions on how and when to differentiate in terms of the "content" of the learning activity (what is being taught), the "process" of learning (how it is being learned), "products" that need to be created (assessments such as tests, reports, etc.), and the "routines and procedures" as well as the overall impression" of the educational setting. Differentiated instruction combines individual, group, and whole-class learning approaches. One of the most significant advantages of differentiated education for learners is that it incorporates a number of different methods of instruction. Pretty much the entire discussion in differentiated instruction courses is frequently followed by group or individual learning exercises that consolidate specific topic understanding. Moreover, differentiated instruction puts a greater emphasis on substantially modifying learner tasks. This is especially beneficial for learners in higher education since the quality of compulsory activities is more significant in determining learner retention and comprehension than the frequency of required activities. Instead of just changing the amount of work required for an assignment, changing its nature is a much more effective and active strategy to encourage learning.

Making curriculum flexible is also another inclusive practice implemented by mainstream teachers in their classrooms that has been reported in the literature. Flexibility in curriculum refers to the ability of the school environment to provide a broad range of options and tailor the curriculum to individual learners' varied learning needs and objectives (Jonker, März, & Voogt, 2020). Because of massive awareness of inclusion and enlightenment, schools now accept learners from a wide range of backgrounds, including cultural heritage, place of

residence, age, career and personal experiences, prior education, level of digital literacy, and learning methods (Severiens et al., 2014). Rao and Meo (2016) were also of the view that, due to increasing diversity, a flexible curriculum that identifies and automatically adjusts to the various talents and needs of the learners is required. Flexible curriculum gives learners more control over their learning environment and learning processes. For a curriculum to be flexible, much depends on the principles as well as how, when, and where they are applied. On their part, Carlsen et al. (2016) argue that inclusion of all learners in the education system, regardless of their varied origins, requires curriculum flexibility based on when and which aspects of learning are involved.

In order to execute sentient tests and computer-based tests such as intuitive and web-based tests, curriculum flexibility implementation necessitates a flexible evaluation timeline and service offerings. Schools can also use learning analytics to provide flexible learning (Jonker, März, & Voogt, 2020). A flexible curriculum has several benefits, one of which is that it connects meaningful education with the learner and represents a deeper comprehension of the overall goal of school education. As a result of bad performances, pupils will no longer mistakenly believe that they are eccentric. With effective learning and a flexible curriculum, every learner will be competent and confident. Then again, parents can be assured about the child's natural aptitude in a particular area and work further to cultivate it using flexible curriculum techniques.

Adding to the inclusive practices implemented in mainstream classrooms by township teachers is the Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Universal Design (DU) is an architectural concept that was created to provide accessible environments for the general public (Nelson, 2014). Although this concept was initially developed to ensure people's accessibility in the most diverse physical structures, these principles have been applied to other areas of knowledge. The term used in education in the United States is universal design for learning (Oliveira, Munster, and Goncalves, 2019). Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a collection of pedagogical concepts for building adaptable teaching and learning approaches that accommodate the diversity of all classroom learners (Black et al., 2014; and Evmenova, 2018). The UDL philosophy is founded on three principles: various ways of engagement, multiple means of knowledge representation, and multiple methods of understanding expression (Evmenova, 2018). These principles pertain to the cognitive learning process, which is founded on emotional networks responsible for motivation, recognition networks responsible for

acquiring and evaluating information, and strategic networks responsible for planning and executing actions (Dell et al., 2015; Robinson & Wizer, 2016).

In another instance, the Faculty Commons of the University of Delaware (2018) believes that UDL is a teaching framework that allows students to access learning materials, engage with content, and demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways. The faculty also suggests strategies for providing equal learning opportunities to all students.

> It believes that learners should be given a variety of ways to interact with course content. Giving learners the opportunity to actively participate, explore, and reflect on their learning experience, whether alone or in groups, is one way to accomplish this. Setting personal learning goals and allowing students to reflect on their progress is one way to set high expectations while also assisting students in developing their own metacognitive abilities in the classroom. Giving learners multiple ways to engage and encouraging them to set learning goals can also help boost their motivation.
>
> Secondly, the faculty contends that assessment is critical in any course and that giving learners' options for how they will be assessed can help them feel successful, reduce barriers, and reduce anxiety. Consider giving students the option of taking an open-book exam or presenting orally.
>
> Furthermore, the faculty argues that learning is enhanced when information is conveyed in multiple modes and that if concepts can be presented visually as well as verbally and are linked to prior knowledge, the learning experience will be more powerful than if it is presented in only one of these modes. (University of Delaware Faculty Commons, 2018: 01)

The benefits of UDL in the classroom cannot be overlooked. Finkelstein et al. (2021) argue that strategies like the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can encourage inclusive practises. In the end, it is worth noting that UDL principles assist both teachers and learners in developing new skills and improving professionally. Because teachers are only sapient, they will usually teach using the techniques that are most familiar to them. Learners learn best when they use the methods they are most comfortable with. UDL promotes growth and development by utilising innovative teaching and learning methods.

In addition, another inclusive practise adopted and implemented by mainstream teachers in their classroom is the concept of multigrade teaching. According to Cornish (2014), "multi-grade teaching is where a teacher in a school is teaching two or more grades with all the learning areas in the same classroom. Cornish further argues that this situation is mostly found in rural areas that are on the periphery of the land, far from town, with all the characteristics of a poor environment, hence rural education".

Multi-grade;

> Classroom teaching is entirely focused on the teacher, with little or no involvement from learners. A small amount of involvement occurs when learners are required to repeat reading after what the teacher has said. As learners lack communication skills, such a stance leads to poor communication between the teacher and the students. In other words, the teaching method used falls short of quality teaching and learning on the part of quality education. It should be noted that communication is an extremely important tool in the teaching and learning process (Mpahla & Makena, 2022:197).

Berry (2010), as cited in Kivunja (2014), also contends that multi-grade teaching can be an answer to quality teaching and learning where there's a shortage of teachers due to small enrolments, particularly in rural schools. Echoing these sentiments, Juvane (2007) attests that the success of multi-grade teaching and learning will only come from effective teacher education. However, Naparan and Alinsug (2021) noted that multigrade teachers have challenging responsibilities in front of them. They are required to teach children of different grade levels and ages. Teaching a multigrade class involves a lot of patience and perseverance. In the same vein, Miller reported that, similar to the preservice training conference held in the United States, all countries participating in the conference reported that teachers were not prepared for teaching in multigrade classrooms (Miller 1991:3).

In summary, the reviewed literature indicates that inclusive practises acknowledge the benefits that learner diversity may contribute to the overall learning experience. Inclusive practice educates students on diversity and equality, develops learners' sensitivity and empathy for those who are different from them, enhances friendships, self-assurance, and self-image, and places priority on providing teachers with more methods to include problem-solving, cooperation, and collaboration into their teachings.

From the reviewed literature above, there are research gaps that exist. First, from the literature review, there seems to be less research conducted on inclusive practices within township schools, and this is a major research gap that the present study endeavours to fill. Secondly, some of the literature was from quantitative studies and lacked in-depth results that could have been obtained from a qualitative approach. Therefore, the present study filled in this literature gap.

2. 5: Barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in mainstream classrooms

According to Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana (2002:4), barriers to learning are any factors that interfere with a learner's ability to benefit from schooling, whether internal or external to the learner. The South African school system is plagued by numerous setbacks that make teaching and learning more difficult than they should be. These problems, called "barriers," have negatively impacted the implementation of any policy meant to make education accessible and a right for all children. The inclusive education policy, which advocates for the inclusion of all learners, regardless of learning disability, in mainstream schools to be accommodated and supported, is one of these important policies.

Barriers to inclusive education implementation have been classified as follows for the purposes of this study: teachers' personal barriers, school-related barriers, and community-related barriers.

2.5.1: Teachers' personal barriers

Teachers are the primary implementers of any policies in an educational system's classroom. It is critical to recognise that the effectiveness of any policy implementation within the school system is heavily dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of teachers. Teacher personal barriers to inclusive education account for low teacher buoyancy, low teacher self-efficacy, teacher negative attitudes, and a lack of inclusive education training, all of which have a negative impact on policy implementation. The reviews of these teacher-personal barriers to implementing inclusive education in a mainstream public township school in the Frances Baard education district are provided below.

One personal teacher barrier to inclusive education implementation in mainstream classrooms is low teacher buoyancy. First and foremost, teacher buoyancy refers to a teacher's ability to endure and overcome challenges, stressors, and impediments in the teaching and learning process (Verrier et al., 2018). Like other constructs, buoyancy is affected by both internal and external factors. Internal factors like self-efficacy, self-confidence, motivation, and agency can all have an impact on academic buoyancy. External forces such as socio-cultural contexts, educational environments, and stakeholders, on the other hand, can influence one's academic buoyancy (Comerford et al., 2015). A teacher who lacks buoyancy lacks the spirit to overcome challenges in the teaching and learning process and may be unable to assist students with learning barriers.

Low teacher self-efficacy is another teacher-personal barrier to implementing inclusion in mainstream classrooms in township schools. Teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers' belief in their ability to produce the desired results in their students. This belief has a powerful impact on learners because it helps teachers motivate even those students who are experiencing learning difficulties (Armor et al., 1976). A highly effective teacher fosters an environment in which students are motivated and goal-oriented. Teachers with a higher level of self-efficacy provide more effective teaching outcomes, which contribute to their students' higher levels of motivation and, as a result, higher academic achievement (Caprara, et al. 2006). Teacher self-efficacy can have a significant impact on classroom management, specifically in dealing with misbehaviour among students (Tilfarlioglu & Ulusoy, 2012).

Teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy become stressed by students' misbehaviour, which leads to strict disciplinary action, making them more authoritarian and focused on teacher-centred approaches centred on subject matter rather than learners' achievements. Cherry (2020) contends that teachers who have a high sense of teacher efficacy can develop an interest in academic activities, a higher sense of commitment to their interests and school activities, do not lose control when faced with difficulties and setbacks, and welcome challenging activities in order to succeed. Whereas teachers with a low sense of teacher efficacy avoid challenging activities and make excuses, they believe that challenging tasks are beyond their abilities. They focus on negative consequences and blame themselves, and they eventually lose faith in themselves. Thwala (2015:496), on the other hand, states that even if teachers include learners with disabilities in the mainstream classroom, they lack confidence, which affects their teaching and learning in general.

Teacher negative attitudes towards inclusion is also another teacher personal barrier to inclusive education implementation in mainstream classroom. According to Unianu (2012), one of the challenges of supporting learners with learning barriers in the classroom is teachers' attitudes. The attitudes of teachers determine whether or not the mood in the classroom is inclusive enough to accommodate all learners (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014). However, teachers' attitudes towards including students with learning disabilities in the classroom differ. While some teachers are willing to include learners with learning disabilities in the mainstream classroom, others believe their inclusion will have a negative impact on the performance of other students (Grieve, 2009). Similarly, other teachers believe that learners with learning disabilities would be better served in special schools, where they are expected to receive a higher quality and level of support than in mainstream schools (Grieve, 2009). However, Monsen et al. (2014) argue that a lot of factors affect the attitudes that teachers hold about the implementation of inclusive education. They believe that factors such as a lack of resources, insufficient support, teachers' perceptions of their own competence in managing an inclusive classroom, and the behaviour of students with learning disabilities influence teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of the inclusive policy.

Additionally various researchers have also identified a lack of inclusive education teacher training as one of the personal teacher barriers to implementing inclusive education. Teachers play a critical role in the implementation of inclusive education because they are the primary implementors of policies in the classroom. It is critical for teachers to be educated and trained on all aspects of the policies that are being implemented. As a result, Harvey (2005) contends that inclusion failed in part because teachers were unable to meet the demands of modifying and delivering an appropriate curriculum to children with diverse educational needs due to incapacity. Furthermore, Bagree and Lewis (2013:2) emphasise that teachers are rarely trained or supported to teach children with learning disabilities. Bagree and Lewis (2013:2) contend that in the United States of America, teachers are frequently not trained or supported to teach children with learning disabilities, putting these children at the bottom of the educational opportunity and attainment scale.

Zimba (2011:52) identified a lack of teacher training in some inclusive schools in Swaziland as one of the causes of the challenges in inclusive education. In the same vein, Zwane (2016:61) contends that some teachers in Eswatini have a misunderstanding of what inclusive education entails, which affects the identification of learners with special needs in the mainstream

classroom. Furthermore, Fakudze (2012:40) believes that while teachers support the idea of inclusive education, they are unsupported and ill-equipped to provide effective instruction and support for the diverse needs of their students. Furthermore, Mutungi and Nderitu (2014:95) depicted a situation in Kenyan primary and secondary schools where inclusive education is ineffective due to a lack of teacher training initiatives. Wevers (2013), on the other hand, believed that the only way for inclusive education to succeed was for teachers to receive ongoing training.

2.5.2: School-related barriers

For the implementation of inclusive education to be successful and effective, the school where the policy is to be implemented must be conducive enough to accommodate the program. In this light, it is only proper that certain factors that generally hinder implementation be addressed. Currently, the policy implementation in township schools is faced with significant setbacks due to various school-related barriers, which have made the whole policy implementation not serve its purpose. Findings from this study revealed large class sizes, a lack of resources or teaching aids, a lack of support for implementation, the absence of learning support teachers in schools, a non-accommodative curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS), variance between policy and practise in the classroom, and inadequate contact time. As mentioned above, the mainstream township schools face various challenges with the implementation of the inclusive education policy. One common phenomenon in public, mainstream township high schools is the higher number of learners in classrooms. Learners are usually overcrowded in the classes to the extent that the teachers are not even able to recognise or identify some of their learners' names in the classroom.

This is why Agran, Alper, and Wehmeyer (2002) believed that large class sizes could be a barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive education in the classroom. This is especially true because overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to attend to each individual learner's learning needs. Van Reusen, Shoho, and Barker (2001) argue in a similar vein that larger class sizes place additional demands on the regular teacher and that learners may not receive enough time and the all-important individual assistance and attention given to learners experiencing learning barriers in the classroom (Wasik & Slavin, 1993). Extending the argument, Wedell (2005) believes that teaching large class sizes with limited resources is one of the major setbacks that ignites the pressure experience by teachers in the classroom.

Nonetheless, because it is believed to have an impact on students' performance, high class sizes are a contentious subject for both teachers and learners (Blatchford et al., 2009; Maringe & Sing, 2014). Some studies indicate that smaller classes have a positive impact on academic performance at the elementary and secondary levels (Glass & Smith, 1978; Robinson, 1990). Others claim that class size has little to no effect on performance (Hanushek, 1986; Hoxby, 2000). Large classes, according to Ayeni and Olowe (2016), have a negative impact on how well business education is taught in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. According to the study, it leads to poor classroom management, ineffective learner control, insufficient planning and assessment, and increased teacher workload. It also claims that large class sizes increase disruptive behaviour, thwart the teacher's efforts, and harm the teacher's mental wellbeing.

In the South African context, township schools typically have overcrowded class sizes. According to Gustafsson and Mabogoane (2012:356), public schools have high class sizes, even by developing country standards, and especially in schools that have historically catered to black African learners (Howie, 2005:124). Furthermore, a lack of support to implement inclusion has been identified as a school-related barrier to the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms. Support initiatives are any initiatives that improve a school's ability to respond to diversity (Mahlo 2011:54). According to Mahlo's (2011:176) interviews in Gauteng Province, South Africa, school-based support teams (SBST), which according to the SIAS policy have as their role to support teachers and learners with the implementation of the inclusion policy, lack the knowledge and abilities to assist learners and teachers; however, Mahlo was of the belief that strengthening SBSTs could be one method to improve the effectiveness of inclusive education. Similarly, the lack of learning support teachers in schools is a significant school-related barrier to the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream classrooms. The National Department of Education, in collaboration with provincial education departments, district-based support teams (DBST), and school-based support teams (SBST), is required by Department of Education regulations to work hand in hand to provide support to teachers and learners in policy implementation (Department of Education [DoE], 2001). Adewumi and Mosito (2019) proposed that the Department of Education appoint special teachers known as Learning support teachers (LST) who would be permanently stationed at schools and would be responsible for assisting teachers and students. Nonetheless, the researcher's personal observations revealed that such policy is not being implemented in the Northern Cape.

Another school-related barrier to the implementation of the inclusive policy in mainstream schools is the non-accommodative nature of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum currently in use in the South African school system. According to Giangreco (2021), the provision of a curriculum that is inclusive of all learners in inclusive settings is critical for the successful implementation of the inclusive education policy. However, Motitswe (2012:39) contends that one of the most serious barriers to learning in South Africa can be found within the curriculum itself, owing to its rigidity. In agreement, Thwala (2015:498) emphasized the argument by stating that another challenge teachers face in the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream secondary schools is the issue of an un-inclusive curriculum that makes it difficult for teachers in an inclusive school.

As a result, Muyungu (2015:28) raises a similar situation in Tanzania, where the curriculum is viewed as not flexible enough to meet the needs of children with learning barriers in an inclusive school. This is contrary to what White Paper 6, as quoted by Links (2009:7), states in relation to the things that need to change before the implementation of inclusive education, making the curriculum one of them. Furthermore, Tremblay (2014:8) asserts that the success of inclusive education does not result solely from raising awareness; it must also be put into practice. In this regard, it is also possible to argue that, in the South African context, there is a variance between policy and actual practice in the implementation of inclusive education in schools. According to Tremblay (2014:8), policies formulated in various countries in light of inclusive education appear beautiful from a distance, but the situation is not the same as portrayed.

