

https://dspace.org/

Investigating 4th year student teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms.

Dewa, Nokuthula Ntombiyelizwe

2020
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/30050

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Investigating 4th year student teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms.

Nokuthula Ntombiyelizwe Dewa (2021446)

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Masters in Inclusive Education of the University of the Witwatersrand

Supervised by: Dr Tanya Bekker

Date: May 2020

Acknowledgements

My sincere acknowledgment and gratitude go to my supervisor for the sacrifices she made to guide me in this study. Her passionate guidance, constructive criticism, love, and guidance enabled me to be confident and gain ownership of this study.

I further acknowledge my lecturers, Foundation Phase head of department, School head of department (education) and the study participants (4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers) of the institution where l gathered data.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to my dear husband and my two daughters, for their holistic support throughout the study.

Declaration

I, Nokuthula Ntombiyelizwe Dewa, hereby declare that this work titled "**Investigating 4th year student teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms**" is my genuine piece of work and has never been submitted for an academic award to any University or Higher Institution of Learning.

Signed …  …… Date ……29 May 2020……..

Nokuthula Ntombiyelizwe Dewa (2021446)

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate how pre-service teachers perceive the preparation they receive from an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in one Higher Education Training (HET) institution in Gauteng. This investigation was intended to gain insight into how pre-service teachers are prepared for handling inclusive environments and to enact inclusive pedagogy in Grade R classrooms. This was viewed as fundamental in answering the claim that many learners enrol in Grade One underprepared for formal learning, which has a profound effect on the achievement gap between learners. To address this, data was collected from pre-service teachers using qualitative surveys, focus group, and individual interviews, both interview sets were semi-structured. All 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers were given equal opportunities to participate as respondents. Six pre-service teachers gave their consent to participate in the study. Data was gathered and analysed, which led to the emergence of four overarching themes. These were: (1) Importance of Grade R, (2) Perceptions of preparedness, (3) Understanding of concepts and (4) Experiences of pre-service teachers. The findings from the analysis were contrasted against the theoretical framework of inclusive pedagogical practice, which informs the study, leading to the following discoveries as key perceptions of preparedness. (i) Pre-service teachers view Grade R as important to both teachers and learners. (ii) Pre-service teachers perceive their school-based training as playing a role to some extent in their pedagogical practices. (iii) Pre-service teachers also perceive concepts such as; diversity, exclusion, inclusion, inclusive pedagogy and differentiation largely influencing their pedagogical practices. These study findings were contrasted with the research questions leading to the conclusion that although school-based training can influence teachers' practices, more so teachers' pedagogical practices are to a larger extent influenced by their preparedness. The study ended with some possible recommendations for future research.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Inclusive Pedagogy, Differentiation, Inclusion, Exclusion, Pre-service teachers, Grade R learning.*

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction and motivation of the study 1
1.0 Introduction 1
1.2 Background to the Study 1
1.3 History of Inclusion 2
1.4 Problem Statement 3
1.5 Purpose 5
1.6 Main Research question 5
1.6.1 Sub Questions 5
1.7 Rationale 5
1.8 Conclusion 6
Chapter Two: Literature Review 8
2.1 Introduction 8
2.2 Development of Inclusive Education Internationally and in South Africa 8
2.3 Definitions of Inclusive Education 10
2.4 Implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa 14
2.5 Inclusive Pedagogy 17
2.6 Early Childhood Development 20
2.7 Teacher preparedness in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) 25
2.8 Theoretical Framework 30
2.9 Conclusion 37
Chapter Three: Methodology and Design 39
3.1 Introduction 39
3.2 Research Design and Methodology 39
3.3 Interpretive paradigm 40
3.4 Research Site and Participants 41
3.5 Data Collection 42
3.6 Description of data analysis process 44
3.7 Ethical Consideration 46
3.8 Research Rigor 47
3.9 Credibility 48
3.10 Reliability 48
3.11 Dependability 49
3.12 Confirmability 49
3.13 Transferability 50

3.14 Conclusion 51
Chapter Four: Discussion of themes/findings 52
4.1 Introduction 52
4.2 Discussion of themes 52
4.2.1 Importance of Grade R 52
4.2.2 Perceptions of preparedness 56
4.2.3 Understanding of concepts 60
4.2.4 Experiences of Pre-service Teachers 68
4.3 Discussion of findings 76
4.4 Conclusion 84
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations 86
5.1 Introduction 86
Answering Research Questions Using Research Findings 86
1. Which aspects of the ITE programme address and prepare 4th year pre-service teachers for inclusive environments? 86
2. In what ways are 4th year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers prepared to enact inclusive pedagogy? 89
3. How do 4th year Foundation Phase student teachers demonstrate responsiveness to developmental needs for Grade R learners? 90
5.2 Limitations of the study 92
5.3 Recommendations 93
5.4 Conclusion 95
References 96
Appendices 111
Appendix I: Questionnaire for Fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers 111
Appendix II: Focus Group Interview Schedule for Fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers 115
Appendix III: Individual Interview schedule for fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers 116
Appendix IV: Information sheet for Head of School (Wits School of Education) 117
Appendix V: Head of School Informed Consent 119
Appendix VI: Information sheet for Registrar for Humanities (Wits School of Education) 120
Appendix VII: Registrar Informed Consent 122

Appendix VIII: Information sheet for 4th year Foundation Phase preservice teachers 123
Appendix IX: Student Teacher's Consent Form 125
Appendix X: Office of the Deputy Registrar approval 126
Appendix XI: Research Ethics Clearance Certificate 127
Appendix XII: Comparison of Pedagogical Assumptions and Proposed Standards against Findings 128

List of Figures

Figure 1: Representation of themes and sub-themes..... 46

List of Tables

Table 1: Visual Presentation of Theoretical Framework 36
Table 2: Themes per data set and overarching themes 45
Table 3: Comparison of Pedagogical Assumptions and Proposed Standards against Findings 77

Chapter One: Introduction and motivation of the study

1.0 Introduction

The introduction of Inclusive Education internationally has led to significant changes in modern classrooms to respect the rights of all humans. These changes have been evident at macro and micro levels of teaching, and South Africa is not an exception. In the South African context, policies regarding the inclusion of all learners have been drafted and implementations are underway. This study looked at the perceptions of fourth-year foundation phase pre-service teachers of one Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Gauteng to find out how they are prepared for teaching in environments that include everybody in Grade R classrooms. The foundation phase, which includes Grade R to Grade Two, is of interest and critical in this study because this is where the foundation for future learning is laid (Pandor, 2008).

The first chapter is an introduction to the study, which presents the background of the study, history of inclusion, problem statement and the purpose of the study. The chapter further presents the main research question with its three sub-questions, intended to address the main question. This chapter attempts to paint a picture of the historical background of Inclusive Education in the South African context. Inclusive Education in South Africa is drawn from international policies, to which South Africa is a signatory, as well as from the country's Constitution and policies, thus adopting a human rights stance.

1.2 Background to the Study

The background of the study attempts to locate and problematize the focus of investigation for this study. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of (1948), various national together with international organizations have not only realized but also acknowledged education as a right to every human. This has led to the consensus that basic education should be compulsory. In the South African context, basic education refers to the education of all learners from Grade R up to Grade 12 (DBE, 2010). This implies that all young children regardless of any impairment should have access to learning. Following the universal declaration, the rights of children were uplifted by many nations at the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in 1990. Consequently, in 1994 representatives from 25 international, 92 national governments, met in Spain to honour the same spirit and to enhance access to education of all children

(UNESCO, 1994). The introduction of Inclusive Education internationally involves a lot of changes in the education system. According to Ainscow (2005), the movement requires restructuring of schools for them to be responsive to the needs of all learners. This suggests that the Inclusive Education movement entails changing many of the current educational practices which are not responsive to the learners' needs. Thus, Mittler (2005) argues that the challenges in learning are not a result of the deficit within an individual; rather they are one of many factors worthy of consideration. This implies that learning challenges should not be seen as a learners' fault, rather, teachers should view these as challenges to their professionalism. Drawing from the international frameworks, Ntombela (2009) states that South Africa has shown its intention to educate all children through the constitution of the country as well as the Education White Paper 6 among other instruments. This shows the commitment of South Africa as a country to join the rest of the world in fighting against educational discriminatory practices.

1.3 History of Inclusion

Since 1994 the South African government has proved its intention to promote Inclusive Education as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2007) as it indicates that children and adults with diverse contexts should be protected and respected. These efforts have been attempts to dismantle the apartheid system of education as the nation welcomes the democratic, Inclusive Education system. According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001), the South African education system before 1994 was based along racial lines which resulted in the replication of responsibilities, services and functions, and huge inequalities in per capita funding between the dissimilar education departments. This helped the dominant ideology (Foucault, 1977) to maintain its power and continue enjoying the privilege of oppressing other groups (people of colour). In response to this historical context, the post-1994 government was tasked with finding ways to reconstruct the education system which resulted in the new policy being implemented.

Research shows that the dawn of a democratic South Africa brought about developmental changes in the structure of education which created a shift from one education system to a policy committed to social justice and human rights (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001; UNESCO, 2005). Such commitment, reports Savolainen,

Engelbrecht, Nel and Malinen (2012), is evident in major policy documents like; the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) which directs all schools to admit all learners without discrimination, White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995), The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (Ministerial Office of the Deputy President, 1997) as well as the National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services Report (Department of Education (1997).

Consequently, the adoption of Inclusive Education policy in South Africa means that teachers are expected to be responsive to the range of diversity found in South African classrooms. Rensburg (2015) and da Costa (2003) report that the South African constitution has prioritised early childhood education in recent years, hence inclusive teaching and learning should be happening at all levels of schooling including Grade R. Government's intentions to reconstruct the South African education system should not just be on papers and policies pertaining to general education. Rather it should be coupled with inclusive teaching and learning practices, implemented at all levels of learning, starting from early years. Interestingly, the participation of children in education in their early years is considered by the government of South Africa as an inclusive investment into the future of the country amongst other priorities (DoE, 2009). This implies that the South African government considers Inclusive Education as crucial, which includes early years learning as well.

1.4 Problem Statement

The problem is that many Grade One learners in South Africa enter into formal schooling underprepared as revealed by Rensburg (2015) who argues that students enrol in Grade One without conceptual understanding. In support of the same thought, Artmore (2013) argues that the majority of children in South Africa have no access to ECD provisions, as a result, they enter Grade One without having attended any structured programme of learning. This, he further elaborates, deprives most South African young children of quality early learning, consequently, disadvantaging them from attaining needed skills and knowledge for Grade One. This implies that most children qualify for Grade One by virtue of age, rather than having obtained the needed foundation in Grade R. Additionally, Artmore (2013) reports that in some parts of South Africa there is under-emphasis of basic skills development in reading, writing and numeracy at the early

childhood level. This could imply that the credibility of teachers manning those ECD centres needs to be investigated. Equally important, is the fact that it is crucial for learners to comprehend the medium of instruction.

Additionally, Rensburg (2015) posits that it is expected that children should acquire and clearly understand the teaching and learning of concepts, therefore, concepts should be delivered in the language the child understands. This implies that learners in the early stages of development should be best taught in their mother language. However, despite education department initiatives to include Grade R, the quality of Grade R teaching and learning remains variable and questionable. According to Pandor (2005), the South African education system is currently training teachers in early years, teachers who will be qualified to teach ECD children, teachers who will lay a strong foundation in order for children to succeed in their future learning, hence contributing to the closing of the achievement gap. Age is yet another factor that also plays a critical role in enrolling learners into Grade One.

According to Rensburg (2015) since 2004, many primary schools started enrolling five years old children provided they complete their sixth year on or before mid-year of the year they enter Grade One. This implied that a learner is enrolled in Grade One regardless of successfully completing Grade R class or not. From a developmental point of view, this is problematic, claims Rensburg (2015), because the Grade One teachers' task gets complicated. This is because the Grade One teacher has to deal with two developmental age groups (five and seven years old), which is a challenging task. Teachers naturally are inclined to favour learners at an advantage. He further eludes to the inequalities caused by South African society's ever-widening gap between the achievement of formerly advantaged learners and those from underprivileged backgrounds. This implies that disparities, therefore, begin to exist before individuals start formal schooling (Hoadley 2013; Lee & Burkam 2002). Teachers, nonetheless, are to be trained to handle diverse environments.

Grade R teachers like all other teachers are required to teach inclusively in diverse contexts and so need to be prepared for that role. Understanding how Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes go about supporting the preparation of teachers for this role enhanced understanding of what is needed to promote Inclusive Education that supports learner development at Grade R level.

1.5 Purpose

To investigate an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme that supports the preparation of Grade R teachers at one Higher Education and Training (HET) institution in Gauteng to better understand in what ways these teachers perceive the preparation they received for handling inclusive environments and to enact inclusive pedagogy to ensure the effective development of Grade R learners.

1.6 Main Research question

In what ways do 4th-year pre-service teachers feel the ITE programme at one HET in Gauteng supports the preparation of Grade R teachers for teaching inclusively in diverse contexts?

1.6.1 Sub Questions

1. Which aspects of the ITE programme address and prepare 4th-year student teachers for inclusive environments?
2. In what ways are 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers prepared to enact inclusive pedagogy?
3. How do 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers' responsiveness to the developmental needs for Grade R learners reflect lessons learned from the ITE programme?"

1.7 Rationale

Investigating how an ITE programme at one HEI in Gauteng prepares pre-service teachers for inclusive environments has shed light on enhancing understanding about what is required to promote Inclusive Education in pre-formal learning. This has assisted in alleviating the problem of children progressing to Grade One underprepared which has a high probability of overburdening the learner and the teacher. Research shows that when learners enter Grade One underprepared, this creates societal inequalities, which surfaces before children commence formal education (Hoadley 2013; Lee and Burkam 2002). These inequalities, they further claim, are a threat to inclusion as they perpetuate the achievement gap between privileged children and those who are not, thus making it difficult to implement inclusion. This suggests that if a certain group of learners acquires quality early education, they are better positioned compared to those who did not get that privilege. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons Lewis (1995) argues

why Japanese children have higher successful performances, because of the attention they are given at early years learning, before formal schooling. Similarly, Rogoff (2003) concurs that collaboration and co-operative learning during the early years act as amplifiers to improved academic results later in the academic journey of an individual. This emphasise the value of the quality of early years learning. It is, therefore, the purpose of this study to investigate an ITE programme that supports the preparation of Grade R teachers at one HET institution in Gauteng to better understand in what ways these pre-service teachers are being equipped for inclusive environments and to enact inclusive pedagogy to address the gap between pre-formal and formal learning. As much as quality inclusive early years learning is dependent on teachers, it is also reliant on learners' attitudes.

As much as it is true that teachers play an important role in the implementation of inclusion, research shows that the relationships that children have amongst each other are also significant (Adderley, R.J., Hope, M.A., Hughes, G.C., Jones, L. and Messiou, K, 2015). They elaborate that learners' sense of being united with one another, to their school and teachers is crucial for their sense of being part of the whole inclusion. This concurs with Messiou's (2006/2012b) arguments of how marginalisation is conceptualised and can be experienced by any child in the school. This implies that there are instances when exclusion is unavoidable as children can sometimes alienate or isolate themselves without the teacher's knowledge. Thus, in order for inclusion to be successfully implemented, all stakeholders should work together, that includes; learners, teachers, policymakers, and society at large. Hence Florian and Walton (2017) contend on working towards inclusion to be viewed as a norm of changing policies and educational structures among other issues, which is collaborative work.

1.8 Conclusion

The first chapter looked at the effects of introducing Inclusive Education at an international and national level, which has brought significant changes to modern classrooms. The background of the study showed that not only has inclusion been realised internationally and nationally, but it has also been acknowledged as a fundamental human right of everybody. As a signatory to the international frameworks, South Africa has shown its intention to include and meaningfully educate all children,

thus dispelling discriminatory practices that have been intentionally and unintentionally accepted and practiced by many teachers and parents. The chapter also looked at the history of Inclusive Education in South Africa, which led to the identification of the problem statement. The problem has been identified as enrolling learners into Grade One without adequate preparation, which poses challenges to both teachers and learners. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate an ITE programme that supports the preparation of Grade R teachers at one HEI institution in Gauteng. This enhanced insightful development of what ways pre-service teachers perceive the preparation they received for handling inclusive environments and to enact inclusive pedagogy to ensure the effective development of Grade R learners. The purpose of the following chapter was to find out other related literature with significance to the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The intention of the second chapter was to review the literature that is significant to the study. In addition, some key headings of interest to the study were identified, thus the chapter was organised as follows:

1. The development of Inclusive Education internationally and in South Africa;
2. Definitions of Inclusive Education, inclusive pedagogy, Early Childhood Development and Initial Teacher Training; and
3. The Theoretical Framework is from the works of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), Florian and Spratt (2013) and Florian and Walton (2017). The same ideas developed by these authors are also stated by the Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginners (2017), which inform the study.

2.2 Development of Inclusive Education Internationally and in South Africa

Internationally, Inclusive Education is understood as a major strategy in achieving Education for All (EFA), as it strengthens the capacity to reach out to all learners (UNESCO, 2009). Consequently, it should guide all education policies and practices, since it is an overall principle, starting from enforcing that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more impartial and equal society. The report of UNESCO (2009) further elaborates that the major push for Inclusive Education was given at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, which was held in Salamanca in June 1994. This is when more than 300 participants from 92 nations and 25 international organizations considered the fundamental policy movement required to endorse the Inclusive Education approach. The outcome of this conference enabled schools to welcome all children, including those living with disabilities in mainstream schooling. It is noteworthy that in this conference, even though the focus of the conference was on special needs education, the conclusion was that special needs education should be part of the Inclusive Educational strategy, not to be a stand-alone entity (UNESCO, 2009). This implies that there will be a single Inclusive Education package that works as an educational strategy to alleviate discrimination in all levels of development.

According to Engelbrecht (2006), in South Africa, Inclusive Education is framed within an approach of human rights which transforms integrated human values to rights of

marginalised learners. She further elaborates that Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) defines Inclusive Education, based on the Constitution ideal, as a system of education that ensures that all children are given equal opportunities to become competent citizens who will work together with others towards bringing positive changes in a diverse society. Equal opportunities are however hampered by marginalising and stigmatising ways of viewing those who physically and mentally appear different from others. This perspective is derived from a traditional model that has proven to be at fault in many ways.

Interestingly, there has been a shift in education from marginalising ways of viewing learners who appear different (medical model) to a different view, a (social model). According to Stadler (2006), the medical model is where those who appear different from what is considered “normal” are separated from other learners to be ‘fixed”, through being taught in different classrooms where it is claimed that they get the best attention for their development, taught by a special teacher. Sadly, contrary to its purpose, this further alleviates and perpetuates discrimination, creating two opposite groups or categories, which Stadler (2006) calls a deceptive binary between those who are marginalised and regarded as not normal and those who are considered normal. As a result, this medical model is not working and has been rejected in favour of the social model.

The social model has a different perspective on the medical model. Swain and French (2000) agree with Oliver (1990) that the social model is concerned with the way society responds to difference, which has a profound effect on compounding or alleviating the difficulties faced by those who are different. This implies that it is important how people (teachers) respond to difference in order to accommodate diversity in the classrooms, and this should be applicable to all levels of teaching and learning, including Grade R. Conversely, if society, teachers, in particular, fail to meet the needs of those who are different, learners are unfortunately disabled, not by the impairment they live with but disabled by their teachers’ failure to recognise, accommodate and respond to their needs. The way teachers respond to diversity is also dependent on their conceptualisation of Inclusive Education.

Additionally, Liasidou (2012) in agreement with Oliver (1990) argue that because Inclusive Education is defined from the standpoint of social model of disability, it

emphasizes the social barriers that incapacitate individuals over individual deficits, as denoting to the social restructuring, and by suggestion, educational settings that are responsive to the needs of varied learners. This could advocate that Inclusive Education, uses a proactive approach that is responsive to the needs of all learners, thus dispels the view that disability is within an individual and is permanent; rather the way society is organised either restricts or empowers individuals. Thus, Goodley (2013) concurs that being impaired does not lead to disablement, rather disability can be caused by registers such as; cultural, social, economic and political, and it is, therefore, a challenge created by society. For instance, if a hearing-impaired learner is deprived of hearing aids, then they are socially disabled or oppressed (Thomas, 2007) by the societal unpreparedness, not by the impairment. It can be argued therefore that if society is unresponsive, it imposes restrictions on the activities of those with learning challenges. On this point, some might argue that then the majority of environments then are not responsive to diverse needs, therefore nothing could be done to cater for the needs of everybody.

However, according to Slee (2011) Inclusive Education endeavours to re-frame the education field, re-right language, re-search inclusion and re-vision education in order to embrace diversity, thus responding to the needs of all learners, not just a few (Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011). This shows that it is the aim of Inclusive Education to correct the disparities of the past, the rhetoric use of language in the field and encourage ways of thinking about and doing inclusion. Consequently, Janks and Vasquez (2011) and Gee (2005) state that since language is a powerful instrument, there seems to be a need to comprehend relationships between meaning-making, texts, and power so as to adopt transformative social action that leads to a further justifiable social order. This entails that through language, viewing differences through a medical lens works to exclude those viewed as different and perpetuate social inequalities, hence the need to re-establish and imbed rights and justice vocabulary in education. Hence, Brantlinger (2006) and Stadler (2006) reiterate Foucault's (1984) words that language acts as a continuous penalty in disciplinary institutions by normalizing differences in textbooks and media. This shows how language intensifies the perpetuation of social inequalities.

2.3 Definitions of Inclusive Education

Although Inclusive Education has grown into a worldwide trend, Walton (2015) states that nations internationally are struggling with how to make a more Inclusive Education.

Some authors reveal that Inclusive Education is conceptualised differently in different contexts and countries (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2011; Florian, 2012). This suggests that Inclusive Education has multiple meanings, depending on contexts. This kind of conceptualisation, states (Walton, 2015) reveals the truth of possibilities and restraints of different contexts, such as historical, socio-economic and cultural realities that have an impact on inclusion and exclusion. For instance, in South Africa, the prime historical influence on exclusion is racism, hence conceptualisation of Inclusive Education in South Africa is influenced by racism. Therefore, racism could not be an issue in another context and as such will not influence inclusivity.

According to Miles and Singal (2010), Inclusive Education aims at promoting principles of democracy, values as well as beliefs related to social justice and equality to enhance the participation of all children. They further elaborate that because Inclusive Education championed marginalised groups, it has something valuable to offer the current EFA debate through promoting these values and beliefs. Consequently, Srivastava, De Boer, and Pijl. (2015) concur that Inclusive Education is not only concerned with raising issues of placement and quality education, rather its main focus are issues about social justice. They elaborate that this focus would afford society the opportunity to examine its social institutions and structures through a critical lens. Thus, challenging practices such as; rote learning, teacher-centred practices, didactic, among many other traditional practices, in an effort to open up chances for new and greater pedagogical competences (Miles and Singal, 2010). This implies that Inclusive Education is calling for massive restructuring, not only changes in teaching methods but more importantly, changes in the current systems of education and the methods of assessments.

Research shows that educational restructuring and reorganisation is a move in responding to global imperatives for the development of inclusion which has the potential to shape the broader social and institutional contexts in which school teachers operate (Sikes, Lawson &Parker 2007). This implies that since teachers are the main implementers of inclusion, it is indeed teachers who enact inclusion in their classrooms, therefore teacher training institutions need to prepare them for teaching in inclusive environments. Hence Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) emphasize that it is critical for the implementation of inclusion that pre-service teachers acquire knowledge, skills, and inclusive practices that translate to modifying their conceptualisation of Inclusive

Education. Implementation of Inclusive Education and enacting it is also emphasised by other significant policy documents.

The Salamanca Statement and the Framework for Action have been argued by Ainscow (1999) as the most significant document in Inclusive Education. The document entails a strong encouragement that all schools should be inclusive in relation to the international goal of achieving education for all. The term, all involves children from diverse backgrounds, children from ethnic, linguistic cultural minorities, and those from marginalised groups (UNESCO, 1994). Noteworthy is that children from all these diverse backgrounds need to be accommodated right from their early years. Consequently, Dyson (2004) concurs that Inclusive Education is not static rather it is a process that continues to challenge exclusionary practices in schools, communities, hence being vigilant about any practice that threatens equity. The international policy documents precede over national policy documents, thus binds all signatories to the international agreements.

Inclusive Education policies in South Africa are drawn from international policies, Wakefield and Murungi (2011) define it as a suitable approach for educating everyone. They explain that this approach is instituted on the acknowledgment that certain groups of learners such as indigenous children, children living with disabilities, or girls have traditionally been directly or indirectly excluded from the present education system. To elaborate on this definition, Voltz, Brazil, and Ford (2001) posit that Inclusive Education is concerned with the state or condition of a human being that brings about a sense of acceptance and belonging. This implies that Inclusive Education goes beyond the physical placement of diverse learners into the mainstream, rather, as propounded by Voltz et al (2001), it is a combination of physical enrolment and integrating the systems of general education into new systems of Inclusive Education. This means that it is not enough to just enroll learners of diversity into the mainstream without changing the old systems which are currently in place.

Therefore, as an effort to accomplish inclusive inclusionary goals, Inclusive Education should welcome and embrace all children, including those who have been neglected, as captured in the Dakar Framework, by Wakefield and Murungi (2011) that education should neither discriminate nor exclude. This would imply restructuring the physical environments as well as the general education systems currently in place. According to

Hewitt (1999), inclusion calls for changes in curriculum, philosophy, school and district restructuring, pedagogical, particularly teacher training. She further argues that one of the teachers' roles is working towards doing inclusion well, rather than working towards just doing inclusion, thus preparing all learners to be members of a broader community. This suggests that inclusion is not only about letting learners be placed in a regular classroom but it involves making sure all learners meaningfully participate.

Consequently, Loreman (2011) states that there is a need to move Inclusive Education from the "why" to the "how", hence it is important to take into consideration the background and contextual conditions necessary for the successful implementation of inclusion. According to Ainscow (2005), a debate has always existed concerning the definition of Inclusive Education. Nonetheless, Ainscow (2005) agrees with Loreman (2009) on that Inclusive Education is designed to allow schools to be driven by action rather than debating the shades of language. Ainscow (2005) notes that inclusive practices have everything to do with attempts to do away with issues that hinder learning and full participation of students, hence "it is about social learning developments within a given workplace that inspires people's actions and, indeed, the thinking that informs these actions' (p.112-1113). This implies that pre-service teachers should be prepared on inclusive practices that will place them in a position to be able to identify and fight any exclusionary practices, be they from learners, community or other teachers, which are likely to hinder the successful implementation of inclusion.

Additionally, Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel, Koskela, and Okkolin (2017) concur that Inclusive Education is about acceptance of all learners and full participation which brings about unconditional, quality education for everybody. Contrary to the mentality of those socialised in special education, many authors broadly define inclusion as not marginalising learners based on ethnic background, ability, socio-economic or other recognisable physical characteristics, rather it welcomes everybody to general learning environments (Engelbrecht et al.2013; Ferri,2015 & Armstrong et al. 2009). This shows a move in the thinking of selecting some learners as fit to be taught in a different way from others. Consequently, Powell (2013) refutes those who just rename special schools into inclusive schools without making significant changes in the contents of the curricular or organizational structures as mere rhetoric and euphemistical (p.336). From the above definitions, Loreman's (2011) definition was adopted because it puts emphasis on the full participation of all learners, which implies that learners have formal

access as well as epistemological access from as early as pre-formal learning. If all learners are getting full participation that will mean a change or reform in the education system which will enhance accommodation of everybody, hence successful inclusion implementation. The international policy document plays a powerful role in moulding Inclusive Education at national levels as well, to achieve the education all goal by making sure everybody is embraced.

2.4 Implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa

Since 1994 the South African Constitution has established a democratic society that embraces equality, human dignity as well as freedom of all its citizens in line with international educational practices of inclusion, which have strongly influenced the shift of education from the apartheid era. As a result, Engelbrecht (1999), states that Inclusive Education in the South African context has not been viewed as just another option to education, but rather, as a strategy in education that is most likely to bring about a just and democratic society. This strategy will promote recognition and respect for the previously marginalised groups of people, which Green (2001), refers to as a celebration of diversity through changing attitudes. Conversely, Engelbrecht (1999) shows that this looks very good on paper, but the reality on the ground remains a challenge even after more than two decades after the publication of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO,1994). This suggests that even though racial lines of education in South Africa have been abolished, Inclusive Education is not fully realized in practice.

According to Engelbrecht (2006), the implementation of Inclusive Education requires more than simply shifting from the Apartheid system of education to a democratic education that is just and equal to recipients of a curriculum. Rather, Welgemoed (1998) postulates that it should be viewed as a continuous process that works towards building a society that is democratic. Thinking along the same lines is Christie (1999) who states that policy visions and political elections are just a step towards inclusion, they alone cannot bring about needed changes socially and educationally. This means that improvements towards inclusion are seen as steps in the right direction, however, there is still a lot to be achieved. Consequently, Engelbrecht (2006) in agreement with Christie (1999) says that this development can be achieved through concerted engagement with all facets of social, economic, and political spheres, acknowledgment that of diversity between societal and contextual factors at all levels of life. This is an invitation to the nation of working collaboratively towards inclusion.

According to Murungi (2015) education has been considered the priority right to everyone as stated in the South African Constitution section 29. He further elaborates that this is one of the most debated issues in the Bill of Rights because of its implication for the realisation of some other rights. Swart and Pettipher (2011) concur with Engelbrecht (2007) in that before Inclusive Education was introduced in South Africa, a medical model was followed as an intervention strategy. They elaborate that the medical model viewed learners with challenges as sources of problems that needed to be fixed. Consequently, Strogilos, Avramidis, Voulagka, and Tragoulia, (2019) stipulate that a traditional approach of the consultation was undertaken, resulting in intervention tasks tailored for certain individuals. This implied that specific learners were labelled and pulled out of their peers to be supported separately in separate units. Engelbrecht (2007) states that this created a multidisciplinary approach to collaboration whereby specialist experts provide their knowledge to the client individually from each other, hence marginalising the learner. Currently, the South African policies regarding the implementation of Inclusive Education have moved away from the medical model to the social model (DoE 2001, 2005; DoE 2010). Under the social model, Voltz et al (2001) state that instead of learners needing additional support being pulled-out to be taught separately, support services are brought to the learner in the general classroom. This means that learners will no longer be marginalised through the process of separate units as their needs will be accommodated within the mainstream learning. Hence the need to change systems of general education, (Voltz et al, 2001), as this will be difficult to accomplish in the current educational system meant for the so-called “normal” learners.

Additionally, Swart and Pettipher (2011), posit that the social model puts emphasise in a socio-ecological approach to learning support. This approach investigates contextual factors as well as influences affecting learners who face obstacles to learning. This implies that Inclusive Education is based on the bio-ecological system which Bronfenbrenner emphasises that there is an interaction, complication of influences, and interrelationships between the student and multiple other systems. Therefore, to provide holistic support as opposed to individualistic intervention, it is important to adopt an approach that embraces the whole child. This would then imply that students are accepted into the mainstream classrooms as they are, without any form of labelling or discrimination, with a view that diversity is another form of humanity in this approach.

Policy documents after the 1994 system of education drawing from international practices to set out a vision of an ideal education system in South Africa (Christie, 2008). To elaborate, Christie (2008) posits that the South African system of education was built upon principles of equality, human rights and human resource development which in turn obliged schools to promote equity and redress traditional education programmes (RSA, 1996a/1996b). Research reveals marked progress through the 1995 White Paper, the 1996 South African Schools Act, which created a shift from the medical deficit paradigm to the social model shift (Muthukrishna and Schoeman, 2000; Swart and Pettipher,2011 &Terzi,2010). The medical model was evidently supported by the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (RSA, 1997). Terzi (2010) reports that the medical model approach promoted a mentality that disability is viewed as a condition within an individual, hence the labelling of "different' learners as individuals with special needs.

With the advent of time, there was a move from the medical model to the social model of disability in 1996 through the appointment of the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) together with the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, and van Deventer, 2016). This move necessitated the removal of learning barriers, propounds Terzi (2010), and permitted full participation of people of diversity in the society. According to (Engelbrecht et al. (2016), the South African government responded to the commission's report by introducing White Paper 6 (WP6) on Special Needs Education. This paper was followed by subsequent policies such as; National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (2005), Conceptual and operational guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive Education (2005), Framework and management plan for the first phase of implementation of Inclusive Education: Managing the transition towards an Inclusive Education system (2005), Guidelines for inclusive programmes (2005) as well as Guidelines for Full-service Schools (2010) among others (Du Plessis, Conley and Du Plessis (2007). These are some of the policies that inform the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa and make clear that teachers are to use inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms to ensure an inclusive learning environment.

2.5 Inclusive Pedagogy

It is appropriate to define pedagogy before moving onto inclusive pedagogy. According to Mortimore (1999), there have been shifts in pedagogical thinking in education. He claims that in modern society pedagogy can refer to any sensible activity done by a person(s) with an objective of imparting knowledge (learning) to another. This implies that pedagogy could be viewed as a technique of teaching used by adults or teachers to learners. Hence, Wilson, Flodden, and Mundy (2002) elude that teachers should undergo a strict pedagogic preparation, which involves; educational measurement, instructional methods, psychology, sociology, and history, as well as learning theories that will arm them to in turn, teach pre-service teachers inclusive knowledge and skills. This implies that pedagogy of teaching empowers teachers in ways that are meant for most of the majority of learners.

Notably is that mere pedagogy having specific boundaries as shown by Lewis and Norwich (2005) when they refer to pedagogy that can be regarded as specially meant for learners deemed to have special educational needs, hence “little need to pursue diagnosis-specific pedagogies” (p.236). Although it has been normalised in educational thinking that some learners will require “additional to” or something “different from” that which is normally available to other learners, inclusive pedagogy reveals otherwise (Florian and Walton,2017: p.169). This kind of thinking results from the bell-curve misconception which reinforces that what is ordinarily available will not embrace the needs of all learners. Therefore, learners at the extreme ends of the bell-curve should be given additional or different work (Florian, 2014). This suggests the norm of planning lessons for most not all learners, with the misconception that not everybody is capable of performing to their full potential. Consequently, Fendler and Muzaffar (2008) posit that such kind of thinking is related to inequalities in education because “the naturalisation of the bell-curve as a structural feature of schooling perpetuates the inevitability of failure” (p.65). This implies that the idea of separating learners on the basis that they need differential teaching has a profound influence on shaping differences, hence viewing some learners as failures beforehand.

Accordingly, Gould (1981) summarised the structural challenge of inequality in schooling as tragedies which could be more painful than the stunting of life but deeper than the pain of an individual denied the opportunity to strive by some external limitations falsely identified as within an individual. In line with this thought, Florian and

Walton (2017) posit that although the apartheid system of education that focused its expenditure and energies on white learners and offered different inferior education to “Bantu education” has been done away with, care should be taken on the renaissances of the racist education system. This implies that the bell-curve way of thinking is an exclusionary practice as it identifies individual challenges in learning as deficits within some learners, hence the need for alternative approaches.

Many authors have critiqued the bell-curve thinking, saying that it limits the chances for learning, considering its ideas of fixed ability, which is its key problem (Hart, Dixon, Drummond, and McIntyre; 2004). This could mean that teachers socialised in bell-curve thinking may fail to visualise that the learner can be transformed from one level of development to the next through inclusive practices but believe that once a failure always a failure. In welcoming inclusive pedagogy, Florian (2011) alludes that inclusive pedagogy will expose pre-service teachers to a variety of curricular, assessment and instructional approaches known to be more inclusive. Hence, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) elude that inclusive pedagogy would give opportunities to teacher educators to emphasise to pre-service teachers that cooperative learning, differentiation, and instructional approaches are not inclusive if used in isolation, rather their use will determine the extent to which they promote inclusion. This suggests that pre-service teachers will be conscientized in widely accepted approaches which will challenge their ways of socialisations. So, the question could be: what is inclusive pedagogy?

Florian and Black-Hawkins (2015) define inclusive pedagogy as a pedagogical approach that concerns a shift in conventional ways of conceptualising approaches that work for most learners, then providing additional support to some learners with learning difficulties towards one that accommodates basically all learners. This implies that the latter approach is about providing a rich, conducive environment that caters to the interests of all learners not just some, in simple terms inclusive environment. This approach, they further elaborate, acknowledges that learners are different individuals, and as such, they are bound to develop differently and they should be allowed to do so, teachers should avoid stigmatising learners as different, just because they progress slower than their peers. Therefore, inclusive pedagogy, on one hand, gives freedom to the teacher as [s] he is not pressured by trying to push learners to be at a certain expected level, on the other hand, learners are not pressured to progress faster than

their capabilities. Rather everyone in the classroom works as a team to create an open and supportive environment to encourage social justice, allowing all individuals to be fully present, feel an equal sense of belonging as they are valued.

Engelbrecht and Green (2017) concur with Florian and Black-Hawkins (2015) on that inclusive pedagogy aims at raising the achievement of not just disabled learners but for all learners. They state that this is done at the same time carefully safeguarding that the vulnerable learners are accommodated. This shows a different lens from the general pedagogy that renders some learners as meant to be given additional support. Additionally, Engelbrecht and Green (2017) posit that inclusive pedagogy rejects a curriculum that separates learners with a disguise that some learners need “additional support” rather, it accommodates all learners by extending what is ordinarily available in the classroom activities. In so doing it enhances an alternative perspective to the bell-curve philosophy that perpetuates discrimination of learners through the use of differentiated lessons as a disguise for including everybody.

Research shows that inclusive pedagogy as an approach emerged from craft knowledge as a study in the United Kingdom which showed commitment to Inclusive Education principles (Florian and Black-Hawkins ,2011; Florian and Linklater, 2010; Florian and Spratt,2013). Engelbrecht and Green (2017) state that these studies were meant to capture the complex demands of teaching practice so as to better understand how experienced teachers were able to support vulnerable learners. Additionally, the concept of craft knowledge, posit Grimmett and Mackinnon (1992), refers to “the accumulated wisdom derived from teachers’ and practice-oriented researchers”. This implies that on one handcraft knowledge works in practice because it allows focusing on how teachers respond to learners in the event of challenges arising. On the other hand, craft knowledge is an important tool in the hands of a researcher as it is used for recognising, exploring, valuing the complexity of teachers’ work on a daily basis. Consequently, the inclusive pedagogy principles alleviate some of the misconceptions and practices associated with learning and teaching. In this study, Inclusive pedagogy enhanced pre-service teachers’ understanding that learners should not be compared rather should be embraced with their differences and assisted in acquiring concepts through the responsiveness of teachers to inclusive environments.

Furthermore, Shulman (1987) posits that inclusive pedagogy enhances teachers to empower epistemological access to all learners, which calls for the "teacher's content knowledge as well as pedagogical content knowledge, (PCK)" (p.173). This implies the conceptualisation of the subject or topic, how to deliver it in an easier way, knowing its common misconceptions and ways of overcoming them (Taylor and Taylor, 2013). Consequently, teachers should be prepared on how to teach inclusively in diverse environments. Taylor (2013) and Florian (2014) suggest that the lack of PCK and content knowledge could be considered a challenge to the realization of inclusive pedagogy. Whereas PCK and content knowledge are important facets in aligning learning for varied groups of students (Deppeler, Loreman, Smith & Florian, 2015). This implies that teachers should be prepared on content as well as PCK in order for them to practice inclusive pedagogy in the classrooms which enhances the enactment of inclusion. As argued by Florian and Walton (2017), inclusive pedagogy principles should form a major part of the theoretical foundation of ITE programmes. Henceforth, pre-service teachers should be prepared by training institutions to find a variety of ways to extend the pedagogic responsiveness to all learners, thus, working towards making inclusion a norm with the help of changing policies, educational structures, practices, teacher's beliefs and ITE programmes (Florian & Walton, 2017). The emerging question could be: Can teachers successfully extend pedagogical responsiveness to every learner without any hindrances?

However, the challenge for teachers remains, teachers are gauged against the national set standards and assessments (Ball, 2009). This means that although pre-service teachers can be trained in inclusive pedagogical practices, without restructuring the education system it will be a challenge to implement theories they have acquired. This shows the importance of coupling the restructuring of pre-service teachers' beliefs, attitudes as well as the environment they will work with. Failure to take this into serious consideration will prove futile to all efforts made in training pre-service teachers well.

2.6 Early Childhood Development

According to Singh (2016), not much work has been done in pre-formal schooling in Inclusive Education. Additionally, out of the few studies conducted at this level, Singh (2016) states that most of those studies have failed to recommend any evidence-based established practices for early childhood development (ECD) Inclusive Education. This is an indication that even researchers do not assume that educating everybody, even

those with learning challenges, from an early age is inherently a responsibility of the regular education system, rather, an isolated business of benevolent contributors. Interestingly, Singh (2016) argues that educational policies should promote inclusion from the early childhood stage as it is important that inclusive practices commence early. Hence, Lewis and Norwich (2001) concur with LiGrining, Maldonado, Votrub, and Haas (2010) on the point that ECD prepares learners to meet the demands of early schooling, which are important in foreshadowing learners' later academic achievement. This means that there are researchers, although few in numbers, who see value in the importance of early years learning.

Internationally, research shows a consensus on the benefits of early childhood education and has provided evidence that intensive, high-quality early childhood interventions have direct and persistent effects on cognitive and non-cognitive development (Engle et al., 2007; Vargas-Barón, 2009; Vegas and Santibanez, 2008). This suggests a consensus on the value of ECD at the international level. Early childhood development is defined by Evans, Myers, and Ilfeld (2000) as the most formative period in human development, a period that will have a lifetime—even permanent—effects on individual adult life. They further elaborate that from birth to age eight, a child gradually controls complex levels of movement, feeling, thinking, and interacting with other people and the world around them. This implies that early childhood education should be taken seriously as it forms the foundation for future learning. Research shows that early childhood development, (as a critical first stage in human development), is the period where early stimulation is most effective, and if not properly handled, Shonkoff and Phillips (2000), can lead to abnormalities, which have adverse effects in future learning (Nelson, de Hahn, and Thomas 2006; World Bank, 2006).

Emphasizing the importance of ECD, Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) propound that a dollar invested in a quality ECD education will harvest greater benefits for a vulnerable child than the equal dollar invested in later years, for instance, in primary education. Concurring to this, Jaramillo and Tiejen (2001) specify investing during early childhood life works as a way of cementing a strong foundation and should be complemented by further investing after early childhood. This will create a basis for further investments to be more effective and efficient. This shows the importance of investing in ECD as a basis for future learning, the essence of a good start for all children. Accordingly, Bansal

‘s (2014) intervention in early childhood before mainstream induction is counted amongst the good inclusive practices which promote more joyful and successful inclusion. Intervention in early childhood education assists children by ensuring that they do not drop out of school but stand a chance to compete equally with their peers (Bansal, 2014). This shows that it is in early childhood education where learning challenges are mostly realised and rightful interventions administered.

Jaramillo and Tiejen (2001) state that many of the challenges in the development of human resource base in the African context are rooted in how early childhood development (ECD) is viewed. They further specify that early childhood development, which is a provision of services that respond to early children’s elementary needs for holistic stimulation), offers a window of opportunity that is incomparable to exercise a positive and lifelong influence on the future growth of the individual child. Conversely, Jaramillo and Tiejen (2001) claim that most of the African children, about 98% enter formal schooling with very little or without benefiting from ECD programs at all. They further lamented that even those who benefit from ECD programs, the quality of education they get is questionable, as evidence reveals that there are disparities between the poor and the rich communities. This implies that the affluent communities become the biggest users and beneficiaries of ECD programs, as it is within their means to acquire the best quality education, have more qualified personnel, more resources, which widens the gap between children from rich families and those from poor families.

Therefore, those interested in the holistic development of children’s education should take into consideration what really counts as early childhood development that which will prepare young children to acquire the needed skills in order to enter Grade One fully prepared for formal learning. This is revealed by Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, and Knoche (2009) when they say, “the early childhood development is a field where professional development practice and craft knowledge require a larger and firmer platform of theoretical and empirical expertise in order to guide planning and implementation of the ambitious kinds of school and child care reforms that are demanded in the current era of services expansion and accountability (p. 378)

This could mean that early childhood education is guided by standards that need to be followed and executed perfectly in order to achieve the objected outcomes of the programme. Recommendations from Jaramillo and Tiejen (2001) need to be

considered: the creation of a supporting policy framework, working within a realistic framework, encouraging communities and private sectors initiatives of ECD programs, development of low-cost effective models of ECD that are realistic, as well as launching parental educational campaigns. If these are considered and enacted they will help with provisions of equal quality ECD programs, help communities to work within their budget at the same time producing quality ECD work, consequently affording ECD education to all children without discrimination.

Jaramillo and Tiejen (2001) further propound on the three basic arguments for ECD; human rights, basic needs, and economic/social benefits. This implies that the rights of humans as stated in the Convention on the Rights of Children, (1989) (CRC) begin from when an individual is born until they die, hence children's rights have to be respected and protected throughout their lifetime, their basic physical needs should be upheld as neglecting them can cause delays or retardation in development. Commenting on economic needs, Jaramillo and Tiejen (2001) highlight that it is through ECD interventions that society can boost the efficiency of other programs through collaborations and positive shared effects with education, health, nutrition programs for the development of young children. In this way, ECD programs should develop young children, prepare them for formal learning, following a set standard nationwide, hence creating equal opportunities. According to Wertheimer (1997), the Salamanca Statement backs this human rights standpoint, maintaining that inclusion and participation are crucial to human dignity, gratification as well as the exercise of human rights. Both instruments, the Salamanca Statement and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child give strong international power to the matter of inclusion as one of the rights to humanity. In order to realize and cater to human rights, pre-service teachers should be taught on differentiated instruction.

According to Voltz et al. (2001) and McIntyre (2009) the process of modifying as well as adjusting instruction in order to accommodate the diverse range of learners in the mainstream, called differentiation, is at the heart of inclusion. This demonstrates a caring and compassionate spirit, which Purcell and Rosemary (2008) view as important in early years teaching using differentiation as a valuable way of teaching in elementary diverse environments. Many others concur that early childhood research (though limited), with the use of differentiated instruction, has provided overwhelming results, hence concluding that differentiated instruction in early learning is a promising

inclusionary strategy. This implies that differentiated instruction works as an effective pedagogic practice in cementing a firm foundation in early learning.

Consequently, Sherry and Draper (2013) state that in order to address the deficits and inequalities evident in the South African ECD, there is an urgent need for provincial and national levels to put words into action. This, they say, could be done through paying attention to the development of quality programs and interventions directed to specific areas of development, such as; cognitive skills, emotional skills, motor skills, along with methods of implementing them. This implies taking care of the holistic development of an individual, not to emphasising some facets of development at the expense of others. Grantham-McGregor, Cheung, Cueto, Glewwe, Richter, Strupp (2007) posit that development is a multi-faceted concept that involves cognitive skills, (including the aspect of language), sensory-motor as well as socio-emotional skills. These definitions reveal that child development is susceptible to being interpreted in terms of culture, however, Heckman and Masterov (2004) argue that because of the broadness of this concept (child development), it is important to consider the reason (s) one wishes to measure the child's development for, in this case for educational purposes.

Subsequently, Artmore (2013) argues that ECD is critical in combating social inequalities, thus it is a priority provision for the youngest learners in the South African government. This implies that the South African education system endeavours to prevent the negative consequences that can affect the full potential development of learners. Additionally, Artmore (2013) states that these negative effects do not only stunt the individuals' ability to flourish in later years, rather, they jointly limit the country's probable development. This shows that if certain individuals are deprived of early years learning, this could impact negatively on society as a whole. ECD programmes are essential in providing young learners with innovative ways of acquiring numeracy, literacy and life skills in the first six years of an individual's life for optimal educational and social development (Artmore, 2013).

The failure rates in South Africa, particularly in the Foundation Phase, from 2007 up to 2011, (Department of Basic Education, 2011) further confirms that learners enter formal schooling with lots of baggage. Learners enter formal schooling laden with disadvantages, and hence the concept of under preparedness for formal schooling becomes a problem to be investigated (Sherry &Draper, 2013). In line with this thought,

this study aims to investigate how one ITE institution prepares Foundation Phase pre-service teachers for handling inclusive environments, particularly at Grade R level, so that learners acquire the necessary skills to qualify for Grade One (formal learning). Acquiring needed skills will determine learners' readiness to enrol in Grade One.

Notably, school readiness is defined from different perspectives, such as; the child's, school's as well as family or community. Sherry and Draper (2013) define school readiness from the child's perspective as concerned with the development of social, physical, emotional and language development. Accordingly, High (2008) posits that although school readiness can be understood in various ways, it should emphasis interaction between the individual child and the environment as this promotes the assistive learning of all children in the process of learning. Either way, it is important to realise which aspects of school readiness have not been developed or are lacking, in order to be able to offer theoretical remediation and needed interventions (Sherry & Draper, 2013). This implies that it should not be an obvious knowledge that learners enter Grade R and the following year they qualify for Grade One, they must meet the qualification or expected standards to enter formal schooling, if they do not, then they should repeat. This then will help in moderating what is learned in Grade R nationwide.

2.7 Teacher preparedness in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

According to Bansal (2014) inclusion is founded on the premise that all humanity is equal and should be afforded the same opportunities. Nonetheless, the process of transforming the existing system to embrace diversity is a daunting undertaking that necessitates preparation at each step of the teacher training programme (Bansal, 2014). This implies that changing the discriminatory current educational system to one that embraces everybody will not be an easy task but can be accomplished. This can be achieved through training pre-service teachers to reject negative mental attitudes towards learners who are different, Sharma (2011), and welcome all learners as every teacher's responsibility. Some teachers have raised concerns that they are not adequately trained to teach some learners. (Bansal, 2014). Several authors have counteracted this argument, stating that teacher training institutions have provided, and continue to provide transformational leadership to bring changes in terms of behaviour and attitudes of in-service and pre-service teachers (Sharma, 2011; Rouse, 2010; Shulman and Shulman, 2004 & Bansal, 2014). Transformational leadership, states Bansal (2014) is a vehicle to bring about the celebration of individual differences in

Inclusive Educational set up. Bansal (2014) nicely coins this change as pivotal to transforming classrooms into a garden of diversity reflected in the form of beautiful and varied hues and colours. If differences are viewed this way, surely diversity could be welcomed and cherished.

Accordingly, Sharma (2011) postulates that many nations are struggling to implement Inclusive Education, including developed nations. He further notes that many nations have taken drastic measures such as; legislative policies, to include learners from impoverished economies, diverse ethnicities, but still inclusion remains a desire in terms of classroom practices. This implies that efforts of moving away from viewing different learners as meant to be taught by a "special' teachers as if, in Sharma's (2011) terms, "there is special pedagogy tailored for special learners" are reiterated as an attempt to move away from the medical model to the social model. In agreement with the notion of changing teachers' hands, hearts, and hands, Florian (2016) says that there is a big difference between claiming that an institution (country, school, class) is inclusive and practicing inclusion. This implies that inclusion should not only be welcomed by words rather it should be accompanied and furnished by actions through practices.

To support his argument, Sharma (2011) states that teacher training programs reveal that there is little or no emphasis at all on strategies of addressing diversity in regular classrooms. The use of inclusive strategies by teachers in supporting teaching and learning should commence as early as before the child starts formal learning (ECD). However, from what Sharma (2011) says, sadly teachers, the fundamental implementers of inclusion, and come out of teacher training institutions handicapped concerning (Barbour, 1998) embracing diversity, with little knowledge about inclusion, as a result, reluctant to implement it. Hence Sharma (2011) in agreement with Rouse (2010) and Shulman and Shulman (2004) argue for the re-examination of the traditions long forsaken, such as; attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and practices, referring to these as the teacher's head, heart, and hands which need to be inculcated in prospective teachers in place of the favoured Western models. This implies that teachers' negative attitudes coupled with a lack of knowledge become a hindrance to the implementation of inclusive strategies in the classroom.

Jordan and Stanovich (2000/2004) argue that effective intervention is akin to effective teaching. Hence through their model, Jordan et al. (2009) admit that very little is

researched about how effective inclusionary skills are developed to encourage teachers' epistemological beliefs. This is a relevant model to teaching as it states that teachers' beliefs and attitudes have a profound effect to effective learning (Jordan et al., 2009). This means that if effective skills are developed, chances are high that this will influence teachers' practices in handling diverse environments. Research shows that most pre-service teachers enter the teaching profession, their initial period of training with varied beliefs about teaching and learning that are not easy to change (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996 & Tillema, 1995). For instance, the belief that learners with learning difficulties are not every teacher's responsibility but the special teacher's. Therefore, teacher training programmes should be designed in ways that influence beliefs in inclusionary practices. Schwartz and McGhie-Richmond (2009) propound that what predicts good teaching practices which in turn leads to student outcomes are; the norm of the school, educators' sense of teaching efficacy as well as individual teachers' duties, tasks, and their beliefs. This implies that teachers should know and adhere to what is expected of them by their principals concerning inclusionary practices.