2.5.3: Community-related barriers

As a stakeholder, the community can also contribute to the policy's implementation. Community activities can have an impact on policy implementation. Community-related barriers to inclusive education include a lack of parental participation, parental stigmatisation of disability, a lack of community support, and a lack of parental inclusion education. The school, teachers, parents, and community all play a part in putting the inclusive education policy into practice. It is critical for these stakeholders who are leading the charge to understand the inclusive policy's content in order for implementation to be successful and goals to be met; however, most of the time, only teachers receive inclusive education training. The lack of

participation of parents of learners with learning disabilities is a major community-related barrier to inclusive education implementation (McDowall & Schaughency, 2017).

According to the findings of Adewumi and Mosito's (2019) study in selected Fort Beaufort District primary schools in South Africa, parents were not helping matters because many of them were unaware of inclusive education policy. Okeke and Mazibuko (2014:11) contend that training is the most effective way to deal with parents, who are also stakeholders and critical to their children's education. It is believed that insufficient training and other support for parents exacerbates the difficulties they already face in their roles as carers, affecting how inclusive education is implemented (Phiri, 2021). Furthermore, stigma has been defined as a "deeply discrediting attribute" that reduces the stigmatised person "from a whole and ordinary person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963: 3). According to Teferra (2005), disability is frequently associated with shame. Parents are often hesitant to involve their disabled child in the immediate community because they are perceived as bringing shame upon the family (Schiemer, 2017). Most mainstream township schools face a significant community-related barrier to implementing inclusive education policies. Overall, a lack of resources, funding for inclusive education, adequate remuneration, and support from parents, the community, and even the workplace have all served as barriers to teachers in their inclusive classrooms (Calitz, 2000; Fakudze, 2012; & Mahlo, 2011).

From the reviewed literature above, it is clear that there is ambiguity between policy and actual implementation of inclusive education in South African schools; therefore, more research is necessary to unpack the learning barriers that teachers experience in the implementation of inclusive education. It is for this reason that this study sought to address the research gap that exists on the learning barriers that teachers experience in the implementation of inclusive education. In addition, from the literature reviewed above, there seems to be no research conducted specifically in the Northern Cape province of South Africa on barriers experienced by mainstream township secondary school teachers in implementing inclusive education in the classroom. This is a research gap, which the study sought to address.

2.6: Teachers support to learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms.

In the classroom, teachers provide various types of support to students in general and to students with learning disabilities in particular. The goal is to ensure that every learner participates in and benefits from the learning process. Individualized education plans (IEPs), for example, were developed in the 1970s in the United States and have since become an integral part of special education strategies in many countries around the world to support learners with barriers in the classroom (Mariga et al., 2014). Students can benefit from assistive technology devices to gain access to information and succeed in the classroom. However, only 515 percent of disabled children in low-income countries currently have access to assistive technologies or assistive devices (Saebones et al., 2015). Furthermore, in his report on managing an inclusive school, a case study of a pilot school in Swaziland, Zimba (2011:54) stated that the use of concrete objects in the inclusive curriculum must be emphasised in order for all learners to be supported in the classroom.

The teacher most importantly provides for learners' curricular and co-curricular support needs (Storbeck, 2009). This means that it is the teacher's responsibility to motivate students by employing effective teaching strategies and active learning techniques. This increases intrinsic motivation, eagerness, and purpose for learning through self-directed learning. Support for the curriculum is an issue that affects the entire school, and it should be flexible and accessible to all learners, including those with severe disabilities, in order to be effectively implemented by the teacher. The DBE (2014:16) suggests that assistive devices, specialised equipment, and teaching and learning support materials be provided. Curriculum differentiation and an emphasis on individual education plans (IEPs) are important in curriculum design and implementation to meet the individual needs of learners (DBE 2014:16). Literature also indicates that some teachers use scaffolding to provide support to students facing challenges in the classroom. For example, Nel et al., (2013) assert that scaffolding assists the learners by making sure they understand and internalise that knowledge. Pienaar and Raymond (2013) argue that some teachers adopt differentiated instruction, whereby 'teachers structure their teaching so that it fits the diverse interests, abilities, and experiences of learners in the class. Moreover, Beattie et al., (2006) add that some teachers adopt accommodations and modifications to instructional materials and assessment measures that are specific techniques that provide teachers with the means of meeting the unique needs of learners experiencing

barriers to learning. The findings from this study reveal other support strategies below that are being adopted and implemented by mainstream township teachers in the classroom:

According to the findings of this study, teachers collaborate with parents of learners who have learning barriers to provide support for these students. Collaboration between parents and teachers is crucial to a learner's educational pursuits. When a learner's teacher and family can communicate with one another, they can collaborate to build a relationship and create the best conditions for learning at home and at school. They can also commiserate about the learner's strengths and weaknesses, develop a strategy to strengthen those weaknesses, identify any circumstances that may be enhancing or impeding the learner's learning, and form a strong support network to help the learner become their best academic selves (Western Governors University, 2021: July 7).

Remedial lessons are another support strategy used by mainstream teachers. To put it simply, a remedial programme is for students who have average or above-average intellectual ability but are underperforming in school. Remedial students typically struggle in one subject, such as reading, writing, or mathematics, rather than due to intellectual abilities. Remedial education is designed to help students reach their full potential by giving them the individualised attention they need to develop their skills and confidence. Furthermore, in order to assist learners who are slow at reading and can't even prepare properly, mainstream teachers have resorted to the use of extra-reading strategies. Furthermore, in order for all students in the classroom to benefit from the lesson, teachers may change the seating arrangement of the students. Wannarka and Ruhl's (2008) research on seating arrangements suggests that learners behave more appropriately when they sit individually. Similarly, Krantz and Risley (1977) contend that simply seating learners apart from one another was nearly as effective in increasing on-task behaviour as the systematic use of differential reinforcement and the delivery of tangible rewards. Furthermore, Wheldall and Lam (1987) claim that when students were seated individually rather than in groups, their on-task behaviour doubled. One support strategy employed by mainstream teachers to assist learners with learning barriers is referral for professional help. According to the policy document for the implementation of the inclusive education policy, a learner's case is to be referred for professional assistance if the learner is under the age range of the teachers or the school.

From the above reviewed literature, there are research gaps that were filled by the present study. First, there seems to be few studies done on the support teachers provide to learners in township schools experiencing learning barriers in their classrooms, and hence more research is needed to in this particular area. Therefore, this is a research gap which this study sought to fill. Secondly, another research gap is that, some studies focused on special schools only and did not include mainstream schools. Therefore, the present study

2.7: Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter focused on a review of the literature on teachers' experiences with providing support and implementing inclusive education. The chapter also identified research gaps in the reviewed literature. The theoretical framework used for this study is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework adopted for this dissertation. The study adopted two theories, namely, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and the social model of disability. The two theories are discussed as follows:

3.2: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological systems theory was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, and it suggests that there are layers or levels of interacting systems resulting in change, growth, and development (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010). Each of the layers within the system is interrelated because what happens in one system affects and is affected by another system. The model can also be used as a conceptual tool for understanding classrooms, teachers, practices, schools, and families. The layers (as demonstrated in Figure 1 below) are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem, which are all connected with each other.

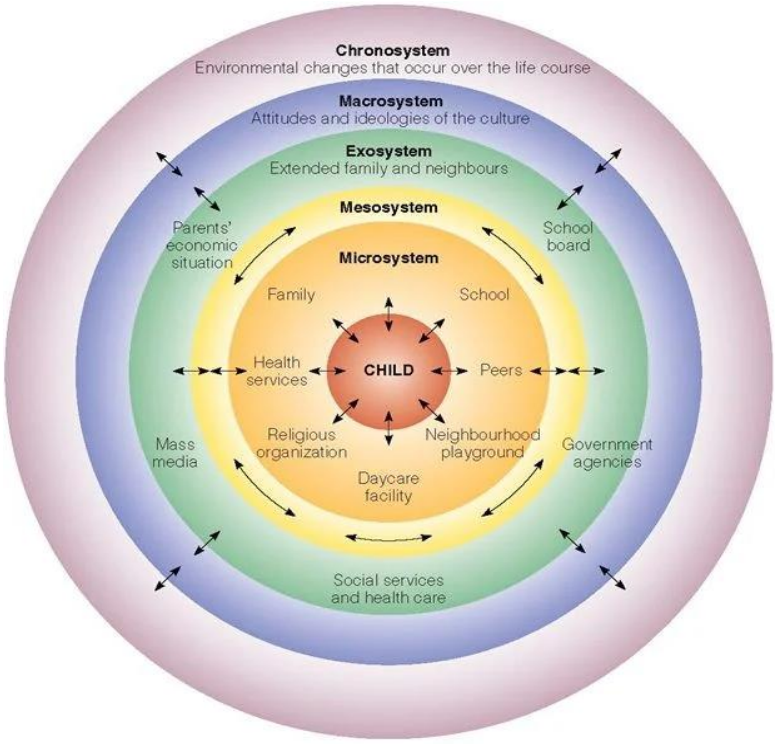

Figure 1: *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (source):*

https://simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html

Each of the systems is discussed as follows:

The Microsystem

The microsystem is the first level of Bronfenbrenner's theory and is comprised of objects that have direct contact with the kid in their immediate surroundings, such as parents, siblings, teachers, and classmates. The microsystem is a pattern of human activities, roles, and interactions with the systems in which they participate. It consists of the people and events closest to a person's life and is characterised by constant face-to-face interaction. At a certain time in a person's life, each individual in the surrounding environment has an impact on the other. Also, a child's behaviour towards the people in their microsystem can influence how those others treat them in return. Frequently, the interactions within microsystems are highly intimate and vital for developing and supporting the child's growth. This system provides the youngster with a sense of belonging, affection, and support, which encourages the child to act (Landsberg, Kruger, & Swart, 2011). A strong, nurturing relationship between a child and their parents is thought to have a favourable effect on the youngster. In contrast, emotionally distant and indifferent parents will have a detrimental impact on the child. This system can also be a risk factor for the child if there is violence at home, in a child-headed household, among the homeless, at school, or if there is drug misuse, all of which can negatively impact and ruin the child. In the present study, this system indicates that the teacher, the class, the parents, and anyone else the learner works with are all part of the microsystems level. It also looks at how the classes, the teachers, and the parents work together and get along. At this level, the relationship between the teacher and the student is looked at, as is the teacher's ability to handle the different people in the class. The staff, the school, and the board members are looked at the organisational level of analysis. Here, the school's policy on inclusive education and how they handle the process of being inclusive will be looked at. There is thought given to teacher training and school resources. At the locality level of analysis, the school's neighbourhood and all socioeconomic factors are looked at.

The Mesosystem

The mesosystem includes interactions between the child's microsystems, such as those between parents and teachers or between school peers and siblings (Landsberg, Kruger, and Nel, 2005, p. 10). The family, school, and peer group all interact with one another at this level, influencing each system. A learner from an unsupportive home environment, for example, may not receive the emotional support needed, putting that learner at risk of potential learning barriers; however, if a child's parents communicate with the child's teachers, this interaction may influence the child's development. A positive environment that builds the learner's self-esteem and sense of security over time. To some extent, the school's microsystem can protect him or her from the psychological effects of an unsupportive home environment. " Learners whose parents do not interact with the school consistently underperform (Mcleod & Gleason, 2023). As a result, they are unmotivated, which harms their self-esteem and psychological well-being. This system is relevant to this study because it is critical to recognise that how a teacher collaborates with all of the micro-systems around him or her can influence how the teacher supports learners with learning barriers in the classroom. Parental neglect, lack of inclusion support, or inadequate teacher training in inclusive education could be cited as examples that directly relate to the current study.

The Exo-system

The exosystem is the third level of ecological systems theory. According to Landsberg et al. (2005) the exo-system refers to one or more environments in which the developing learner is not directly involved as an active participant but which may influence the learner. Consequently, a parent’s stressful relationship with an employer does not involve the learner directly but can possibly influence the quality of that parent’s relationship with the learner and microsystems. The same applies if the learners are frequently absent from school as a result of poor health services; it will influence their relationships with their parents, teachers, and peers, as well as their schoolwork (Mcleod & Gleason, 2023). This system provided an answer to the question of which learning obstacles teachers encounter when implementing inclusion in the classroom for the current study. In relation to the current study, it can also be stated that decisions made by policy-making bodies governing the school regarding the admission of learners to the mainstream school may have a negative impact on a child with learning barriers

who lives far from a special school by denying that child admission to the mainstream school closest to that learner's home.

The Macrosystem

This refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values, and ideologies inherent in a society's and culture's systems, which may influence or be influenced by any of the above systems (Landsberg et al., 2005, p. 12). According to Landsberg et al. (2001), the very principle of inclusion is part of the macrosystem's ideology, and it is clear that these changes have had a reciprocal impact not only on government structures but also on societies, school cultures and systems, professional services, classroom systems, families, and the individual child. The macro-system in South Africa can refer to the level at which education policy decisions are made, namely the national Department of Basic Education (DBE). These policies have a large impact on how teachers teach and support their students (Staden, 2015:54). However, this system aided the researcher in answering the question, "Which inclusive practices do teachers use in their classrooms?

The Chronosystem

The chronosystem refers to the time frame in which these systems interact with one another and have an impact on individual development (Landberg, Kruger, & Nel, 2008, p. 12). Changes to systems and curriculum have caused and will continue to cause teachers to feel insecure, which could lead to low levels of support between teachers and learners. For the current study, chronosystems level could be helpful in examining the evolution of inclusive education policy over time, as there was a need for a new educational system in South Africa following apartheid. It also takes into account the learner and the teacher at any given time. For the current study, the chronosystem could also be used to assess teachers' attitudes towards the inclusive education policy before and after receiving inclusive education training or a course to see if their perceptions changed.

3.2.1: Justification on the application of the Ecological Systems Theory to the study

A conceptual model is required on a holistic level because it informs decision-making processes regarding educational practises. This study adopted Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, which is a model used to conceptualise inclusive education. The ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner is relevant to the study because inclusive education necessitates

collaboration between the school and the home (Koutrouba, Vamvakari, & Steliou, 2006). As a result, an inclusive education conceptual model that takes into account various environments is required. The model should also account for the collaboration and interactions between the various role-players (teacher, learner, parent, and community) involved in inclusive education. The Ecological Systems Theory has been applied to inclusive education because it focuses on the developing child and the five ecological systems that occur within and between them. To strengthen the development of ecological systems in educational practice, teachers and parents should maintain good communication and collaborate to benefit the child. Many studies have reported on the application of ecological systems theory to education. For example, Lippard, et al., (2017) found that these relationships were related in a big way to how well learners did in school and how they behaved in class. This suggests that these relationships are important for learners' development and backs up the Ecological Systems Theory. Moreover, Wilson et al., (2002) also indicated that creating a positive school environment by valuing diversity makes it easier for students to get along with each other. Incorporating this type of school ethos influences those within the developing child's ecological systems. Additionally, Langford et al., (2014) portrayed that, whole-school approaches to the health curriculum can help students do better in school and feel better about themselves. This shows that microsystems affect student growth.

The theory is relevant for the study because it delves into the underpinning contents of the inclusive policy, which states that teachers and parents should maintain open lines of communication and collaborate to benefit the child in order to strengthen the development of ecological systems in educational practise. Teachers should also be aware of the situations that their students' families may be in, such as social and economic factors that are part of the various systems. A positive relationship between parents and teachers, according to the theory, should shape the child's development. Similarly, both academically and socially, the child must be actively engaged in their learning. To promote positive development, they must collaborate with their peers and engage in meaningful learning experiences.

The social model of disability is discussed in the next section.

3.3: Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability identifies disability as the formation of specific exclusionary social and economic practices and institutions founded in cultural attitudes, with the goal of ousting the notion that impairment and disability are causally linked (Terzi, 2004; Meltz, Herman, & Pillay, 2014). According to the social model, it is society that disables people with impairments, and therefore any meaningful solution must be directed at societal change rather than individual adjustment and rehabilitation' (Barnes, Mercer, & Shakespeare, 2010). One of the most important documents in the development of this approach is the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation's (UPIAS) manifesto document, Fundamental Principles of Disability (1976).

The social model is especially concerned with addressing the 'barriers to participation' experienced by PWDs as a result of various social and environmental factors in society (O'Connell, Finnerty, & Egan, 2008). UPIAS (1976) emphasizes the importance of this social dimension in its definition of disability: Disability is a situation caused by social conditions that requires, for its elimination, (a) that no one aspect such as income, mobility, or institutions be treated in isolation, (b) that disabled people should, with the advice and help of others, assume control over their own lives, and (c) that professionals, experts, and others who seek to help must be committed to promoting such control by disabled people.

In the same vein, Oliver (2018) argues that the social paradigm does not deny the existence of disability but rather places it within society. In other words, a repressive and discriminatory social framework is perceived as imposing disability on disabled people in addition to their impairment. The social model denies the core assumptions of the medical or individual models, and it contests marginalization and discrimination, according to Oliver (2018), by removing the stifling barriers established by ascendant social and cultural norms. Moreover, Schugurensky (2010) argues that the social model is founded on principles of social justice, which define a society as one that aspires to the principles of equity and solidarity, cherishes and understands differences, and places a high value on human dignity, which is what inclusive education is all about.