Oliver and Reschly (2010) propound that pre-service teachers should be adequately prepared for teaching in diverse environments, as underprepared teachers hinder the success of early intervention as well as response-to-intervention. They further state that inclusive teacher preparation in all parts of classroom organization, behaviour management is a requirement at the pre-service training. Inadequate preparation of teachers is evidenced in Putnam and Borko's (2000) report of teachers complaining (both novice and experienced) about the difference between learning experiences outside the classrooms and what transpires on a day to day teaching and learning. This implies that pre-service teachers need inclusive pedagogy preparation that will empower them to be responsive to various or diverse environments that are likely to enhance different kinds of knowledge acquisition.

Inclusive pedagogy will assist pre-service teachers to embrace diversity as research (Forlin, Earle, Loreman, and Sharma, 2011; Graziano, 2008) shows that one of the biggest hindrances for Inclusive Education is lack of teachers' preparedness to enact an inclusive approach in learning institutions. This implies that if teachers can become inclusively effective, understand and meet the needs of all students, then they need to be properly prepared to undertake this emergent role. In a response to this call, Florian and Rouse (2009) concur with Sharma (2010) in that some systems of education are

undergoing massive reviewing of their preservice teacher education programs to include new inclusive methodologies, for instance, collaborating of schools and training institutions.

Malakolunthu and Rengasamy (2012); Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2011) point out that it is disappointing to note that teacher education programs have been slow in changing to meet the new demands of an inclusive approach. They further state that this has been happening even though these countries have been practicing inclusion for a long time. In such cases, teachers hide behind their lack of training in failing to implement inclusion. Consequently, Forlin (2012) claim that this lack of confidence in implementing inclusion trails back to teacher educators as the key challenge because they are professionally not prepared to assume the role of educating preservice teachers about inclusion. Teacher educators, therefore, need to be upskilled themselves, with sentiments and knowledge of inclusion to and in turn impact inclusive attitudes to preservice teachers, otherwise, how can they give what they do not have? This should not be a problem considering that most countries are signatories and are working towards the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007) towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, (MDG) as revealed by Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2011).

However, Marshall, Ralph, and Palmer (2002) reveal that several teachers agree to teach all learners, but further probing reveals a “but” attitude which shows that they believe some children should be taught separately. Research done in South Africa, Walton (2011) ague that for Inclusive Education to be realised in South Africa, there is urgent need to realise the equality values of the country’s constitution, freedom from discrimination and social justice, this will enhance to view inclusion as an urgent imperative to every school. Accordingly, this reveals the misconception that different learners are to be taught different and they are not the responsibility of every teacher.

However, according to Feldon (2015), often novice teachers suffer from cognitive overload (stress) despite all the preparedness they get from ITE programmes. When novice teachers are overloaded cognitively, Feldon (2015) claims, they tend to revert to the methods which were used with them during their schooling days, not the knowledge they acquired in ITE programmes. For instance, Feldon (2015) gives an example of “Bob” the novice teacher who resorted to swatting the naughty boy who was difficult to

handle during a principal's visit to his class, which is the way he was socialised, instead of using strategies he acquired in his ITE programme. Accordingly, it could be argued that experience plays a pivotal role in addition to preparedness for inclusive environments. Hence, Feldon (2015) mentions that experienced teachers handle challenges with great ease compared to novice teachers because of what he calls, automaticity. This implies that experienced teachers have had ample time to practice and internalise the strategies they learned at ITE programmes with the advent of time. Hence, they can handle cognitive overload better than novice teachers.

This then follows that despite knowledge acquired by novice teachers in ITE programmes to teach inclusively, they are likely not to use inclusive practices in the events of facing cognitive overload (stress) in their first eight years of teaching (Feldon,2015). This then becomes the main concern as it delays the successful implementation of inclusion. Kagan 's (1992) teacher preparation review pinpoints out one of the causes of cognitive overload to novice teachers, that is, insufficient procedural knowledge provided to pre-service teachers in ITE programmes as the main cause of failure to handle diversity in learning. Therefore, a question arises, what can be done to reduce cognitive overload and develop skill automaticity for novice teachers before they gain experience for successful inclusion implementation? Research shows that automaticity develops with skill performance, Feldon (2015), hence Fisk (1989) posits that skill automaticity cannot develop in isolation, adequate practice is needed as pointed out by Kagan (1992). Therefore, ITE institutions should see to it that they provide ample time for teaching practice so that pre-service teachers gain and improve skill performance before they graduate. Teacher training institutions should review the time spent by preservice teachers doing practice, interacting with learners, overcoming challenges in natural settings. This will help the novice teachers to handle cognitive overload better and more efficiently like experienced teachers by the time they graduate from training.

Additionally, a study conducted on how the professional and personal selves of teachers, particularly new teachers are construed reveals the development of teacher's professionalism (Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons, 2006). Day et al (2006) concurs that in addition to teacher training, the identity of a teacher is produced by a development mediated by a series of overlapping contexts, such as; the personal and professional elements of a teacher's life, teacher interacting with learners, early

teaching experience and the concept of a fragmented self. This implies that teacher training on its own is not enough in the development of a teacher. This training has to be furnished with experience of working, interacting with learners, experiences of the teacher as an individual and working in different contexts. All these have the potential of producing a teacher who has the potential of using their professionalism (preparation in the ITE programme) together with their personal development to handle the inclusive environment effectively.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by the works of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) on Exploring inclusive pedagogy, Florian and Spratt (2013) on enacting inclusion, Florian and Walton (2017) on inclusive pedagogy, as well as the Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginner Teachers (2017) produced by the Department of Higher Education and Training in the Republic of South Africa. It is to be noted that the Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginner Teachers (2017) are currently being proposed as additions to the South African Council of Educators (SACE) standards for teachers in South Africa. SACE is the regulatory body that registers qualified teachers in South Africa and sets professional standards for teaching. The proposed standards are considered here as relevant to the investigation of ITE programmes as they are intended, if adopted, to inform these programmes and ensure that beginner teachers are enabled through their initial teacher education to teach inclusively in diverse contexts.

According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010), inclusive pedagogy is influenced by three theoretical assumptions namely; a shift from the idea of focusing on most and some learners to the idea of embracing all learners, rejection of the idea that the progress of other learners will be held back by some learners and teachers' practices that show respect of learners as full members of the society. In line with the first assumption, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) encourage teachers to devise learning opportunities that cater to everyone to enhance full participation. This, they state, can be achieved through always considering everyone in mind when creating opportunities for learning as this will enable full participation in the classroom community. They further stipulate that teachers should avoid teaching strategies that are suitable for most learners and create alongside additional work to cater for learners experiencing challenges, and should rather, extend or create learning environments that are rich from

what is normally available. Additionally, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) emphasise the need to focus on what and how to deliver content instead of the recipients of content. This will enhance pre-service teachers to desist from the bad habits of focusing and viewing the physical appearance of learners as determinants for successful learning. Hart et al. (2007) argue that deterministic beliefs pervade educational policies by making it a challenge for teachers to take alternative decisions plus actions that reject these beliefs. Hence, doing away with deterministic beliefs opens alternative strategies for supporting learners such as differentiation which supports the learning of everyone if used creatively and flexibly rather than a simplistic linear way of grading pupils into more able or not able (Nind, 2005).

Secondly, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) posit inclusive pedagogy rejects deterministic beliefs which views ability as static, hence the presence of different learners is seen as derailing the progress of 'normal' learners. Instead, they argue that all learners can learn and make progress if the right conditions of learning are provided, hence the reason to focus on what children are capable of doing, not that which they cannot do. This, they suggest can be achieved through using a variety of grouping strategies that support the learning of everyone rather than using ability grouping which separates the so-called able from the less able learners.

Thirdly, teachers should desist from focusing on the recipients of their teaching and focus rather on what and how to teach. The third assumption that teachers and adults' practices should display respect for children is supported by other authors who argue that the emergence of childhood sociology puts much emphasis on viewing children 'as beings, not becomings' (Qvortrup et al., 1994 cited in Clark (2005). Therefore, as a researcher, it is crucial to view children as full human beings not as progressing to humanity, hence respecting their perspectives. Hence, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) allude that what determines inclusive pedagogical approach is revealed through teachers' practices in addressing and enacting issues of inclusion in their daily lives, in terms of knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about learners, teachers' actions and responses to arising barriers.

Acknowledging the work done by Florian and Black-Hawkins, Florian and Walton (2017) further developed the work of inclusive pedagogy by bringing it closer to the South African context. They state that inclusion was historically developed as an

alternative to dual systems of education that separated some children from other children. Florian and Walton (2017) lament that despite the commitment to the inclusion principles, several teachers' practices in Southern Africa reveal that learners experiencing difficulties in learning are viewed as needing additional or different support. For instance, in South Africa, such learners are viewed as not normal, and because of this mentality less is expected from them (Engelbrecht, Nel, Smith & Van Deventer, 2015). This is the kind of thinking that has led to separating learners (separate units), basing on capabilities, which leads to labelling and discrimination.

Additionally, because these learners are marginalised socially and epistemologically, the realisation of an inclusive system of education that is inclusive and socially just is thwarted (Engelbrecht et al. (2015). Consequently, Fendler and Muzaffar (2008) in agreement with Hart (1998) reveal that these marginalising views are based on bell-curve thinking which assumes that learning ability is fixed, the probability is that most learners will perform at the same level, with a few extremes on both ends of the tail, for the different learners. These beliefs have proved to be so dangerous, states Slee (2011), to the extent that they have influenced various educational policies, practices, and structures in South Africa. For instance, the policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support puts more emphasis on the idea that some learners need "additional support" (Department of Basic Education, 2014). According to Florian and Walton (2017), this policy contradicts itself since on one hand it cautions teachers against labelling learners identified as needing additional support, whilst on the other hand, by identifying a learner as needing additional support teachers are labelling learners. Instead, teachers are encouraged through inclusive pedagogy practices to do away with imagining something different from what they offer for different learners, rather use the knowledge they currently have to accommodate all learners (Florian and Walton (2017). This implies that pre-service teachers should be prepared that teaching inclusively is about extending one's PCK to accommodate all learners, not some or most learners.

The Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginner Teachers (PSITBT) are drawn from the works of Florian and Walton (2017), Florian and Spratt (2013) as well as those of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010). These are: agency for social justice and inclusion, valuing and understanding learner diversity, classroom practices that promote and support collaborative and individual learning, collaboration to enable inclusive

teaching and learning as well as developing professionally as an inclusive teacher (Department of Higher Education and Training, RSA, 2017). According to PSITBT (2017), five key ideas arise from the works of the three authors on inclusive pedagogy.

The first idea concerns the need for the agency for social justice and inclusion. This is supported by Florian and Walton (2017) when they caution teachers' exclusionary practices that perpetuate marginalisation of some learners. This implies that pre-service teachers should be prepared to be able to identify practices and attitudes that are excluding so that they will avoid them.

The second idea of the PSITBT (2017) is concerned with the diversity of learners that needs to be valued and understood by teachers. This is posited by Florian and Spratt (2013) who talk about the framework for investigating the inclusive practice. They posit that it is not enough just to place learners in mainstream schooling rather learners should have access to epistemological knowledge. This will have a profound effect on the practices of teachers in their classrooms as well as in the school. Therefore, it is the role of teacher educators to help pre-service teachers to understand the multiplicity, complexities, and intersectionality of diversity within the South African context. This is shown by Florian and Spratt (2013) in their research interrogating practices of newly graduated teachers. They posit that the Inclusive Practice Project (IPP) team designed a project to develop pre-service teachers to respect, respond and acknowledge diversity amongst learners. This will enable pre-service teachers to devise different strategies to cater for educational needs that are meant for everyone, not just some or most individuals.

The third idea of the PSITBT (2017) is about promoting and supporting collaborative classroom practices as well as individual learning. This is drawn from the ideas of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) who are against deterministic beliefs that view ability as static. The PSITBT (2007) concurs with Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) on that pre-service teachers should be prepared in using a variety of instructional strategies, such as differentiation, that are responsive to diverse needs not just needs of most learners. This implies that all learners can learn well if teachers create environments that are enabling and safe for learning. This can be enhanced through extending the ordinarily available to all learners rather than teachers thinking they need to be further trained to handle diversity. Consequently, Florian and Spratt (2013) stipulate that pre-

service teachers should be convinced, affirmed that they are adequately prepared to teach all children. This, they claim, will help them to view challenges in learning as challenges to the profession or teacher hence locating challenges in the environment not in the learner. Hence Florian and Walton (2017) should be made aware that they are responsible for the learning and full participation of all learners not just some learners.

Fourth, PSITBT (2017) suggests collaboration within colleagues in the school, creating partnerships with parents, caregivers as well as families. This is drawn from the ideas of Florian and Spratt (2013) and Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) who posit that teaching as a profession should continuously develop new, creative strategies of working with others. They elaborate that this can be practically manifested through teachers'/ parents' partnerships, discussions within teachers outside classrooms as well as moving focus from differences to the learning of everyone via offering learners' choices and seeking their views. This kind of collaboration has profound effects on enabling inclusive teaching and learning hence pre-service teachers need to be conscientized of the value of planning collaboratively, collaborating with school-based structures as well as reflecting after teaching to develop inclusion practices (PSITBT (2017). Consequently, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) state that there is a need for pre-service teachers' preparation to cover ways of accessing external support and identifying suitable partners to meet the needs of individual learners, such as support from the Non-governmental organisations(NGO).

The fifth suggestion from PSITBT (2017) entails the professional development of an inclusive teacher. According to Florian and Walton (2017), the South African ITE should be the primary site for advocating an advancing inclusive pedagogy. This is concurred by Walton and Rusznyak (2016) who argue that inclusive pedagogy principles must form part of the conceptual foundations of the ITE programmes. Consequently, pre-service teachers should acquire the ethical dilemmas of inclusive classrooms at ITE which will help them to respect the confidentiality and dignity of all learners and their families. This will enhance pre-service teachers to understand how important it is to reflect, both as an action and as a process (PSITBT (2017). Research also has confirmed that teachers in South Africa need continuous support as well as encouragement in facilitating both access and full participation for all learners (Hay, 2003; Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff, and Pettipher, 2002). Additionally, PSITBT (2017)

reveals that reflection is particularly important because it will help pre-service teachers to identify practices that enable learning and those that constrain learning as well as the effects of a teacher's wellbeing and the impact it has on teaching. (Walton, Getting Inclusion Right in South Africa, 2011).

The five key areas provided by the PSITBT (2017) will be useful in exploring ways in which the fourth year pre-service teachers feel about their preparedness for inclusive environments by their ITE programme. Firstly, the agency for social justice and inclusion will be matched against what pre-service teachers have acquired in the ITE programme since they are nearing the end of their training. This will reveal their understanding of exclusionary practices through questionnaires and conduction of interviews. Secondly, key point number two in PSITBT (2017) on valuing and understanding learner diversity will help in finding out if pre-service teachers understand literacy for transformation, diversity as a resource and strength for teaching and learning. Thirdly, classroom practices that promote and support collaborative and individual learning as a key in PSITBT (2017) will help to find out if pre-service teachers are aware of the inclusive pedagogic practices that are responsive to diverse learners. Fourthly, the key to collaboration that enables teaching and learning inclusively will help in discovering if pre-service teachers are made aware of a variety of partnerships that exist in schools to enhance successful learning. Then lastly, PSITBT (2017) mentions the professional development of an inclusive teacher. This key area will help to find out how pre-service teachers feel about continuous professional training which will enhance teachers to move with times, become ethical, inclusive professionals who are prepared to reflect on their practices and make needed improvements. These five key areas will assist in finding out if ITE programme has prepared pre-service teachers to be responsive in inclusive environments who are in turn prepared to teach Grade R learners to be ready for Grade One.

Accordingly, Florian and Black-Hawkins 's (2011) work raises three important assumptions that are required for the effective enactment of inclusive pedagogy, which is shown in Table 1. These assumptions were further developed by Florian and Spratt (2013) when they persuasively argue about enacting an inclusive framework. They argue for the use and development of a systematic framework used (that is informed by inclusive pedagogy) to interrogate how newly graduated teachers practice and enact Inclusive Education. Consequently, Florian and Walton (2017) attempt to apply inclusive

pedagogy to respond to the problems of Inclusive Education in Southern Africa, including South Africa. Therefore, the adoption of inclusive pedagogy, without doubt, challenges most of the widely accepted practices and policies in South Africa, (Florian and Walton, 2017), such as the bell-curve thinking, Screening, Assessment, Identification and Support (Department of Basic Education, 2014). It could be argued that inclusive pedagogy calls for a paradigm shift in teaching strategies, educational structures coupled with practices to enhance formal and epistemological access to all learners. This renders the South African current standards of teachers inadequate, there is a need for reviewing these standards so that they are compliant with inclusive pedagogy.

Hence, the South African Department of Higher Education and Training has proposed new standards for inclusive teaching which will be compliant with inclusive pedagogy (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017). The five key concepts of the Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginners (2017) relate to the works of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), Florian and Spratt (2013) as well as Florian and Walton (2017). Table1 attempts to show how the five key concepts relate to theoretical concepts revealed by these authors, through inclusive pedagogy assumptions, hence it will be used as a theoretical lens in the research proposal.

Table 1: Visual Presentation of Theoretical Framework

Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011)	**Florian and Spratt (2013)**	**Florian and Walton (2017)**	**Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginners (2017)**
Shift from focusing only on individuals identified as having support needs to learning of everyone	Any conceptualisation should view difference as an important part of humanity.	Different thinking about differences in learners. Enable epistemological access to all learners.	Agency for social justice and inclusion. Valuing and understanding learner diversity.
Dismissal of deterministic views about disability, presence of different learners will hinder the progress of other learners	Welcome learning difficulties as challenges for teaching as a profession. Teachers to believe that they are capable of teaching all	Viewing learner difficulties as challenges for teachers.	Classroom practices that promote and support collaborative and individual learning. Collaboration to enable inclusive teaching and learning.

	learners not just some learners.		
Strategies of working with and through other adults which respect the learners' dignity as full community members	Teaching as a professional should continue to develop creative strategies of working with others	Rejection of Bell-curve thinking in ITE as well as teachers' continuous programmes of professional development	Developing professionally as an inclusive teacher.

Arguably, according to Zigmond (2003) general teachers find it impossible to solely focus on individual learners to the extent that differentiated activities are implemented at the same time. This implies the challenge of implementing differentiated individual activities in a classroom with many learners (overpopulated). Because of the number of learners in each classroom, mainstream teachers have resorted to approaches that consider the needs of the group, the extent to which the teaching materials preserve classroom flow, cooperation and orderliness (Zigmond, 2003). This implies that teachers generally formulate teaching plans that are a result of a productive learning environment for most of the learners. The remaining few learners, it is assumed, Zigmond (2003), will be catered for via a different orientation because they indicate that they are incapable of learning what most learners are learning. These are learners who will be referred for special education, or in pull out programs.

2.9 Conclusion

The second chapter of the research focused mainly on debates in the literature related to what literature is saying about the development of Inclusive Education internationally as well as in the South African context. Internationally, Inclusive Education is based on the premise of educating all learners, giving equal opportunities to all children. Inclusive Education strengthens the capacity to reach all learners. The literature revealed that the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality held in Spain, Salamanca June 1994 served as a major push for Inclusive Education (UNESCO, 2009). Drawing from the international frameworks, Inclusive Education in South Africa is framed within the human rights approach which transforms integrated human values into rights of marginalized learners (Engelbrecht, 2006). It is also supported by the

EWP6, based on the Constitution deal, endeavours to afford equal opportunities to all learners, stating from early pre-formal years. The shift from the medical model to the social model, (Stadler, 2006) that creates a deceptive binary of two opposite categories was reviewed.

Literature also reviewed how Inclusive Education has been conceptualized in different contexts (Armstrong and Spandagou, 2011 & Florian, 2012). This implies that Inclusive Education is conceptualized according to contexts, revealing the truth of possibilities and restraints of different contexts, such as; historical, cultural or socio-economic realities that impact inclusion and exclusion (Walton, 2015). The adopted definition for this research is from Loreman (2011) which puts more emphasis on the full participation of all learners. This implies that in addition to placement, learners get to access epistemological access as well from as early as pre-formal learning. Implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa was historically traced from 1994 when democracy was attained, consequently, embracing equality, the human dignity of all citizens.

Prior to defining inclusive pedagogy, simply pedagogy was defined as referring to any sensible activity carried out by adults to learners with an objective of imparting knowledge to another person (Mortimore, 1999). Therefore, inclusive pedagogy has been defined as one that welcomes and enables teaching, learning and participation of all students (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). Literature also revealed that the concept of inclusive pedagogy was initiated as a challenge to the bell-curve thinking, which subsequently perpetuates inequalities in education (Fendler and Muzaffar, 2008).

Early childhood education was also reviewed to justify the significance of this level to the implementation of inclusion. Teacher preparedness was revealed to find out how preservice teachers go through the process of training to handle inclusive environments. The theoretical framework adopted for this research includes the work of Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian and Spratt, 2015 & Florian and Walton, 2017. The work of these authors was combined with what is proposed by the Proposed Standards for inclusive Teaching for Beginners (PSITB) (2017). Basically, all the three authors and the PSITB (2017) are of the idea that; dismissal of deterministic views about disability, shift from focusing only on individuals identified as having support needs to the learning of everyone and strategies of working with and through other adults which respects the

learners' dignity as full community members. The next chapter presented the research design and methodology used for the study.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Design

3.1 Introduction

This study intends to find out how the 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers perceive the preparation they received for handling inclusive environments and to enact inclusive pedagogy to ensure the effective development of Grade R learners. This chapter explained how the research was conducted, with whom, where and how. The research is an interpretivist approach, case study, carried out at one HET with 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers. Data was collected using qualitative surveys; focus group and individual interviews, which were all semi-structured. This chapter demonstrated the procedure of data collection from pre-service teachers, making sure ethical procedures were followed and measures are taken to ascertain the authenticity of the research conclusions through the research rigor process.

3.2 Research Design and Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative, case study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) a qualitative research is an investigative approach that focuses on understanding the meaning of experiences from the perspective of the respondent, not from the researcher's point of view. They further elaborate that the researcher is the main instrument for data collection as well as analysis. Since qualitative research is grounded on the basis that reality is constructed by people as they engage in and create meaning of an experience, activity or phenomenon, in their natural settings, data for this study was constructed from human beings (pre-service teachers) as they engaged with their environment (Crotty, 1989). This gave the researcher opportunities to find out how the 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service has been prepared to interpret and enact inclusive practices, how they construct inclusion practices as well as ways of demonstrating inclusive practices in teaching and learning. Additionally, Merriam and

Tisdell (2016) define a qualitative case study as sharing the same characteristics with qualitative research, but in addition, having a deeper description with a bounded analysis system. Consequently, Yin (2015) argues that a case study defines a case or a contemporary phenomenon, in its real-life context, within a boundary or boundaries. Therefore, it could be concluded that a qualitative case study pinpoints the element of study, what is to be learned from an element of a study, Stake (2005), then studies what is within a certain boundary, hence fencing the area of study. This suggests that this study was only limited to one ITE institution in Gauteng province, rather than many teacher training institutions.

3.3 Interpretive paradigm

The purpose of the interpretive paradigm, or as it is sometimes called, constructivist perspective is to describe, understand and interpret the phenomenon (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Hence, the research purpose is not to do an experiment, test theory or measure anything of that nature. Rather, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) elaborate, conducting research through the interpretivism perspective implies that there are multiple realities to phenomena that are context-bound, and thus data was collected from participants under their natural settings. In this research data was collected from 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers in their university (natural setting) which reduced the chances of negative impacts caused by new environments. Data collected assisted the researcher in describing, understanding and interpreting how ITE programmes go about preparing pre-service teachers for inclusive environments. Consequently, it is expected that analysis of data provides the researcher with a variety of realities concerning pre-service teacher preparation for inclusive environments.

Additionally, Erickson (1986) and Firestone (1987) define interpretive research as a family of approaches consisting of qualitative, case study, ethnographic as well as participant observational research among others. Burrell and Morgan (1979) concur with the same sentiments by stating that interpretivism consists of more than a single paradigm, it is a family of varied paradigms. These conceptualisations suggest that interpretive research is a multidimensional, narrative and descriptive approach to studying social sciences. Gallagher (1991) cited in Merriam and Tisdall (2016) contends that the line of research arose as a result of an attempt to separate between human and natural sciences, of which he supports the distinction as necessary since human beings differ from other creatures and non-living objects in terms of creating and sharing

meaning. Therefore, good qualitative methods are pivotal in enhancing interpretivists' abilities to construct insightful meaning that inform teachers and learners' interactions in the classrooms (Gallagher (1991) cited in Merriam and Tisdall (2016). Therefore, in this study, interpretive research was used to extract data from humans (pre-service teachers) in an attempt to understand how their ITE programmes prepare them to teach in inclusive environments.

3.4 Research Site and Participants

Accordingly, the research site is the Education Faculty at one university in Gauteng province. The chosen university is an internationally recognised university situated in the urban context of the city but draws students from across the whole country as well as internationally. The university can be said to be an Inclusive Educational institution because its students comprises of all humanity, such as; students who were previously marginalised as well as students living with disabilities. The participants were 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers instead of all 4th-year pre-service teachers. The pre-service teachers were selected using purposeful sampling as they are the right respondents with the potential to provide insight into the area of investigation. And as such, a sizable sample can be selected for data collection.

Accordingly, Chein (1981) states that purposeful sampling assumes that the researcher's intention is to find out, understand as well as gain insight, hence a smaller group (sample) from which the most information could be learned is selected. Similarly, Patton (1990) emphasizes the importance of selecting information rich-cases in order to learn insightful issues of central significance to the purpose of the study. This implies that the concern is neither quantity of data collected nor a number of sources, instead, it is the richness of collected data that has the potential to bring clarity and refinement to understanding the phenomena under study. This shows the strengths of purposeful sampling

Consequently, Patton (2015) contends that the power of purposeful sampling is from the emphasis of in-depth conceptualisation of cases that are specific and rich in information. He further explains that cases that are rich in information are those that are significant to the purpose of the investigation, those that one can learn a lot of issues of central significance to the purpose of the investigation. In this study, these participants are purposively selected as they are the ideal respondents in the area under study, likely

to provide data that is very significant to the study. The ITE to be working with has an estimated number of about sixty-five Foundation Phase 4th-year students, of which all of them were invited to participate in answering the qualitative surveys for purposes of data collection. However not all 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers did take part in the focus group and individual semi-structured interviews. It was anticipated that the focus group interviews were to consist of four groups, each group comprising of five 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers, and lastly, individual interviews to be conducted with five of the pre-service teachers extracted from the focus group interviews. The participants were coded as; P1 – qualitative surveys, P2- focus group and P5-individual interviews.

3.5 Data Collection

Data was collected from the Foundation phase 4th-year pre-service teachers using the following data collection instruments: qualitative surveys, focus groups and individual interviews for triangulation purposes. Triangulation is defined by Fielding and Fielding (1986) as a strategy of collecting information from various individuals and situations, using different data collection tools, for purposes of validating information. Sixty-five qualitative surveys were issued out to all the 4th-year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers, followed by a group of six pre-service teachers in a focus group interview. Then lastly, data collection was anticipated to end with semi-structured individual interviews (five) with pre-service teachers. Accordingly, sixty-five qualitative surveys were distributed, followed by a focus group semi-structured interviews, consisting of six respondents, then lastly, six individual semi-structured interviews of the twenty pre-service teachers participated in the focus group interviews. Finally, the total number of participants was twenty.

According to Polkinghorne (2005), qualitative surveys are open-ended questions which in a survey, permits respondents to provide unique answers. This means that open-ended qualitative surveys allow respondents to be free in their responses, which provides the researcher with exploratory data capable of revealing unforeseen issues. Hence, McMillan and Shumacher (2010) stipulate that the objectives of such qualitative surveys are based on the research questions, hence their purpose is to extract information that will help in answering the research questions. Marshall (2005) concurs with McMillan and Shumacher (2010) by adding that research surveys are good data collection tools if carefully planned as they preserve anonymity which makes

respondents feel free, to be honest with answers, avoiding the bias of social desirability compared to interviews (Grimm, 2010). This implies that qualitative survey respondents are free from falling into the respondents' tendency of giving socially acceptable answerers which could not be a true reflection of their feelings. In this study, data collected from qualitative surveys is supported by data collected through interviews.

Data were collected from the respondents using a semi-structured focus group and individual interviews. According to Woods (2011), semi-structured interviews are a type of intentional conversation, however, Denscombe (1983) and Silvermann (1985) define semi-structured interviews as more than a conversation, because they involve assumptions and an understanding of the situation. This suggests that although semi-structured interviews do take the form of a conversation, they are in fact more than a simple conversation, they have an objective. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) posit that semi-structured interviews are about asking a series of planned questions but probing deeper with a form of open-ended questions with the intention of further extracting added information. This implies that semi-structured interviews are intentional conversations and provide deeper information compared to structured interviews. It is, therefore, the intention of this study to use semi-structured interviews as they necessitate flexibility between the researcher and the respondents during sessions. This enables the use of follow-up questions in the event a need to do so arises. The semi-structured interviews were used to extract data from two forms of semi-structured interviews - focus groups and individual interviews.

A focus group is defined as a technique that involves the use of in-depth interviews in a group whereby participants are purposively selected (Thomas, Kuras, Barbey, Cherest, Blaiseau & Surdin-Kerjan (1995). The selected group does not necessarily represent the larger group, however, participants selected in the focus group are selected using the criteria that they would have something to contribute to the topic under research, have similar socio-characteristics and would find it comfortable to talk to the researcher and amongst each other (Richardson & Rabiee, 2001). Accordingly, Thomas et al. (1995) posit that focus groups help in providing a variety of information about different individual feelings on certain issues as well as revealing different perspectives that exist between groups of individuals. Hence focus group interviews were used with the intention of acquiring data on how individual pre-service teachers feel about inclusion preparedness. The focus group interviews were also used with the intention of getting

the actual perceptions of pre-service teachers concerning the preparation they have acquired from the teacher training institution to handle inclusive environments. In an effort to collect authentic data, certain measures were viewed as worthy to be followed.

3.6 Description of data analysis process

Data was collected from pre-service teachers using two data collection tools - qualitative surveys and semi-structured (focus group and individual) interviews. Sixty-five qualitative surveys were distributed to all 4th-year Foundation phase pre-service teachers, of which thirty-two answered the surveys. In accordance with Clarke and Braun's (2013) framework of analysing data, after familiarisation with data, initial codes were generated, themes searched and reviewed to make sure if they are worthy to be accepted as themes or they could be sub-themes, then they were defined and a first write up was drafted. Using the thematic analysis, responses were collected and represented biographically, three male and twenty – nine female respondents. Then responses were diagrammatically represented in an effort to match the questions they appear to be answering. To get to the themes, each of the seventeen qualitative surveys was individually worked out against the responses to pull out codes and categories, which eventually led to four themes emerging as shown in Table 4.1.

From the qualitative survey respondents, pre-service teachers were invited to participate in focus group interviews and six of them responded, five were further invited to participate in individual interviews, and they gave their consent. Data was collected from the respondents initially, through the focus group interview, then data collection concluded with five pre-service teachers participating in the individual semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse both focus group and individual semi-structured interviews. Information was transcribed from audio to written form, after conducting interviews. This was achieved by writing down all the eleven focus group interview questions, then writing all the perceptions/views of the six pre-service teachers against each question. Highlighters were used from those responses to assess potential patterns of responses. The same process was applied to individual interviews.

Theoretical, rather than inductive thematic analysis was used because the main concern of the study is to address the specifically raised research questions (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). This suggests that using the theoretical thematic way of analysis requires the researcher to limit his/her focus only on relevant or interest capturing data

that will help in answering the research question (s), not coding every text. Consequently, open coding was administered as there were no pre-set codes, rather codes were developed and improved through the coding process (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). This means that there were no predetermined codes that were to be approved, rather codes unfolded with the progress of coding leading to the emergence of themes. Five themes emerged from the interviews as shown in Table 2. All the themes (from the qualitative surveys and interviews) were pooled together to get the common themes from both sets of data collection, and four themes stood out.

Table 2: Themes per data set and overarching themes

Qualitative Surveys	Semi-Structured Interviews (Focus group and individual)	Overarching Themes
Grade R importance	Acknowledgement of individual differences	Importance of Grade R
Concept understanding	Importance of being inclusive in Grade R	Perceptions of preparedness
Preparation for teaching Grade R	Exclusionary practices at Grade R	Understanding of concepts
Exclusion experiences/inclusion/differentiation	Conceptualisation and handling of diversity at Grade R	Experiences of pre-service teachers
	Understanding of differentiation	

Figure 3.1 below displays visual representation of themes and sub-themes. The figure shows the emerging sub-themes from the four identified major themes, and the last sub-theme has its own sub-themes as shown below.

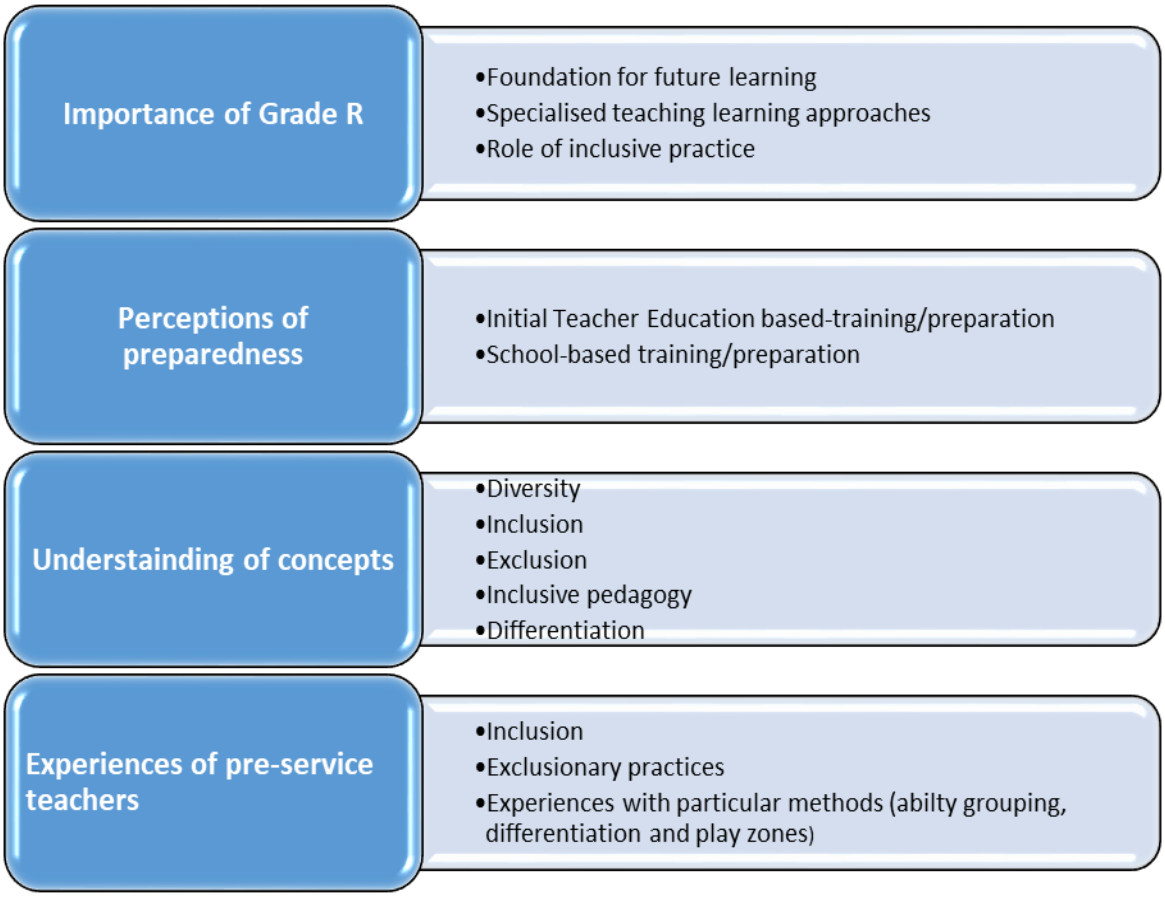

Figure 1: Representation of themes and sub-themes

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured strict adherence to the university's procedures for ensuring that the research is carried out ethically. Thus, it was ascertained that there was no identification of information used in the publically available documents and pseudonyms were used throughout the study to protect the identity of the university and participants. Focus group and individual interviews were conducted in a private place (one of the conference rooms) and all the raw data were accessed by the researcher. All data were stored in a secure location (Wits University library locker) to which only the researcher has access.

The researcher provided information letters to the Head of Wits School of Education to ask for permission to carry out the study on the campus. After obtaining permission from the Head of School, further permission was sought from the Registrar's office as well. Both permission letters, one from the Head of School and the other from the Registrar were attached together with the ethics application documents to obtain the

final permission to conduct research from the ethics committee. Information sheets were also sent for pre-service teachers with attachments of consent forms so that they indicate their consent to participate in the research. All information was treated with confidentiality, observing the process of ethics procedures. Furthermore, the researcher observed some methods used in the qualitative research paradigm as a way of strengthening the study.

3.8 Research Rigor

Firestone (1987) states that different paradigms employ different persuasive ways to convince readers that they are worthy to be trusted. He further posits that because qualitative investigation provides a very little tangible description of what respondents and researchers do, it tries to convince its readers of its trustworthiness by providing enough description to show that the researcher's conclusion is sensible. Consequently, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that the research community can sometimes be skeptical about the results and interpretations of an interpretivist study. This suggests that since there is little or no tangible descriptions to support the interpretations of this study, the researcher made use of research rigor as a way of confirming the trustworthiness of the study. This scepticism is also revealed by Stake (2005) who posits that information gained from an enquiry or investigation faces a vulnerable journey from the time of writing to reading, hence the need for the writer to find ways of safeguarding its trip. This could suggest the responsibility of a qualitative researcher to know their study clearly.

Henceforth, Stake (2005) argues that qualitative investigators should be in a position to respond to the concerns of people outside, some of whom are not familiar with or are deliberately challenging the trustworthiness of the study. This, then implies that researchers have a role of protecting their studies (both from those with a genuine intention to know and those who intend to oppose the study), and results in addition to undertaking the investigation, otherwise, they will toil for nothing. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), validity, reliability, transferability, and ethics are a major concern to every researcher, and as such, this study attempted to carry out these efficiently, so as to contribute to the field a believable and trustworthy knowledge.

3.9 Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research should be credible or dependable, which will enhance its chances of being acted upon and decisions made in line with it. They further posit that qualitative credibility is reinforced by qualitative practices such as; triangulation, thick description of crystallization as well as multivocality and partiality, hence Gonzalez (2000) states that as understanding increases in qualitative research, things do not decrease but they get bigger. This shows the importance of knowing and observing credibility practices in a study as this will determine whether the findings of the study can be acted upon or thrown away as useless. Although there are arguments surrounding triangulation, Tracy (2010) propounds that working with a variety of data sources, theoretical lenses and methods still carries great value as revealed by many authors from different perspectives, (Richardson, 2000a; Lincoln and Guba 1985 and Denzin 1978). They argue that varied types of data, different viewpoints of multiple researchers, methods analysis allow exploration of different aspects of challenges, deepens understanding, increases scope, and above all encourages consistent re-construal of reality. Thus, in this study the question of credibility or validity was addressed by the use of triangulation and by doing back checks or respondent validation (Maxwell, 2013), asking peers to make comments on coming up findings as well as clarifying investigator prejudices and assumptions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.10 Reliability

According to Joppe (2000) reliability is the degree to which conclusions, results or findings maintain consistency over some time and an accurate depiction of the larger population under investigation. This implies that the result of that particular investigation can be reproduced using the same method to prove its reliability. To reinforce reliability of a qualitative study, Patton (2015) recommends use of triangulation. He explains that triangulation is a powerful technique for enhancing credibility in a study as it counteracts accusations likely to arise that the findings of an investigation are a simple artifact of single source or method. Additionally, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posit that reliability is the degree to which there is uniformity in the findings and is reinforced by the researcher clarifying theory that informs the study as well as his or her assumptions. They further posit that this can be achieved through data triangulation and leaving an audit or

inspection trail, which is done by a rich and thick description of how the study was carried out and how conclusions were reached.

Notably, further studies have shown that triangulation as a strategy is being revised in the literature from a perspective of postmodernism, (Richardson, 2000; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005) which is done to ensure qualitative research trustworthiness. Richardson (2000) picked up this by stating that triangulation assumes a fixed point or object to be triangulated, whereas in postmodernism there are surely more than three ways or sides to approach or view the world, hence crystallization becomes the strategy to be adopted. Nevertheless, this study used triangulation because despite the criticism it has received, a host of researchers from different paradigms consider it valuable (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The fact that triangulation is valued by many researchers not only in qualitative research but from different paradigms shows its usefulness, hence it was adopted in this study. Consequently, the study provided a thick description laden with information to explain precisely what has been involved to conclude.

3.11 Dependability

Dependability is defined as the faithfulness of data across related conditions, (Polit and Beck, 2012) and (Tobin and Begley, 2004), and this constancy can be achieved when a different investigator agrees with the trails of decisions taken by the previous researcher at each study process. Koch (2006) concurs to this by stating that through the investigator's descriptions and process, a research would be deemed trustworthy if its discoveries were a reproduction of similar partakers in similar settings. Consequently, in this study dependability was ensured so that if another researcher develops interest in carrying out the same study using same methods and under the same conditions, findings will be more or less the same with this study's conclusions.

3.12 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the investigator's ability to prove that information represent the responses of the participants and not the viewpoints or biases of the researcher (Polit and Beck, 2012; Tobin and Begley, 2004). They explain that the researcher can achieve confirmability by unfolding how interpretations and conclusions were established, and illustrating that the findings were as a result of data collected. Hence, when writing a qualitative research, this can be displayed by a provision of participants' rich speech marks that portray each developing theme. Therefore, in this study, confirmability was

achieved through describing the process that was undertaken to collect data, explaining how data was coded and analysed up to the point of reaching conclusions.

3.13 Transferability

Transferability refers to the possibility of applying findings from one group or setting to the other, (Houghton, Casey, Shaw and Murphy, 2013 & Polit and Beck, 2012). This implies that the findings of one qualitative research study should be applied or used to another group or setting that were not part of the study and be meaningful. However, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) posit that the transferability or generalization of findings of a qualitative study to different situations is a debatable issue. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the investigation is trustworthy, and the trustworthiness of a study depends on the researcher's credibility. The credibility of the researcher as stipulated by Maxwell (2013) is achieved through engaging in a description that is thick and rich. Hence Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) advice about what the researcher can do is to acknowledge the ethical issues pertaining the research process as well as examining their philosophical positioning on these issues. It should be noted that the intention of this study is not to generalize findings of the investigation, but to get a deeper understanding that will shade light into why Grade One learners enrol for formal schooling underprepared.

Conversely, some authors have disputed the credibility of validating strategies (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Miles and Huberman, 1984 & Guba and Lincoln, 1989). For instance, Bloor (1983) argues that these strategies of validation are more problematic than most investigators appear to realize it. Thus, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) posit that it cannot just be assumed that the respondents' pronouncements should merely be accepted as valid rather their responses serves as an acknowledged of evidence regarding the validity of the researcher's account. Nonetheless, this study will use the validating strategies because despite the criticism they receive from some authors, there is ample evidence that they are useful in carrying out a good qualitative research study. It is interesting to note that although Fielding and Fielding (1986) initially argued against using triangulation, he cautions that it is important to realise the shortcoming of any data or method, then triangulate in relation to validity threats. Consequently, it is the intention of this proposal to make sure that the findings of the study will be credible, reliable confirmable and transferable to other similar situations.

3.14 Conclusion

The third chapter has explained what type of research was conducted, with who, where and how. Qualitative research was conducted, and as defined by Crotty (1989) is based on the premise that reality is constructed by people in their natural settings. Therefore, the researcher visited the respondents in their natural settings to extract reality about their preparedness to handle inclusive environments. Erickson (1986) and Firestone (1987) define interpretive paradigm as a family of approaches consisting of qualitative, case study, ethnographic as well as participant observational research among others. One of the HET in Gauteng was chosen as a site for collecting data. Ethical considerations were adhered to through observing and engaging in the ethics application process. The researcher observed research rigor; credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability, and reliability. These were carried out in an effort to persuade or convince readers that findings of this research are to be trusted (Firestone, 1987), through the provision of thick description to show that the conclusion reached is sensible. Discussion of themes and findings that emerged from analysing data is presented in Chapter four with the intention of answering the main research question.

Chapter Four: Discussion of themes/findings

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four presents a discussion of themes and findings that emerged from the data analysis in an effort to answer the main question and sub-questions of the study. The problem statement for the study raised in the first chapter argued that many South African learners enter Grade One underprepared for formal learning. Enrolling learners into Grade One underprepared presents challenges to the Grade One teachers as learners would be lacking foundational skills acquired in early learning (Rensburg, 2015 & Artmore, 2013). This suggests that it is in Grade R where the foundation for formal learning is laid. This claim led to the purpose of this study: To investigate an ITE programme that supports the preparation of Grade R teachers at one HET institution in Gauteng to better understand in what ways these teachers are being equipped for inclusive environments and to enact inclusive pedagogy to ensure the effective development of Grade R learners. This chapter, therefore, addresses the results of data collected from 4th year pre-service teachers at one ITE training institution in the province of Gauteng. Ultimately, four themes emerged from the responses of pre-service teachers with sub-themes as addressed in this chapter.

4.2 Discussion of themes

Four overarching themes were identified as; (1) Importance of Grade R; (2) Perceptions of preparedness; (3) Understanding of concepts and (4) Experiences of pre-service teachers. Each theme consists of sub-themes, which will be discussed hereafter.

4.2.1 Importance of Grade R

Firstly, the importance of Grade R came out as an overarching theme, with its sub-themes; foundation, specialised teaching and learning approaches. The sub-themes for this theme are; (1) Foundation, (2) Specialised teaching and learning approaches, and (3) Role of inclusive practice.

4.2.1.1 Foundation

Most of pre-service teachers' responses revealed that they view Grade R as an important year because it is at this level (Grade R), where the foundation for formal learning is set. Accordingly, Green, Parker, Deacon and Hall (2011), mentioned in the literature review, state that early years learning opportunities bears a significant impact

on further learning as well as development. This suggests that Grade R acts as a forerunner for formal learning of an individual, it lays the groundwork for future learning and progress. In agreement with this, one pre-service teacher had this to say,

> *Grade R gives equal opportunities to all learners to acquire a firm foundation laid for their future learning*.

Another pre-service teacher expressed a similar sentiment by stating the following,

> *Learners should be made aware of inclusive practices at a very early age, because this helps to set a firm foundation*

This could mean that the pre-service teachers value inclusive practices and view them as necessary to start at an early age so that learners' elementary steps are grounded on a strong basis.

Another pre-service teacher raised the point of equal opportunities by saying,

> *It is at this level, Grade R, where learners should be given equal opportunities in order to thrive.*

Giving all learners equal opportunities is in line with what Engelbrecht (2006) picks up, that South Africa's Inclusive Education is framed within a human rights context. Hence, human rights approach transforms integrated human values to rights of all learners, including the marginalised. It follows then that when pre-service teachers view grade R as a time to afford equal opportunities to all learners, they are acting in harmony with the findings of Engelbrecht (2006). However, O'Carroll (2011) argues that it is essential that the Grade R curriculum provide educators with clear data on the critical literacy foundations that need to be laid at this point. Research indicates that the secret for most successful schools have proven to be investment in good early education coupled with teacher training (UNESCO, 2007 & Mourshed and Barber, 2007). This means that the experiences of young children in their formative years, before enrolling to the first grade create the basis for subsequent learning.

Furthermore, the EWP6 states that Inclusive Education, based on the Constitution ideal, ensures that all children are given equal opportunities so as to become competent citizens, who are prepared to work collaboratively towards bringing positive changes in a diverse society (Engelbrecht, 2006). The same thought is also posited by Miles and Singal (2010) who emphasise the Inclusive Education aims as promoting principles of

democracy, values as well as beliefs related to social justice and equality, hence offering valuable EFA debates through the promotion of these values and beliefs.

Some of the teachers revealed that grade R acts as preparatory for formal learning, therefore, there are expectations or concepts Grade R learners should acquire at this stage, which would be useful in grade one. Perhaps this is the reason one teacher remarked,

> *Learners should be stimulated at grade R in preparation for formal learning***.**

In line with the same thought, one teacher had this to say,

> *…grade R bridges the gap between informal learning and formal learning.*

This implies that it is in grade R where learners are scaffolded to progress from informal ways of learning to formal ways of learning. Consequently, Rogoff (2003) stated previously in the literature review, encourages the use of amplifiers to future academic success as cooperative and collaborative learning. Some pre-service teachers expressed sentiments along the same lines, such as;

> *Grade R learning helps with the development of skills like; reading, writing and numeracy, which are necessary skills needed in formal learning.*

Hence, Grade R prepares learners for future learning by laying the needed foundational skills for an individual's smooth take off.

4.2.1.2 Specialised teaching and learning approaches

Grade R is a stage where teaching is not as organized as in formal learning because it is the informal stage, in preparation for formal teaching and learning (Artmore, 2013). This implies that the teaching and learning structure is not very rigid but allows learners to explore, whilst they are gradually introduced to formal learning. And because of the flexibility at this stage, there are various specialised methods used at Grade R, such as; play-way, discovery, dramatic, amongst others, which could be beneficial for teachers as well. This is revealed by the expressions of pre-service teachers, one of them had this to say,

> *Grade R teaching and learning have positive implications for the teachers too, because it teaches us methods of teaching children at this stage, how children learn and develop.*

This finding has been documented by other researchers, recently by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011). In their research study, they discovered that teachers discerned a lot of insights through observing learners engage in “play zone “activities. This means that as learners collaboratively worked together, they display qualities like; free expressions, independence, self-confidence, and creativity, which they usually do not exhibit when a teacher is present. In the same research, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) also discovered that the “work choice” activity taught teachers about how learners want to be treated as individuals. For example, one teacher learned through conversation with a certain learner that she could lengthen what is normally available to all learners in the class, rather than providing additional or different provision for some learners who might be considered undergoing learning difficulties (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). Teaching Grade R, therefore, advantages not only learners but teachers, as well as they, gain understanding into how to manage diversity and create rich inclusive environments.

4.2.1.3 Role of inclusive practice

Research shows that inclusive practice is influenced by inclusive pedagogical knowledge (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Florian and Linklater, 2010 & Florian and Spratt, 2013). This means that for teachers to teach inclusively, they should be educated on inclusive pedagogical knowledge at their ITE programmes. Pre-service teachers in this study did reveal that they received inclusive training. However, some of them had concerns with practising what they have acquired in their ITE programmes in schools of attachment. One of them stated,

> *My problem is that we do learn about including everybody but when we go out for practice, we are not given that opportunity because “those learners” are not in the classes we teach, they are kept separate for “special teachers.*

This shows the challenge faced by pre-service teachers of failing to practice theory. It has broader implications for conceptions of Inclusive Education versus special education. This was picked up by McIntyre (2009) who laments about the education system which does not allow continuity between pre-service teachers and principles of inclusive pedagogy they acquire at the ITE. Hence, the dire need for reconstruction of the education system, Walton (2016), which, according to McIntyre (2009) is organised around issues of ability labelling, categorisation, identification of learners. Furthermore, he argues, implementing inclusive practice on the current system is viewed as

uncomfortable, disrupting the status quo, thus not welcome and in some cases, not practiced**.** This implies that although pre-service teachers could be trained on inclusive practices, all effort could be wasted as they are likely to be challenged by systemic and policy constraints.

4.2.2 Perceptions of preparedness

Pre-service teachers demonstrated that they view preparedness for teaching in inclusive environments in terms of their ITE training as well as what they have experienced during their schooling years as children. Two sub-themes under this theme are; (1) Initial Teacher Education (ITE) based preparation and, (2) School-based training.