3.3.1: Justification on the application of the Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability is important for this study because it sees education as a mechanism for changing society's attitudes toward people with disabilities (Hodkinson, 2019). Moreover, the social model, as argued by Winzer and Mazurek (2010), is the cornerstone of inclusion, and it is about taking steps to ensure educational equity and freedom from predisposition, according to Johannessen (2010). The social model is also necessary for this study because it is practiced in education through inclusive education (Winzer & Mazurek, 2010). Furthermore, the model sees education as a mechanism for changing society's predispositions against disabled persons (Hodkinson, 2019). Moreover, the model requires a fundamental shift in concepts and actions when providing for impaired children, as opposed to the medical deficit model. As a result, in order to break present stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes, curriculum approaches and classroom management would have to be modified. Furthermore, Hodkinson (2019) argues that the social model of disability visualizes a world where segregated school environments are replaced by open-access schools that allow space and structure for all learners to participate.

This study was influenced by the social model of disability because it aims to change the unfavourable attitudes that schools, teachers, and other stakeholders in the mainstream have towards learners who have disabilities in order to accommodate them. The theory supports the idea that individuals with disabilities have a right to be educated in regular classrooms. As a natural result of human diversity, the theory forces society to confront its psychological, behavioural, interpersonal, and social components in order to adapt to impairments.

3.4: Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter presented the theoretical framework of the study. The two theories, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and the social model of disability, have been discussed. The chapter also presented detailed justifications for the application of the models. The next chapter, Chapter four, presents the research design and methodology adopted in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR
4.0: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1: Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study's research design and research methodology. Included are an overview of the research paradigms, research design, research site, research sampling, data collection methods, data analysis, the trustworthiness of qualitative data, and ethical considerations.

4.2: Research paradigm

A paradigm is defined as "a way of seeing the world that frames a research topic" and influences how researchers consider the topic (Hughes, 2010). A paradigm, according to Fraser and Robinson (2004), is "a set of beliefs about how particular problems exist and a set of agreements about how such problems can be investigated". The interpretive paradigm was used in this study. The primary goal of employing interpretivism was to comprehend the subjective realm of human experience (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

People differ in many ways, and different perspectives on the same subject exist, so they can have different perspectives on a social reality (Wahyuni, 2012). The interpretative research paradigm was relevant for the current study because it aided in exploring teacher experiences that could not be understood from an individual's perspective but were instead based on understanding the interpretations and meanings that people place on actions and focused on gaining insight into the experiences of individuals and groups.

4.1.1: Axiology

Axiology refers to the ethical issues that must be addressed when developing a research proposal, and it considers the philosophical approach to making value-based or correct decisions (Finnis, 2011). It also entails defining, assessing, and comprehending concepts of right and wrong behaviour in relation to the research. It considers how much weight we will give to various aspects of our research, such as participants, data, and the audience to whom we will present our findings. Simply put, it asks, "What is the nature of ethics or ethical

behaviour?" In answering this question, it is critical to consider everyone who will be involved with or participate in your research project's regard for human values.

4.1.2: Ontology

Ontology is defined as "the nature of our beliefs about reality" (Richards, 2003, p. 33). Researchers make assumptions about reality, how it exists, and what can be known about it. The ontological question prompts a researcher to inquire about the nature of reality: "a singular, verifiable reality and truth [or]... socially constructed multiple realities" (Patton, 2002, p. 134). Ontology is critical to a paradigm because it aids in the understanding of the things that make up the world as it is known (Scott & Usher, 2004). It attempts to ascertain the true nature, or the foundational concepts that comprise themes that we analyse in order to make sense of the meaning embedded in research data. The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism, which states that reality is subjective (Scotland, 2012). The researcher employed the ontological perspective of relativism in this study to determine how different teachers felt about the practise of incorporating everyone in the classroom. Furthermore, relativist ontology was used because it is based on the philosophy that experience is formed within the human mind; thus, teachers' positions regarding the implementation of the inclusive policy are relative to what each teacher has experienced in the classroom at any given time while attempting to implement inclusive education.

4.1.3: Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with assumptions about human knowledge, specifically the knowledge that is acceptable in a discipline. These assumptions shape our understanding of our research questions as well as the methods we will use to investigate the research question, collect data, analyse data, and interpret data. In other words, specifying the ontological stance is a prerequisite for selecting the epistemological standpoint, which in turn shapes the research methodology that was used (Grix, 2001).

The study adopted a subjective epistemology. The belief that knowledge is "always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity" is known as subjectivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). While not denying the existence of an external reality, subjective epistemology recognises knowledge as positivistic. Beyond individual reflections and interpretations, unaffected and universal knowledge of an external reality is not possible.

The observer influences observations, and the observed influences the observer. The researcher used subjective research in the study to nurture comprehension, raise awareness of ethical and moral issues, and promote personal and political release (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and to explore the experiences of teachers in implementing inclusion. Additionally, subjective epistemology was also relevant for the current study because it unveiled how teachers experiences inform their perceptions of supporting and ensuring the inclusion of learners with learning barriers in their classroom.

4.1.4: Research Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology that is closely linked to the interpretivist paradigm, which is subjective. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explain how qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and the subject of study, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), qualitative techniques collect data primarily in the form of words rather than numbers. The study provided a detailed narrative description, analysis, and interpretation of phenomena related to teachers' experiences of the implementation of inclusive education. It provided verbal descriptions to portray the richness and complexity of events that occurred in natural settings from the participants' perspectives. The researcher aimed at studying the lived experiences of the teachers to make sense of them and decipher issues at a deeper level (Litchman, 2010). Consequently, the researcher also submerged herself in the study in order to get rich data (Maree, 2010). The qualitative research methodology was relevant to the present study because it assisted in obtaining an account of the experience of teachers with reference to providing care and support to learners who may be facing difficulties in learning.

4.2: Research Design

A research design is a plan or strategy that specifies the selection of participants, the data-gathering methods to be employed, and the data analysis to be performed, starting with the underlying philosophical assumptions (Maree, 2007:72). A case study research design was adopted in the present study. According to Merriam (2015), a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system in which the investigator investigates a small number of participants' live experiences of a phenomenon as described by the participants in order to better understand the phenomenon (Staden, 2015). The researcher investigated and

explored a bounded system or cases over time using detailed, in-depth data collection from multiple sources of information and reported a case description as case-based themes (Merriam, 2015). One of the most powerfully defining elements of case study research is limiting the study's target, namely the case. As a result, it is more of a "choice of what to study" than a methodological decision. The "what" is a confined system, a single entity, a unit with boundaries surrounding it (Merriam, 2015).

This study needed a case study research design because it needed to look at a "current phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the lines between the phenomenon and context are not clear." Moreover, this design also allowed for the exploration of complex situations by allowing the collection of multiple perspectives from a variety of sources, including contextual information (Yin, 2003). The case study answered the question of ‘‘how’’ (Yin, 2009), which was in line with the research questions of the study, which were how do teachers implement inclusive practice in the classroom and how do teachers support learners who are experiencing learning barriers in the classroom?

4.3: Research site

The study was conducted in one secondary school in the township of Kimberley, the Northern Cape province's capital. Kimberley has 139 high schools and five school districts that serve it. Frances Baard, the second largest of the five districts, was the site of the researcher's selection of one secondary school. The selected secondary school is a mainstream school in the Frances Baard district that was established to include learners with disabilities within the regular classroom while giving them the same opportunities as other learners to access instruction, gain knowledge, and grow as individuals. Learners attending quintile 2 schools do not pay school fees; rather, it is the government that provides funding for all the activities of these schools. Most quintile 2 schools, like the selected school, are located within the townships of the cities and are under-resourced. The site was selected for the study because it is a preferred choice for parents to send their children to and hence has high enrolment. Approximately 8% of the learners have disabilities such as learning and intellectual disabilities, autism, and behavioural disorders (personal observation). Additionally, to support inclusive education, the school is supposed to work with the district support team (social worker), the school-based support team, and the provincial learner support teachers on professional development activities. The school, like other schools in South Africa, is dedicated to educating all children in accordance with the

South African Education Service's goal of providing quality education to all children (DOE, 2001).

4.4: Research Sampling

The study sampled twelve (12) teacher participants from one mainstream school, among whom two (2) were members of the school-based learner support team. The school employs more than forty-nine teachers, including four department heads, one main principal, and two deputy principals. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of the 12 participants. According to Bertram and Christensen (2004), purposive sampling means that the researcher makes specific decisions about which groups or objects to include in the sample. The study employed purposive sampling because the teacher participants had specific knowledge relevant to the questions to be investigated, and it was also assumed that these teachers had first-hand knowledge of inclusive practices and could demonstrate a deeper understanding and good inclusive education practices (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019). Teachers from General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) of all grades and departments of the school were chosen for this study. To achieve equality, gender representation and years of teaching experience among teachers were considered.

4.5: Data Collection Methods

The researcher adopted semi-structured individual interviews to collect data from the participants on their experiences of giving support and implementing inclusion in their classrooms. An individual interview is a method of discovering what is in or on someone's mind, including his or her unique lived experience and knowledge, opinions, beliefs, and demographic information (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The interviews were face-to-face between the researcher and each of the participants to explore participants' experiences of giving support and implementing inclusion in the classroom. It included a total of 12 participants from one selected mainstream secondary school. Each interview with the participants lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. The researcher embarked on an audiotape recording of the interviews, which was transcribed for analysis. Semi-structured interviews were good for this study because the main goal was to learn and collect information about teachers' experiences with giving support and implementing inclusion. It would not have been possible to find out this information without talking to and questioning the teachers.

4.6: Data Analysis

This study used thematic analysis in analysing the data. Thematic analysis is defined as a way of finding and analysing common themes in a set of data (Liamputtong, 2009). In order for the data to be analysed, one needs to have it in its raw form so that connections can be made between what was seen, heard, and said during its collection.

Braun and Clarke (2006), provide a six-phase guide for conducting data analysis for a research study, which the researcher followed in the thematic analysis of the transcribed data for the current study.

- The first phase in analysing the data was reading and rereading the transcripts to get to know the data.
- The familiarised data was then coded in a methodical manner to ensure organisation and give meaning.
- The coded data was then categorised under different themes and sub-themes (Vasimoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013) to address teachers experiences of giving support and implementing inclusion in a mainstream township school.
- In the fourth phase, all the relevant data for each theme was gathered and then all the themes were looked at again.
- In the fifth phase, the themes were defined to '...identify the 'essence' of what each theme is about.'. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92).
- Finally, in the sixth phase, a report was written. But the final draught was preceded by organising the responses per research question, which were then taken back to participants to confirm if they reflected the meanings they wished to communicate. This type of analysis was underpinned by the social constructionist perspective and was advantageous in providing a meaningful analysis of the data.

4.7: Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

Trustworthiness and credibility are concepts used in qualitative research to measure the authenticity and quality of the research (Rule & John, 2011). It is suggested by Rule and John (2011) that the trustworthiness of qualitative research is reached by ensuring the study has transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability. The researcher ensured the trustworthiness of qualitative data as discussed below:

4.7.1: Credibility

According to Bashir, Afzal, and Azeem (2008), credibility raises concerns about the accuracy of qualitative research findings. Credibility can be ensured by using a variety of data collection methods, a process known as triangulation (Terre Blanch, Durkheim, & Painter, 2006). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), peer debriefing and member review of transcripts can help ensure credibility. In the current study, credibility was ensured by providing the transcribed and analysed interview data back to participants for member checking to ensure that their statements were correctly transcribed and appropriately analysed. Moreover, credibility was ensured by the triangulation of data from semi-structured interviews for each of the research questions.

4.7.2: Transferability

The ability to apply the research findings in a setting other than the original can be used to demonstrate the validity of the findings (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003:256). Thus, the question of transferability of my research was whether the results would be the same if my research was conducted with a different group of people in a different setting (De Vos, 2005:346). Data source triangulation was used in the study to ensure transferability. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews of the participants were triangulated to ensure that the findings concerning people's perceptions were accurately reflected (Merriam, 2009:216). In addition, transferability of the qualitative data in the study was ensured through a rich and thick description of the phenomenon under study.

4.7.3: Dependability

In qualitative research, "dependability" means whether or not the research results would be the same if they were done again with the same people in the same setting (De Vos, 2005, p. 346). According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003:581), the use of multiple methodologies contributes to the dependability of the findings. Merriam (2009:229) also discusses the use of multiple sources to confirm new findings. The dependability of interview data in the study was ensured by a detailed description of the methodological procedures for data collection to reflect the experiences of the participants in implementing inclusive education.

4.7.4: Confirmability

Conformability is the extent to which the research findings are the result of the investigation's emphasis rather than the researcher's bias (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278). The qualitative technique that was used in the study, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:10), focused on gaining a thorough understanding of the participants' experiences and recognised the researcher as an integral component of the research process. The researcher interpreted the data. In the current study, the researcher ensured confirmability by being aware of her personal framework and views, as well as the influence they had on the data interpretation. Moreover, the researcher ensured confirmability through the provision of a detailed account of the audit trail of the evidential source of the interview results.

4.8: Ethical considerations

Kumar (2005) defines ethics as "behaviour that is thought to be correct and does not cause harm to anyone." In any type of research, ethics are critical to ensuring that no harm is done to anyone, especially young children. Researchers must abide by the ethical principles of autonomy, nonmaleficence, and beneficence (Piper & Simons, 2005). In terms of each of these terms, this means that participants must voluntarily participate in the study and have the right to withdraw at any time; they must not be harmed in any way; and the research must be beneficial or create positive change in some way. The aspects considered in the ethical considerations in the present study are discussed below:

4.8.1: Approval Obtained from Appropriate Institutions

All ethical protocols were followed throughout the course of this study. The University of Witwatersrand's Ethics Research Committee was approached first for ethical clearance. The researcher obtained approval from the principal of the selected school after obtaining permission from the Northern Cape Department of Education to conduct the research in the selected school. The participants were informed about the study's purpose and given the researcher's proof of enrolment as a student as well as the ethical clearance certificate. Interviews were done face to face.

4.8.2: Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation includes information such as a description of the study, an explanation of the activities involved, the study's time frame, an explanation of participants' right to withdraw at any time, a discussion of potential risks, and assurances that information would be kept confidential (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101). Participants should not be coerced into being involved in any way. The researcher achieved this by using consent forms and first explaining to the participants that the decision to take part was out of their own free will and that at any point in time if they felt they could no longer continue, they were free to withdraw at any time.

4.8.3: Confidentiality

This is where some personal information about the participant should be kept secret and should only be made public with the participant's consent. The participants were assigned different numbers, and their names were not used to protect their identities. Furthermore, the comments of the participants were kept confidential and reported in an anonymous way. The data was also stored on a computer with a password that was known only to the researcher, and the data would be destroyed five (5) years after the completion of the study.

4.8.4: Anonymity

This means that identifying (name, address, and email address) information about research participants should not be collected unless it is required by the study protocol. It also means that the study will be unable to link individual responses to participants' identities. The researcher ensured participants' anonymity by ensuring that their identities were not linked to their responses in any way

4.9: Conclusion

This chapter looked at the research paradigms, research design, research site, research sampling, data collection methods, data analysis, the reliability of qualitative data, and ethical concerns about the study. The next chapter will focus on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.1: Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research design and methodology were presented. This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings are presented on inclusive practices of teachers in implementing inclusive education in classrooms, barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in classrooms; and how teachers support learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in the classroom. The findings in the chapter are presented as follows.

5.2: Data Presentation and analysis

The study explored teachers' experiences of giving support and implementing inclusive education in mainstream township secondary schools in the Frances Baard Education district of Kimberley, the Northern Cape Province (South Africa). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcribed data. In line with the research questions, the recorded audio-taped interview responses of teacher participants were sorted by coding and classified under different themes and sub-themes (Vasimoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). From the thematic analysis of the data, the following posteriori themes and sub-themes emerged and are discussed below:

5.3: Findings on the inclusive practices of teachers in implementing Inclusive education in the classrooms

The study examined the inclusive practices of teachers in implementing inclusive education in classrooms in the selected mainstream township school in the Frances Baard education district of Kimberley, Northern Cape. Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the interview data from teachers. The findings reported that teachers comprehend inclusive practices differently and how to implement them varied in the same school setting. The themes on the inclusive practices of teachers in implementing inclusive education in the classroom resulting from the interviews are reasonable accommodation of learners with disabilities, adoption of individualized instruction, differentiated instruction for learners, adoption of a flexible curriculum, universal design for learning**,** and multigrading. The themes are presented and discussed as follows:

5.3.1: **Theme 1:** *Reasonable accommodation of learners with disability*

Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) defines reasonable accommodation as "necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, where necessary in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UN-CRPD, 2006:4). With respect to the right to education, reasonable accommodation means ensuring the specific support needs of learners with disabilities are met so that they are able to equitably participate in learning alongside their peers. The findings from two teacher participants (teachers 1 and 5) out of the expected twelve teachers in the selected school reported that they adopted reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities in their classrooms. The participants further reiterated that accommodation of learners with special needs was necessary to bring learners from varied backgrounds and cognitive abilities in one inclusive classroom. For instance, one teacher participant reported that: *''I don't have much knowledge per se; the little I know is that, with inclusive practice, we try to accommodate all learners from different backgrounds and different capabilities. Especially those with disabilities''* (Teacher Participant, 1). In addition, below is another teacher participant's interview excerpt on reasonable accommodation of learners with disabilities as an inclusive practice by teachers in the classroom:

> *I think inclusive practice is where everyone with physical challenges is accommodated, and they must be able to move around the class. The teacher must create an environment where every learner is going to feel accepted and that he belongs in that classroom; he must not feel inferior* (Teacher Participant 5)

From the interview excerpts above on reasonable accommodation of learners with disabilities, it can be argued that the position of making adjustments and modifications in the mainstream classroom to accommodate learners with disabilities is an inclusive education best practice. However, in as much the two teachers adopted reasonable accommodation for learners with disability in their classrooms, one of them (teacher one) acknowledged inadequate knowledge on inclusion. Moreover, only two teachers adopted the accommodation method for learners with disabilities. This could imply that most teachers still have inadequate training on accommodation as an inclusive practice for learners with disabilities in classrooms. The

researcher believes that if teachers make reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities, the stigma, which according to Link and Phelan (2001) is the relationship between negative attitudes resulting from negative perceptions of societal structure driven by cultural beliefs towards a marginalized group, that is usually associated with learners with disabilities, can be overcome.