4.2.2.1 Initial Teacher Education Based (ITE) training /preparation

Pre-service teachers' responses disclosed the usefulness of the process pre-service teachers went through in preparing for inclusive R grade learning. They revealed that the ITE programme helped them to build their Inclusive Education knowledge. One pre-service teacher mentioned specific courses like; Inclusive Education III, EWP6, ECD and Education III as courses that equipped her to handle inclusive environments. She stated,

> ... *these courses developed my awareness of diversity in South Africa***.**

This indicates that pre-service teachers hugely benefited from their training as they acquired knowledge on handling diversity in the South African context. Contrasting this assertion with the sentiments of the previous pre-service teacher, who stated that "those learners" are kept in separate units, reveals that despite having been socialised in discriminatory ways, the ITE preparation has helped pre-service teachers to acquire a different view concerning marginalised learners. According to Sikes, Lawson and Parker (2007) teachers as implementers of inclusion, enact inclusion in their classrooms, hence the need for teacher training institutions to prepare them for handling inclusive environments. This demonstrates the critical role that ITE programmes play in raising awareness about inclusion among pre-service teachers so that after training they are equipped to manage inclusive environments. As a result, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) emphasize that pre-service teachers should acquire knowledge, skills and inclusion practices that translate into modifying their conceptualization of Inclusive

Education. It is interesting to note that these courses not only conscientize pre-service teachers on issues of learners' diversity but also about principles and policies of inclusion as revealed by other teachers' responses.

In line with the same thought, another pre-service teacher revealed that these courses were useful in that they made her aware of the policies and principles that guide inclusion. For instance, one of them had this to say,

> *I enjoyed courses which specifically demonstrated the link between policies and what we should do, such as; the EWP6, the Salamanca Statement, the South African Constitution*.

This reveals that pre-service teachers were made aware during their ITE training of the connection between policies and practice. Likewise, the literature reveals that some of the objectives of inclusion, based on inclusive policies and principles, are to promote democratic principles, values, and beliefs of social justice and equality to enhance the participation of all learners (Miles and Singal, 2010). This indicates that inclusive practices, drawn from the country's constitution, policy documents are to promote the meaningful participation of everybody. Henceforth, Srivastava, De Boer, and Pijl. (2015) stipulate that this goes beyond raising issues of placement, instead, social justice issues are more at stake. This is likely to work as a good move because it can allow society to examine its social institutions and structures through a more critical lens.

On the one hand, some pre-service teachers suggested that the ITE programme should take into consideration the issue of affording pre-service teachers adequate teaching experiences. Some pre-service teachers aired their concerns on other parts of segments of their ITE programme, the teaching experience period. One of them stated,

> *As much as I agree with my colleagues about including all learners, I feel the current teaching experience I got is inadequate, am happy with theory but did not get enough time to practice what I learnt.*

Interestingly, the issue of inadequate practice is revealed by Florian (2016) who emphasises the importance of inclusive practice by stating that there is a big difference between claiming to be inclusive and practicing inclusion**.** This means that Inclusive Education should not only be welcomed through theory, but should be accompanied and provided through provisions to practical experiences. Additionally, Jordan and Stanovich (2000/2004) state that effective practice is akin to effective teaching and bears a profound effect on teachers' epistemological beliefs. This suggests that for ITE

institutions to produce effective teachers, they should afford ample teaching experiences to pre-service teachers. The current teaching experience afforded to pre-service teachers, considering the responses from data collected, is inadequate. Furthermore, research has indicated that most pre-service teachers enter their initial teaching year after graduation with varied beliefs about teaching and learning that are not easy to change (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996 & Tillema, 1995). This could partly be that pre-service teachers do not get enough teaching experience to alleviate those varied beliefs through interacting with learners in schools.

This is also revealed by one pre-service teacher who stated,

> *In the schools where I did teaching experience, it was discouraged to teach all learners, including those with disabilities in the same class, there were separate units for special needs learners taught by special teachers.*

Therefore, if a pre-service teacher is attached to such a school, they will never get the opportunity to teach inclusively as the system does not allow that practice.

Admittedly, there are schools which have transformed from the traditional ways of teaching into Inclusive Educational ways of teaching, they are however, those schools which are still stuck in the traditional view of teaching. This is revealed by the Department of Basic education's efforts to adhere to the guidelines of full – inclusive schools' standards (DoBE 2010), through equipping and positioning selected schools to serve as support structures for Inclusive Education. McIntyre (2009) states that collaborative partnerships have tried to alleviate this challenge but failed, hence he advocates for responsible stakeholders to come together and map the way forward. This means teachers, parents, departmental authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested stakeholders working together to find ways of putting inclusive pedagogies into practice.

On the other hand, according to Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) the professional development and personal selves of new teachers develop over some time. They further postulate that the identity development of a teacher goes beyond ITE training, as it is mediated by a series of overlapping contexts. Therefore, as teachers interact with learners in different contexts, they gain experience on handling inclusive environment hence developing the concept of fragmented self (Day et al.2006). This suggests that with the advent of time, teachers gain more confidence in handling diversity, just as a newly qualified driver gains experience by driving more often.

According to Kagan (1992) mentioned in the literature review, newly qualified teachers are faced with the challenges of cognitive overload caused by insufficient procedural knowledge provision at ITE institutions. This is detrimental to inclusion implementation as it hinders teachers from successfully handling inclusive environments. To alleviate this, teachers need to develop what Feldon (2015) calls, the skill automaticity, which calls for adequate practice (Fisk, 1989). This implies that although pre-service teachers could be feeling inadequately ready for handling inclusive environments, with the advent of teaching experience, most uncertainties will be cleared.

4.2.2.2 School based training/preparation

A number of responses from pre-services teachers indicated the evidence of relying on the methods that were used by the school teachers during their schooling years. Some of the popular sentiments were,

> *Sometimes I find it very useful to implement the methods that my teachers administered to us during our school days, you know the use of corporal punishment was very useful even though it is abolished now. These alternative methods to corporal punishment, to say the truth, are not working at all.*

This suggests that pre-service teachers are not only relying on the knowledge acquired through training but they also make use of the methods used by their school teachers as they were learners themselves. This reverting of novice teachers to methods which were used during their schooling days in situations of cognitive overload is supported by Feldon (2015), as indicated in the literature review. This suggests that despite the training acquired in ITE programmes, when faced with challenging situations, novice teachers are bound to use what their own teachers' methods, rather than what they learned. This serves as a reminder for teachers to treat learners inclusively as they are role models.

Furthermore, it could be argued that such sentiments are not just talking about reverting to traditional practices, rather, they are indicative of certain mind sets that challenge the human rights stance of Inclusive Education. For instance, the contributions of the ITE programme of changing teachers' minds, hands and hearts, Sharma (2010), are undermined. In reflection of this, one pre-service teacher said,

> *Nowadays, we see a lot of misbehaving children, children who neither fear teachers nor parents. Why? Because of the abolishment of corporal punishment. In the old days all this was not seen because children knew they will be severely punished.*

This statement reveals the challenge of changing old habits, ways which were administered to them during their schooling days. Although pre-service teachers value inclusive practices they have learned at the ITE programme, the renaissances of their socialisation are still veiling the adoption of inclusive practices. They still want to believe that instilling fear and controlling learners is the right way to discipline learners to teach. However, Charlton (2010) argues against instilling fear to control learners as oppressive and a violation of human rights. This suggests that inclusive pedagogical teachers, unlike traditional teachers, are encouraged to desist from oppressive exclusionary practices and treat their learners with dignity and respect. One might ask; why then do learners misbehave? Is it because they are given too much freedom? On the contrary, Wright (2009) argues that inclusive pedagogical practices reveal that a child's deviant behaviour should be treated as a deliberate attempt to raise an alarm for help. This suggests that when a learner displays deviant behaviour, teachers should take that as symptoms of something not going well with the learners, thus, correct measures need to be taken to address the problem. However, teachers will always respond to such cries differently, depending on their orientation, be it constructivists or traditional view of inclusive pedagogy.

4.2.3 Understanding of concepts

The third theme that emerged from the pre-service teachers' responses is the way they understood different concepts like; (1) diversity, (2) inclusion, (3) exclusion, (4) inclusive pedagogy and (5) differentiation, as sub - themes.

4.2.3.1 Diversity

Pre-service teachers showed their understanding of diversity at grade R by stating that it involves differences in language, culture, differing learning disabilities, socio-economic statuses, various learning needs, race, children coming to school for the first time, as well as different religious affiliations. One of them had this to say,

> *To me diversity means recognising differences in learners and appreciating them, learners should be made aware that they are different but they all matter. Teachers can do this by acknowledging various cultural backgrounds, races, languages, food, among other differences.*

Another pre-services teacher concurred with her colleague by adding the following.

> *It also means embracing and respecting different religions, giving equal treatment to learners with physical learning challenges and maintaining dignity of learners facing learning difficulties.*

Additionally, pre-service teachers perceive handling of diversity as appreciation that learners learn in different ways. On this note, one of them had this to say,

> *Appreciating diversity compels teachers to appeal to individual differences through the use of various approaches, such as storytelling, sharing knowledge about different cultures, food and types of dancing*

This implies that as children share knowledge about various cultures, they get to know that there are various people with various ways of living but they all matter. In support of this one pre-service teacher had this to tell,

> *Through the use of themes, I invited my learners to come to school dressed in their cultural attires and pack cultural food as their lunch for the day. Then we discussed the various cultures and the attire pieces in class, how to dance and their food, and I also dressed in my traditional attire (IsiZulu) and brought traditional samp (umngqusho) as my lunch for the day.*

This shows that the pre-service teacher did not only instruct learners to do something but she was also involved, she actually acted as a role model. Infinite diversity of human variation, (Greenstein, 2016) became clearer as learners came dressed in varied ways and brought various traditional packed food and shared with the class.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the ITE programme conscientized pre-service teachers on an inclusive approach, which is in contrast with the special education approach. For instance, the conceptualisation of disability here is viewed as another aspect of diversity, Oliver (1990), contrary to the special education approach that views disability as a separate entity from diversity. Consequently, it could be argued that the ITE programme has achieved the Inclusive Education goal of recognising and embracing differences as what they really are- human variations. Therefore, the ITE programme has armed pre-service teachers for teaching in inclusive environments.

4.2.3.2 Inclusion

Pre-service teachers demonstrated that they understand inclusion to mean catering for different abilities and disabilities of all children entrusted to them. One pre-service teacher stated,

> *Inclusion at Grade R means including all children regardless of race, gender, age, development, disability, or any other identifying feature.*

This was supported by another pre-service teacher who posited,

> *Inclusion means every child is given equal opportunity to learn.*

This line of thought is revealed by literature as indicated in the literature review chapter, that Inclusive Education aims at principles of democracy, values, and beliefs related to social justice and equity (Miles and Singal, 2010; & Srivastava, De Boer and Pil, 2015). This implies that Inclusive Education goes beyond merely placing learners in schools, rather it is more concerned with their full and active participation. To afford full participation to all learners, the education system will be obliged to examine the current existing structures and practices of education which will likely pave way for new and greater pedagogical competences (Miles and Singal, 2010 & Hewitt, 1999). Therefore, catering for all learners' capabilities will then be achievable under restructured conditions, which will be compatible with the use of inclusive pedagogical practices.

Noteworthy is that previously, some pre-service teachers expressed concerns about facing challenges of putting theory into practice, this contradicts with the sentiments of understanding and acknowledging inclusion as meaning equal opportunities to every child and diversified needs. This suggests that although pre-service teachers do acknowledge their ITE preparation in making them aware and welcome diversity, there is still a gap that could be missing in the ITE programme concerning how Grade R learners can be better supported for Grade One. Most pre-service teachers' responses reveal the contradiction between the inclusive pedagogical practices and the systemic structure and policies coupled with inadequate time they spend practising (teaching experience). This suggests that pre-service teachers, like other teachers find themselves caught in between practising inclusive pedagogy and bending towards the systemic structure and policies, which sometimes violate inclusive practices. Hence, the need for collaborative work into finding solutions to counter the imbalances between theory and practice.

4.2.3.3 Exclusion

Pre-service teachers also expressed their understanding of exclusion as referring to teachers' practices that fail to accommodate all learners. For instance, one pre-service teacher stated,

> *My concern is about teachers who just talk, write on the board and uses none or limited practical examples in their lessons, which to me exclude other learners.*

Accordingly, Makoelle (2014) argues that Inclusive Education uses inclusive pedagogical strategies which are constructive, drawing on teachers' creativity and novelty with the intention of enhancing learning that is meaningful. This means that inclusive teaching is not like traditional teaching which is teacher centred, rather teachers encourage and guide learners to construct their knowledge through interacting with them. Another pre-teacher stated,

> *Some teachers marginalise learners due to religious affiliations, and some ask learners to bring learning resources from home which they know very well that learners cannot afford, maybe due to financial constraints.*

Another pre-service teacher had this to say,

> *Some teachers select potential cricket players by asking learners to bring cricket materials, then those who fail to bring them are left out of the school team.*

This shows discrimination of learners because of the socio-economic backgrounds. Interestingly, the fact that pre-service teachers are now able to recognize and identify such discriminatory practices shows that their ITE programme has properly prepared them for teaching inclusively. The pre-service teachers are equipped and ready to ensure that all learners, not just some or most, Florian Black-Hawkins (2011), are welcomed and their needs met as individuals.

4.2.3.4 Inclusive Pedagogy

This sub-theme was voiced by some pre-service teacher who said that inclusive pedagogy should be understood as working with learners from their different levels. The pre-service teachers mentioned that courses like Inclusive Education III made them aware of the usefulness of inclusive pedagogy in handling diverse environments. This is in line with the change from mere pedagogy to inclusive pedagogy, which, contrary to simple pedagogy, welcomes and promotes the teaching, learning and involvement of all learners (Florian and Black Hawkins, 2011). Therefore, inclusive pedagogy is welcomed and appreciated to simple pedagogy which has limitations.

Pre-service teachers expressed their understanding of inclusive pedagogy as teaching that embraces and affords all learners to acquire knowledge. One pre-service teacher stated,

> *Inclusive pedagogy means thinking of all learners when planning lessons for diverse learners.*

This shows that pre-service teachers conceptualised inclusive pedagogy as an approach that is inclusive. This is also evidenced by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) that inclusive pedagogy works with a proactive approach, thus catering for all learners. This implies designing lesson plans with everybody in mind, with the intention of counteracting any potential challenges which might arise, rather than planning for a few or most learners, with additional assistance on the side. Another pre-service teacher said

> *Inclusive pedagogy is all about including all learners despite any differences they might possess.*

This is consistent with what Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) posit that inclusive pedagogy welcomes and allows all learners to be taught, learn and participate fully.

Another pre-service teacher echoed the same sentiments,

> *Inclusive pedagogy does away with all forms of discrimination and oppressive measures that separates and marginalises learners.*

This suggests that pre-service teachers conceptualise inclusive pedagogical practices as accommodative of all diverse learners, thus abolishing many forms of discrimination. Similarly, Engelbrecht and Green (2017) concur with Florian and Black – Hawkins (2011) that the shift from simple pedagogy to inclusive pedagogy was a step to counteract the widely naturalized bell curve thinking. They argue that the bell curve thinking has proven to be challenging inclusion implementation because its social construction constitutes a knowledge system that underpins the education structure. The same idea was previously raised by Florian (2011) by alluding that inclusive pedagogy will go a long way into concretizing pre-service teachers to a variety of curricular, assessment and instructional approaches known to be more inclusive. This implies that Inclusive pedagogy has a potential to make pre-service teachers aware of naturalized practices that works against Inclusive Education so that they challenge them. Thus, according to Freire (1972), awareness emancipates individuals to challenge dominant ideas and oppressive standards. In the same way, if pre-service teachers are made aware of oppressive practices currently prevailing, they will be in a better position to transform educational practices to inclusive pedagogical practices, with differentiation as a key concept.

However, one teacher argued against inclusionary practices by stating,

> *It is not easy as all that to implement inclusion, because truly speaking considering the number of learners in a class, it is not easy to accommodate all individual needs, which calls for more work, time and knowledge from teachers.*

This suggests that although pre-service teachers acknowledge the importance of inclusion, they are intimidated by diversity in their classrooms Ball (2009). It should be noted however, that the intimidation is not caused by diversity per se, rather the concern is inclusion practicability considering class sizes in terms of learners. This concern is picked up by Ball (2009) who mentions “terrors of performativity” experienced by teachers, as they are expected to implement inclusion and are gauged against the expected set standards. Hence, teachers are intimidated by diversity in their classroom. And as such, teachers find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place, between on the one hand, meeting the national standards and assessment and on the other hand, accommodating all learners which requires time and expertise, which teachers do not have. To effectively handle diversity, teachers need to be prepared on various ways of delivering information.

4.2.3.5 Differentiation

Differentiation is a very important concept which pre-service teachers need to understand to be able to handle diversity and enact inclusive practices in their spaces of work. According to Tomlinson (1999), differentiation refers to extensive teaching techniques and lesson variations that teachers use as instruction for a diverse group of learners, with varied learning needs, in the one classroom set up or learning environment. This entails teachers recognizing and embracing learners’ interests, strengths and weaknesses as pivotal for planning. Tomlinson (1999) argues that differentiation encourages all learners to assume responsibility and accountability for their learning because it accommodates everybody. This suggests that differentiation caters for weaker, average as well as advanced learners equally as the teacher works along with learners to facilitate solving challenges not as a problem solver.

Pre-service teachers demonstrated their understanding of the concept of differentiated instruction as catering for diverse needs of learners hence the need to teach content differently. Sadly, some responses showed different understandings of differentiation in relationship to inclusive pedagogy. This was raised by quite a number of them making remarks like;

> *It is teaching to individual groups, it is key to ensuring that learning is afforded to weak, middle and strong learners.*

The mentality of perceiving some learners as; weak, middle and strong, indicate exclusionary thinking, thinking that leads to teaching for the most (middle to strong), and providing supportive material for the weak, alongside (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). This is a special education approach, (Makoelle, 2014), which excludes other learners and is against inclusive pedagogical practices. Instead of categorising learners, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) advocate for the use of Universal Design Learning (UDL), which emphasizes response to individual needs. This entails the idea of moving away from focusing on most learners, which is the primary assumption to inclusive pedagogy, to proactively embracing everybody. UDL has the ability of helping teachers move away from the assumptions that are medicalised and specialised, further argue Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011), to working with everybody. This suggests that UDL is an effective tool, which could be used in rejection to bell-curve thinking to differentiate instruction and teach inclusively.

One pre-service teacher stated,

> *Differentiation is a teaching approach used in accommodating the needs of various learners in the class, giving equal opportunities of learning to all learners*.

This implies that pre-service teachers understand differentiation as an approach that embraces differences in learners so that they develop to their full potential. Accordingly, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2015), differentiated instruction is inclusive as it allows different teachers to use different means of teaching the same content to different individuals. This does not mean giving easy work to some learners and challenging work to others, rather it refers to using various ways of delivering the same content to different learners, with the same outcome objective for everybody.

Some pre-service teachers had mixed perceptions about differentiation as shown in their uttered sentiments,

> *When kids come into class their learning and individual needs will not be the same. Differentiation is key to ensure learning happens for weak, middle and strong learners regardless of their level.*

This conceptualisation reveals the same kind of thinking previously uttered by other pre-service teachers, which is a special education approach argued by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011). This suggests that labelling some learners as weak or strong on its

own is a discriminatory practice, which is against inclusive pedagogical practices. This conceptualisation had modal appearances in pre-service teachers' responses as indicated by some extracts below;

> *Differentiation is a process whereby learners are put at different ability levels.*
>
> *Teaching for different levels and abilities to be able to teach all types of learners.*
>
> *Refers to being able to cater for children who perform at different ability levels- strong, moderate/average and weak.*
>
> *Differentiation speaks to teaching children at their respective level usually done in group from where children are grouped according to their abilities.*
>
> *Dividing learners into their ability groups and giving learners work that will challenge their ability and also won't be that difficult for the child to complete.*

The above quotations demonstrate that although pre-service teachers are saying they are ready for handling inclusive environments, their responses of differentiation are showing otherwise. For instance, the responses reveal that the pre-service teachers are still stuck in traditional strategies orientation views of inclusive pedagogy, (Makoelle, 2014). This implies that despite receiving training in constructivists' view of inclusive pedagogy, these teachers are still glued to the old strategies that violate Inclusive Education practices. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons Greenstein (2016) reiterates Halpin's (2003) words that there is a need for taking the utopian imagination and continue with teacher development as it is an essential component of inclusionary practices, for purposes of reinforcement. Admittedly, utopias cannot be immediately translatable into policy documents, however, they can point at possibilities for change that otherwise would be adopted.

Nevertheless, Tomlinson (2005) defines differentiated instruction as a strategy for teaching that is based on the premise that learners perform better when their interests and learning profiles are accommodated. This shows the effectiveness of taking into consideration learners' variations, that is, their background, race, gender, language, culture, among other variations. Hence, Florian and Black – Hawkins (2011) concur with McIntyre (2009) on working against bell curve thinking, and advocate for the use of Universal Design Learning (UDL) for lesson planning, as it works from where learners are. This implies that despite its widely naturalised concept, the bell curve system of

normalising learners is not an inclusive practice, it has to be done away with. However, responses from pre-service teachers did not show any evidence of knowledge about the UDL, hence no one engaged with it or witnessed teachers using the method during their teaching experiences. Perhaps, the reason could be that pre-service teachers were not taught about UDL in their ITE programme.

4.2.4 Experiences of Pre-service Teachers

4.2.4.1 Inclusion

Inclusion is a concept that moves away from segregating learners to embracing all learners without any form of discrimination (Florian, 2008) this suggests that teachers in their spaces should extend what is generally available to all learners, rather than excluding learners. Three sub-themes identified were; (1) Inclusion, (2) Exclusionary practices and (3) Experiences with particular methods.

One pre-service teacher voiced her concern as follows,

> *As much as I like this inclusion, to me it seems teachers cannot do much as long as the system of education is not changed or revisited.*

This is a valid point considering that the education structure seems to be in the complete opposite of what inclusion is advocating. Nevertheless, according to Florian (2008), admittedly, teachers on their own cannot bring about radical change, however, as literature has shown, (Ainscow, Dyson and Booth, 2006; Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007; Hart et al., 2004; O'Hanlon, 2003 & Skidmore, 2004), that teachers are better positioned to change their practices in their spaces of work, despite the national curriculum and assessment constraints. This implies that despite the current exclusionary structure, teachers have the freedom to think differently about the current arrangement of the educational system and right the wrong practices currently operational. This will help in alleviating exclusionary practices that have been raised as a concern in some schools.

Some responses from the pre-service teachers revealed their preparedness for handling inclusive environments at the Grade R level. Some of them stated the following:

> *That every Grade R learner has specific needs that needs to be mediated with planning.*

These sentiments revealed the cognisance of viewing learners as humans with individual needs. This was supported by another pre-service teacher who stated,

> *The work presented to the learners must represent learners and their background so they are familiar with the work.*

This shows taking into consideration the background of each learners so as to fully include everybody. This involves including learners in the diverse contexts, including disability as an aspect of disability as indicated in the previously mentioned quotation in support of this point, other pre-service teachers conceptualised inclusion as,

> *Meaning working with all the children at whatever level of understanding they are at, not isolating children who have disabilities.*
>
> *Include all children regardless of race, gender, age, development, disability etc. Making sure that they participate in the learning and teaching at their individual level.*
>
> *Involving and accepting all children in your class. Not out casting any child and making them feel unwelcome or unimportant.*
>
> *Teaching all children but using a preferred method by the teacher.*

These sentiments reveal that pre-service teachers conceptualise inclusion as referring to embracing all learners, without any discrimination. However, part of the response of the last sentiments reveals something on the preference of the teaching method that is teacher centred. This is indicative of the traditional approach to teaching, which Greenstein (2016) argues that it encourages passivity on learners as it is driven by teachers without considering the views of learners.

4.2.4.2 Exclusionary Practices

Pre-service teachers expressed concerns about exclusionary practices they encountered during their teaching experience. The issue of diagnosing learners, which leads to labelling was pointed out. One of them stated,

> *Learners are excluded through diagnosing them as having learning disabilities, such as; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or any other learning disability.*

This shows that teachers take it upon themselves to prescribe learners as suffering from ADHD or any other learning disabilities. Furthermore, this practice shows that teachers are stick stuck to the traditional ways of labelling learners and putting them into categories. When teachers see difference in individuals, they do not view them as normal human variations, rather they view them as individual problems worthy to be

alleviated, and thus, they label and try to “fix” them, which is a medical approach to differences.

Another pre-service teacher supported this sentiment by stating the following,

> *I believe teachers should do their work and leave diagnosis to doctors and psychologists, and concentrate at what they know best, that is, teaching.*

This means that pre-service teachers did not agree with what they encountered in the teaching experience, the diagnosis of learners as suffering from ADHD, hence they aired their opinions that teachers were wrongfully exercising their powers. Contrary to practice of diagnosing learners, Graham (2008) argues that teachers should desist from “informing” parents about their children’s behaviour, instead they should “consult” or reason with parents to get how the child behaves from the parent’s perspective. This implies that if parents get the feeling that teachers are judging their children to be ADHD, they lose interest in whatever the teacher is suggesting and the teacher risk opportunities of gaining information about the child from their parents, which can be very useful. This suggests that pre-service have been made aware of exclusionary practices through their ITE programme and are ready to handle inclusive environments at Grade R level.

Second, pre-service teachers mentioned the issue of language as an exclusionary practice. Pre-service teachers conceptualised the use of language understood by learners as catering for everybody, reaching out to every child and teaching the whole child. One pre-service teacher reiterated the language issue as a challenge in handling diversity. She stated,

> *If a teacher is to handle diversity effectively, all children should have a sense of belonging, and that sense of belonging is a result of learners seen the value bestowed upon their culture and language.*

This implies that learners get the sense of belonging if learning is embracing their culture and language. Many pre-service teachers stated that since South African learners are coming from diverse backgrounds, they bring to the classroom environment many languages, which are unfortunately not recognised, as English is the medium of instruction. Similarly, Taylor and Fintel (2016) admit that there are concerns in South African schools surrounding the policy debate on language of instruction issues. They further reveal that there is empirical evidence of better academic performance and second language acquisition skills when learners are taught in their first language. This

implies that South African schools are facing challenges of language of instruction, English is usually the most widely used language as a medium of instruction, however the challenge is – which language to use considering the diversity of languages. One could argue that since learners are so diverse which language of instruction can be selected as the medium of instruction, if English was to be dropped? Could this not be another form of domination of other languages? This is surely a puzzle to solve for another day.

Third, overcrowded classrooms were also raised as another exclusionary practice. Pre-service teachers were concerned about the practicability of implementing Inclusive Education with high levels of learners in the classes. One of them had this to say,

> *Overcrowded classes are an exclusionary factor because it becomes a challenge to implement inclusive practices with such big numbers. For instance, one – on – one is impossible as the teacher – learner ratio is as high as 1:50 or even more in some cases. As a result, teachers only move with those learners who are performing well, and you cannot blame them. The large numbers make inclusive practices difficult to implement.*

This implies that the large numbers of learners per class are a hindrance to Inclusive Education practices as they challenge the practicability of attending to individual needs of all learners. One pre-service teacher argued that inclusive pedagogy calls for learners to be allowed to develop at their paces. This is in line with what Greenstein (2016) posits that schooling is heavily organised around age as the main factor that determines progression in predictable ways. This means that according to Greenstein the fact that schools heavily rely on age as a prediction of development is problematic as it excludes those who have not met the expected standards of development by a certain age.

Arguably, if the progression of learners is not determined by age, then grades will end up having several different age group, which will be a challenge to both the teacher and learners. For instance, teachers will face the challenge of dealing with more than one age group as earlier indicated in the literature review, Rensburg (2015). This implies that for learning to be successful, from a developmental perspective, learners should be put according to the ages to avoid leaving some learners behind. Therefore, Greenstein's (2016) argument of heavy reliance on age as problematic need to be revisited. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons in the South African context there is the rule of learner progression (Department of Basic Education, 2012). This implies that

learners cannot be allowed to stay in one grade for longer than two years as they will be overaged for that grade and problematic.

Fourth, pre-service teachers expressed their understanding of exclusion as referring to teachers' traditional practices that fail to accommodate all learners. For instance, one pre-service teacher raised her concerns by stating the following,

> *I have a problem with teachers who just talk, write on the board and use none or limited practical examples in their lessons.*

This indicates that pre-service teachers have been made aware of the specialised ways of teaching at Grade R level. The learners at this level are in their early stages of development, they have short concentration spans, their listening skills need to be stimulated through the use of learning aids appealing to most, in not all their senses. Thus, effective teaching at this level, involves the stimulation of all senses, which is mostly achieved through practical activities, for full participation. Thus, one of them stated,

> *We learnt about early childhood development through ECD course, issues like; their concentration span, ways of helping these learners listen attentively, ways of stimulating and arousing their interests, in fact they learn through play, that's why their lesson plans are not formally structured like formal grades.*

This indicates that pre-service teachers appreciated the knowledge they gained from their ITE programme. The ITE programme has mostly equipped pre-service teachers in relation with preparedness for effective handling of inclusive Grade R environments but that they continue to require support in implementing specific inclusive pedagogical practices such as differentiation.

Additionally, this sentiment also indicates pre-service teachers 'awareness of inclusive practices, which engages learners as active participants. Accordingly, Makoelle (2014) argues that Inclusive Education uses inclusive pedagogical strategies which are constructive, drawing on teachers' creativity and novelty to enhance meaningful learning. This means that inclusive teaching is not like traditional teaching which is teacher centred, rather teachers encourage and guide learners to construct their knowledge through interacting with them.

Fifth, pre-service teachers 'responses indicated that learners were excluded due to socio-economic background. One of them mentioned the following mentioned the following,

> *Some teachers marginalise learners due to financial status, for instance, teachers can ask learners to bring learning/sport material that they know most learners from poor socio-economic background will fail to uphold.*

The same concern was earlier mentioned by another pre-service as excluding some learners in section 4.3.3.3 above.

This shows discrimination of learners in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds.

4.2.4.3 Experiences with particular methods

Pre-service teachers also demonstrated their experiences with various methods they encountered during teaching experience. This last sub-theme had three sub themes: (1) ability grouping, (2) differentiation, and (3) play zones.

4.2.4.3.1 Ability grouping

There were mixed perceptions from pre-service teachers' responses about the use of ability grouping. Contrary to the views of the majority of pre-service teachers, one pre-service teacher had this to say about ability grouping,

> *… Speaking to children at their respective level usually done in groups from where children are grouped according to their abilities, provided the groups are changed weekly.*

This indicates the idea of grouping learners according to abilities, which is a debatable practice for Inclusive Education.

On the one hand, literature reveals otherwise, stating that separating learners according to abilities perpetuates exclusion and discrimination (Hornby and Witte, 2014). According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) ability grouping does not support the learning of all but some learners, which is against Inclusive Education pedagogical practices. This implies that ability grouping splits learners in terms of "able" learners from those who are less "able". Additionally, literature reveals that ministries of education need to provide schools with guidance on using practices that are evidence-based for grouping learners (Slavin,1996). Hornby and Witte (2014) concur that this can be achieved by working together with educational psychologists who play a crucial role in helping schools develop effective practices and policies.

On the other hand, ability grouping could yield positive results if handling properly. Literature reveals that there are certain types of grouping which could be effective as part of a coherent strategy for adjusting instruction to meet the needs of individuals

(Slavin, 1988 & Anderson et al.1979, 1985). This could mean that ability grouping as another type of grouping could be effectively used in some classroom instances. For example, using temporary ability grouping in elementary classrooms have encouraged hard working amongst learners as they always thrive to be in the best group (Slavin (1988). This implies that if learners are not in static groups, ability grouping can be effective; it can encourage everybody in class to work harder to be assigned a better group. This is a different line of thinking which can be tested in practice; perhaps it can prove to be an inclusive pedagogical practice. One pre-service teacher was not sure whether to adopt or reject ability grouping, she stated,

> *I can say yes and no to ability grouping. Yes, because not all learners have the same conceptualisation capacity, and no, because ability grouping is an exclusionary practice.*

This implies that this pre-service teacher, and likely others as well, are caught in between using or not using ability grouping. Another pre-service teacher supported the view of ability grouping stating that it helps teachers to strategize according to the needs of learners, enables teachers to capitalise on strengths of learners.

Nonetheless, Ireson and Hallam (2005) encourage teachers to be aware of the heterogeneity of learners in their classes, hence, develop skills in teaching a wide range of ability classes. This implies that teachers are encouraged to handle diverse learners instead of separating them, be it separation in terms of grouping, or any type of marginalisation. In agreement to this Bansal (2014) postulates that acknowledging differences can be likened to a vehicle that brings about the celebration of individual differences in Inclusive Education. This, further argues Bansal (2014), is essential for transforming classrooms into a garden of diversity reflected in the form of lovely and diverse colours and shades. Surely viewing diversity in this way can lead to a lot of positive outcomes. Accordingly, Hornby and Witte (2014) and Ireson and Hallam (2005) agree that all teachers need to know the required strategic abilities to handle mixed skill communities, including differentiated curriculum and teaching materials and UDL.

4.2.4.3.2 Differentiation

Pre-service teachers demonstrated their understanding of differentiation as an important inclusive strategy. One of them stated this,

> *The first and foremost thing when differentiating is to know your learners, then you are in a better position to understand them with their differences.*

This implies that one cannot plan effective lessons for a group of learners they do not know, as they need to take into account issues of learners' weaknesses, strengths and differences. Hence, Tomlinson (1999) argues that it is only after acquiring such information about learners, a teacher can commence the differentiation process. In addition to this one pre-service teacher argued,

> *Knowing and starting off from where your learners are, is a very important element for differentiation, which is the very opportunity our ITE program is not availing to us.*

This indicates that pre-service teachers perceived their teaching experience to be very short for them to acquire knowledge about their learners and begin to implement differentiation. Thus, Tomlinson (1999) emphasises the need to be cognisant of learners' differences, such as; cultural backgrounds, various parenting styles, to capture attention of learners. This suggests the importance of getting to know learners before drafting effective lesson plans which will be responsive to the needs of learners.

Additionally, pre-service teachers stated that it is important for teachers to know their learners to avoid exclusionary practices. One pre-service teacher said,

> *Knowing your learners is the first and foremost priority, because knowledge of your learners will help the teacher to use a familiar language, familiar concepts which are readily available and avoid labelling learners.*

This implies that if a teacher has knowledge about his/her learners, they would be in a position to use the accepted language, use familiar learning /visual aids as well as avoid using offensive language. Another teacher stated,

> *If one has knowledge about their learners, they can strategize learning approaches and embrace human variations, hence giving deserved respect to all learners.*

According to Rensburg (2015), young learners are to be taught in a language that they understand and are familiar with. This implies that teachers should deliver concepts in a language learners understand, not a foreign language. Therefore, getting to know the learners first will assist teachers to get information on the local language, then strategize accordingly

4.2.4.3.3 Play zones

Playing zones also came as a segment under the sub-theme experiences with particular methods, which pre-service teachers encountered during their teaching experience. Pre-service teachers indicated that they view play as an effective teaching method at Grade R. Some of the sentiments were,

> *When learners are engaged in their play zones, they are free to express themselves, correct one another, model to others and even instil discipline to the fellows.*

This reveals the strengths of allowing learners to work in the play stations, as they play constructively.

Another pre-service teacher supported this by stating,

> *Through play children learn ways of living and working together harmoniously, this teaches them that people should live and share ideas within the society.*

This shows the importance of providing learners with opportunities like group works, pair work, and storytelling or assigning learners to work on a project, where they work in a playful method. According to Florian and Black – Hawkins (2011) play zones are intended to encourage full participation of everybody, including those learners viewed as having learning challenges. This means that it is mostly likely in play zones, where learners get to open up to others and explore the learning environment without being pressured. This was observed by pre-service teachers during their teaching experienced as a good method at Grade R level.

4.3 Discussion of findings

The above emerged themes were contrasted with the theoretical framework, ITE and the Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginner Teachers (PSITBT), which inform this study. The PSITBT are proposed standards, waiting to be added to SACE standards for inclusive teaching in South Africa, as discussed in the literature review chapter.

The theoretical framework is considered relevant to the study specifically considering its three major assumptions:

- Shift from focusing only on certain learners as needing additional support to supporting the needs of everybody.

- Dismissal of deterministic views about disability, presence of different learners will hinder the progress of other learners.
- Strategies of working with and through other adults which respect the learners' dignity as full community members.

These assumptions were demonstrated by the responses of pre-service teachers through the four identified themes. The table in the literature review section consisting three inclusive pedagogical assumptions, proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginner Teachers were contrasted with the findings of the study to develop discussions of findings as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Comparison of Pedagogical Assumptions and Proposed Standards against Findings

Inclusive Pedagogical Framework: Assumptions	Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginner teachers (2017)	Findings of the study
1. Shift from focusing only on certain learners as needing additional support to supporting the needs of everybody.	**1. Agency for inclusion and social justice** 1.1. **Understanding exclusion:** 1.1.1. New teachers are able to recognize excluding and marginalising practices and attitudes to learners. 1.1.2. New teachers understand historical development of Inclusive Education locally and globally as a response to practices that are exclusionary.	- Participants mostly understand and can identify examples of exclusionary practices - Some contradiction was noted in participant responses that failed to recognise fixed ability grouping as potentially marginalising - Participants made some reference to the Salamanca Statement indicating some awareness of global history and development but this was not elaborated on their experiences in schools
	1.2. **Foundational theories and concepts in Inclusive Education:** 1.2.1. New teachers have a theoretical groundwork for their sustenance in inclusive pedagogical practices 1.2.2. New teachers comprehend concepts critical to Inclusive Education, such as equity, social	- Participants expressed the perception that they are aware of policy i.e. White Paper Six - It emerged clearly that whilst participants feel they understand theory they feel less prepared for practice -Most participants understood concepts related to Inclusive Education although contradictions were noted, for instance;

	justice, redress, human rights and democracy	some responses indicated that there those who are of the idea the use of the bell-curve system as they think in any normal class, there are those who will excel, the average and the below average, which is a naturalised misconception teachers work with, which is excluding and violates rights of humans. Then there are those who think the curriculum demand and the time needed to cater for learners in need of support is overwhelming teachers. -Almost all participants recognize and respect the democratic rights of all learners are citizens and are prepared to redress the social injustices some learners have been subjected to.
2. Dismissal of deterministic views about disability, presence of different learners will hinder the progress of other learners	**2. Understanding and Valuing learner diversity**	
	2.1. **Diversity literacy for transformation**: 2.1.1. New teachers understand the multiplicity, complexities, as well as intersectionality of diversity in the context of Southern Africa 2.1.2.New teachers demonstrate an awareness of how institutionalised oppression and diversity hierarchies are constructed and sustained	-Participants were able to overcome and adjust the misconception that the presence of *some* learners disrupts the learning of other learners -Participants demonstrated appreciation that learners are different in many ways, such as; cultural background, language, gender, socio-economic status, among many others. -Most participants showed appreciation of inclusive pedagogy which taught them to embrace diversity in human variations. - Participants demonstrated how oppression is constructed through medicalised practices that are exclusionary, which teachers need to reject for inclusive pedagogical practices.

	2.2. **Diversity as a resource and strength for teaching and learning:** 2.2.1. New teachers recognise, value, and respect the individual strengths of varied learners 2.2.2. New teachers recognise and appreciate diverse educational needs 2.2.3. New teachers make teaching and learning relevant, accessible, and suitable for diverse learners	-Participants revealed that they have acquired knowledge about what diversity entails. -Participants demonstrated that all learners have strengths and weaknesses, thus, teachers need to recognize individual needs in order to be responsive for inclusive environments. -Participants demonstrated the value of differentiation to embrace diversity -Participants expressed that diversity should be viewed by teachers as a challenge to strategize their teaching methods, not to view it as a learners' challenge -Most of the participants were able to identify diversity, in terms of; language, background, race, colour, among others. -Participants stated that their lesson plans have to take into cognisance the type of learners in their classrooms, hence the need to know their learners before drafting lesson plans for them - Most participants showed concern on the time they spent on teaching experience, that it is inadequate to gain enough knowledge about learners

3. Strategies of working with and through other adults which respect the learners' dignity as full community members	**3. Classroom practices that support and promote individual and collaborative learning**	-Most participants acknowledged the benefits of working together -Participants were aware of different collaborations, however, it was evident from their responses that pre-service teachers have not been practically exposed to many collaborations except teacher – parent collaborations - There few indications of collaborations between teachers and teachers in some responses, however it was only between the supervising teacher and the pre-service teacher, and not with other teachers -Responses from participants revealed that pre-service teachers have been made aware of strategizing individual support plans -Participants were able to plan the individual support plans, however, they complained about not getting enough time on teaching experience to implement their strategies.
	3.1 Classroom strategies pedagogically calculated to be responsive to the needs of diverse learners 3.1.1 New teachers design and use a multiple of instructional strategies	

	3.1.2 New teachers are knowledgeable on ways of differentiating instruction, curriculum, and assessment 3.1.3 New teachers provide a safe, enabling and well – managed environment 3.1.4 New teachers meet diverse learning needs by integrating ICT	-Participants were aware of that collaboration and reflection enhances inclusive teaching and learning -They appreciated the assistance they get from their supervising teachers -Participants appreciated working with parents as they get to know learners from a parent's perspective -However, they expressed concern that they do not get opportunities to work with other teachers outside their supervisors
	3.2 Individual asset- based support 3.2.1 New teachers strategize asset-based approach to meet individual learner needs 3.2.2 New teachers appreciate the process and purpose of Individual Support Plans development and implementation	-Participants' responses demonstrated that they value families, parents and caregivers' collaborations. - They demonstrated this by highlighting the value of parents' information about learners. - Participants showed that they as teachers also possess valuable knowledge and skills, that if it is coupled with parents' knowledge it would hugely benefit learners.
	4. Collaboration to enable inclusive learning and teaching	-Participants also demonstrated the value of roles played by education interested stakeholders, such as; various community based, professional, NGO and other support partners
	4.1 School based colleagues' collaboration 4.1.1 New teachers appreciate the importance of collaborative planning, teaching, as well as reflection, as an effort to develop inclusive practices	-Participants demonstrated that they are in a better position to identify which organisations could be useful in supporting the needs of certain

	4.1.2 New teachers are knowledgeable and implement skills and dispositions necessary for effective collaboration 4.1.3 New teachers are able to implement the necessary skills to collaborate with school based support structures and colleagues **4.2 Partnering with families, parents, and caregivers** 4.2.1 New teachers appreciate the responsibilities and role of families, parents and caregivers 4.2.2 New teachers respect and value the unique knowledge and skills of families, parents and caregivers 4.2.3 New teachers have the essential knowledge to build families, parents and caregivers / teacher collaborative partnerships **4.3. Accessing external support** 4.3.1 New teachers have acquired and understand the responsibilities and roles of various community based, professional, NGO and other support partners 4.3.2 New teachers are in a position to identify suitable collaborative partners in response to the support needs of individual teachers and learners **5. Professional development as an inclusive teacher**	learners, hence they should be consulted whenever such decisions are made. -Participants demonstrated awareness of being inclusive and ethical in handling their duties. -Participants showed this by emphasizing that they have learned that every learner has a potential for improvement, provided their individual needs are met. -Participants demonstrated their preparedness to recognise and respond to confidentiality and dignity of every learner together with their families. -Participants appreciated the value of reflecting on their lesson deliveries afterwards with their supervising teachers -Participants demonstrated the value of their personal wellness when they mentioned that too much emphasis is given to learners and they are left out with all pressure to carry by themselves

	5.1. Becoming an inclusive and ethical teacher 5.1.1 New teachers recognise all learners' learning potential and assume responsibility to help learners reach their potential 5.1.2. New teachers recognise and respond to dilemmas that are ethical in the inclusive classroom 5.1.3. New teachers respect the confidentiality and dignity of learners and families **5.2 Becoming a reflective inclusive teacher** 5.2.1 New teachers appreciate the value of a reflection-action process 5.2.2 New teachers critically reflect on how teaching practices constrain and enable learning 5.2.3 New teachers reflect on individual wellness and identify its impact on teaching	

Under the theme: Importance of Grade R, pre-services teachers demonstrated that it is in this grade where inclusive practices should commence. This agrees with the one of the five key ideas that arise from the works of the three authors, (Florian and Walton (2017), Florian and Spratt (2013) as well as those of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010), on inclusive pedagogy together with those from the PSITBT. The primary key idea is the need for agency for social justice and inclusion. This has been demonstrated through pre-service teachers' responses, which showed that pre-service teachers can identify exclusionary practices.

Pre-service teachers also revealed what they perceived about ITE based training as well as school based training. Their responses revealed the importance of coupling ITE

training with teaching experience. This was revealed by pre-service teachers mentioning that they did not get enough time to implement what the theories they have learned because of the inadequacy of time spent in teaching experience. Pre-service teachers also mentioned that sometimes, especially when under pressure, they have found themselves using methods they saw their teachers using rather than those they acquired from the ITE programme. This shows how important it is for teachers to be aware of their practices as they are role models.

Additionally, under the theme: Understanding of Concepts, pre-service teachers revealed how they conceptualise major concepts like; diversity, inclusion, exclusion, inclusive pedagogy and differentiation. Their conceptualisation of the terms have a profound effect on their practices, (Walton, 2016). This concurs with the promotion of supporting classroom practices raised by Florian Black-Hawkins (2010) and the PSITBT, which works against the deterministic understandings that views ability as static. Deterministic views should be replaced by use of differentiation strategies, which were pre-service teachers experienced during their teaching experience, such as; ability grouping, differentiation as well as play zones

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the data collection process, emergence of themes, both from the qualitative surveys and the interviews, converged themes from both data collection sets and the overarching themes. Four overarching themes have been discussed in response to the problem statement and aim of the study to answer the specific raised questions of the study. These have later been contrasted with the framework of the study that is informed by the works of Florian and Walton (2017), Florian and Spratt (2013), Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) and the PSITBT. It was discovered that pre-service teachers view Grade R as important both to learners and teachers. To the learners, Grade R is important for laying the foundation for future learning, whilst for teachers, it teaches them how young learners learn, how they want to be treated and the best approaches of handling diversity at this level.

Furthermore, pre-service teachers demonstrated what they perceive as preparedness for teaching in inclusive environments. They emphasised the importance of coupling ITE training with adequate time for teaching experience. They also demonstrated the importance of teachers' practices as role models, as they (pre-service teachers)

sometimes use methods that were administered to them during their schooling days, especially when under pressure. The chapter also looked at ways pre-service teachers conceptualise concepts like; diversity, inclusion, exclusion, inclusive pedagogy and differentiation, which have a profound effect of how they enact inclusive practices. It was discovered that the ITE programme have indeed empowered pre-service teachers with the much needed knowledge as indicated by their perceptions on what and how they feel about the exclusionary practices they witnessed during their practicing periods. For instance, pre-service teachers demonstrated logical reasoning when arguing about the practicability of inclusion implementation, using inclusive strategies, which require extended time from teachers, whilst at the same time, teachers are required to meet the expected standards of the national curriculum. These findings were used in the next chapter to answer the research questions.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by looking at the previous chapter's results and using them with the research questions. The research study raised the main question: In what ways do 4th year pre-service teachers feel about the ITE programme at one HEI in Gauteng support the preparation of Grade R teachers for teaching inclusively in diverse contexts? To address this question, three sub-questions were designed and discussed below.

Answering Research Questions Using Research Findings

1. **Which aspects of the ITE programme address and prepare 4th year pre-service teachers for inclusive environments?**

Responses from pre-service teachers showed that theories learned from the ITE programme had a profound effect on effective preparation for inclusive environments. Pre-service teachers were made aware of shifting their focus as teachers, from focusing only on certain learners, especially those identified as needing extra support to supporting the needs of every learner. These theories were to be cemented through the teaching experience, which is another aspect of the ITE programme, a continuation of the training.

First, the ITE programme exposed pre-service teachers to various policies that underpin inclusive teaching and learning. For instance, In Inclusive Education 111, pre-service teachers stated that they learned about various policies, like the South African Constitution, Salamanca Statement, EWP6, SIAS, among others and principles of teaching in inclusive environments. These policy documents widened pre-service teachers' conceptualisation about recognising and welcoming diversity. ECD course introduced pre-service teachers to early childhood development policies, which has a profound effect on handling young learners in schools, understanding the stages of development. The study of policies also informed pre-service teachers about their roles as teachers at Grade R level, which is very important considering that learning at this stage is less structured, not formal.

Second, the theory aspect of the ITE programme conscientized pre-service teachers about exclusionary practices, which, they, like most people, took for granted. For

instance, the widely accepted and naturalized use of the bell-curve system, which has led to the teaching of learners in separate units. Pre-service teachers did acknowledge that they also used to think these are right practices, designed to assist those that have learning difficulties. However, with the knowledge acquired from the ITE programme, they adjusted their conceptualisation of issues of inclusion and exclusionary practices. For instance, theories of disability studies, reveal that those with learning challenges do not need charity or sympathy but equal treatment like any other human being. Pre-service teachers have acquired knowledge about diversity, that differences in people should be welcomed and embraced because they are human variations.

Third, studies in Inclusive Education aspect of the ITE programme conscientized pre-services teachers on the deterministic views about ability (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). They learned that any learner has the potential to improve performance provided their needs are met. Thus, teachers are encouraged to use differentiation to cater for the needs of all learners, rather than catering for the most and providing additional help alongside. Pre-service teachers did acknowledge the proactive approach, which works to cater for any potential challenges that might arise, instead of waiting for learners to show signs of struggling then providing support. This has helped pre-service teachers to find ways of differentiating lessons, (Tomlinson, 1999), taking into account the interests of learners, learning styles, strengths as well as their weaknesses when planning lessons.

However, pre-service teachers have raised concerns that despite acquiring all these theories and being armed with relevant knowledge, they failed to adequately put all these theories into practice. The reasons for failure to practice the acquired theories were twofold. First, because of inadequate time spent on teaching experience, pre-service teachers complained that the teaching experience period was over before they could even know their learners. They emphasized the importance of knowing your learners as it is key to differentiating lesson plans. For a teacher to be able to effectively differentiate lessons and cater for everybody's needs, they should start by getting to know their learners. Therefore, the teaching experience periods were not accommodating that process of pre-service teachers getting information about the learners. Of course learners' profiles and supervising teachers could be sources of information about learners, pre-service teachers felt they needed to acquire that

information on their own, information that will be free from bias from the previous teacher (s).

Second, pre-service teachers mentioned that they failed to practice theory in the field because there were clashes between the inclusive principles they have acquired and the educational system arrangement (McIntyre, 2009). For instance, on the one hand, the ITE programme taught them to teach inclusively without discriminating any learners, all learners to be taught in the mainstream. On the other hand, when pre-service teachers get to schools, schools were arranged in terms of those who are educable and those who are non-educable, the traditional view of inclusive pedagogy (Makoelle, 2014). There are special units/classes for learners facing learning challenges, manned by special teachers, and classes for the so-called normal learners. As a result, pre-service teachers are forced to teach exclusively, they are not allowed to practise teaching inclusively. Justifiable, the education system is structured in this way, considering that teachers are expected to meet the set national standards which they are gauged against. As a result, the system overrides the SIAS conclusions, (DBE, 2014), which views everybody as needing additional support, not only learners with learning challenges.

Nonetheless, the teaching experience did expose pre-service teachers to many inclusionary and exclusionary practices, which helped them to compare the theories they learned and what is exactly happening in the field of teaching. This, additionally, stimulated their reasoning capacities as they realised that the discrepancies in the education system need restructuring (Walton, 2016). This implies that the current structures do not encourage inclusive practices and continuous collaborative work. This designing of strategies of working with and through other adults which respect the learners' dignity as full community members, (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011), is the third assumption raised in the theoretical framework. Therefore, pre-service teachers discovered that their ITE programme addressed and armed them for teaching inclusively, however, there is discontinuity, McIntyre (2009), of inclusive principles in the teaching field.

Pre-service teachers also learned that Grade R is not only important to learners only but to teachers as well. Teachers get to learn how learners learn, how they develop confidence as they interact with their peers through specialised teaching approaches in

Grade R, such as; play zones, ability grouping and differentiation. These teaching approaches are learning opportunities which are not provided in formal learning. The specialised approaches are also noted by Rogoff (2003) as previously mentioned in the literature review that they act as amplifiers for improved academic performance in later years. Pre-service teachers also intensified their understanding of concepts like; diversity, inclusion, inclusive pedagogy through teaching experiences. It is through teaching experience that pre-service teachers realised what preparedness means to them. They demonstrated that preparedness to them is in terms of the ITE training as well as school based training that was administered to them during their school days.

2. In what ways are 4th year Foundation Phase pre-service teachers prepared to enact inclusive pedagogy?

The findings revealed that the 4th year Foundation phase pre-service teachers have been prepared in several ways to enact inclusive pedagogy. First, pre-service teachers were made aware of the importance of Grade R as a right to every individual as it is the foundation for future learning and giving equal opportunities to all citizens. This helped pre-service teachers realise that all learners should commence their learning at least from Grade R, if not before. Grade R in South Africa have been made mandatory to everybody, not only to the few.