5.3.2: Theme 2: *Adoption of Individualized instruction*

Individualized instruction is a pedagogical approach that involves one-on-one teaching and self-paced learning based on a set of policy ideas that lead to the curriculum outcomes.
(New York Department of Education, 2001). This is an inclusive practice that ensures that students are guided and flexible in their learning process, thereby enhancing their academic growth. Three teacher participants (teachers 2, 3, and 11) all agreed that they adopted individualized instruction as a strategy for learners with disabilities in their classrooms. According to the findings of the three teacher participants, individualized instruction is useful in making learners who experience exclusion feel that their needs are met in inclusive classrooms. The interview excerpts from teachers on individualized instruction as a practice implemented in inclusive education in the classroom are presented as follows:

> *It requires you to change your teaching strategies so that you include all learners. So,* you now *sit down and reflect as a teacher: "I am using a learner-centred method plus a teacher-centred method because both the learner and the teacher must be involved in the lesson." Now you need to check which strategies will work for this learner who has barriers, or what intervention is it that I'm going to make for this learner* (Teacher Participant 2)

> *You will notice that this learner is always alone, withdrawn, and extremely bullying, aggressive, or angry. Inclusive practices require that I sit down with the learner and talk to him or her, getting to know the learner better and determining the best way to assist that particular learner* (Teacher Participant 3)

> *it means now when you have to teach you must consider that you are not only teaching, learners who are gifted, or learners with otherwise skills. So, my approach must be*

such that i consider every child as unique and different from the others (Teacher Participant 11).

From the interview results above, it can be argued that some teachers have a good understanding of individualized instruction as an inclusive education practice. The teachers have demonstrated their knowledge of this inclusive practice by implementing it during instructional hours, which would ensure that all learners, irrespective of their learning abilities, benefit from the lesson. The researcher is of the opinion that the ideas expressed by the teachers on individualized instruction as an inclusive practice are therefore a positive foundation for the effective implementation of the inclusive education policy, as teachers are the chief implementors of it. However, only three out of the twelve teacher participants reported using individualized instruction in their classrooms. This could imply that most teachers may not have had adequate knowledge about the use of individualized instruction as an inclusive practice that could be helpful for learners with disabilities in their classrooms.

5.3.3: Theme 3: *Differentiated instruction for learners*

Differentiation is described as an epistemology that allows teachers to plan purposefully in order to meet the needs of diverse learners in classrooms while meeting specific target standards (Gregory & Chapman, 2012). The findings of this study indicated that two teacher respondents (teachers 8 and 10) adopted differentiated instruction in their lessons to cater for learners with diverse needs in their classrooms. For example, one teacher participant reported that: ‘‘*It has to do with the teacher using different strategies to include everyone irrespective of their learning abilities. I adopt strategies to cater for varied learners in my class’’* (Teacher Participant 10). The findings from the two respondents further argue that by adopting differentiated instruction, varied learners’ needs are taken care of and all learners will benefit from the lesson outcome. The following is an excerpt from interview with one teacher participant on the use of differentiated instruction in the classroom:

Inclusive practice means including all learners in the learning process. When a teacher prepares a lesson, it is meant for all learners. Those who are fast learners, even those who are slow learners, must all benefit from it. You cannot exclude those who take a long time to understand. We have to give them extra work or extra examples while the others are busy moving forward because they are obviously faster, but you must make

> *time for those who are known to be slower. So inclusive practice means you must include all the learners in the learning process. They are all entitled to the lesson's outcomes by the end of the period.* (Teacher Participant 8)

The aforementioned interview snippets (of teacher participant 8 and 10) show that some teachers adopted differentiated instruction to cater for learners with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms. The researcher argues that the ideal method to implement a policy is when the person responsible for doing so fully comprehends the concept behind it. However, this finding could also imply that only a few teachers have knowledge about the use of differentiated instruction as an inclusive practice, which could mean that there is a big variance between inclusive policy and the practise as implemented by teachers in classrooms.

5.3.4: **Theme 4:** *Adoption of Flexible curriculum*

Curriculum flexibility is defined as the curriculum's ability to adapt and its responsiveness to the needs and capabilities of learners (Jonker, et al., 2020). According to the findings of this study, only one teacher participant (teacher participant 4) used flexible curriculum as an inclusive practice in the implementation of inclusive education. The manuscript below is an excerpt from an interview on the adoption of flexible curriculum as an inclusive practise.

> *The curriculum itself should be flexible and open to the needs of each individual learner, and by individual learner, we mean that all learners have their own capabilities, weaknesses, and strengths, and other learners are gifted differently, so that's all I've got to understand about inclusive practices: developing a curriculum that meets the needs of individual children based on their abilities* (Teacher Participant 4)

From the interview result above, it is evident that one teacher respondent had knowledge of flexible curriculum and adopted this method to cater for learners with diverse needs in the mainstream classroom. This finding implies that for best inclusive practice, the curriculum being implemented in the classroom should be adaptable and accessible to meet the needs of all learners and should be able to factor in the abilities and capabilities of all learners. The researcher argues that, inasmuch as differentiated curriculum has been adopted by one teacher participant, it also implies that, most teachers are not aware of this method. As a result, this

could imply that teachers have not received adequate training on practices that can cater for learners with diverse needs in their classrooms, as required by inclusive education policies.

5.3.5: Theme 5: *Universal Design for Learning*

Universal design for learning (UDL) is a set of principles for developing curriculum that provides equal learning opportunities for all individuals. UDL is intended to benefit all students, regardless of ability, disability, age, gender, or cultural and linguistic background. UDL provides a framework for developing goals, methods, materials, and assessments that will reach all students, including those with special needs (Shuy & Staff, 2010).

The UDL principles, which are based on research on learner differences and effective instructional settings, call for a variety of flexible ways to present or access information, concepts, and ideas; plan and execute learning tasks; and get involved and stay involved in learning. The findings of this study indicated that some respondents (teacher participants 5, 6, and 7) all reported having knowledge of and having adopted universal design for learning to cater for learners with diverse needs in their classrooms. The interview excerpts below give an affirmation of the adoption of this method as an inclusive practice:

> *When we talk about inclusive practice, I basically mean education in general, where every learner's needs, whether they have physical or cognitive challenges, and any learning barriers that they are experiencing, are addressed or catered for, and they are all in one school. I mean using methods that benefit all learners irrespective of their special needs* (Teacher Participant 5)

> *However, there are certain things that we as teachers could do to have this policy, such as bringing those learners with vision barriers and putting them in front of class; however, we cannot fully apply or implement it in our school. We need a classroom that provides opportunities for all categories of learners in the classroom. For example, if one of them cannot see the chalkboard easily, we will put them in front, sometimes by sharing them in groups, and then we will put the one who suffers from a lack of confidence in front.* (Teacher Participant 6)

I believe that inclusive practice is to have all learners who have problems with barriers because we now have the misconception that inclusive only refers to physically disabled learners, and this is something that we need to understand. I believe that inclusive education practice caters for every learner, whether they are physically disabled or in good physical condition, but they will have certain barriers that they will be suffering from, and in that way, inclusive practice allows those learners to be taken into the educational system. (Teacher Participant 7).

The above responses from excerpts of the interview reflect some knowledge, understanding, and utilization of universal design for learning to accommodate all learners in the mainstream classroom. This implies that some teachers view all learners as capable of attaining learning in a mainstream classroom when strategies that cater to all learners are implemented during the instruction sessions. However, there is concern that this critical practice is not being fully implemented in schools because most teachers are either ignorant of it or because there is a wide gap between inclusive policy and the practice in classrooms.

5.3.6: Theme 6*:* *Adoption of Multigrade Teaching*

Teaching classes of learners from different grade levels as well as learners of dissimilar ages and skills is known as "multigrade teaching." Although using multi-grade teaching can be difficult, it motivates students to learn from their peers and so fosters cohesion, cooperation, and healthy competition among them. It also improves their interpersonal and leadership skills and fosters a culture of sharing (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015). According to the findings of this study, one teacher participant (Teacher 2) was aware of the use of multigrade teaching to accommodate all learners in the classroom.

The response from one interview excerpt reflects teacher participant's adoption of multigrade teaching: *"There is also this thing that we call "multi-grading," which is also more like "inclusive practice" because you'll be teaching different grades in the same class at the same time"* (Teacher Participant 2).

According to the interview results, only one teacher participant used multigrade teaching to meet the needs of all learners with diverse needs in the mainstream classroom. It can be argued also from the finding above that, though multigrade teaching is very essential, most teachers have no training in it or, because of the challenges associated with it, feel reluctant to adopt multigrade teaching in their classroom to assist learners.

5.4: Findings on Barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education.

The study also investigates the challenges that teachers face when implementing inclusive education in classrooms at the chosen mainstream township school. The findings from the interview data reported on various barriers to implementing inclusive education in classrooms. The major themes and sub-themes on barriers experienced by teachers to implementing inclusive education are: *teachers' personal barriers* (sub-themes: low teacher buoyancy, low teacher self-efficacy, teacher negative attitudes towards inclusion, and lack of teacher training on inclusive education); *school-related barriers* (sub-themes: larger class sizes, lack of resources or teaching aids, lack of support to implement inclusion, absence of learning support teachers in schools, non-accommodative curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS) curriculum, variance between policy and practice in classrooms, and inadequate contact time); and finally, *community-related barriers* (sub-themes: lack of parental participation, parental stigmatization about disability, lack of community support, and lack of parental education on inclusion)

The themes and sub-themes on barriers to implementing inclusive education in classrooms are presented in figure 2 below.

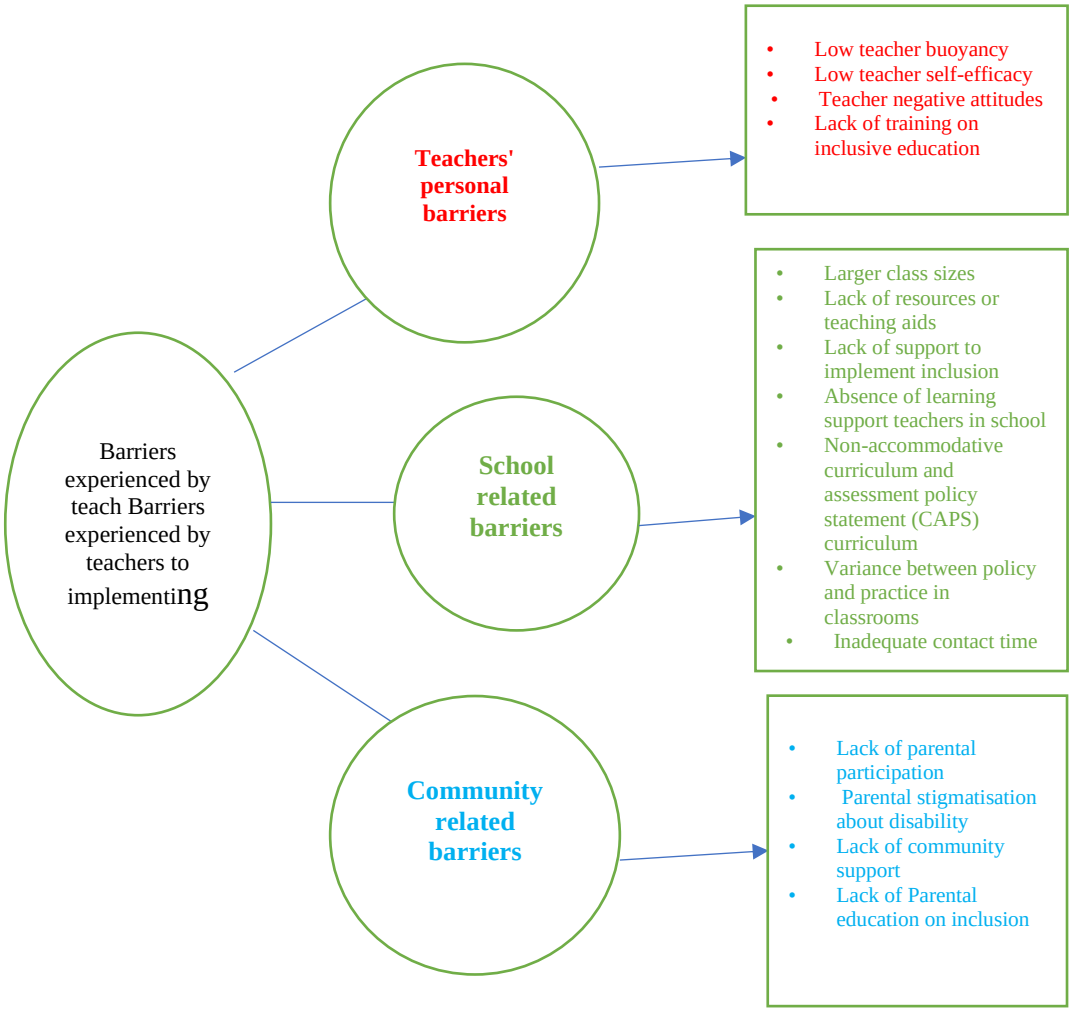

Figure 2: *Themes and sub-themes on barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education* (Source: Analysed Primary data (2022))

The main themes and sub-themes are presented and discussed as follows:

5.4.1: Teacher' Personal barriers

Teachers are the fulcrum in the implementation of the inclusive education policy, as they are the main policy implementors in the classroom. The effectiveness, efficacy, resilience, abilities, and capabilities of the teacher do become a major ingredient in the implementation of the inclusive education policy, which cannot be emasculated. However, the teachers' own actions and inactions can serve as a barrier to the implementation of the inclusive education policy. For the purpose of this study, teacher personal barriers can be defined as the walls thwarting the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom, emanating from the teachers' own

actions, opinions, inabilities, and work reflections. The findings from the interview excerpts of teacher participants reported low teacher buoyancy, low teacher self-efficacy, teacher negative attitudes, and a lack of training on inclusive education as sub-themes to teachers' personal barriers to the implementation of inclusive education policy. The sub-themes are discussed below:

5.4.1.1: Sub-theme 1: *Low Teacher Buoyancy*

Teacher buoyancy is defined as a perceived adaptive response to everyday challenges, setbacks, and difficulties (Wong, et al., 2021). The findings of this study indicated that three teacher participants (teachers 1, 4, and 8) reported their perceived inability to surpass the learning barriers associated with implementing the inclusive policy, implying low teacher buoyancy. The findings further indicates that the teachers perceived themselves as unsure of their ability to overcome the setbacks in their inclusive classrooms. For example, one teacher participant reported that: *"I don't think it will be easy to overcome the setbacks in the mix of lack of resources and no training; it will not be easy for me."* (Teacher Participant 1).
The following interview excerpts further demonstrate how low teacher buoyancy is a barrier to inclusion in township mainstream schools:

> *I will say if the setbacks have to do with the content of the subject I teach now, which is geography, I can tell you with confidence that I have the ability to overcome the setbacks because I have received enough training about the subject. But for inclusive education, I cannot assure you of it because it also needs special training and knowledge, which I don't have. I might, but as to how effective it will be, I can't say.* (Teacher Participant 4).

> *As far as my ability to overcome barriers in the classroom is concerned, one of the major problems is these overcrowded classrooms with very little resources and no training, so accommodating learners with learning barriers is really beyond my control* (Teacher Participant 8).

From the results of the interview excerpts above, it could be argued that teachers in mainstream township schools are vividly sure of their ability to overcome the setbacks linked to the content subjects. The findings further imply that the ability of a teacher to overcome the setbacks in an

inclusive classroom is directly linked to content training on inclusive education, availability of resources, and other factors.

5.4.1.2: Sub-theme 2: *Low Teacher Self-efficacy*

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to carry out the behaviours required to achieve specific performance goals. In the same vein, having confidence in one's own ability to achieve desired levels of learner learning, especially with challenging or uninspired learners, is referred to as teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Self-efficacy is a very important attribute for teachers in the field of inclusive education. Moreover, a teacher's ability to effectively implement inclusion to meet the needs of all learners depends on their own efficacy. However, in this context, low teacher self-efficacy means that a teacher has little belief in themselves to be able to implement inclusion in the classroom.

In this study, the findings from two teacher participants (teachers 1 and 4) all reported that due to the nature of challenges persisting in the mainstream township schools, they were unable to affirm their ability to implement inclusion in their classrooms. One teacher participant reported that: *"I'm not absolutely sure if I am capable of implementing inclusion." This is because of the serious challenges that are beyond me* (Teacher Participant 1). However, participants further argued that if given the needed training and the right working environment, mainstream teachers would be able to accommodate and support all learners with learning barriers in their classrooms. The following interview excerpt from another teacher also portrays mainstream township teachers' low self-efficacy on implementing inclusive education:

> *Really, I believe if I am giving the needed content training on inclusive education and its implementation, then I wouldn't have any doubt about my capability to implement inclusion in my class. But, in my current situation, I would be lying if I boasted about my firm and effective ability to implement inclusion in the classroom* (Teacher Participant 4).

According to the results of the interview excerpts above, mainstream township teachers do not believe they are capable of implementing the inclusive policy in their classrooms due to the number of challenges that teachers teaching in township schools face on a daily basis. This is a negative indicator of low teacher self-efficacy and a significant barrier to the implementation of inclusive education policy, as these teachers are the policy implementers.

5.4.1.3: Sub-theme 3: *Teacher-negative attitudes*

Teachers are the main implementors of the inclusive education policy in the classroom. As a result, it is critical that teachers have a positive attitude toward the implementation of the inclusive policy. However, the finding from one teacher participant (Teacher 4) indicated that some teachers have negative attitudes towards implementing inclusive education and that this could imply that the inclusive education policy has no place in township schools. The interview excerpt below demonstrates the negative attitudes of township school teachers towards inclusion.

> *Thank you, but to be very honest with you, I don't have a good feeling about this inclusive education implementation thing. Though this is a good policy on paper, I don't believe much is being done by the department to implement it. So, to me, I don't think it has a place, especially in our township schools. So, if you ask me, I will say I have a negative attitude toward it* (Teacher Participant 4).

Based on the findings of the above interview excerpts, it can be argued that the ineffectiveness of the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream township schools is due in part to teachers' negative attitude toward policy implementation. The findings further show that, while teachers believe the inclusion policy is a good policy, it is best on paper but the practice in schools is not coherent with the available policies.

5.4.1.4: Sub-theme 4: *Lack of teacher training on inclusive education*

Inclusive education implementation in the township mainstream classrooms is a challenge in practice for teachers. This is due in part to the lack of inclusive education teacher training and workshops. Training basically assists teachers to gain skills that can assist them in the implementation of inclusive education. The findings from most teacher participants (teachers 1, 3, 9, 10, and 12) all reported that lack of training is a major obstacle for teachers, hindering the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms. The findings further indicate that a lack of training on inclusive education makes teachers incapable of adapting their classrooms to cater for learners with diverse needs. For example, one teacher respondent reported that "*There has not been any workshop or training organized for teachers to enlighten us about inclusive education since I started teaching"* (Teacher Participant 10). Another

teacher respondent with similar views reported that *"There are no workshops organized for teachers to be able to assist those learners. Not at all; most of the workshops they hold focus on content"* (Teacher Participant 12). The following interview excerpts also allude to the lack of teacher training concerning inclusive education.

> *The problem has more to do with a lack of knowledge and skills on how to deal with such challenges; no teacher is trained in these skills. I mean, the school doesn't give you, like, some kind of workshop or any kind of education around it, so we lack the training* (Teacher Participant 1).

> *I think training is required; we only have workshops once a term, and that workshop is not about learners' support but about the subject that you teach. Because our learners are going through depression and we are not aware of that, you will see a learner who is bullied, a learner who is aggressive and very loud, and you will never know what the learner is going through at home, so we need training.* (Teacher Participant 3).

> *Ever since I started teaching, I have never attended or been trained for such a thing. The only thing that I have is the background we had from varsity, but here at the workplace, we never had training on how to help those learners* (Teacher participant 9).

From the interview results above, it is evident that most teachers in mainstream township schools lack the skills, training, and education and are even not aware of the content of the inclusive education policy. This raises a major concern since the significance of policy education, training, and workshops cannot be overlooked. The researcher argues that, for the implementation of the inclusive education policy to be effective, there is a need for teachers who are the policy implementors to be aware of and have the needed education and training on the inclusive education policy. The researcher further argues that if teachers are given the necessary training on how to support learners with various degrees of barriers, teachers would be in a better position to embrace the concept of inclusive education and, in the end, create a learning environment where all learners, irrespective of their ability, capability, or barriers, are accommodated and given the opportunity to realize their aims for life.

5.4.2: School Related barriers

School-related barriers are the challenges within the school system that impede the smooth implementation of the inclusive education policy. For the implementation of the policy to work effectively within the school setup, there is a need for certain measures to be put into place, but within the school system, there are various challenges ranging from a lack of resources to curriculum issues and an absence of support, which serve as barriers to teachers' ability to effectively implement the inclusive education policy. The findings from this study and excerpts of interviews with teacher participants in a mainstream township high school revealed that the implementation of the inclusive education policy has not gained the needed interest in the township schools due to barriers such as larger class sizes, a lack of resources or teaching aids, a lack of support to implement inclusion, the absence of learning support teachers in school, a non-accommodative Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum, a variance between policy and practice in classrooms, and insufficient contact time. The findings further report that the existence of these challenges has incapacitated teachers from effectively supporting and accommodating learners with learning barriers. The above barriers, which serve as sub-themes to school-related barriers to implementing inclusive education in a mainstream township school, are discussed below.

5.4.2.1: Sub-theme 1: *Larger class sizes*

One common feature of township mainstream public schools is the overcrowding or large numbers of learners in classrooms. As for the teacher-to-student ratio, it is ideally suggested, according to the recommendations of the Department of Education of South Africa, that the average teacher-to-student ratio per class is supposed to be 1:30. But contrary to this, the findings from most teacher participants (teachers 4, 6, 7, 8, and 11) indicated that larger learner class sizes are a major issue in the township schools and a barrier for the teachers in the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms. A teacher participant reported that: *"The number of learners in a class is also too large because I am sitting with forty-four." I don't even know all of their names. I mean, already, that's a challenge to me''.* (Teacher Participant 11). In the same vein, the findings from the interview excerpts also indicated that, due to the large number of learners in the teacher's classroom, it does not allow teachers time during the lessons to attend to each individual learner's needs. For example,

another teacher participant reported that, *"With the big classes that we have and the period that we have with these kids, it doesn't give us time to actually assess individual children's needs and cater according to their weaknesses and strengths"* (Teacher Participant 4). The following additional excerpts from the interviews also reflect how larger class sizes in mainstream township public high schools are a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education.

> *The teacher-to-learner ratio should be 1:30 in class sizes, and by class sizes, I mean the number of students in the class. We are setting with 1:40, 1:45, and 1:47, and this is across different grades because I am in high school grades 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Those are the numbers that we are setting with in the classes* (Teacher Participant 6).

> *We can't use it in our township school because there are too many contextual factors that prevent us from doing so. For example, classes are overcrowded, and as a result, it will be difficult for us to implement this policy of inclusive education in our township school* (Teacher Participant 7).

> *So, teachers are trying to implement inclusive education, but actually the system is failing us because of the large classes; there is nothing we can do. For example, I have seven 8th grade classes this year, and they range between 48 and 50 students per class, so if I want to implement inclusive education in each of them, it's impossible.* (Teacher Participant 8).

According to the interview excerpts above, it is evident that the challenge for teachers in township schools, where class sizes are typically larger than the average teacher-to-student ratio, is that individual learner needs are not addressed by teachers in the classrooms. In essence, if the goals of the inclusive policy are to be met in the township public high schools, it is critical that the issue of overcrowded class sizes be addressed. From the perspective of inclusive education, it is a policy that demands teachers have enough time during tutoring with learners to be able to accommodate each learner and to pay specific attention to individual learner needs. This obviously requires stretching to engage the extra workload that comes along with it. The researcher believes that if the number of students in a teacher's class is kept relatively small, the teacher will have enough space to attend to individual learner needs while also accommodating all of the students in the classroom, ensuring effective implementation.

5.4.2.2: Sub-theme 2: *Lack of resources*

Resources are a critical component of any policy implementation, particularly in an inclusive environment such as an inclusive classroom. Without the necessary teaching aids, the teacher is helpless because their operation is limited. The findings from the interviews with the teachers' participants (teachers 1, 3, 10, and 13) revealed that teachers' inability to fully implement the inclusive education policy in mainstream township public schools is solely due to a lack of resources. For example, one teacher participant reported that "*Hmmm, the problem has more to do with resources*" (Teacher Participant 1). The following interview excerpts further demonstrate how a lack of resources is a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education:

> *We don't have textbooks. Because we don't have enough text books, we must always make copies. We go to make copies, but the photocopy machine is not working, so it is very difficult for us as teachers to support learners* (Teacher participant 3).

> *We don't have a white board to show them diagrams or the colour of the diagrams; instead, in life science, there are no textbooks. Now that there are no textbooks, you're supposed to teach the circulated system, but you only explain, even when you were supposed to show them* (Teacher participant 10).

> *If I have to enlarge the paper, for example, it means I will have to use extra papers. We are struggling even with those papers, so we don't really have the resources to be honest and attend to those learners* (Teacher participant 12).

According to the responses in the interview excerpts above, it could be argued that one of the major factors impeding the smooth implementation of the inclusive policy in the northern Cape's township mainstream public high schools is a general lack of resources, as indicated by the teacher participants above. The findings also revealed that the lack of basic classroom resources like textbooks, photocopying papers, and general teaching aids is a major contributing factor to the inability of teachers to address the learning barriers learners face in the classroom. The researcher could argue that if the implementation of the policy is to achieve its purpose, then the Northern Cape Department of Education should consider reducing the resource deficit in the mainstream township public schools. In the same vein, educational

resources aimed specifically at providing support for learners with learning barriers should be made available in township schools to help teachers accommodate all learners in their classrooms.

5.4.2.3: Sub-theme 3: *Lack of support from school to implement inclusion*

To ensure the success of the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream schools, a lot of stakeholders have to come on board to provide support or assistance. The findings of this study demonstrated that three teacher participants (teachers 1, 3, and 8) expressed their displeasure about the lack of support from the school, the specialists, and the education department in general. The participants further argue that the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream high schools has received little or no support at all. This has caused the researcher to argue about how a successful implementation of the inclusive policy may be achieved without the requisite support. The following responses from interview participants painted a clear picture of the situation in the Frances Baard Education District mainstream high school:

> *Not to say the specialists are accessible; they aren't even there; we don't even know if they exist; I don't even know if they exist at all; if they were there, we wouldn't have to struggle to access them, but I never heard about them in schools, in township schools* (Teacher Participant 1).

> *We don't get support; as a teacher, you are on your own. Even if you take the problems you are experiencing in the classroom with the learners to the head of the department or to the principal, there is no support.* (Teacher Participant 3).

> *I can say that they are accessible, but only sometimes. The problem is that I now understand that even they themselves want to help every child, but there are very few of them and there are too many learners.* (Teacher Participant 8).

From the interview excerpts above, it is evident that, teachers are not adequately supported in mainstream township high schools for the smooth implementation of inclusive education. This, however, creates a barrier to the teaching of all learners. It often frustrates teachers in the end, which could defeat the goal of implementing the inclusive education policy. In line with the

implementation of the inclusive education policy as per the SIAS document, there is the district-based support team (DBST), whose members are trained and considered specialists. Typically, their main job is to assist and provide support to teachers who are the inclusive policy implementors so they can implement the inclusive policy in their classroom. To be able to function well and ensure effective policy implementation, the DBST is supposed to work closely with teachers, schools, and the School-Based Support Team (SBST) on a regular basis so that they can easily be accessed, particularly by the teachers, as to where and when they need their support.

5.4.2.4: Sub-theme 4: *Absence of learning support teachers in schools*

In schools, learning support is given in accordance with the levels of screening, identification, assessment, and support (SIAS). Teachers that specialize in learning support offer additional instruction to learners who need it, and they are also expected to provide group learning support for learners, either in the learners' classroom or in a separate classroom for learning support. They are responsible for carrying out academic assessments, creating and implementing successful teaching plans, advising the School-Based Support Team (SBST), and coordinating with staff, parents, and other important stakeholders. They work closely with the district and might collaborate on projects with other members of the learning support team. These Learning Support Teachers are controlled and supervised by the District Learning Support Coordinator and Learning Support Advisors, who are a part of the District/Circuit Based Support Team (D/CBST). In this study, two teacher participants (teachers 1 and 10) reported that the learning support teachers were not available in schools to provide the required support to teachers on inclusive education. The following interview excerpt depicts the lack of learning support teachers in Northern Cape mainstream township high schools.

> *There should be people especially trained to handle such learners; they should be part of the school staff and available to access as teachers. So, when you have such challenges in the class, they can come to assist; they can be in the class with you; they can be assistant teachers; or they can be in a special class where learners are sent for intervention.* (Teacher participant 1)

Based on the aforementioned interview results, it is evident that the lack of these support teachers, whose roles are extremely crucial towards effective implementation of the inclusive

policy, has accounted for the reason why the inclusive education policy implementation is not gaining the momentum it should in the mainstream township schools in the Frances Baard education district of the Northern Cape Province. Again, from the interview excerpts above, though there are assistant teachers present in the mainstream schools, their roles are technically not purposeful as they don't assist the teachers. For example, one other teacher participant reported that: "*In this school, in particular, the assistant teachers don't help the teachers, so the school is not making provisions to help the teachers with inclusive education."* (Teacher Participant 10). Therefore, the researcher sees it as necessary for the province to effectively adopt the SIAS policy if the level of implementation of the inclusive education policy in the Northern Cape province is to achieve a higher and more noticeable level.

5.4.2.5: Sub-theme 5: *Non-accommodative Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum*

The CAPS is defined as a change to what is taught (a curriculum) and not how it is taught (teaching methods) (Department of Education (DoE), 2011). Having been introduced in South Africa in the year 2012, CAPS was intended to enlighten teachers about what they should teach in class and how they should assess learners. However, the introduction of the CAPS curriculum has been criticized by many stakeholder groups because it has much to do with ensuring that teaching and learning are as effective and accommodating of all learners as possible. The CAPS curriculum has been criticized for being overly content-heavy, with most subjects hopping from topic to topic with no time or accommodations for slow learners or students with learning disabilities. Very few children are able to cope with the hopping around of concepts. Again, it does not allow for depth of knowledge to form, and it confuses any child that has average to below-average processing skills. The majority of children need concepts to be consolidated, and not just once. This has left many children feeling flabbergasted, concerned, and jittery as they struggle to keep up with the pace set in the classroom. However, the findings from teacher respondents (teachers 4 and 8) indicated that the CAPS curriculum does not make room for learners with learning barriers as the content is too loaded and that it does not create space for teachers to attend to learners' individual needs but rather to focus on completing the annual plan of teaching.

The interview excerpts on the non-accommodative nature of the CAPS curriculum are presented below.

"But like I said, we have a lot of challenges as individual teachers, and taking it to a national level, I don't think the CAPS curriculum also accommodates inclusive education, because for them, it's about us chasing ATP and completing it, so it doesn't cater for individual child needs" (Teacher Participant 4).

"If I want to implement inclusive education, it's impossible because the period is too short, and on the other hand, my head of department (HOD) will say, "Hey, curriculum coverage," so the teachers are trying to implement inclusive education, but the main focus of our government is curriculum coverage, which is not fair" (Teacher Participant 8).

According to the interview findings, the CAPS curriculum does not actually cater to the needs of the individual learner and instead places the accommodation or inclusion on the poor learner rather than the teacher, because the teacher who is to implement inclusion is only focused on completing what the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) demands rather than on supporting and accommodating all learners in the classroom. This is practically in contrast with the position of the implementation of the inclusive education policy, which is for the teacher to ensure that all learners, irrespective of their intellectual ability and capability, are supported and accommodated in the classroom during the course of the teaching and learning process. The researcher believes that curriculum policies such as the CAPS, which are too rigid, focus on quantity rather than quality, and are inconsistent with the inclusive education policy, are a major setback towards the effective implementation of the inclusive education policy in township schools.

5.4.2.6: Sub-theme 6: *Variance between policy and practice in classrooms*

In essence, for effective implementation of a policy, what the policy document advocates should, most importantly, be the same as what is happening in mainstream schools. This cannot, according to practice, be said of the inclusive education policy, as the findings from the responses to the interview portray a mismatch between the policy and implementation. The findings of this study from four teacher participants (teachers 4, 8, 10, and 12) reported that inclusive education is just a policy on paper but has not been implemented in the mainstream classrooms. Specifically, teacher participant 10 was of the assumption that the schools, and for that matter, the department of education, are assuming that all the learners have the same abilities because nothing is being done to respond to each individual learner's needs.

The following excerpts of interviews speak to that effect:

> *Yes, it is a beautiful concept on paper, but when it comes to cooperating in the educational system, it simply does not exist because I have never seen anyone championing the course that allows for the inclusion of all learners or implementing inclusive education. is all about progressing learners to the next grade without thinking about each individual's capability or learning needs.* (Teacher Participant 4).

> *Not at all. Maybe it is implemented in other schools, but they don't do it well. Most of us just went for teaching, but we don't know how to include the other learners. "Really, the policy just exists on paper but has not been implemented"* (Teacher Participant 8).

> *I think the school is just assuming that every learner must have the same ability, so we are teaching the learners as if they are all the same; we are not taking their differences into account when we teach them. We use the same strategy of talk and talk, which is only for learners who can hear, but we do not really include the visual learners* (Teacher Participant 10).

> *I would say inclusive education is not feasible based on what I have been observing so far. Yeah, I would say it's just formalities for formalities' sake, but when it comes to reality, practicality is not feasible. It's just something on paper. It appears to be quite good on paper, but the implementation, I can assure you, is just something on paper. Even if you interview other teachers in all aspects and in all corners of South Africa, they will all admit that it is just something on paper. So, in a nutshell, we are quite far from actually embracing the idea of inclusive education in South Africa.* (Teacher Participant 12)

According to the findings of the interview excerpts above, it is evident that, while the concept of inclusive education is important, little has been done to implement or advocate the policy's course in Northern Cape township high schools. As a result, it could be argued that the Northern Cape Department of Education has not made a sufficiently strong commitment to ensuring that the requirements of the SIAS, White Paper 6, and other policy documents relating to the implementation of inclusive education in township mainstream public high schools are met.