Second, through understanding of concepts like; diversity, inclusion, inclusive pedagogy, differentiation, which have a profound effect on successful implementation of inclusive practices, Pre-service teachers were armed to enact inclusive pedagogy through being made aware of the major concepts in Inclusive Education. The concept of diversity taught pre - service teachers that humans have many variations, they are different in numerous ways, but all variations are equally important and should be treated with dignity. In inclusive pedagogy pre-service teachers learnt that teachers should work towards embracing every learner by adopting a proactive approach, an approach that extends what is available to everybody. Admittedly, this works against the generally accepted and naturalised misconception that the performance of learners should always be bell-curved. The concept of inclusive pedagogy helped pre-service teachers to adjust their thinking and be in a position to embark on extending what is generally available to everybody.

Third, through using specialised and learning approaches relevant to the Grade R level. Particular methods such as; ability grouping, differentiation and play zones among others. Pre-service teachers have been prepared to enact inclusive pedagogy through the ability grouping teaching and learning approach. This approach helped pre-service teachers realise that ability grouping has its advantages and disadvantages. For instance, pre-service teachers were conscientized that on the one hand, several literature does not support separation of learners in terms of ability (Hornby and Wittee, 2014, Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). However, on the other hand, some literature (Slavin, 1988 and Anderson et al.1979, 1985), reveal that if ability grouping is handled properly, it can yield good results. Slavin further elaborates that temporary ability grouping has proved successful in early learning classes. This could mean that ability grouping can encourage hard work when practices over shorter periods with young learners.

Fourth, through awareness of exclusionary practices and avoiding them. Pre-service teachers have been made aware of the many taken for granted exclusionary practices which hinder successful implementation of inclusive pedagogy. Many pre-service teachers were not aware of exclusionary practices, which made them susceptible to fall into the habit of intentionally and unintentionally violating the rights of learners who appear different from others. Therefore, the ITE programme helped pre-service teachers to adjust their perception about human variation.

3. How do 4th year Foundation Phase student teachers demonstrate responsiveness to developmental needs for Grade R learners?

The 4th year pre-service teachers demonstrated their responsiveness through identifying exclusionary practices in schools. They were able to identifying during their teaching experiences that some learners were excluded from full participation in five ways.

First, through the use of English language only as the medium of instruction. This hindered the full participation of learners who are not first English language speakers, thus the creation of social inequalities at an early age.

Second, pre- service teachers were able to identify that some learners were wrongly diagnosed by teachers as needing additional support of suffering from ADHD. As a

result, such learners were stigmatised and excluded from learning. Pre-service teachers believed that diagnosis should be best be left to experts who are trained for it.
Third, pre-service teachers mentioned teachers' traditional practices as another exclusionary practice. These traditional practices work against the principles of inclusion as they are stuck in ways that view some learners as lesser than others.

Fourth, pre-service teachers showed their responsiveness to the developmental needs of Grade R by arguing against the large class sizes which hinder the implementation of inclusion. They argue that with the large class sizes, it is difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to teach inclusively. For instance, accommodating the individual needs of more than fifty learners is not practical.

Lastly, pre-service teachers mentioned the issue of socio-economic background as another hindrance of learners' full participation. They stated that they have seen learners being selected for certain sporting activities, based on their social standing.

Responses to the three sub-questions answered the main overall question: In what ways do 4th year pre-service teachers feel about the ITE programme at one HET in Gauteng support the preparation of Grade R teachers for teaching inclusively in diverse contexts? It was concluded that indeed the ITE programme conscientized pre-service teachers to move away from focusing only on learners identified as needing support to viewing everybody as needing support. The ITE programme also helped pre-service teachers to view the widely accepted and naturalised use of exclusionary practices like the bell-curve system with a different lens. This view assisted pre-service teachers to avoid deterministic views about ability as fixed. Pre-service teachers demonstrated their total engagement by highlighting their concerns, such as, the challenge of failing to practice theory in the teaching field, which is caused by inadequate time provided and clashes between the education system arrangement and the inclusive principles. The ITE programme additionally armed pre-service teachers to teach effectively in Grade R inclusive classrooms in various ways. Pre-service teachers acquired knowledge about the main following issues; Grade R is a requirement to every learner in South Africa, concepts in inclusive pedagogical practices, use of specialised approaches in Grade R, and awareness about exclusionary practices. In turn pre-service teachers demonstrated their responsiveness to Grade R developmental needs through; being able to identify

exclusionary practices in schools, through; use of dominant language, wrong diagnosis of learners, teachers' traditional ways which are against inclusive practices, large numbers of learners per class and socio-economic background discrimination of learners.

5.2 Limitations of the study

It is acknowledged that the study is not annulled of limitations. Time was the primary limitation of the study, as the study was confined to only a year. This restricted the researcher into following the progress of the pre-service teachers from the time they were in the campus up to the time on teaching experience. Attached to the time factor is the issue of the latest syllabus, since the study focused only on fourth years, it was pointed out that the third years are doing a different curriculum, which could alter the findings of the study.

Another limitation is that the respondents were from one HET institutions in Gauteng, hence, external validity is reduced. There is a possibility that pre-service teachers, because of the administration and socialisation in one institution, answered questions grounded on social desirability (McCray and McHattton, 2011). According to Fisher (1993), social desirability is defined as a systematic error, a consequential of deceiving oneself and others, a desire to avoid certain issues viewed as embarrassing to project a favourable appearance to others. This could mean that if other data collecting tools were used, using methods that avoid the interviewer's presence (Grimm, 2010), chances are, different findings could be obtained, hence rendering social desirability a limitation. This suggests the possibility of getting different responses from other HET institutions, therefore, results from the study cannot be generalized as perceptions of all pre-service teachers.

The research project's main aim, pre-service teachers ' expectations of how their ITE prepares them for teaching in inclusive settings, has been in itself a constraint. This is because these are only perceptions of pre-service teachers, which their educators might have different views, or if further research is done using their modules might give different results. Again, the fact that this study was a case study is a limitation in that it only looked at pre-service teachers' perceptions of one ITE institution. The tools used for collecting data were also a limitation, responses from interviews and questionnaires

could be more affirmed through the use of observations. If pre-service teachers were also observed in classrooms, enacting inclusive practices perhaps that was likely to further confirm their responses.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher recommends engagement in a more extensive study to compare findings from several ITE programmes. It is also recommended in the future to study the pre-service teachers' perceptions, lecturer's perceptions in contrast with the courses offered by the ITE programme for triangulation purposes.

Infusing inclusion across the ITE programme is recommended for enhancing inclusive practices and, this is argued by McCray and McHattton (2011) as largely dependent on the instructor's knowledge. This could mean that teacher educators need to be supported by other experts, (collaborative teaching), to provide equal and quality content to all pre-service teachers. Consequently, training pre-service teachers collaboratively will teach them to be open to co- teaching in schools, realising that not every teacher can be skilled in all teaching aspects (McCray and McHattton, 2011). This suggests that teachers have the potential to leverage skills and knowledge amongst colleagues to respond to inclusive environments.

Admittedly, literature, (Brownell, Ross, Colon, and McCallum, 2005; Boling, 2007; Lombardi and Hunka, 2001; Hastings and Oakford, 2003), support that most teacher education studies include content on; inclusion, behaviour management, collaboration with families and other professionals, however, pedagogy used for teacher preparation for inclusion and collaboration is lacking. This suggests that ITE programme should be cautious and include, teachers' efficacy, which is one of the valuable aspects of training teachers to handle inclusive environments. Thus, posits Pugach (2005), teacher educators should understand pre-service teachers' needs and highlight the importance of acquiring needed skills in inclusive practices.

Noteworthy, responses from pre-service teachers showed a positive attitude towards collaborative teaching. However, there was no evidence of pre-service teachers being exposed to collaborative teaching, neither in schools where they practiced nor in the training institution. Therefore, as much as it is commendable that collaborative teaching

is taught theoretically, it is also recommended that it be applied practically as well, both in schools and in the ITE institution. Teacher educators might argue that collaborative theory is part of the ITE programme.

However, although literature supports that theory should be coupled with practice, findings revealed discrepancies between theory and practice (Brantlinger, 2008 & McIntyre, 2006). This shows that even though pre-service teachers are well aware of what to do as professionals, they are compelled and pressured by the push for popularity competition, which is measured by evaluations of courses through standardised national examinations of the educational system. Consequently, yielding to violating principles of inclusive pedagogy, as most teachers do in the field. This is what Brantlinger (2008) terms, “yielding to demands of safe official understanding and known practice, even if it deviates from the learnt knowledge”. This could suggest the practice of pedagogy that is not inclusive, pedagogy that not only tolerates discrimination, but promotes it, hence perpetuating inequalities in societies. Thus, Walton (2016) argues for the reconstruction of educational practices, which will work in tandem with the inclusive pedagogical practices. Consequently, Grade R learners enter formal learning underprepared, mostly, not because their teachers are not adequately prepared for teaching these learners, but because teachers are pressured to yield to the expected demands, which violates inclusive pedagogical practices. This surely cannot be achieved by teachers alone, thus, working together of all interested stakeholders is commendable for the holistic development of Grade R learners, who needs a firm foundation for future effective learning.

Lastly, it is recommended that the Department of Education assumes responsibility for employment of qualified personnel starting from Grade R teachers not just from Grade One. Leaving out Grade R opens opportunities for the commencement of social inequalities, as those who are more privileged will take their children to better places to acquire needed skills for Grade One which cannot be afforded by the poor ones. Therefore, providing equal opportunities to all learners involves levelling teachers of all learners at par.

Putting together these recommendations, and linking them to the problem of this study, that learners enter Grade One underprepared, shows that to overcome this problem,

the following points are worthy of consideration: (ii) Collaboration of all stakeholders coupled with teachers' efficacy are important in equipping Grade R teachers for handling inclusive environments. (ii) Continuity between theory and practice, which could be achieved through the reconstruction of educational system. (ii) Equal remuneration of all teachers, inclusive of Grade R teachers by the Department of Education.

5.4 Conclusion

Chapter five has shown that pre-service teachers perceive one ITE institution in Gauteng as having adequately prepared them for handling inclusive environments at Grade R level. This has been achieved in various aspects of the ITE programme, such as; learning of child development theories, cementing theories through teaching experience during attachments, and exposure to respective policy documents. Pre-service teachers learnt that Grade R learning is not to be acquired by the few but by everybody as it is a right to every learner in South Africa, it is mandatory to all. Pre-services teachers were also conscientized on exclusionary practices, such as; the widely naturalized use of bell-curve system which denies human variations. Pre-service teachers were also made aware of avoiding deterministic views about ability. Rather than viewing learners in deterministic views, pre-service teachers learnt of using differentiated instruction, which is proactive in approach. However, pre-service teachers' concerns were acknowledged as worthy of consideration, such as; inadequate teaching experience duration, discontinuity of inclusive practices in the schools where they are to practice theories learnt. Hence, the need for restructuring the education system and collaborative working with all interested stakeholders.

References

Adderley, R.J., Hope, M.A., Hughes, G.C., Jones, L. and Messiou, K. (2015). Exploring Inclusive Practices in Primary Schools: Focusing on children's voices. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 30(1), 106-121.

Republic of Africa South. (1996). South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Ainscow, M. (1999). Understanding the development of inclusive schools. London: Falmer.

Ainscow, M. (2005). Developing Inclusive Education systems: What are the levers for change? Journal of educational change, 6(2), 109-124.

Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A. and Spandagou, I. (2011). Inclusion By choice or by chance? . International Journal of Inclusive Education, 15(1), 29–39.

Artmore, E. (2013). Early Childhood Development in South Africa-progress since the apartheid. International Journal of Early Years Education, 21(2,3), 152-162.

Assembly, U. G. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UN General Assembly, 302(2).

Bansal, P. (2014). Educating Teachers for Celebrating Differences. Book Titled 'Marching to Different Drummers:Inclusive Education through Teacher Education. ISBN:978-93-8014-530-3.

Ball, S. J. (2012). Global Education Inc.: New policy networks and the neoliberal imaginary. Routledge.

Barber, M. M. and Mourshed, M. M. (2007). How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top.

Barbour, R. S. (1998). Mixing qualitative methods: quality assurance or qualitative quagmire? Qualitative health research, 8(3), 352-361.

Begley, S. (1996, February 19). Your child's brain. Newsweek, pp. 55-62.

Bloor, D. (1983). Wittgenstein: A social theory of knowledge. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Boling, E. (2007). “Yeah, but I still don't want to deal with it”. Changes in a Teacher Candidate's Conceptions of Inclusion. Teaching Education, 18(3), 217-231.

Brownell, M., Ross, D., Colon, E. and McCallum, C. (2005). Critical features of teacher preparation. A comparison with general teacher education. J. Spec. Educ, 38, 244-251.

Bruer, J. (1997). Education and Brain: A Bridge Too Far. Educational Researcher,Vol.26(8), 4-5.

Burkam, D. T. and Lee, V. E. (2002). Inequality at the starting gate: Social background differences in achievement as children begin school. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

Burrell, G. (1979). Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis. London: I-Ieinemann.

Christie, P. (1999). Inclusive Education in South Africa: Achieving equity and majority rights, In H. Daniels and P. Garner (Eds.)World yearbook of education (pp. 150-168). London: Kogan Publishers.

Clark, A. (2005). Listening and involving young children: A review of research and practice. Early Childhood Development and Care 175(6), 489-505.

Clarke, V. and Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. The psychologist, 26(2).

Crotty, J. (1989). The limits of Keynesian macroeconomic policy in the age of the global marketplace. Instability and change in the world economy, 82-100.

da Costa, M. (2003). The experiences if Inclusive Education in Mpumalanga and Northen Cape Provinces. South Africa: SCOPE.

Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G. and Sammons, P. . (2006). The personal and professional selves of teachers: Stable and unstable identities. British educational research journal, 32(4), 601-616.

DeBaryshe, B. D., Gorecki, D. M. and Mishima-Young, L. N. . (2009). Differentiated instruction to support high-risk preschool learners. NHSA DIALOG, 12(3), 227-244.

Denscombe, M. (1983). Ethnic group and friendship choice in the primary school, Educational Research, 25:3, 184-190, DOI: 10.1080/0013188830250304.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). Sociological methods: A sourcebook (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Deppeler, J. (2012). Developing inclusive practices: Innovation through collaboration. What works in inclusion (pp. 125–138). Developing inclusive practices: Innovation through collaboration. In C. Boyle & K. Topping (Eds.). England: Open University Press.

Deppeler,J., Lorema, T., Smith, R.A.L. and Florian, L. (Eds). (2015). Inclusive pedagogy across the curriculum: International perspectives on Inclusive Education,vol.7. Melbourne: Emerald.

Du Plessis, P., Conley, L. N. and Du Plessis, E. (2007). Teaching and learning in South African schools. Van Schaik Publishers.

Dyson, A. (2004). Inclusive Education: A global agenda? Japanese Journal of Special Education 41, no. 6, 613–25.

Engelbrecht, P. (2006). The implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa after ten years of democracy. European Journal of psychology of Education Vol 21(3), 253-264.

Engelbrecht,P. and Green, L. (2017). Responding to the challenges of Inclusive Education in Southern Africa (2nd Ed.). Van Schaik Publishers.

Engelbrecht,P., Nel,M., Smith,S. and Deventer,M. (2015). The idealism of education policies and the realities in schools: the implementation of Inclusive Education in South Africa. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 1-16.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching.In M.C. Whittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (3rd ed.). (pp. 119–161). Old Tappan,NJ: Macmillan.

Escobar, A. (1984). Discourse and power in development: Michel Foucault and the relevance of his work to the Third World. Alternatives, 10(3), 377-400.

Evans, J.,Myers R.G. and Ilfeld E. (2000). Early Childhood Counts: A Programming Guide on Early Childhood Care for Development. Washington D.C: World Bank.

Faucalt, M. (1977). Discipline and punish. London: Penguin.

Fendler,L. and Muzaffar, I. (2008). The history of the bell curve: Sorting and the idea of normal. Educational Theory 58(1), 63-82.

Ferguson, D. L. (2008). International trends in Inclusive Education: The continuing challenge to teach each one and everyone. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 23, 109–120.

Fielding, N., Fielding, J. L. and Fielding, J. L. (1986). Linking data (Vol. 4). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Firestone, W. (1987). Meaning in method:The rhetoric of quantitative and qualitative research. Educational Researcher, 16(7), 16–21.

Firestone, W. (1987). Meaning in method:The rhetoric of quantitative and qualitative research. Educational Researcher, 16(7), 16–21.

Fisk, A. (1989). Training consistent components of tasks: Developing an instructional system based on automatic/controlled processing theory to training of tactical command and control skills: Background and Task analytic methodology. In 33rd Annual Proceedings of the Human Factors, 31. 453-463.

Fisher, R. J. (1993). Social desirability bias and the validity of indirect questioning. Journal of consumer research, 20(2), 303-315.

Florian, L. (2012). Teacher education for inclusion. In C. Forlin (Ed,) Future directions for inclusive teacher education (pp. 212–220) . London, UK: Routledge.

Florian, L. (2014). Reimaging special education: Why new approaches are needed. In L. Florian (Ed.). London: Sage Publications, 9-22.

Florian, L. and Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. British Educational Research Journal, 37(5), 813-828.

Florian, L. and Spratt, J. (2013). Enacting inclusion: A framework for interrogating inclusive practice. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 28(2), 119-135.

Florian, L. and Walton, E. (2017). Inclusive pedagogy within the southern African context. Responding to the challenges of Inclusive Education in southern Africa.

Florian, L., and Rouse, M. (2009). The inclusive practice project in Scotland: Teacher education for Inclusive Education. Teaching and Teacher Education, 25, 594–601. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.003 .

Forlin, C. (2012). Responding to the need for inclusive teacher education: Rhetoric or reality? In C. Forlin (Ed.), Future directions for inclusive teacher education (pp.3–12). New York: Routledge.

Forlin, C. A. (2010). A national strategy for supporting teacher educators to prepare teachers for inclusion. In C. Forlin (Ed.), Teacher education for inclusion: Changing paradigms and innovative approaches (pp. 34–44).

Forlin, C. and Dinh, N. T. (2010). A national strategy for supporting teacher educators to prepare teachers for inclusion. In C. Forlin (Ed.) Abingdon

Forlin, C., Earle, C., Loreman, T., and Sharma, U. (2011). Forlin, C., Earle,The Sentiments, Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education Revised (SACIE-R) scale for measuring pre-service teachers" perceptions about inclusion. Exceptionality Education International, 21(2).

Freire, P. (1972). Pedagogy of the oppressed Harmondsworth. UK: Penguin, 19721.

Gettinger, M. and Stoiber, K. C. (2012).Curriculum-based early literacy assessment and differentiated instruction with high-risk preschoolers. Reading Psychology, 33(1-2), 11-46.

Goodley, D. (2013). Dis/entangling critical disability studies. Disability & Society, 28(5), 631-644.

Gould, S. (1981). The mismeasure of man. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Grantham-McGregor, S., Cheung, Y. B., Cueto, S., Glewwe, P., Richter, L. and Strupp, B. (2007). Development potential for children in the first five years in developing countries.The Lancet, 369(9555), 60-70.

Green,W., Parker,D., Deacon,R.D. and Hall,G. (2011). Foundation phase teacher provision by public higher education institutions in South Africa. South African Journal of Childhood Education 1(1), 109-122.

Greenstein, A. (2016). Radical Inclusive Education. Hove: Routledge.

Grimm, P. (2010). Social desirability bias. Wiley international encyclopedia of marketing.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). Fourth generation evaluation. Sage.

Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (2002) Handbook of interview research: Context and method, 3.

Hammersley, M. (61). Atkinson,P. (1983). Ethnography: Principles in practice.

Hart, S., Dixon,A., Drummond,M.J. and McIntyre,D. (2004). Learning without limits. Maidenhead,Berkshire,UK: Open University Press.

Hart, S., Drummond,M. and McIntyre,D. (2007). Learning without limits, in: L.Florian(Ed.) The Sage Handbook of special education. London: Sage,499-514.

Hastings, R. P. and Oakford, S. (2003). Student teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special needs. Educational Psychology, 23(1), 87-94.

Heckman, J. J. and Masterov, D. V. (2007). The productivity argument for investing in young children. Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy, 29(3), 446-493.

Hewitt, M. (1999). Inclusion from a general educator's perspective. Preventing School Failure. Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 43(3), 133-134.

Hoadley, U. (2013). Building strong foundations: Improving the quality of early education. Cape Town: University of Cape Town School of Education.

Hornby, G. and Witte, C. (2014). Ability grouping in New Zealand high schools: are practices evidence-based?. Preventing school failure: Alternative education for children and youth, 58(2), 90-95.

Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D. and Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study research. Nurse researcher, 20(4).

Ireson, J. and Hallam, S. (2005). Pupils' liking for school: Ability grouping, self-concept and perceptions of teaching. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 75(2), 297-311.

Jaramillo, A., and Tietjen, K. (2001). Can We Do More for Less? A Look at the Impact and Implications of Preschools in Cape Verde and Guinea. Africa Region: World Bank.

Joppe, G. (2000). Testing reliability and validity of research instruments. Journal of American Academy of Business Cambridge, 4(1/2), 49-54.

Stanovich, P. J. and Jordan, A. (2000). Effective Teaching as Effective Intervention. Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 10(4), 235-38.

Jordan, A. and Stanovich, P. (2004). The beliefs and practices of Canadian teachers about including students with special needs in their regular elementary classrooms. Exceptionality Education Canada, 14(2–3), 25–46.

Jordan, A., Schwartz,E. and McGhie-Richmond, D. (2009). Preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms. Teaching and Teacher Education 25 , 535–542.

Kagan, D. (1992). Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. Review of Educational Research.62, 129-169.

Killoran, I., Woronko, D. and Zaretsky, H. (2014). Exploring preservice teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 18(4), 427-442.

Koch, T. (2006). Establishing rigour in qualitative research: the decision trail. Journal of advanced nursing, 53(1), 91-100.

Krueger, R. A. (2000). A practical guide for applied research. A practical guide for applied research.

Lewis, M. (1995). Shame: The exposed self. Simon and Schuster.

Lewis,A. and Norwich, B. (2005). Special teaching for special children:A pedagogy for inclusion? . Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Liasidou, A. (2012). Inclusive Education and critical pedagogy at the intersections of disability, race, gender and class. Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies (JCEPS), 10(1).

Li-Grining, C. P., Votruba-Drzal, E., Maldonado-Carreño, C. and Haas, K. (2010). Li-Grining, C. P., Votruba-Drzal, E., Maldonado-Carreñ Children's early approaches to learning and academic trajectories through fifth grade. Developmental Psychology, 46(5), 1062.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Lombardi, T. P. and Hunka, N. J. (2001). Preparing general education teachers for inclusive classrooms: Assessing the process. Teacher Education and Special Education, 24(3), 183-197.

Lomofsky, L. and Lazarus, S. . (2001). South Africa: First Steps in the development. Cambridge Journal of Education, 31 (3), 303-317.

Loreman, T. (2014). Measuring Inclusive Education outcomes in Alberta,Canada. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 18(5), 459-483.

Maguire, M. and Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. AISHE-J: The All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 9(3).

Makoelle, T. M. (2014). Changing teacher beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion in South Africa: Lessons from collaborative action research. Journal of Social Sciences, 38(2), 125-134.

Malakolunthu, S., and Rengasamy, N. (2012). Education policies and practices to address cultural diversity in Malaysia: Issues and challenges. Prospects, 42, 225–229. doi: 10.1007/s11125012-9227-9 .

Marshall, J., Ralph, S. and Palmer, S. (2002). 'I wasn't trained to work with them': Mainstream teachers' attitudes to children with speech and language difficulties. International journal of Inclusive Education, 6(3), 199-215.

Maxwell, J. C. (2013). The 17 indisputable laws of teamwork: Embrace them and empower your team. HarperCollins Leadership.

McCray, E. D. and McHatton, P. A. (2011). " Less Afraid to Have" Them" in My Classroom": Understanding Pre-Service General Educators' Perceptions about Inclusion.

McCray, E. D. and McHatton, P. A. (2011). " Less Afraid to Have" Them" iTeacher Education Quarterly, 38(4), 135-155.

McIntyre, D. (2009). The difficulties of inclusive pedagogy for initial teacher education and some thoughts on the way forward. Teaching and teacher education, 25(4), 602-608.

McMillan, J. H. (2010). Research in Education: Collecting Quantitative Data.

McMillan, J. H. and Shumacher, S. (2010). Research in Education: Collecting Quantitative Data.

Merriam, S. B. and Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Designing your study and selecting a sample. Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation. Jossey - Brass.

Messiou, K. (2006). “Understanding Marginalisation in Education: The Voice of Children.”. European Journal of Psychology of Education 21(3), 305-318.

Messiou, K. (2012b). Confronting Marginalisation in Education: A Framework for Promoting Inclusion. London: Routledge.

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. . (1984). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Toward a shared craft. Educational researcher, 13(5), 20-30.

Miles, S. and Singal, N. . (2010). Miles, The Education for All and Inclusive Education debate: conflict, contradiction or opportunity? International journal of Inclusive Education, 14(1), 1-15.

Mittler, N. P. (2005). The global context of Inclusive Education: The role of the United Nations. In Contextualizing Inclusive Education (pp. 38-52). Routledge.

Morgan, D. L. (1997). The focus group guidebook (Vol. 1). Sage publications.

Mortimore, P. (1999). Understanding Pedagogy and its impact on learning. California: Sage Publishing Company.

Nelson, C. A., De Haan, M. and Thomas, K. M. (2006). Neuroscience of cognitive development. The role of experience and the developing brain. Nueva Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Nind, M., Sheehy, K., Rix, J. and Simmons, K. (2003). Inclusive Education: Diverse perspectives. David Fulton Publishers Ltd.

Norwich, B. and Lewis, A. (2001). Mapping a pedagogy for special educational needs. British Educational Research Journal, 27(3), 313-329.

Norwich, B. and Lewis, A. (2005). How specialized is teaching pupils with disabilities and difficulties?. Special teaching for special children? . Pedagogies for inclusion, 1-16.

Ntombela, S. (2009). Are We There Yet? Towards the Development of Inclusive Education in One District in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Oliver, M. (1990). The politics of the disablement: Critical texts in social work and the welfare. Basinstoke: Macmillan.

Oliver, R. M. and Reschly,D.J. (2010). Special Education Teacher Preparation in Classroom Management: Implications for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. Behavioral Disorders, 35(3), 188-199.

UNESCO (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework on special needs education. Spain: UNESCO.

UNESCO (2005a). Guidelines for Inclusive Education.

Pajares, F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. Review of Educational Research, 62(3), 307–332.