This, however, contradicts the concept of inclusive education because the majority of children are not accommodated and supported.

5.4.2.7: Sub-theme 7: *Inadequate contact time*

Contact time is the time teachers spend with learners during a lesson section, teaching and supporting them and this is crucial in the implementation of an inclusive education policy. Teachers need time to accommodate and support learners with learning barriers in their classroom. According to the findings of two teacher participants (teacher 1 and teacher 8) time is a major barrier to accommodating learners with learning barriers because the time allocated to a period is insufficient for the teacher participants to attend to each individual learner. For example, one teacher participant reported that, "*As teachers, we don't have all the time to establish if learners are having certain barriers because we have to finish the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), so time is also a factor."* (Teacher Participant 11). In a similar manner, another teacher participant also reported that: *"If I want to implement inclusive education in every one of my classes, it's impossible because the period is too short."* (Teacher Participant 8).

Based on the results of the interview above, it could be argued that, because the teacher, who is responsible for ensuring that all learners with learning barriers are accommodated and included in the learning process, is chasing after the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) or curriculum coverage, the teacher does not have the luxury of time to implement inclusive education in the classroom. Moreover, the findings could imply that the time allocated to a period per teaching section needs to be reconsidered and amended to create more time for teachers to be able to attend to each individual learner's specific learning needs.

5.4.3: Community related barriers

Schools are located within the township's community, and it can be argued that all factors and activities taking place within the community either affect the school positively or negatively; therefore, for a school to function effectively to achieve the global goal of education for all children without limitations, it becomes important that these factors and behaviours within the environs of the community and the school positively function to promote and support the course of the school. It is also worth noting that townships are part of the community where poverty and all sorts of negative vices affecting children and their ability to receive education

are prevalent. In this sense, community-related barriers to inclusive education can be defined as encompassing all the negative factors within the township community that do not create room for learners with learning barriers to be supported and accommodated in the schools. From the findings of this study, the sub-themes such as lack of parental participation, parental stigmatization about disability, lack of community support, and **l**ack of parental education on inclusion were identified as common community barriers obstructing the smooth implementation of the inclusive education policy in the Frances Baard education district of the Northern Cape province of South Africa. The manuscripts below discuss the sub-themes of the interview excerpts from this study on community-related barriers to inclusive education implementation.

5.4.3.1: Sub-theme 1: *Lack of parental participation*

Parental participation, as defined by Dekker and Eleanor (1993) in Maluleke, (2014), is a broad phrase that is used to represent a wide range of activities, from infrequent participation at school events to rigorous efforts to assist parents in becoming better instructors of their children. The success of the implementation of an inclusive education policy is partly dependent on the cooperation and support of the parents of the learners facing learning barriers. The findings of this study from teacher participants (teachers 8, 9, and 10) all reported that there is a lack of parental participation, which negatively affects the implementation of inclusive education in classrooms. One teacher participant reported that "*parents must also help us at home." "Because if at home these kids are encouraged to read, and then the parents make sure that they do"* (Teacher Participant 11), The following interview excerpts on the lack of parental participation in their children's learning process were also reported:

> *You learn that we are having difficulties with a parent who does not want the child to be referred to a special school. They are denying the challenge that the learner has, so we are taking two steps forward and ten steps back, and I think it's a matter of counselling needing to be undertaken. I know a colleague of mine who has a learner in grade 8, and that learner has huge barriers, which translate into behavioural problems. The parents have been called in, but the parents are denialist in their approach to the learner's barriers to the extent that it frustrates the process of teaching such a child, and even if you have taken it to the school support team and they have taken it to*

educational support services (ESS), you are still left with the child because there isn't anything they can do without the consent of the parents. (Teacher Participant 8).

I think the problem lies with the parents; if parents who have children with learning difficulties don't want to explore other options to assist their children, the school management won't be able to take any decisions on their behalf; basically, there is nothing that the school can do. (Teacher Participant 9).

Based on the interview findings above, the implementation of the inclusive education policy in the township's mainstream schools has been hampered in part by the unwavering stance of some parents. It can be argued that some parents feel they have no role to play in their children's education, others are adamant and don't care about the progress of their children's education, and others are in total denial about their children having particular learning barriers and, as a result, have failed to cooperate with teachers and schools to assist these learners. The researcher is firmly of the belief that, if the total objective of accommodating and supporting all learners at school and in the classroom is to be achieved, it is important that parents take a key interest in their children's education by playing their part.

5.4.3.2: Sub-theme 2*:* *Parental stigmatization about disability*

Stigma is defined as the link between unfavourable sentiments or prejudice toward a group that is subjected to discrimination as a result of unfavourable social stereotypes fed by cultural values (Link & Phelan, 2001). Stigma has the potential to limit people's abilities and disempower them by limiting their ability to "choose between different styles and ways of living" (Sen, 2009, p. 227). According to the findings of teacher participant 1, cultural beliefs and people's attitudes toward people with disabilities are a hindrance in addressing the issue of education for all children. The excerpted response demonstrates how stigmatization of disability is a problem in inclusive education. For example, one teacher reported that "*I think cultural beliefs and attitudes towards the issues of people with disabilities are one factor that hinders the implementation of inclusion*" (Teacher Participant 1).

From the results of the interview excerpt above, it can be argued that disability is often correlated with negative conceptions that lead to stigma, discrimination, exclusion, and malice, as well as other forms of abuse of people with disabilities. The findings can also imply that inclusion among learners with disabilities is a challenge because of societal beliefs that people

with disabilities should be separated and given special treatment. It further indicates that even in the school environment, some policy implementors hold the notion that learners with disabilities should not be accommodated in mainstream schools but rather be taken to special schools. However, all these notions are in contrast with the entire idea of inclusive education.

5.4.3.3: Sub-theme 3*:* *Lack of community support*

The community has a significant stake in children's education. The school is located in the community, and any activity that occurs within the community has a direct impact on the school's progress and performance. The findings of three teacher participants (teachers 4, 9, and 12) indicated that the community does not support the schools adequately. The findings further indicate that community activities have an impact on a school's ability to effectively implement any curriculum to benefit students. For example, one teacher participant reported that *"I think there is a lack of support from different community members, including those who have child-headed families in their neighbourhood."* (Teacher Participant 12). Similarly, another teacher participant stated, "It's simply a lack of support from community members." *I don't think the activities happening in the community create a good environment for effective learning to take place at the schools''.* (Teacher Participant 4). The interview excerpt below further demonstrates the extent of the community's lack of support for mainstream township high schools.

> *One can also say there isn't anything the community is doing to support these children in terms of their education. Learners are allowed to enter places they are not supposed to be without any care. In fact, on weekends, learners are all over taverns and nightclubs, and the community is doing nothing about it. So there really is a problem.* (Teacher Participant 9).

According to the findings of the interviews, it is argued that the community's failure to implement measures that prohibit learners from engaging in activities that have a negative impact on their education is a major contributing factor to the township schools' inability to accommodate and respond to all learners' learning needs. It is critical that community opinion leaders address the issue of underage children participating in drinking sports and smoking hard drugs in order to create a safe environment in which schools can function effectively.

5.4.3.4: Sub-theme 4*:* *Lack of parental education on inclusion*

A role is best played when the person playing it fully understands the nature of the role. To be more effective, inclusive education necessitates specialized skills and training. How effective will parents, who are stakeholders in the implementation process, be in supporting these children with learning barriers if they are not adequately educated on inclusive education? Findings from the interview excerpt of one teacher participant (teacher 8) highlighted parents' inability to support their children experiencing learning barriers due to a lack of knowledge on inclusive education by parents and were reported by the teacher participant as *"Also, I believe those children who are living with grandparents who might not have any educational background and do not know how to get involved in helping these learners are also a major problem."* (Teacher Participant 8).

From the interview excerpt above, it can be argued that one of the main reasons why the implementation of inclusive education in township schools is not making the necessary progress is due to a lack of education on inclusion among parents on how to handle cases of learning deficiencies in their children. The findings also indicated that the majority of learners with learning barriers live with their grandmothers, who might or might not be educated. This is a significant setback for the implementation of the inclusive policy because any intervention for learners with learning barriers cannot begin without the consent of their parents, who are often unaware of the process.

5.5: Findings on Teachers support for learners experiencing learning barriers in the classrooms.

The study also examined how teachers support learners who are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms when implementing inclusive education. Teachers play an important role in the classroom as front-line policy implementers, including the inclusive education policy, which aims to make education accessible to all children. The analysis of the interview data revealed the following themes in relation to teachers' support for learners experiencing learning barriers in the classrooms include: modifying seating arrangement in the classroom, adoption of an extra reading strategy, referral for professional help, collaboration with parents, and remedial lessons. The themes are presented and discussed as follows:

5.5.1: Theme 1: *Modifying Seating Arrangement in the classroom*

Modifying classroom seating arrangements entails changing how learners should be seated in the classroom based on their specific learning barriers in order to benefit from the lesson outcomes. The seating arrangements of learners in an inclusive classroom play an important role in ensuring that all learners within the classroom are supported and benefit from the outcomes of the learning process. According to the findings of two teacher participants (teachers 9 and 11), as a way of supporting learners with learning barriers in the classroom, partial changes to learners' seating arrangements are made based on their unique barriers to ensure that learners' barriers are addressed during the lesson period. For example, one teacher participant reported that: "*It's not much, but there are learners who have visual impairments; they are unable to see clearly, so those learners I put in front so that they can see clearly."* (Teacher Participant 9). The excerpt below from the interviews in this study further shows how teachers are changing learners' seating arrangements to support them in the classroom.

> *Actually, in class, I identify the learners who have difficulty sitting and place them in front next to my desk, while those who have hearing difficulties are placed in a position where they can see my mouth and face me* (Teacher Participant 11).

It could be argued, based on the responses in the interview excerpts above, that teachers, in their quest to support and meet the learning needs of learners with learning barriers in their classroom, are first and foremost aware of their learners' challenges and, because they are aware, try to modify the way the learners should sit in the class in order to meet the learners' individual learning needs and address their barriers. This is good inclusive education practice on the part of teachers because it helps them understand the nature of the barrier and how to respond to it. However, it could also be argued that because only two of the twelve teacher participants could identify and use modification of learners' seating arrangements as a support strategy for addressing learners' learning barriers, it could imply that the majority of teachers in mainstream township schools lack the knowledge and experience necessary for inclusive education as per the SIAS policy.

5.5.2: **Theme 2:** *Adoption of Extra reading strategy*

Extra reading time is when teachers make time aside from the normal reading lesson time to correct learners' reading challenges by taking the identified learners through more and additional reading activities. To accommodate all learners and meet the needs of all learners in the classroom, teachers should be able to identify learners' problems and attend to them individually in order for all learners to benefit from the learning process. Findings from two teacher participants (teachers 3 and 9) revealed that they were able to identify learners who struggled to read and then try to support them by scheduling extra reading time for these learners in order to collect their reading barriers. For example, one teacher participant reported that: *"Then there are those who are struggling with reading, so sometimes I make time after school to read with them and during teaching and learning whenever there is a passage that we have to read"* (Teacher Participant 9).

The interview excerpt below similarly describes how teachers in mainstream township schools assist learners with reading difficulties.

> *As a language teacher, I normally identify the learners who can't read. Because the majority of these students are entering grade 8 from grade 7, they cannot read or write. What I do is identify them and spend more reading time with them after school or even during the weekends.* (Teacher Participant 3).

It can be inferred from the interview excerpts above that some teachers in the township mainstream high schools in the Northern Cape employ extra reading as one of the inclusive practices to support learners in their class who struggle with reading. From teacher participant 3's response, it can also be inferred that some of the small learning barriers that should have been addressed in elementary schools are the main causes of the learning barriers that high school students encounter. This raises questions about how seriously the education department is taking the implementation of the inclusive education policy, especially at the primary school level. However, it is encouraging to see that high school instructors are able to identify these barriers and are employing strategies to support learners.

5.5.3: **Theme 3:** *Referral for Professional help*

A referral is the action taken by a teacher or school to obtain extra or professional support for a learner with a learning barrier that is beyond the support range of the teacher or school. There are three distinct types of referrals in the school: referrals for discipline issues, special education assessments, and therapy services. Teachers only make referrals when they believe a student requires additional assistance. Some learners require this to help them overcome barriers to progress, while others require it to help them express their desires and avoid overreactions. All referral cases are determined by a learner's behaviour and actions, regardless of how severe they may be. Findings from the study of three teacher participants (teachers 2, 5, and 11) indicated that teachers refer learners to the school management team and specialists at the education district for professional support if the nature of the barrier is out of their hands. For example, one teacher participant reported that: *"If it is out of your hands, it means now you need to refer this learner to the School Management Team (SMT)."* (Teacher Participant 11). Moreover, the findings also indicated that teachers make referrals to the educational support service (ESS) if the barrier is a cognitive disorder. The responses from the interview excerpts below further show how Township High School teachers refer learners with learning barriers for professional support.

> *……and we should be able to tap into some issues, but if they need professional help, we can also assist in that and refer them to someone higher than you. In terms of applying for learners who generally have learning challenges, you would need to include them in order to avoid making them feel discriminated against.* (Teacher Participant 2).

> *There is a challenge in that regard because normally in school, for example, with what is happening in our school, we have learners with cognitive challenges, or, let me say, barriers to learning, so normally what the school does with these learners who have serious learning barriers is to refer them to educational support services (ESS) at the education department so that they may be able to intervene and assist where we can't assist these learners.* (Teacher Participant 5).

According to the interview results, it is evident that teachers go above and beyond to accommodate learners, and if the learners' barriers are beyond them, they refer them to specialists and professionals who can provide professional support to the students based on the

degree of the barrier. However, the referral for professional help was only adopted by few teachers, and others are yet to embrace by all teachers in mainstream schools.

5.5.4: Theme 4: *Collaboration with parents*

Collaboration with parents is crucial in the implementation of the inclusive education policies in mainstream schools. In the context of this study, collaboration with parents can be seen as teachers working hand in hand with parents of learners with learning barriers to address the barriers and provide support for the learners. However, it is impossible to support learners with learning disabilities without the collaboration and participation of their parents. The findings from this study indicated that only two teacher participants (teachers 3 and 4) reported on the use of parent-teacher collaboration as a strategy to provide support for learners with learning barriers. This could imply that the majority of the teachers in the mainstream township schools do not collaborate or involve parents in addressing their children's learning barriers. This could further mean that most mainstream teachers in the township do not support the idea of involving parents in addressing their children's learning barriers. The following interview excerpts demonstrate how the two teacher participants involve parents in supporting learners with learning barriers.

> *I think as much as we don't want to do that, parents are involved because if you're dealing with a learner, you're also dealing with their parents. So, parents must be involved. We have extra meetings with the parents. I call in the parents and discuss with them my findings and what I notice. Then I will make suggestions to the parent, maybe asking them to consider other options* (Teacher Participant 3).

> *Normally, what we do is, when we identify that a learner has a specific barrier, the first thing we do is inform the parents and try to involve them in the process of trying to assist the learner* (Teacher Participant 12).

On the bases of the findings above, it can be inferred that teachers make an effort to accommodate all learners by involving parents of learners who have learning difficulties in the learning process. The results further support the idea that teachers play a crucial role in the screening, identification, assessment, and support (SIAS) policy because instructors work to identify learners' learning difficulties and involve parents in addressing them. In as much as

some teachers embraced improvement of collaboration with parents, much is yet be realized on the full implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

5.5.5: **Theme 5:** *Adoption of Remedial lessons*

Remedial lessons are lessons that are given to correct mistakes and improve learners' performance in subjects that they were unable to achieve or get correct. The goal of remedial lessons is to bridge the knowledge gap between learners' errors and what is expected of them, as well as to impart fundamental skills. According to the findings of this study, three teacher participants (2, 4, and 8) identified the root cause of their learners' inability to achieve in a specific subject and which aspect of the lessons they struggle with, and then try to remedy or correct the situation by implementing remedial lessons. For example, one teacher participant reported that : "*I always come to school on weekends with students to catch up on what they are struggling with''* (Teacher participant 4). Moreover, another teacher reported that: "*I believe we can, and those who are struggling to advance to the next grade can be given extra lessons to help them achieve instead of using their age to progress them*" (Teacher Participant 8).

The interview excerpt below further describes how mainstream teachers support learners through remedial lessons.

> *I'm going to make it so that this learner stays behind, but now it's up to me as a teacher to figure out what the root cause of this learner's barriers are. If you find that learners are having social issues that prevent them from thinking and concentrating in class, those will need to be addressed, and as our system is, we have support systems in the education system, but they're not being used* (Teacher Participant 2).

Based on the findings presented above, it can be argued that remedial lessons help teachers bridge the gap between what learners are supposed to know and what they do not know. It can also be argued that teachers are more interested in actually assisting students in overcoming their challenges rather than using their ages as a basis for progressing them to the next grade, which will only exacerbate the learners' problem. In as much as some teachers adopted remedial lesson strategy for learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms, implementation of inclusive education is yet to be fully realized in schools.

5.6: Conclusion of the Chapter

The chapter presented the findings and interpretations of the study, in line with the research questions of the study. The next chapter presents the summary of findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations, and suggestions for further research from this study.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1: Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the findings and discussions of the current study. This chapter further presents the conclusion and recommendations of the current study. The findings and discussions are presented in line with inclusive practices implemented by teachers in mainstream classrooms, barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in mainstream classrooms, and finally, teachers' support for learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms. Moreover, the chapter presents the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

6.2: Summary of Study Findings

6.2.1: Inclusive practises implemented by teachers in mainstream classrooms

The study examined the inclusive practices of teachers in implementing inclusive education in mainstream township classrooms. The findings from the study indicated that teachers implemented inclusive practices such as reasonable accommodation of learners with disabilities, adoption of individualized instruction, differentiated instruction for learners, adoption of a flexible curriculum, universal design for learning, and multigrading. According to the findings, teachers perceive inclusive practices differently, and how they are implemented varies even within the same school setting. Moreover, the findings also postulate that, though some teachers are aware of the above inclusive practice strategies, others do not have any knowledge of them and have had no training on them, and teachers who are familiar with these practices are not able to fully implement them in their classroom because of challenges both within and outside the school environment.

6.2.2: Barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in mainstream classrooms

The study also explored the barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in mainstream classrooms. According to the findings of the study, the barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in their classroom included three major types of barriers: teacher personal barriers, school-related barriers, and community-related barriers. The findings further revealed that teacher-personal barriers are caused by low teacher buoyancy, low teacher self-efficacy, teacher negative attitudes towards inclusion, and a lack of teacher training on inclusive education. Additionally, it was indicated that factors such as larger class sizes, lack of resources or teaching aids, lack of support to implement inclusion, the absence of learning support teachers in schools, non-accommodative Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum, variance between policy and practise in classrooms, and inadequate contact time are the school-related barriers to inclusive implementation.

Finally, the findings indicated that factors such as lack of parental participation, parental stigmatization about disability, lack of community support, and lack of parental education on inclusion accounted for the community barriers. The findings indicate that there are different challenges thwarting the efforts teachers are making to implement the policy. The findings further indicate that, in as much as teachers are willing to implement the policy, they feel they have not gotten what it takes to do so because of a lack of knowledge and education about the whole inclusive policy. Additionally, the findings portray the inefficiencies of the educational policies, the lack of commitment from the education department, and the lack of support from the school system and the community.

6.2.3: Teachers' support for learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms

The study also examined how teachers support learners who are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms. The findings of the study indicated that the following are some of the ways in which teachers in mainstream classrooms provide support to learners: by modifying the seating arrangement in the classroom, adopting an extra reading strategy, making referrals for professional help, collaborating with parents, and providing remedial lessons. The study

findings indicated that teachers in township mainstream classrooms are applying various strategies to support learners. It further indicates that, though some teachers employed measures like collaboration with parents, some teachers still do not see the essence in liaising with parents to provide support to the learners, and consequently, most teachers do not employ these support strategies in their classrooms in spite of their relevance.

6.3: Discussion of findings

6.3.1: Inclusive practises implemented by teachers in mainstream classrooms

The study aimed to explore inclusive practices implemented by township mainstream teachers in the classroom.

The study findings indicated that some teachers in mainstream classrooms have adopted reasonable accommodations for learners with disabilities as an inclusive practice to ensure that the learning needs of learners with disabilities in their classrooms are attended to so that these learners can also benefit from the lesson outcomes. The findings further imply that teachers in mainstream township schools believe in the fact that all children, regardless of whether they are disabled or not, have the right to receive an education. Additionally, the findings could indicate that, in accordance with the U.S. Department of Education's (2007) definition of reasonable accommodation, mainstream teachers have adopted changes to their practices and the way things are usually done in their classrooms to allow learners with disabilities to participate in the classroom on an equal footing with any other learner.

This is an inclusive best practice that is in line with Hodkinson's (2019) position that the social model of disability theory (one of the theories that informed the study) visualizes a world where segregated school environments are replaced by open-access schools that allow space and structure for all learners to participate. Furthermore, the social model of disability, according to Keenan (2006), traces disabilities to the community rather than the individual. As a result, the social model encourages society to make reasonable adjustments and eliminate barriers within the system, schools, and processes (Graham, 2008). According to Breakey (2006), people with disabilities argue that it is society's barriers that cause their problems, not their impairments. Teachers and the community must adapt and accommodate learners with disabilities by moving away from restrictive curriculums, structures, pedagogical skills, and

classroom experiences and towards flexible curriculums, buildings, teaching methods, and learning environments (Tendai, 2021).

In a broader sense, the findings suggests that the social model of disability is crucial for teachers in township schools supporting diverse students like the visually impaired, hard of hearing, and those with psychological or physical challenges. It shifts focus from individual impairments to societal barriers. For visually impaired students, barriers include inaccessible materials and tech. Teachers use the model to create accessible classrooms, eradicating obstacles and fostering inclusivity. Similarly, for hard of hearing students, communication barriers are tackled through sign language and visual aids. The model promotes awareness of societal attitudes. Lastly, learners with psychological or physical challenges benefit as teachers embrace the model's call for an inclusive environment valuing diverse abilities. It involves adaptable teaching and emotional support, empowering these students.

However, in contrast, the findings also indicated that only a few teachers adopted reasonable accommodation of learners with disabilities as an inclusive practice in their classroom. The findings are an indication that not all teachers in the mainstream classroom agree with the idea of accommodating learners with disabilities in mainstream schools. This finding concurs with Woodcock and Hardy (2017), who asserted that when teachers believe that learners with disabilities require additional assistance in order to be included in their mainstream classrooms, complications can arise. Moreover, the findings further indicated that it was essential for teachers to gain knowledge and training in inclusive practices to have the confidence and ability to accommodate learners with disabilities in their classrooms (Ainscow et al., 2019; Florian & Spratt, 2013).

Additionally, the findings also revealed that mainstream teachers also adopted differentiated instruction and individualized teaching. In accordance with Coubergs et al., (2017), inclusive practices such as differentiated instruction and individualized teaching are measures adopted by mainstream teachers to address the needs of learners with learning barriers. The findings from the study indicated that some teachers in mainstream schools understand and have adopted these inclusive practices in their classrooms. This concurs with Tomlinson et al.'s (2003) and Roy et al.'s (2013) assertion that these inclusive practices ensure that teachers vary and adapt their teaching style to match the abilities of learners using appropriate processes and also ensure that learners who have experienced marginalization feel their needs are met in inclusive classrooms. Further, the findings are in line with Reis and Renzulli (2010), who postulate that teachers can increase learner engagement by focusing on individual learners'

interests. However, in contrast, Van Casteren et al., (2017) asserted that although the concept of differentiated instruction is quite well-known, teachers have difficulties implementing it in their classrooms. This also concurs with the findings, as the findings indicated that only a few teachers out of the lot adopted these inclusive practices, alluding to the fact that not many teachers at the mainstream township schools have had knowledge or education about these inclusive practices. This calls for concern, as this could also mean that there is a big variance between what the inclusive education policy advocates for and what is being implemented in mainstream classrooms.

Furthermore, the findings of the study also indicated that other inclusive practices, such as universal design, flexible curriculum, and multi-grade teaching, have been adopted by mainstream teachers in their classroom. These findings suggest that mainstream teachers understand the assertion that, if the curriculum can be made flexible, adopted, and modified to suit the learning needs of each individual learner, the objective of inclusive education can be achieved. In agreement, Finkelstein et al., (2021) argue that strategies like the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) can encourage inclusive practices.

However, the findings also indicated that only a few teachers have adopted these practices in the classroom (Schwab et al., 2019). For instance, the findings reported that only one teacher participant adopted flexible curriculum as an inclusive practice. This, however, disagrees with Carlsen et al.'s (2016) assertion that including all learners in the education system, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, necessitates curriculum flexibility based on when and which aspects of learning are addressed. Furthermore, only one teacher used multi-grade teaching, according to the findings. This could imply that the majority of teachers in the township's mainstream schools lack knowledge about inclusive practices, resulting in their inability to implement inclusive strategies in the classroom. This could also imply that there is a need to develop strategies to help bridge the gap between inclusive education policy and classroom implementation. In a nutshell, a single teaching approach may not meet the specific needs of individual learners (Suprayogi, Valcke, & Godwin, 2017), so options must be provided for learners to learn properly and achieve their highest potential academic achievement (Tomlinson, 2014). On the bases of the findings, the implication is that despite the implementation of inclusive education policy in schools, much is yet to be realized on the actualization of the policy implementation.

6.3.2: Barriers experienced by teachers in implementing inclusive education in mainstream classrooms

The findings of the study indicated that mainstream secondary school teachers in townships experienced various barriers in the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom. The findings revealed that there are three major barriers experienced by teachers when implementing inclusive education.

6.3.2.1: Teachers' Personal Barriers

The findings identified the barriers as teachers' personal barriers (which included low teacher buoyancy, low teacher self-efficacy, teacher negative attitudes towards inclusion, and a lack of teacher training on inclusive education). From the literature reviewed, teacher buoyancy refers to a teacher's ability to endure and overcome challenges, stressors, and impediments in the teaching and learning process (Verrier et al., 2018). The findings from the study indicated that some teachers in mainstream classrooms perceived themselves as unsure of their ability to overcome the challenges in their inclusive classrooms. Specifically, some teachers in mainstream classrooms have low buoyancy towards implementing the inclusive education policy in their classrooms. However, the findings also indicated that some teachers also believe they have the ability to overcome the challenges that come with implementing the inclusive policy in their classroom. In agreement with Comerford et al. (2015), the findings further indicated that teacher buoyancy is affected by both internal and external factors, as the teacher participants in the study pointed out that insufficient training and resource availability impacted their ability to implement the policy in the classroom. It is worth noting that teachers are the key implementors of the policy in the classroom, and for that matter, low teacher buoyancy affects the policy's implementation in a negative way.

The findings also indicated that low teacher self-efficacy is a personal barrier affecting the implementation of inclusion in the mainstream classroom. The findings from the study revealed that, due to the nature of the challenges persisting in mainstream township schools, some teachers were unable to affirm their ability to implement inclusion in their classrooms. However, the findings also indicated that, if mainstream teachers are given the needed training and the right working environment, mainstream teachers would be able to accommodate and support all learners with learning barriers in their classrooms. In accordance with Armor

(1976), teacher self-efficacy has a powerful impact on learners because it helps teachers motivate even those learners who are experiencing learning difficulties. Additionally, teachers with a higher level of self-efficacy provide more effective teaching outcomes, which contribute to their learners' higher levels of motivation and, as a result, higher academic achievement (Caprara et al. 2006). In the same vein, the researcher believes that teachers' self-efficacy is essential in order to promote learners' self-efficacy. Low teacher efficacy could lead to low learner efficacy and consequently low academic performance, which in turn can result in further declines in teacher efficacy (Bandura, 2001:05).

Furthermore, the findings from the study revealed that mainstream teachers have negative attitudes towards implementing the inclusive education policy in their classrooms. Moreover, the findings also indicated that teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusion were a major barrier to implementing inclusive education in the mainstream classroom. The findings further indicated that some mainstream teachers believe the policy has no place in mainstream schools, and as such, the inclusive policy is better on paper than in practice. However, based on the reviewed literature, Monsen et al. (2014) contend that a variety of factors influence teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom. Teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of the inclusive policy are influenced by factors such as a lack of resources, insufficient support, teachers' perceptions of their own competence in managing an inclusive classroom, and the behaviour of learners with learning disabilities.

Moreover, in accordance with the literature reviewed, the findings further revealed that teachers' lack of education, training, and understanding on how to support children with learning barriers has also influenced the negative attitude of teachers towards inclusion in the classroom (Bagree & Lewis, 2013:2; Fakudze, 2012:40; Zimba, 2011:52; Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014:95; and Zwane, 2016:61). The findings from the study indicated that a significant number of teachers in the mainstream classroom lack education, training, and knowledge about the inclusive education policy and its implementation. This is a major barrier to the success of the policy's implementation since teachers are the implementers of the policy. Additionally. In line with Waver's (2013) position, the findings also indicated that the only way for inclusive education to succeed was for teachers to receive ongoing training, as many teacher participants indicated that they lacked the needed training and education about the inclusive policy. Moreover, the findings also concur with the social model of disability, which regards education as a means of changing society's attitudes towards people with disabilities (Hodkinson, 2019). Furthermore, as Winzer and Mazurek (2010) argue, the social model is the cornerstone of

inclusion because it is a practice in education through inclusive education and is about taking steps to ensure educational equity and freedom from discrimination (Johannessen, 2010). Moreover, the model sees education as a means of changing society's prejudices against disabled people (Hodkinson, 2019).

6.3.2.2: School-Related Barriers

The findings partly identified the barriers as school-related barriers (also caused by larger class sizes, lack of resources or teaching aids, lack of support to implement inclusion, absence of learning support teachers in schools, non-accommodative curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS) curriculum, variance between policy and practice in classrooms, and inadequate contact time).

The findings indicated that township mainstream schools have large class sizes, making it difficult for teachers to implement the inclusive policy. From the reviewed literature, Gustafsson and Mabogoane (2012) indicated that public schools in South Africa have high class sizes, even by developing country standards, and especially in schools that have historically catered to black African learners (Howie, 2005:124). Furthermore, in agreement with Alper and Wehmeyer (2002) and Van Reusen, Shoho, and Barker (2001), the findings also indicated that teachers' inability to implement inclusion in mainstream classrooms is also influenced by large class sizes, which place additional burden on the teachers and make it difficult for the teachers to attend to individually identified learners' learning needs, which is contrary to the whole idea of the inclusive education policy (Blatchford et al., 2009; Maringe & Sing, 2014; Ayeni & Olowe, 2016). In contrast, from the reviewed literature, some studies indicate that smaller classes have a positive impact on academic performance at the elementary and secondary levels (Glass & Smith, 1978; Robinson, 1990). Others claim that class size has little to no effect on performance (Hanushek, 1986).

Additionally, the findings also indicated a lack of resources as a school-related barrier to the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream classrooms. The findings revealed that teachers' inability to fully implement the inclusive education policy in mainstream township public schools is solely due to a lack of resources (Wedell, 2005). Moreover, the findings also indicated that there is a lack of basic classroom resources like textbooks, photocopying papers, and general teaching aids in mainstream township classrooms, which is

a major contributing factor to the inability of teachers to address the learning barriers learners face in the classroom. The researcher believes that, if the objectives of the inclusive policy are to be achieved, especially in township schools, then the department of education should endeavour to make available the needed teaching aids that will make it easy for teachers to assist learners with learning barriers.

Furthermore, the findings indicated a lack of support from the education system as a school barrier to the implementation of the inclusive policy in mainstream classrooms. The findings demonstrated that most teachers in mainstream classrooms expressed their displeasure about the lack of support from the school, the specialists, and the education department in general. The findings further indicated that implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream secondary schools has received little or no support since teacher participants believe that the people who are even trained to support teachers to implement the policy cannot be assessed by teachers in mainstream classrooms when they need their services. However, from the reviewed literature, Mahlo (2011:176) indicated that the school-based support teams (SBST), which according to the SIAS policy have as their role to support teachers and learners with the implementation of the inclusion policy, lack the knowledge and abilities to assist learners and teachers; however, Mahlo was of the belief that strengthening SBSTs could be one method to improve the effectiveness of inclusive education.

In the same vein, Dreyer (2017), while writing on the constraints to quality education and support for all in the Western Cape, South Africa, indicated that teachers were not provided with sufficient support in implementing the policy. Accordingly, Fakudze (2012:74) indicated that the lack of support for teachers is characterized by a lack of state funding for inclusive education programs and the provision of in-service training for teachers. However, according to Slavica (2010), successful inclusive education implementation requires commitment and a coherent vision. Therefore, the researcher is of the belief that if all the stakeholders involved in implementing the inclusive policy can demonstrate support and a high degree of commitment, then the policy's implementation will be a success.

Similarly, the findings from the study indicated that learning support teachers (LST) were not available in mainstream township schools to provide the required support to learners and teachers in inclusive education. Lack of learning support teachers (LST) in schools is also a school-related barrier to the implementation of the inclusive education policy in mainstream classrooms. The presence of learning support teachers in schools in other provinces has proven

to be much more beneficial in terms of the implementation of the inclusive policy. Therefore, the researcher agrees with Mosito (2019) from the reviewed literature that the Department of Education should appoint Learning Support Teachers (LST) in schools, who would be permanently stationed at schools and would be responsible for assisting teachers and learners in the implementation of the inclusive policy in the classrooms (SIAS, 2014). In line with this, Ramrathan and Ngubane (2013) indicated that teachers receive insufficient support from the Department of Basic Education. The researcher couldn't agree more with the position of Ramrathan and Ngubane, as the provision of the LST in schools by the Department of Education could have complemented the efforts of the teachers in implementing the inclusive policy in their classrooms.

Moreover, the findings also indicated that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum is non-accommodative and a major school-related barrier. Additionally, the findings revealed that teachers have problems with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement curriculum currently in use in the South African school system. In agreement with Motitswe (2012:39), Thwala (2015:498) reported that teachers believed the CAPS curriculum is too rigid, not inclusive, and does not cater for the average learner with a learning barrier but rather only entreats teachers to focus on completing the vaunted annual teaching plan (ATP) with less contact time, placing the burden of accommodation on the poor learner. Therefore, the findings also indicated that teachers similarly agree with Tremblay (2014:8) that the policy of inclusive education looks good on paper but not in practice. The implication of this finding is that the Department of Education could reconsider re-training teachers on inclusive practices in schools.