Pandor, N. (2005). Address by the Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, MP. Presented at the Ntataise Conference on Early Childhood Development, Riversdale Hotel and Conference on Early Childhood Development, Riversdale Hotel and Conference.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Phillips, D. A., and Shonkoff, J. P. (2000). From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. National Academies Press.

Polit, D. and Beck, C. (2012). Essentials of nursing research. Ethics, 23(2), 145-160.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. Journal of counseling psychology, 52(2), 137.

Powell, J. (2013). Comparative and international perspective on Special Education. The SAGE handbook of special education, 335-349.

Pugach, M. C. (2005). Research on preparing general education teachers to work with students with disabilities. Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research on teacher education (pp. 549590. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association: In M. Cochran-Smith & K. Zeichner (Eds.).

Putnam,R. and Borko,R.T. (2000). What Do New Views of Knowledge and Thinking Have to Say About Research on Teacher Learning? Educational Researcher,Vol.29(1), 4-15.

Rensburg, O. (2015). The school readiness performance of a group of Grade R learners in primary schools in Gauteng Province of South Africa. South African Journal of Childhood Education 5(1), 1-13.

Richardson, C. A. and Rabiee, F. (2001). A question of access: an exploration of the factors that influence the health of young males aged 15 to 19 living in Corby and their use of health care services.

Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.),Handbook of qualitative research (2nd ed.). (pp. 923–948). Thousand Oaks,CA: Sage.

Richardson, L. (2000a). Evaluating ethnography. Qualitative Inquiry, 6, 253-256.

Richardson, V. (1996). The role of attitudes and beliefs in learning to teach. In J. Sikula, T. J. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), Handbook of research on teacher education (pp. 102–119). New York: Simon and Schuster MacMillan.

Rogoff, B. (2003). Thinking with the tools and institutions of culture. In B. Rogoff (2003), The Cultural Nature of human development. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Savolainen,H., Engelbrecht,P., Neil,M. and Malinen,O.P. (2012). Understanding teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy in Inclusive Education: Implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education. European Journal of Special Needs Education 27(1), 51-68.

Sharma, U. (2010). Using reflective practices for the preparation of preservice teachers for inclusive classrooms.In C. Forlin (Ed.).Teacher education for inclusion: Changing paradigms and innovative approaches (pp. 102-111).

Sharma, U. (2011). Teaching in inclusive classrooms: Changing heart, head, and hands. Bangledesch Educational Journal(2), 1-17.

Sharma, U. F. (2008). Impact of training on pre-service teachers' attitudes and concerns about Inclusive Education and sentiments about persons with disabilities. Disability and Society. 23(7), 773–785. doi: 10.1080/096875908024692.

Sheridan,S.M., Edwards,C.P., Marvin, C.A. and Knoche,L.L. (2009). Professional Development in Early Childhood Programs: Process Issues and Research Needs. Early education and development 20(3), 377-401.

Sherry, K. and Draper, C. E. (2013). The relationship between gross motor skills and school readiness in early childhood: making the case in South Africa. Early Child Development and Care, 183(9), 1293-1310.

Shonkoff, J. P. and Phillips, D. A. (2000). From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Lockbox 285. Washington, DC 20055.

Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and Foundations of the new reform. Havard Educational review 57(1): 1-22. Reproduced in Shulman,L. and Hutchings, P. 2004. Teaching as community propery; essays on higher education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Silverman, W. P. (1985). Two types of word superiority effects in a speeded matching task. Memory & cognition, 13(1), 50-56.

Singh, D. (2016). Dilemma and Challenges of Early Education Inclusion in Schools of Lucknow. Asian Journal of Inclusive Education 4(10, 51-77.

Singh, R. J. (2014). Is mother-tongue education possible in a language-diverse province? A case of Limpopo Province. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5(25), 141.

Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Sylva, K. (2004). Researching pedagogy in English pre-schools.

Slavin, R. E. (1996). Research on cooperative learning and achievement: What we know, what we need to know. Contemporary educational psychology, 21(1), 43-69.

Srivastava, M., De Boer, A. and Pijl, S. J. (2015). Inclusive Education in developing countries: A closer look at its implementation in the last 10 years. Educational Review, 67(2), 179-195.

Stadler, J. (2006). Media and Disability. In Watermeyer, L.Swartz,T. Lorenzo, M.Schneider and M. Priestley (Eds.). Disability and Society. Pretoria: HSRC Press, 373-386.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), The Sage handbook of qualitative research (3rd ed.). (pp. 443–466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strogilos, V., Avramidis,E., Voulagka,A. and Tragoulia,E. (2018). Differentiated instruction for students with disabilitiesn in early childhood co-taught classrooms: Types of quality and modifications. International Journal of Inclusive Education.

Swain,J. and French,S. (2000). Towards an affirmation model of disability. Disability and Society,5, 569-582.

Taylor,S. and Fintel,M. (2016). Estimating the impact of language of instruction in South African primary schools: A fixed effects approach. Economics of Educational Review,50, 75-89.

Thomas, C. (2007). Sociologies of disability and illness: Contested ideas in disability studies and medical sociology. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Thomas, D., Kuras, L., Barbey, R., Cherest, H., BlMet30p, a yeast transcriptional inhibitor that responds to S-adenosylmethionine, is an essential protein with WD40 repeats. Molecular and cellular biology, 15(12).

Tillema, H. (1995). Integrating knowledge and beliefs: promoting the relevance of educational knowledge for student teachers. In R. Hoz, & M. Silberstein (Eds.),Partnerships of schools and institutions of higher education in teacher development(pp. 9–24). Jerusalem: MOFET.

Tobin, G. A. and Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. Journal of advanced nursing, 48(4), 388-396.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). Grading and differentiation: Paradox or good practice? Theory into practice, 44(3), 262-269.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2005). Traveling the road to differentiation in staff development. Journal of Staff Development, 26(4), 8.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2008). Goals of Differentiation. Educational leadership.

Tracy, S. J. (2013). Qualitative research methods. West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell.

UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. Paris: UNESCO.

Unicef. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. (n.d.).

Voltz, D., Brazil,N. and Ford, A. (2001). What Matters Most in Inclusive Education: A Practical Guide for Moving Forward. Intervention in school and Clinic, 37(1), 23.

Wakefield, L. and Murungi, L. (n.d.). "Domesticating International Standards ofEducation for Children with Intellectual Disabilities: Case Study of Kenya and South Africa" in Groeblaar du Plessis I and Van Reenen T Aspects of Disability.

Walton, E. (2011). Getting Inclusion Right in South Africa. Internention in School and Clinic 46(4), 240-245.

Walton, E. (2015). Global Concerns and Local Realities: The " Making Education Inclusive" Conference in johannesburg. Intervention in School and Clinic 2015,Vol.50(3), 173-177.

Welgemoed, A. (1998). Democratising schools in South Africa. In C. Harber (Ed.). Voices for democracy: A North-South dialogue on education for sustainable democracy, 37-47.

Wertheimer, J. (1997). A people divided: Judaism in contemporary America. Brandeis University.

Williams, R. (2001). The long revolution (Vol. 1253). Broadview Press.

Wilson,S.M., Floden,R.E. and Mundy,J.F. (2002). Teacher Preparation Research. An Insider's View from the Outside. Journal of Teacher Education 53(3), 55-88.

Woods, M. (2011). Interviewing for research and analysing qualitative data: An overview. Massey University.

Wright, P. (2009). On living in an old country: The national past in contemporary Britain. OUP Oxford.

Yin, R. (1984). Case study research:Design and methods. Newbury Park,CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2014). Case study research: Design and methods (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2015). Qualitative research from start to finish. Guilford Publications.

Zigmond, N. (2003). Where should students with disabilities receive special education services? Is one place better than another? The Journal of special education, 37(3), 193-199.

Appendices

Appendix I: Questionnaire for Fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers

Dear Fourth Year Foundation Phase Student

My name is Nokuthula N Dewa, a Masters student in Inclusive Education from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. I would like to ask you some questions about, “Teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms”. I would like to understand how you conceptualise inclusion and how you intend to enact Inclusive Education through different inclusionary practices. Your cooperation in this study is greatly appreciated. If you feel that there is any question you are uncomfortable answering, you are free to refuse to participate and you are free to withdraw from the study. You will not be penalised in any way if you decide not to participate.

Please answer all questions in the questionnaire below.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Gender of respondent

Male **Female**

2. Age …….

1. Do you think teaching and learning in Grade R is important? If yes, please explain your answer.

   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……

2. What do you understand by differentiation?

   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……
   ……

3. As a grade R teacher, do you think it is necessary to differentiate? Why and why not? Any practical examples of differentiation you can give?

   ……
   ……

……
……
……

4. What do you understand by inclusion at Grade R level?

……
……
……
……
……
……

5. What kind of things/ practices do you think exclude Grade R learners?

……
……
……
……
……

6. What exclusionary practices have you encountered in your teaching experience?

……
……
……
……
……...

7. Do you feel prepared for teaching Grade R? Why and in what ways?

……
……
……
……
……..

……

8. What do you understand by inclusive pedagogy?

……
……
……
……
……
……

9. What are the principles that guide inclusive practices that you are aware of?

……
……
……
……
……

10. What is the South African policy that guides inclusion?

……
……
……
……
……

11. Is inclusion for all teachers? Justify your answer.

……
……
……
……

12. Do you feel adequately prepared by your ITE to handle inclusive environments at Grade R? If yes, in what ways? If no, please explain why?

……
……
……
……..

13. In your view what kind of diversity are you likely to face at a South African Grade R class?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14. Which courses (if any) prepared you for teaching in inclusive environments at Grade R?

……
……
……
……..

15. Which aspects of the ITE programme can you say prepared you to handle diversity?

……
……
……
……

16. What do you think can be done to improve teacher preparedness for inclusive environments at Grade R?

……

……

……

……..

……

……

……

……..

17. What other concerns or contributions can you add concerning inclusion in the South African education of Grade R learners?

……

……

……

……

……

Appendix II: Focus Group Interview Schedule for Fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers

1. What is your understanding of Inclusive Education?
2. Do you think it is important to be inclusive at Grade R level?
3. Which practices exclude learners at Grade R level?
4. What do you think inclusive pedagogy means in a Grade R class?
5. Explain your understanding by social justice as a critical Inclusive Educational approach in Grade R?
6. How do you view equity, democracy and human rights at Grade R?
7. What do you understand by diversity at Grade R?
8. How can diversity be handled at grade R?
9. Learning difficulties should be viewed as professional challenges. Do you think this is practical?
10. What are some of the classroom strategies teachers can use that are responsive to diversity at Grade R?
11. What strategies should teachers use to meet individual learning needs at Grade R?
12. Do you think collaboration at Grade R enhances inclusively?
13. Do you think inclusive teachers should be involved in continuous professional development? If yes, why?
14. Do you have anything to add concerning inclusive teaching at Grade R level?

Appendix III: Individual Interview schedule for fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers

1. Do you use inclusive pedagogy in teaching Grade R learners?
2. Do you feel that your ITE programme has equipped you to be responsive for developmental needs of learners at Grade R? If so, in what ways?
3. Can you think of ways learners were excluded or marginalised in Grade R during your teaching experience?
4. Can you recall some classroom practices that promote collaborative learning at Grade R?
5. How do you differentiate curriculum at Grade R to embrace all learners?
6. Do you think collaborative learning is important at Grade R?
7. Which types of collaborations at Grade R have you encountered during your teaching experience?
8. What is your view on working with parents as a Grade R teacher?
9. What do you think about continuous teacher professional development?
10. Do you think other learners need additional support to catch up with their peers?
11. What other issues do you think needs to be addressed by ITE institutions in preparing preservice teachers for inclusive environments?

Appendix IV: Information sheet for Head of School (Wits School of Education)

DATE: _____

Dear Professor F.Maringe

My name is Nokuthula Ntombiyelizwe Dewa. I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am carrying out a research project entitled “Investigating 4th year student teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms”. My research involves investigating how Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes go about preparing Foundation Phase preservice teachers for inclusive environments, particularly for Grade R. Based on the literature reviewed for this study, learners enrol in Grade R underprepared for formal learning. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out how ITE programmes equip preservice teachers to enact Inclusive Education in diverse environments at Grade R. I have identified your institution for this research because it is regarded as an institution that inclusively prepares teachers to be responsive in diverse environments, and am asking for your permission to invite the Fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers to participate in this research on “Investigating Teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms”.

Should you give me permission to collect data for the purposes of this research; data will be collected from the fourth year preservice teachers through questionnaires, focus group interviews as well as individual face to face interviews. All Fourth Year Foundation phase preservice teachers are invited to answer the questionnaire. From the group of students who complete the questionnaire, twenty students will be invited to participate in focus group interviews. Four focus groups will be conducted comprising of five students per group. Of these twenty participants, five students will be further invited to participate in individual interviews.

Then from the focus group interviews, five preservice teachers would be asked to participate in individual interviews. Interviews will take place at the University of the Witwatersrand, education campus during a time that is convenient for the students, interviews will take approximately thirty minutes each. One of the conference rooms in the education campus will be booked by my supervisor to be used as a venue for data collection.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. You are reassured that they can withdraw their participation at any time during this study without any penalty, and there are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

All data collected during the research will be treated confidentially and the names of participants and the institution will not be revealed at any time. All research data will be destroyed between three to five years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Nokuthula N. Dewa

No. 14 Nanas Villas

14th Avenue/De Wet Street

Edenvale

2021446@students.wits.ac.za

0612344218

Appendix V: Head of School Informed Consent

I understand that:

my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my institution will not be revealed.

I give permission for data to be collected from the Foundation Phase 4th year preservice teachers to participate in data collection for this research

Sign_____

Date_____

Appendix VI: Information sheet for Registrar for Humanities (Wits School of Education)

DATE: _____

Dear Registrar

My name is Nokuthula Ntombiyelizwe Dewa. I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am carrying out a research project entitled “Investigating 4th year student teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms”. My research involves investigating how Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes go about preparing Foundation Phase preservice teachers for inclusive environments, particularly for Grade R. Based on the literature reviewed for this study, learners enrol in Grade R underprepared for formal learning. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out how ITE programmes equip preservice teachers to enact Inclusive Education in diverse environments at Grade R. I have identified your institution for this research because it is regarded as an institution that inclusively prepares teachers to be responsive in diverse environments, and am asking for your permission to invite the Fourth Year Foundation Phase Preservice teachers to participate in this research on “Investigating Teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms”.

Should you give me permission to collect data for the purposes of this research; data will be collected from the fourth year preservice teachers through questionnaires, focus group interviews as well as individual face to face interviews. All Fourth Year Foundation phase preservice teachers are invited to answer the questionnaire. From the group of students who complete the questionnaire, twenty students will be invited to participate in focus group interviews. Four focus groups will be conducted comprising of five students per group. Of these twenty participants, five students will be further invited to participate in individual interviews.

Then from the focus group interviews, five preservice teachers would be asked to participate in individual interviews. Interviews will take place at the University of the Witwatersrand, education campus during a time that is convenient for the students, interviews will take approximately thirty minutes each. One of the conference rooms in

the education campus will be booked by my supervisor to be used as a venue for data collection.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. You are reassured that they can withdraw their participation at any time during this study without any penalty, and there are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

All data collected during the research will be treated confidentially and the names of participants and the institution will not be revealed at any time. All research data will be destroyed between three to five years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Nokuthula N. Dewa

No. 14 Nanas Villas

14th Avenue/De Wet Street

Edenvale

2021446@students.wits.ac.za

0612344218

Appendix VII: Registrar Informed Consent

I understand that:

my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my institution will not be revealed.

I give permission for data to be collected from the Foundation Phase 4th year preservice teachers to participate in data collection for this research

Sign_____

Date_____

Appendix VIII: Information sheet for 4th year Foundation Phase preservice teachers

DATE: _____

Dear 4th year Foundation Phase Preservice teacher

My name is Nokuthula Ntombiyelizwe Dewa. I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am carrying out a research project entitled “Investigating 4th year student teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms”. My research involves investigating how Initial Teacher Training (ITE) programmes go about preparing Foundation Phase preservice teachers for inclusive environments, particularly for Grade R. Based on the literature reviewed for this study, learners enrol in Grade R underprepared for formal learning. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out how ITE programmes equip preservice teachers to enact Inclusive Education in diverse environments at Grade R. I have identified your institution for this research because it is regarded as an institution that inclusively prepare teachers to be responsive for diverse environments, and would like to invite you to participate in this research on “Investigating Teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms”.

Should you agree to participate in this research; data will be collected from you as one of the Grade R preservice teachers through questionnaires, focus group interviews as well as individual face to face interviews. All Foundation preservice teachers are invited to answer the questionnaire. Those who have answered the questionnaire are further invited to participate in focus group interviews, which would be comprised of five people in each group. Then from the focus group interviews, five preservice teachers would be asked to participate in individual interviews. Interviews will take place at the University of the Witwatersrand, education campus during a time that is convenient for you. One of the conference rooms in the education campus will be booked by my supervisor to be used as a venue for data collection.

You as the research participant will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. You are reassured that you can withdraw your participation at any time during this study without any penalty, and there are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

All data collected during the research will be treated confidentially and the names of participants and the institution will not be revealed at any time. All research data will be destroyed between three to five years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Nokuthula N. Dewa

No. 14 Nanas Villas

14th Avenue/De Wet Street

Edenvale

2021446@students.wits.ac.za

0612344218

Appendix IX: Student Teacher's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called: Investigating teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms.

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to answer the questionnaire

I agree to answer the questions in the questionnaire YES/ NO

Permission to be interviewed (focus group)

I would like to be interviewed for focus group. YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed (individual)

I would like to be individually interviewed. YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the focus group interview YES/NO

I agree to be audiotaped during the individual interview YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

Appendix X: Office of the Deputy Registrar approval

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR

25 July 2019

Nokuthula Dewa
Student number 2021446
Masters in Education
School of Education

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"Investigating 4th year student teacher preparedness for teaching inclusively in diverse Grade R classrooms"

This letter serves to confirm that the above project has received permission to be conducted on University premises, and/or involving staff and/or students of the University as research participants. In undertaking this research, you agree to abide by all University regulations for conducting research on campus and to respect participants' rights to withdraw from participation at any time.

If you are conducting research on certain student cohorts, year groups or courses within specific Schools and within the teaching term, permission must be sought from Heads of School or individual academics.

Ethical clearance has been obtained. (Protocol Number: 2019ECE024M)

Nicoleen Potgieter
University Deputy Registrar

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050, South Africa | T +27 11 717 1204/8 | F +27 86 553 2271 | www.wits.ac.za

Appendix XI: Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

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

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2019ECE024M
PROJECT TITLE	Investigating 4th Year Student Teacher Preparedness for Teaching Inclusively in Diverse Grade R Classrooms.
INVESTIGATOR	Nokuthula Dewa
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DATE CONSIDERED	15 July 2019
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the project report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 22 July 2019 CHAIRPERSON _____ (Dr. Paul Goldschagg)

cc: Supervisor: Dr. Tanya Bekker

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and ONE COPY emailed to the Ethics Office: Matsie.Mabeta@wits.ac.za .

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

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix XII: Comparison of Pedagogical Assumptions and Proposed Standards against Findings

Inclusive Pedagogical Framework: Assumptions	Proposed Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginner teachers (2017)	Findings of the study
1. Shift from focusing only on certain learners as needing additional support to supporting the needs of everybody.	**1. Agency for inclusion and social justice** 1.1. **Understanding exclusion:** 1.1.1. New teachers are able to recognize excluding and marginalising practices and attitudes to learners. 1.1.2. New teachers understand historical development of Inclusive Education locally and globally as a response to practices that are exclusionary.	- Participants mostly understand and can identify examples of exclusionary practices - Some contradiction was noted in participant responses that failed to recognise fixed ability grouping as potentially marginalising - Participants made some reference to the Salamanca Statement indicating some awareness of global history and development but this was not elaborated on their experiences in schools
	1.2. **Foundational theories and concepts in Inclusive Education:** 1.2.1. New teachers have a theoretical groundwork for their sustenance in inclusive pedagogical practices 1.2.2. New teachers comprehend concepts critical to Inclusive Education, such as equity, social justice, redress, human rights and democracy	- Participants expressed the perception that they are aware of policy i.e. White Paper Six - It emerged clearly that whilst participants feel they understand theory they feel less prepared for practice -Most participants understood concepts related to Inclusive Education although contradictions were noted, for instance; some responses indicated that there those who are of the idea the use of the bell-curve system as they think in any normal class, there are those who will excel, the average and the below average, which is a naturalised misconception teachers work with, which is excluding and violates rights of humans. Then there are those who think the curriculum demand and the time needed to cater for learners in need of support is overwhelming teachers.

		-Almost all participants recognize and respect the democratic rights of all learners are citizens and are prepared to redress the social injustices some learners have been subjected to.
2. Dismissal of deterministic views about disability, presence of different learners will hinder the progress of other learners	**2. Understanding and Valuing learner diversity**	
	2.1. **Diversity literacy for transformation**: 2.1.1. New teachers understand the multiplicity, complexities, as well as intersectionality of diversity in the context of Southern Africa 2.1.2.New teachers demonstrate an awareness of how institutionalised oppression and diversity hierarchies are constructed and sustained	-Participants were able to overcome and adjust the misconception that the presence of *some* learners disrupts the learning of other learners -Participants demonstrated appreciation that learners are different in many ways, such as; cultural background, language, gender, socio-economic status, among many others. -Most participants showed appreciation of inclusive pedagogy which taught them to embrace diversity in human variations. - Participants demonstrated how oppression is constructed through medicalised practices that are exclusionary, which teachers need to reject for inclusive pedagogical practices.
	2.2. **Diversity as a resource and strength for teaching and learning:** 2.2.1. New teachers recognise, value, and respect the individual strengths of varied learners 2.2.2. New teachers recognise and appreciate diverse educational needs 2.2.3. New teachers make teaching and learning relevant, accessible, and suitable for diverse learners	-Participants revealed that they have acquired knowledge about what diversity entails. -Participants demonstrated that all learners have strengths and weaknesses, thus, teachers need to recognize individual needs in order to be responsive for inclusive environments. -Participants demonstrated the value of differentiation to embrace diversity -Participants expressed that diversity should be viewed by teachers as a challenge to strategize their teaching

		methods, not to view it as a learners' challenge -Most of the participants were able to identify diversity, in terms of; language, background, race, colour, among others. -Participants stated that their lesson plans have to take into cognisance the type of learners in their classrooms, hence the need to know their learners before drafting lesson plans for them - Most participants showed concern on the time they spent on teaching experience, that it is inadequate to gain enough knowledge about learners

3. Strategies of working with and through other adults which respect the learners' dignity as full community members	**3. Classroom practices that support and promote individual and collaborative learning**	-Most participants acknowledged the benefits of working together -Participants were aware of different collaborations, however, it was evident from their responses that pre-service teachers have not been practically exposed to many collaborations except teacher – parent collaborations - There few indications of collaborations between teachers and teachers in some responses, however it was only between the supervising teacher and the pre-service teacher, and not with other teachers -Responses from participants revealed that pre-service teachers have been made aware of strategizing individual support plans -Participants were able to plan the individual support plans, however, they complained about not getting enough time on teaching experience to implement their strategies.
	3.1 Classroom strategies pedagogically calculated to be responsive to the needs of diverse learners 3.1.1 New teachers design and use a multiple of instructional strategies	

	3.1.2 New teachers are knowledgeable on ways of differentiating instruction, curriculum, and assessment 3.1.3 New teachers provide a safe, enabling and well – managed environment 3.1.4 New teachers meet diverse learning needs by integrating ICT	-Participants were aware of that collaboration and reflection enhances inclusive teaching and learning -They appreciated the assistance they get from their supervising teachers -Participants appreciated working with parents as they get to know learners from a parent's perspective -However, they expressed concern that they do not get opportunities to work with other teachers outside their supervisors
	3.2 Individual asset- based support 3.2.1 New teachers strategize asset-based approach to meet individual learner needs 3.2.2 New teachers appreciate the process and purpose of Individual Support Plans development and implementation	-Participants' responses demonstrated that they value families, parents and caregivers' collaborations. - They demonstrated this by highlighting the value of parents' information about learners. - Participants showed that they as teachers also possess valuable knowledge and skills, that if it is coupled with parents' knowledge it would hugely benefit learners.
	4. Collaboration to enable inclusive learning and teaching	-Participants also demonstrated the value of roles played by education interested stakeholders, such as; various community based, professional, NGO and other support partners
	4.1 School based colleagues collaboration 4.1.1 New teachers appreciate the importance of collaborative planning, teaching, as well as reflection, as an effort to develop inclusive practices	-Participants demonstrated that they are in a better position to identify which organisations could be useful in supporting the needs of certain

	4.1.2 New teachers are knowledgeable and implement skills and dispositions necessary for effective collaboration 4.1.3 New teachers are able to implement the necessary skills to collaborate with school based support structures and colleagues **4.2 Partnering with families, parents, and caregivers** 4.2.1 New teachers appreciate the responsibilities and role of families, parents and caregivers 4.2.2 New teachers respect and value the unique knowledge and skills of families, parents and caregivers 4.2.3 New teachers have the essential knowledge to build families, parents and caregivers / teacher collaborative partnerships **4.3. Accessing external support** 4.3.1 New teachers have acquired and understand the responsibilities and roles of various community based, professional, NGO and other support partners 4.3.2 New teachers are in a position to identify suitable collaborative partners in response to the support needs of individual teachers and learners **5. Professional development as an inclusive teacher**	learners, hence they should be consulted whenever such decisions are made. -Participants demonstrated awareness of being inclusive and ethical in handling their duties. -Participants showed this by emphasizing that they have learned that every learner has a potential for improvement, provided their individual needs are met. -Participants demonstrated their preparedness to recognise and respond to confidentiality and dignity of every learner together with their families. -Participants appreciated the value of reflecting on their lesson deliveries afterwards with their supervising teachers -Participants demonstrated the value of their personal wellness when they mentioned that too much emphasis is given to learners and they are left out with all pressure to carry by themselves

	5.1. Becoming an inclusive and ethical teacher 5.1.1 New teachers recognise all learners' learning potential and assume responsibility to help learners reach their potential 5.1.2. New teachers recognise and respond to dilemmas that are ethical in the inclusive classroom 5.1.3. New teachers respect the confidentiality and dignity of learners and families **5.2 Becoming a reflective inclusive teacher** 5.2.1 New teachers appreciate the value of a reflection-action process 5.2.2 New teachers critically reflect on how teaching practices constrain and enable learning 5.2.3 New teachers reflect on individual wellness and identify its impact on teaching	