Additionally, the findings from the study indicated that a variance between policy and practice in classrooms was a school-related barrier to the implementation of inclusive education policy in township mainstream classrooms. The findings from the responses of teachers in mainstream classrooms portrayed a mismatch between the policy and its implementation. In agreement with the reviewed literature, Tremblay (2014:8) indicated that the success of inclusive education does not result solely from raising awareness; it must also be put into practice. Moreover, the findings further concur with Tremblay's position that the policies formulated in various countries in light of inclusive education appear beautiful from a distance, but the situation is not the same as portrayed. In the same vein, Donohue and Bornman (2014:10) also

revealed that the implementation of inclusive education is at a grinding halt due to ambiguity about the means by which it can be accomplished.

Moreover, the findings from the studies further indicated that most mainstream teachers were of the opinion that inclusive education is just a policy on paper and has not been implemented in mainstream classrooms. However, according to Landsberg et al. (2001), the very principle of inclusion falls within the ideology of the macrosystem of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (which guided this study). They indicated that, in the education system, the macro-system can refer to the level at which education policy decisions are made, in South Africa's case, by the national Department of Basic Education (DBE). These policies have a significant impact on how teachers teach and support learners (Staden, 2015:54). Additionally, policies have been implemented to give weight to inclusive practice, such as the EWP6 (DoE, 2001), the Screening, Identification, and Assessment Strategy (SIAS) document (DoBE, 2014), Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (DoBE, 2010), and others that have an influence on teachers and learners in need of support.

6.3.2.3: Community-Related Barriers

Additionally, there are barriers within the community (which include a lack of parental participation, parental stigma about disability, a lack of community support, and a lack of education on inclusion) that hinder the implementation of the inclusive policy, as discussed below.

Findings from the study indicated that lack of parental participation was a community barrier to the implementation of the inclusive policy. The findings revealed that there is a lack of parental participation, which negatively affects the implementation of inclusive education in classrooms. Moreover, from the reviewed literature, in agreement with the findings of Adewumi and Mosito's (2019) study in some selected Fort Beaufort District primary schools in South Africa, it was indicated that parents were not helping matters because many of them were unaware of inclusive education policy. Additionally, the findings of this study also indicated that the implementation of the inclusive education policy in the township's mainstream schools has been hampered in part by the unwavering stance of some parents. However, from the reviewed literature, Okeke and Mazibuko (2014:11) contend that training is the most effective way to deal with parents, who are also stakeholders and critical to their children's education. It is believed that insufficient training and other support for parents

exacerbates the difficulties they already face in their roles as caregivers, affecting how inclusive education is implemented (Phiri, 2021). All in all, the researcher believes that, if the goal of supporting learners with learning barriers in the classroom is to be achieved, it is recommended that parents be given the needed basic training in inclusive education and also take an active interest and role in the support process.

Furthermore, the findings also identified Parental stigmatisation about disability is a community barrier to an inclusive policy. Stigma, as defined early in this chapter, is the link between unfavourable sentiments or prejudice towards a group that is subjected to discrimination as a result of unfavourable social stereotypes fed by cultural values (Link & Phelan, 2001). The findings from this study indicated that cultural beliefs and people's attitudes towards people with disabilities are a hindrance in addressing the issue of education for all children. From the reviewed literature, Teferra (2005) indicated that disability is frequently associated with shame, and as a result, some parents are often hesitant to involve their disabled child in the immediate community because they are perceived as bringing shame upon the family (Schiemer, 2017). This is a major barrier to the implementation of the inclusive education policy, since teachers cannot support learners with barriers without the full consent and support of their parents. Moreover, a further analysis of the findings indicated that disability is often correlated with negative conceptions that lead to stigma, discrimination, exclusion, and malice, as well as other forms of abuse of people with disabilities (Avramidis, 2012).

In the same vein, the findings also revealed that inclusion among learners with disabilities is a challenge because of societal beliefs that people with disabilities should be separated and given special treatment. However, over a decade after the introduction of the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), it’s quite worrisome since most learners with barriers to learning who attend school are still in separate "special" schools for learners with disabilities (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). A further analysis of the findings of the study indicated that even in the school environment, some policy implementors hold the notion that learners with disabilities should not be accommodated in mainstream schools but rather be taken to special schools.

Another barrier indicated by the findings is the lack of support from the community where the school is located. The findings indicated that the community does not support the schools

adequately. Moreover, the findings further indicated that the activities of the community have an impact on a school's ability to effectively implement any curriculum to benefit learners. The findings revealed that the community's failure to implement measures that prohibit learners from engaging in activities that have a negative impact on their education is a major contributing factor to the township schools' inability to accommodate and respond to all learners' learning needs. Furthermore, the studies indicated that the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream secondary schools received little or no support from the department of education, parents of learners with learning disabilities, the community, and even the education system itself (Mahlo 2011:54). However, Pijl and Meier (1997:9) were also of the belief that the implementation of inclusive education will be successful when teachers receive sufficient support and resources to teach all learners. In the same vein, the foundations on which inclusive education is built are collaborations, where families, learners, education departments, teachers, and communities are involved (Grenot-Scheyer, Fisher & Staub, 2001:173, 181).

6.3.3: Teachers' support for learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms

As stated before, the purpose of the study was to examine the support teachers provide to learners experiencing learning barriers in mainstream public secondary school classrooms. The findings from the study indicated that mainstream teachers adopted various support strategies to ensure every learner takes part in the learning process and gains something from it. The findings specifically indicated that, in agreement with the reviewed literature by Wannarka and Ruhl (2008), Wheldall and Lam (1987), and Krantz and Risley (1977), teachers change learners' seating arrangements during their lessons based on individual learners' learning barriers to ensure that learners are assisted and benefit from the class.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that mainstream teachers used remedial lessons to support learners who struggled in individual subjects and to provide such learners with the individual attention they required to develop their skills and confidence. The findings also revealed that remedial lessons assist teachers in bridging the gap between what learners are expected to know and what they do not know. Furthermore, the findings revealed that teachers are more interested in assisting learners in overcoming their challenges than using their ages to advance them to the next grade, which will only exacerbate the learners' problem. For instance, the progression

of learners to the next grade was cited as being among the contributing factors to the decline of the Grade 12 results (Mogale, M. L., & Modipane, M. C., 2021).

Similarly, the findings indicated that teachers go above and beyond to engage struggling readers by scheduling extra reading time with them to address the learners' reading barriers. Reading, according to Alsamanadi (2008), is an important skill that develops all other language skills and is required for all learner academic development. Nonetheless, Maphumulo (2010) asserted that when teaching learners to read, teachers should use reading materials in a casual manner. Likewise, according to Halliday (1978), a good reader is one who comprehends the material that they are reading. This is the key to effective and successful reading. Goodwin (2005) went on to say that as you read, you should be sure to take pleasure in the language's pleasures because the humour is only made clear when you comprehend the meaning of words.

However, the findings also indicated that some of the small learning barriers that should have been addressed at the elementary school level but were not are the main causes of the learning barriers that high school teachers face. For instance, Msimango (2012) indicated that it was essential for teachers to teach the skill of reading in the early years, as it was found that those learners who were struggling to read in the early grades continued to struggle in the higher grades as well. This raises concerns about how seriously the education department is taking the implementation of the inclusive education policy, particularly at the primary school level.

Additionally, the findings also indicated that some mainstream teachers have adopted teacher collaboration with parents as a support strategy for learners with learning barriers. In agreement with Western Governors University (2021: July 7), from the reviewed literature, collaboration between parents and teachers is crucial to a learner's educational pursuits as it builds a relationship and creates the best conditions for learning at home and at school.

Additionally, collaboration can help develop a strategy to strengthen a child’s weaknesses, identify any circumstances that may be impeding the learner's learning, and form a strong support network to help the learner become their best academic selves. However, in as much as collaboration between teachers and parents is an important strategy in the support process provided to learners with learning barriers, findings from the study also indicated that not all teachers adopted this all-important support strategy, as the findings revealed that some mainstream teachers do not believe in the idea of involving parents in addressing learners

learning barriers. To the teachers, it is much safer to work alone to provide the needed support to the learner than to involve the parent. However, in contrast, according to the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner, which was one of the theories adopted in this study, inclusive education necessitates collaboration between the school and the home environment (Koutrouba, Vamvakari, & Steliou, 2006). This theory explores the underpinning contents of the inclusive policy, where teachers and parents should maintain good communication with each other and collaborate to benefit the child in order to strengthen the development of ecological systems in educational practice. It further advocates that teachers should also be aware of the circumstances that their learners' families may be facing, including social and economic factors that are part of the various systems. Additionally, the theory asserts that a positive relationship between parents and teachers should shape the child's development. Similarly, the child must be actively engaged in their learning, both academically and socially. To enable positive development, they must work as a team with their peers and participate in meaningful learning experiences (Guy-Evans, 2020).

Furthermore, the position of the teachers above conflicts with the screening, identification, assessment, and support (SIAS, 2014) policy since the policy mandates teachers to work to identify learners' learning barriers and involve parents in addressing them.

6.4: Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached based on the study's main research question, objectives, and findings.

A general review of inclusive education in South Africa revealed that in both policy terms and documents, a positive awareness had been created for the smooth implementation of the inclusive education policy; however, a critical and holistic analysis of the implemented policy proves otherwise, as there has been a complete mismatch between what is happening on the ground and what is supposed to happen. However, pockets of success can be said to have been recorded in South Africa’s inclusive education implementation despite the significant challenges impacting the implementation process.

Conversely, it can be concluded from the study that teachers in mainstream classrooms believed that for inclusion to be effective and yielding, a single teaching approach may not suit

the particular needs of the learner with a learning barrier, and hence the adoption of various inclusive practices will enhance the inclusiveness of the teaching and learning process. However, only a small number of teachers were willing to adopt these inclusive practices, implying that internal and external factors influence teacher ability, self-efficacy, and motivation, limiting the ability of mainstream township teachers to implement the inclusive policy. A variety of factors influence teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusion, including a lack of resources, insufficient support, teachers' perceptions of competence, and a lack of education, training, and understanding of the inclusive policy. Additional findings revealed that large class sizes, a lack of support from the department of education, parents of learners with learning disabilities, the community, and even the education system itself contribute to teachers' inability to implement inclusive education in mainstream classrooms.

Furthermore, teachers have concerns about the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum, which is said to be too rigid, not inclusive, and does not accommodate the average learner with a learning barrier. This suggests that the inclusive education policy appears to be good on paper but not in practice.

Finally, the findings from the study also revealed that, to ensure every learner participates in the learning process and gains something from it, mainstream teachers adopted a variety of support strategies, such as altering seating arrangements based on individual learners' learning barriers, using remedial lessons to support students who struggled, and allocating extra reading time for struggling students. Although some feel it is safer to work alone to provide the necessary support than to involve the parent, not all teachers are in favour of this support technique.

6.5: Recommendations

Based on the findings of the teacher's experiences with the implementation of inclusive education in township mainstream high schools, the researcher has made the following recommendations to all stakeholders in the education sector, as well as future researchers:

- The study recommends that the department of education should consider retooling teachers on the policies of inclusive education. This would further enlighten teachers on the importance of adhering to and ensuring the actualization of inclusive education

policies in schools. This is because the findings from the study identified a lack of teacher education and training on inclusive education as a major barrier to its implementation.

- The study recommends to the department of education that it intermittently organize workshops and refresher courses for stakeholders involved in the implementation of the inclusive education policy to keep them up to date with the changing trends in the policy. This is because of the dynamic nature of the challenges associated with the policy's implementation.

- The study recommends to the tertiary institutions within the country that undertake teacher training programs to factor in more inclusive education contents to prepare the prospective teachers for the challenges ahead in the classroom. This is because the findings from the study indicated that most teachers have not had any education on inclusive education.

- The study recommends that the department of education strengthen its efforts by raising more awareness of the policy and its implementation, particularly in rural areas where people and stakeholders have little or no understanding of what the policy entails. This is because findings from the study indicated that the policy's implementation has only gained traction in certain parts of the country while leaving others out.

- The study recommends that the department of education make their commitments more practicable by investing in the policy and its implementation, especially in the township schools within the country where the policy implementation faces a lot of challenges. This is because support in terms of resources and commitment on the part of the department, teachers, parents, and the community at large should be made available to help with the smooth implementation of the program. This is because the findings of the study reviewed a lot of challenges with the policy's implementation that require a coherent effort from all stakeholder groups to overcome them.

- The study recommends that school governing bodies adopt a collaborative approach with all stakeholders, including parents and teachers in the community, to facilitate the future implementation of inclusive education in schools. This would foster the implementation of inclusive education at all levels. This is because the study reported

that there were numerous community-related barriers that hinder the implementation of inclusive education.

- The study recommends that the Northern Cape Department of Education to implement the recommendations of the Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) policy by employing Learning Support Teachers (LST) in schools permanently to ensure effective implementation of the inclusive policy at schools. This is because findings from the study indicated the absence of LST in schools.

6.6: Limitation of the study

The findings of this study are indicative and may only be applicable to the chosen research site and may not be applicable to the entire Northern Cape Department of Education districts because the experiences of teachers in township mainstream schools in the Frances Baard district may not reflect the experiences of teachers in other districts. However, the study still achieved its aim because the findings are detailed in relation to the study context.

6.7: Recommendations for Future Research

On the basis of the study findings, conclusion, and recommendations, the following suggestions are made for further research:

- Experiences of teachers in implementing inclusive education in township schools.
- Policy-related challenges in the implementation of inclusive education in township schools.
- Strategies for enhancing inclusive education in schools in South Africa.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION SHEET

University of the Witwatersrand ,
Wits School of Education,
Tel: (27) 011 717 3003
Date [05/06/2022]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Information letter regarding participation in a research study

My name is Adu Yeboah, and I am a Masters student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my degree, I need to undertake a research study, and I am investigating "**Teachers' experiences of giving support and implementing inclusive education in a township school in Kimberley, Northern Cape**", under the supervision of Dr Peter Aloka and Dr Erasmos Charamba. The study aims to explore barriers experienced by teachers and to establish how teachers support learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in the classroom when implementing inclusive education in the Frances Baard education district of Kimberley, Northern Cape.

The research will entail collecting data from 12 teachers (participants), and I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. Participation entail me having a 30 to 45 minutes face-to-face semi-structured interview with you at Tetlanyo high school. The interview will be after school hours in order not to disrupt your teaching hours. The aim is to explore your experiences of giving support and implementing inclusion in the classroom.

With your consent, the interview shall be audio-taped and later transcribed and brought back to you for verification to ensure that, your statements are correctly transcribed and appropriately analysed. The recordings will be stored in a password protected computer and only the researcher will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be deleted after 5 years, after the completion of this research study.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this research study. You will not receive any direct benefits from participation but there are no disadvantages or penalties if you

do not choose to participate or if you withdraw from the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The interview will be completely confidential as I will not be asking for any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. Anonymous direct quotes from the interview may be used in the final study. I will be using pseudonym (false name) to represent your participation in my final study. If you experience any distress or discomfort at any point in this process, we will stop the interview or resume another time.

Due to the Covid pandemic at the moment, yours and the learners safety and wellbeing is off outmost importance to me. Covid regulations, guidelines and protocols are to be followed at all times. All expenses incurred will be covered by myself.

If you have any questions during or afterwards this research, please feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a dissertation which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this research study, I will be happy to send it to you. With your permission, the data collected from this research study may be used by other researchers in an anonymized format, subject to their own ethical clearance being obtained. The data collected from this research study will be stored in a locked cabinet and password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27 (0)11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,
Adu Yeboah

Contact details:
Adu Yeboah, Cell: 0732252563 ,Email: 1250496@students.wits.ac.za

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Dr Peter Aloka, Tel: (011) 717 3098, Email peter.aloka@wits.ac.za, or
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APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

Title of Project: Teachers' experiences of giving support and implementing inclusive education in a township school in Kimberley, Northern Cape.

Name of Researcher: Adu Yeboah (1250496)

I, ……..., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please tick the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES☐ NO☐
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES☐ NO☐
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES☐ NO☐
I agree that all the data collected during this study will be destroyed after 5 years after completion of the project	YES☐ NO☐
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report.	YES☐ NO☐
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report)	YES☐ NO☐
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES☐ NO☐

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature)

…… (name of person seeking consent)

…… (date)

APPENDIX C: SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Section A.

Gender…….....

Years of teaching experience: .....

Grade responsible for: .....

Qualification: .....

Age in years: .....

Section B.

1. From your perspective, which practices amounts to inclusion in the classroom?

1. How have the adopted the inclusive practices in the classroom?

2. Can you identify some of the learning barriers in your classroom?

3. How have these barriers imparted on your ability to implement inclusion in your classroom?

4. what support services are available for teachers to use for learners with various learning barriers?

5. In what ways do teachers provide support to learners that are experiencing different learning barriers in their classrooms?

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Yeboah

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H22/07/49**
PROJECT TITLE	Teachers' experiences of giving support and implementing inclusive education in a township school in Kimberley, Northern Cape
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr A Yeboah
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Wits School of Education/
DATE CONSIDERED	22 July 2022
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk Level: Minimal
EXPIRY DATE	23 August 2025
DATE 24 August 2022	**CHAIRPERSON** (Professor J Watermeyer)

cc: Supervisor : Dr P Aloka and Dr E Charamba

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.**

Signature

26/08/2022
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES