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University of the Witwatersrand

M.Ed. coursework and research project

Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng.

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Year: 2025

Declaration

I, Nqobile Victoria Hlela, hereby declare that this research project titled "Investigating Intermediate Phase English Educators' Practices in Responding to Learner Diversity at a Full-Service Township Primary School in Gauteng" is my own original work. This research has been conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and standards set forth by Wits University and the relevant ethics committee. I confirm that:

Originality: This research is my original work and has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification at any other institution. All sources of information and data used in this study have been properly cited and referenced.

Ethical Approval: Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Wits University prior to conducting this research. The ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality, and allowing participants the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.

Participant Rights: I have ensured that all participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research, their participation was voluntary, and they were made aware of their rights regarding their involvement in this study.

Data Integrity: I affirm that the data collected during this research has been accurately represented in my findings and discussions. All efforts have been made to ensure the integrity and validity of the data analysis process.

Acknowledgment: I acknowledge that I have received guidance and support from my supervisors, colleagues, and participants throughout this research process. Their contributions have been invaluable to the completion of this project.

This declaration is made in good faith and reflects my commitment to upholding academic integrity and ethical standards in research.

Signed



Full Name: Nqobile Victoria Hlela Date: 9 June 2025

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Abstract

There is a severe shortage of qualified primary school educators who can meet the demands of their learners from a wide range of backgrounds. This makes it hard for primary school educators in Full-Service townships schools to change the way they educate. The scarcity of resources creates barriers to learning, limiting educators' capacity to effectively respond to learners' diverse needs. Moreover, educators encounter challenges in implementing inclusive teaching methods due to insufficient resources, inadequate training and socio-economic inequalities. These issues hinder the full realisation of the inclusive education model that Full-Service School strives to provide. Full-Service Schools in South Africa represent a significant advancement in ensuring that all learners, regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, language or cultural background, have access to quality education.

This research project investigates the practices of intermediate phase English educators in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng, South Africa. The data was collected through focus group interviews, classroom observation and document analysis with six intermediate phase English educators working at FSSs in a South African township. The study aims to explore how educators implement inclusive teaching strategies to address the diverse learning needs of their learners, particularly in the context of historical inequalities and resource constraints. In addition, the theoretical framework of the study is Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which will help analyse and understand how educators dealt with learners' varied learning styles. UDL provides a strong foundation for studying how educators design and implement lessons that respect learners' individual differences. Because learners' interests and fundamental motivations vary greatly among socioeconomic groups, this is an especially relevant consideration when working with the learners.

The findings reveal that educators employ various strategies such as differentiated instruction, formative assessments, and collaborative learning to foster an inclusive environment. However, significant challenges persist, including insufficient resources, varying levels of language proficiency among learners, and large class sizes. The study highlights the importance of continuous professional development and collaboration among educators to enhance inclusive practices effectively. The implications of this research suggest that for inclusive education to be successfully implemented within Full-Service schools, there must be concerted efforts from policymakers and educational leaders to provide adequate resources and support structures. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on inclusive education in South Africa by offering insights into effective practices and identifying areas for improvement.

Keywords: Inclusive education, learner diversity, differentiated instruction, professional development, Full-Service schools, South Africa.

List of abbreviations

ANA	Annual National Assessments
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
ESL	English Second Language
FSS	Full-Service Schools
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SIAS	Screening Identification Assessment and Support
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Table of Contents

Declaration ... **ii**
Acknowledgement ... **iii**
Abstract ... **iv**
Abbreviations ... **vi**
List of tables ... **xii**
List of figures ... **xiii**
1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY ... **1**
1.1 Introduction ... **1**
1.2 Background to the study ... **1**
1.3 Problem statement ... **3**
1.4 Purpose statement ... **4**
1.5 Research aims ... **5**
1.6 Research questions ... **5**
1.7 Significance of the study ... **6**
1.8 Key words ... **6**
1.9 Delimitation of the study ... **7**
1.10 Breakdown of chapters in the dissertation ... **7**
1.11 Conclusion ... **8**
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMING OF THE STUDY ... **9**
2.1 Introduction ... **9**
2.2 Relevant literature review ... **9**
2.2.1 Historical contexts and forms of marginalisation ... 9
2.2.2 Theories underpinning inclusive education ... 10
2.2.3 Impact on learners ... 10
2.2.4 Policy landscape, implementation, and challenges ... 11
2.2.5 Full-Service Schools in Gauteng's township setting ... 12
2.2.6 Learner diversity ... 13
2.2.6.1 International perspective on learner diversity ... *13*
2.2.6.2 Continental (African) perspective on learner diversity ... *13*
2.2.6.3 South African perspective on learner diversity ... *14*
2.2.7 Importance of accommodating diverse needs in education ... 15
2.2.7.1 International perspective ... *15*
2.2.7.2 South African perspective ... *15*
2.2.7.3 Intermediate phase learners ... *16*
2.2.7.4 Teaching English ... *16*

2.2.7.5 Alignment with the South African education system *17*
2.2.7.6 Challenges in assessing learners with different abilities and backgrounds *17*
2.2.8 Specific case studies or examples relevant to the Sedibeng West district 17
2.3 Theoretical Framework: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) **18**
2.3.1 Multiple means of representation 19
2.3.2 Multiple means of engagement 20
2.3.3 Multiple means of action and expression 20
2.4 Conclusion **21**
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY **23**
3.1 Introduction **23**
3.2 Paradigmatic perspective **23**
3.3 Philosophical assumptions of paradigms **23**
3.3.1 Axiology: The role of values and ethics in research 24
3.3.2 Epistemology: The nature and acquisition of knowledge 24
3.3.3 Ontology: The nature of reality 25
3.3.4 Methodology: The research approach and design 25
3.4 Research methodology 26
3.4.1 Justification for qualitative research 26
3.4.2 Strengths and limitations of qualitative research 26
3.4.2.1 Strengths *26*
3.4.2.2 Limitations and mitigation strategies *27*
3.5. Research site **27**
3.6 Sampling **28**
3.6.1 Sample criteria 29
3.7 Data collection instruments **30**
3.7.1 Document analysis 30
3.7.2 Focus group interviews with educators 31
3.7.3 Classroom observations 32
3.7.4 Triangulation of data 32
3.8 Data analysis **32**
3.9 Trustworthiness **34**
3.9.1 Credibility (truth value) 34
3.9.2 Dependability (consistency) 34
3.9.3 Confirmability (neutrality) 34
3.10 Ethical considerations **35**
3.10.1 Informed consent 35
3.10.2 Confidentiality 35
3.10.3 Anonymity 35

3.10.4 Voluntary participation 36
3.11 Conclusion 36
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATIONOF FINDINGS..... 37
4.1 Introduction..... 37
4.2 Demographic data..... 37
4.3 Analytical procedures for identifying themes and sub-themes..... 38
4.4 Findings from the interviews 39
4.4.1 Educators employed differentiated instruction as an approach to accommodate learners' diverse learning abilities. 39
4.4.2 Language professionals navigate between codes through code switching and leverage mother tongue as an inclusive language practice. 40
4.4.3 Challenges in inclusive instruction due to CAPS and ATP constraints..... 41
4.4.4 Visual aids and teaching resources operate as essential components for educational inclusion. 43
4.4.5 Individualised and cooperative learning approaches 44
4.4.6 Educators implemented scaffolding techniques combined with participation-building methods to overcome diverse learner abilities..... 45
4.4.7 Flexible and modified assessment approaches.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
4.4.8 During assessments, educators purposefully employ graded rubrics alongside multimodal assessment techniques. 46
4.4.9 Educators encounters significant problems during assessment process because of limited resources, time constraints and high workload demands. 47
4.5 Findings from classroom observations 49
4.6 Findings from the lesson plan checklist..... 51
4.7 Findings of the assessment tasks 52
4.8 Conclusion 53
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS..... 56
5.1 Introduction..... 56
5.2. Sub research question 1: What strategies do intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service township primary school, use when designing their lessons to accommodate learners diverse learning needs?..... 56
5.2.1 Use of differentiated instruction to address varied learning abilities..... 56
5.2.2 Educators use code switching and their learners' native languages to create an inclusive language learning environment. 57
5.2.3 Academic obstacles prevent inclusive instruction because of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) restrictions. 58
5.3 Sub research question 2: How do intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service School, deliver their lessons to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs?..... 59
5.3.1 Visual aids with teaching resources function as essential tools to promote classroom inclusion. 59
5.3.2 Individualised and cooperative learning approaches 59

5.3.3 Educators build supportive structures while encouraging participation at different learning levels. 60

5.4 Sub research question 3: To investigate the assessment strategies used by intermediate phase English second language educators at a Full-Service township school to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs. 61

5.4.1 Flexible and modified assessment approaches..... 61

5.4.2 Rubrics combined with multimodal assessment tools serve as educational evaluation approaches. 61

5.4.3 Educational assessments dealing with diverse learners face three critical obstacles: time consumption, resource management and increased workload. 62

5.5 Conclusion 63

6. CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS 64

6.1 Introduction..... 64

6.2 Overview of the research..... 64

6.2.1 Brief description of each chapter (Chapters 1–5) 64

6.3 Main research question findings 65

6.3.1 Introduction..... 65

6.3.2 How do intermediate phase second language English educators (ESL), at a Full-Service School in the Sedibeng West district, accommodate learners diverse learning needs? 65

6.4 Recommendations..... 67

6.5 Implications for future research..... 68

6.6 Limitations of the study..... 68

6.7 Conclusion 69

7.REFERENCE LIST..... 71

8. Appendices..... 82

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Breakdown of chapters in the dissertation 7
Table 4.1: Demographic data of participants 37
Table 4.2: Summary of observation findings 50
Table 4.3: Summary of lesson plan findings 52
Table 4.4: Summary of the assessment tasks 53

List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Observation checklist results..... 51

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Educational systems worldwide recognise inclusive education as a fundamental aspect of equitable schooling, ensuring that all learners receive quality education regardless of their backgrounds or abilities (Department of Education, 2001). The introduction of Full-Service Schools (FSSs) represents an educational policy initiative. However, educators encounter challenges in implementing inclusive teaching methods due to insufficient resources, inadequate training, and socio-economic inequalities (Naicker & Mestry, 2019). This research aims to explore how FSSs educators implement strategies to support diverse learners and to understand the challenges they face in creating inclusive environments.This chapter introduces the study by providing an overview of its research focus: examining how intermediate phase English educators at a Full-Service School in Gauteng address the diverse learning needs of their learners. Situated within the broader context of South Africa's educational landscape, the study highlights the challenges educators face in implementing inclusive education practices. It critically examines how historical inequalities in South Africa's education system continue to affect present-day disparities and evaluates existing policies aimed at addressing these systemic issues. The chapter offers a comprehensive background to the study, detailing the evolution of inclusive education policies and the historical context that informs them. The problem statement outlines the unique challenges faced by English educators in FSSs as they strive to support learners with diverse educational needs.

1.2 Background to the study

After apartheid ended in 1994, South Africa pledged to eliminate discrimination and ensure equitable access to education. The South African Schools Act of 1996 and the government both supported open schools to welcome learners from all backgrounds (DoE, 2001). The Salamanca Declaration of 1994 established the foundation for inclusive education, promoting the mission of universal education. Dube (2020) reinforces this sentiment, arguing that despite significant challenges, the principles of inclusive education must remain steadfast. Moreover, inclusive education recognises that all children have the ability to learn, although some, such as learners with disabilities, may require different approaches and support to reach their full potential (DoE, 2001). The diverse needs of learners must be equally valued and embraced (Baglieri, 2022). Fung, Su, Perry and Garcia (2022) state that comprehensive education aims to accommodate all types of learners.

However, the legacy of apartheid's divisive educational system, which segregated learners by race and ability, continues to affect South Africa. In 2001, the South African schooling system adopted a democratic

social order, dividing education into two systems: Ordinary or Mainstream Schools and Special Needs Schools (DoE, 2001). The education system during apartheid presented challenges to inclusive education. In response, FSSs were introduced in 2010 to implement inclusive education, offering varying levels of support tailored to each learner's barriers and needs. FSSs also cater to the diverse requirements of learners (DoE, 2010). The concept of FSSs was first introduced in Education White Paper 6, which aimed to create an environment where learners receive academic instruction along with support services (DoE, 2005).

The FSSs initiative in South Africa serves as an educational strategy to provide comprehensive support services to all learners. The primary goal of these schools is to establish an integrated educational system that combines academic learning with various support services to address the diverse needs of all learners (DoE, 2010). FSSs play a crucial role in promoting inclusive education by meeting the varied educational needs of all learners and ensuring equal access to high-quality education. By offering a range of support services, FSSs aim to create a climate conducive to learning and development (DoE, 2005). The right of all learners to receive a high-quality education free from prejudice or exclusion is a fundamental principle of FSSs in South Africa. The aim is to create a supportive and responsive educational system that nurtures every child's potential and prepares them for active participation in society. However, challenges such as inadequate resources, insufficient educator training, and lack of support for learners with disabilities have been identified in the implementation of FSSs (Ayaya & Makoelle, 2023). These issues hinder the full realisation of the inclusive education model that FSSs strive to provide. FSSs in South Africa represent a significant advancement in ensuring that all learners, regardless of socio-economic status, disability, language, or cultural background, have access to quality education. They play an essential role in fostering a more inclusive culture and transforming educational practices (DoE, 2010). Curriculum delivery methods employed by FSSs educators must consider the needs of all learners, as these schools enroll learners with and without learning barriers (Ayaya & Makoelle, 2023).

More than five percent of learners enrolled in FSSs present with various impairments, creating significant challenges for both educators and learners. These challenges often manifest as inadequate resources and emotional exclusion (Department of Education, DoE, 2001). South African classrooms, particularly within FSSs, are characterised by high levels of diversity, encompassing socioeconomic status, race, religion, and individual learner attributes (Kurian, 2023). In such environments, every learner requires personalised attention and appropriate accommodations within the education system (Bunmi et al., 2021).

According to White Paper 6, an inclusive learning environment is defined as one where all learners and educators feel welcomed and receive the necessary support to thrive (Mpontshane, 2022). Since the implementation of inclusive education policies, providing support to all learners, regardless of whether they have formally diagnosed exceptional needs, has become standard practice. To effectively remove

barriers to learning and development, White Paper 6 mandates the involvement of School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) and other relevant stakeholders in supporting educators (DoE, 2001).

Mpontshane (2022) identifies two critical components of successful inclusive education: stakeholder collaboration and evidence-based interventions. However, a significant research gap exists regarding the practices of intermediate phase English educators in Full-Service township primary schools. This research is essential, as existing literature does not adequately address the actual experiences of these educators, particularly in township contexts. By focusing on Full-Service township primary schools in South Africa, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about inclusive education by highlighting best practices and identifying areas for professional growth.

1.3 Problem statement

Attempts to teach English to intermediate-phase learners at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng, as part of a broad educational program, face significant obstacles. A primary concern is the under-resourced nature of Full-Service classrooms, which hampers the successful execution of inclusive education (Dube, 2020). This scarcity of resources creates barriers to learning, limiting educators' capacity to effectively respond to learners' diverse needs. Additionally, many educators at FSSs doubt their ability to meet the wide range of learners' academic and social requirements (Vincent & Chiwandire, 2019). This self-perceived inadequacy can exacerbate challenges, resulting in inequitable learning outcomes and potential academic struggles for some learners. Furthermore, the lack of hands-on experience among educators can hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education principles in FSSs (De Jager, 2023). According to Phala and Hugo (2022)'s study, FSSs instructors lack the necessary expertise to effectively organise and instruct learners with diverse reading needs. Adapting instructional methods to accommodate a broad range of learners remains a daunting task without the requisite skills and experience, potentially leading to the exclusion of certain learner subgroups.

Inclusive learning promotes the participation of all learners by recognising and valuing diversity while addressing individual learning needs through appropriate support and accommodations (Walton, 2018). However, the lack of adequate support services in Full-Service schools, coupled with the increasing number of learners requiring specialised educational interventions in mainstream public schools, has contributed to high dropout rates, particularly among primary school learners (DoE, 2001).

The application of inclusive learning in real-world settings, especially within township schools in Gauteng, presents challenges that need addressing. The role of English as a pivotal medium of instruction adds another layer of complexity to teaching and learning in inclusive educational environments. In

townships, where socio-economic challenges are prevalent, educational setbacks can deepen existing divides (Ayaya, Makoelle & Van der Merwe, 2020). As South Africa grapples with its historical educational disparities, there is a pressing need to ensure educators are well-prepared to meet these challenges. The nation's broader social and economic progression hinges on its ability to provide quality and inclusive education for all (van der Berg & Gustafsson, 2019).

Drawing from my personal experience as an English educator in the intermediate phase at a Full Service School, I have witnessed first-hand the complexities involved in implementing inclusive teaching and learning. Ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all learners often proves to be a demanding task, primarily due to the wide variety of learner backgrounds and diverse educational needs. These challenges are further compounded by the under-resourced nature of the classroom environment. Such experiences have significantly shaped my perspective, deepening my understanding of the realities faced by educators and motivating me to explore this educational context more critically. This personal engagement has inspired a commitment to identify and highlight potential areas for improvement within inclusive education practices. Considering the challenges identified through both personal experience and existing research gaps, this investigation aims to address the lack of essential knowledge and training among educators in FSSs. It seeks to explore effective strategies to modify teaching practices, ensuring that all learners in Full-Service township primary schools are included and can thrive.

1.4 Purpose statement

The fight for equitable schooling is a matter of equality and social justice (Slee, 2011). After a period of segregation and disparities, the South African education system is now working to implement policies such as Education White Paper 6, which aims to make schools accessible to all learners (DoE, 2001). Full-service township schools are at the forefront of accommodating diverse learner populations while facing significant financial and social challenges, making this change even more critical for them (Naicker, 2018).

In the intermediate phase of Full-Service Schools, where essential elements for critical literacy and learning are established, educators' approaches to diversity go beyond basic teaching strategies. It becomes a fundamental aspect of achieving equitable education for every learner. This phase is crucial because it lays the groundwork for concepts of equality and inclusivity in the learning environment, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their backgrounds, have equal opportunities to succeed and develop. It also highlights the importance of instructional methods. Therefore, it is imperative to scrutinise and understand

the pedagogical practices that underpin teaching and learning in the intermediate phase, particularly in English, which serves as both a medium of instruction and a subject of study (Heugh, 2000).

The aim of this research is to explore the methods used by primary school educators teaching English as a second language in a Full-Service township school within the Sedibeng West District of Gauteng. This study seeks to illuminate the implementation of equitable learning at a critical stage of the South African educational system by analysing how educators prepare, deliver, and evaluate lessons to accommodate a diverse learner body.

1.5. Research aims

The aim of this study is to examine how intermediate phase English Second Language (ESL) educators at a Full-Service School in the Sedibeng West District accommodate learner's diverse learning needs.

To unpack the aim of this study the objectives are to:

1. Investigate the strategies used by intermediate phase English second language educators at a Full-Service township primary school when designing their lessons to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs.
2. Investigate how intermediate phase English second language educators at a Full-Service township primary school, deliver their lessons to accommodate learners diverse learning needs.
3. Investigate the assessment strategies used by intermediate phase English second language educators at a Full-Service township school to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs.

1.6 Research questions

The following is the main research question that this study intends to answer:

How do intermediate phase ESL educators, at a FSSs in the Sedibeng West District, accommodate learners' diverse learning needs?

The sub research questions are as follows:

1. What strategies do intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service township primary school, use when designing their lessons to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs?
2. How do intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service township primary, deliver their lessons to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs?
3. What assessment strategies do intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service township school, use to accommodate learners diverse learning needs.

1.7 Significance of the study

This research is significant because Full-Service Schools in South Africa continue to face persistent challenges in delivering truly inclusive education to their diverse learner populations. These learners represent a broad spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds and include individuals with various impairments. The way educators respond to learners' diverse needs, particularly within the context of English instruction, can profoundly and lastingly impact learners' academic confidence and long-term educational outcomes (Ogbu & Simons, 2022). The primary aim of this study is to contribute to the existing body of literature by examining how educators in FSSs in Gauteng adapt their planning, instructional delivery, and assessment strategies to accommodate a wide range of learning styles and abilities. The findings are expected to inform the provincial Department of Education, enabling it to better equip educators to fulfill the mandates of Education White Paper 6 and to implement inclusive education more effectively in practice (Engelbrecht, 2006; Walton & Rusznyak, 2016).

Ultimately, this research has the potential to influence both policy and practice—moving the notion of inclusion beyond theoretical discourse and into meaningful, actionable strategies within South African classrooms.

1.8 Key words

1.8.1 Full-Service Schools (FSSs):

FSSs in South Africa are mainstream institutions advocating inclusive education regardless of learners' individual needs (DoE, 2005). Specifically, they cater to learners with mild to moderate support needs. For this study, an FSSs are viewed as a comprehensive and holistic model of education that prioritises the well-being and success of learners while promoting inclusive education grounded in national policy.

1.8.2 Barriers to learning:

These are factors hindering effective learning, ranging from systemic issues like under-resourced settings to individual challenges such as language barriers (Walton, 2018). In this study, barriers encompass both tangible and intangible hurdles faced by learners in Gauteng's Full-Service township primary schools.

1.8.3 Inclusive education:

A strategy aiming for quality education for all, inclusive education minimises barriers and focuses on mainstream rather than specialised settings (Walton, 2018). In this study, it signifies Gauteng FSS's

commitment to ensuring that every learner, regardless of their challenges, receives quality education in a mainstream setting.

1.8.4 Diversity:

Diversity encompasses the multitude of learner differences, including learning requirements and cultural backgrounds (de Jager, 2023). This study interprets diversity as the interplay of these differences in Gauteng's schools, emphasising the importance of catering to each learner's unique needs.

1.8.5 Educators:

Educators are professionals facilitating the learning process, including classroom educators and other support staff (DoE, 2005). Within this study, educators refer to professionals in Gauteng's FSSs who influence learners' academic journeys.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

This study is limited to a single Full-Service township primary school located in the Sedibeng West District of Gauteng, South Africa. It specifically focuses on intermediate-phase English second-language educators addressing diverse learning needs among learners in Grades 4 to 6. The research captures the perspectives of educators only, deliberately excluding input from other stakeholders such as learners, parents, the school management teams, and support personnel, including members of the SBST.

Due to these limitations, the findings of this study are not generalisable to other educational phases, such as the foundation or senior phases, nor to FSSs situated in other districts or provinces. The study's scope is intentionally narrow, aimed at providing in-depth insight into a specific context rather than offering broad generalisations.

1.10 Breakdown of chapters in the dissertation

Table 1.1: Breakdown of chapters in the dissertation

Chapter	Title	Description
Chapter One	Introduction and Background to the Study	Introduces the research topic, provides context, and outlines the significance of the study.
Chapter Two	Literature Review	An exploration of existing research on inclusive education practices.

Chapter Three	Research Methodology	A detailed account of research design, data collection methods, and analysis strategies.
Chapter Four	Findings	Presentation of data collected from interviews, observations, and document analyses.
Chapter Five	Discussion	Interpretation of findings concerning existing literature and implications for practice.
Chapter Six	Conclusion	Summary of key findings, recommendations for practice, and suggestions for future research.

1.11 Conclusion

The chapter provided a comprehensive introduction to the study by detailing its research focus, contextual background, and rationale for examining inclusive education practices in Full-Service township primary schools in Gauteng. It situated the study within the post-apartheid South African educational system, where inclusive education is seen as a means to achieve equity and redress. The chapter highlighted the challenges faced by educators teaching English in intermediate grades, who struggle to meet the diverse needs of learners due to resource limitations, inadequate training and socio-economic disparities.

Additionally, the chapter outlined the problem statement, the study's purpose, aims, research questions, and key terminology, thereby establishing the framework for the investigation. The scope and intended contributions of the study are clarified through a discussion of its significance and delimitations. Chapter two reviewed relevant studies on inclusive education and FSSs and explored teaching methods that accommodate a variety of learners' needs in English education settings. The literature review identified gaps in existing scholarship and outlines the theoretical frameworks pertinent to this study's approach.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMING OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This section presents an overview of the literature that analyses and evaluates prior scholarly work on the topic of intermediate phase English educators' pedagogical approaches in Gauteng's Full-Service townships primary schools. The main goal is to outline the study parameters by finding important patterns, conflicts, and gaps in understanding how these educators deal with diversity among their learners and inclusive education. This section will tie the threads of research that has been done in related domains together through a rigorous study of previous studies.

This section delves into the challenges faced by educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders as they navigate the complexities of policy formulation and its subsequent implementation within the realm of inclusive education in township primary schools. By examining academic contributions at international, continental, and South African levels, this review aspires to establish a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, drawing from broad theories down to theories pertinent to the Sedibeng West District in Gauteng.

2.2 Relevant literature review

2.2.1 Historical contexts and forms of marginalisation

Before exploring inclusive practices, it is imperative to first understand the historical and persistent challenges of exclusion and marginalisation in the educational sector. These challenges have permeated societies globally, and while they manifest differently across regions, the detrimental impacts on learners remain consistent.

The historical narratives of exclusion and marginalisation in education are prevalent across the globe, with significant implications for South Africa. In the United States, for instance, the landmark *Supreme Court case Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) marked a significant turning point against racial segregation in schools (Fryer & Levitt, 2004). This ruling not only challenged the legality of segregation but also set a precedent for future civil rights advancements in education. In Europe, similar patterns emerged where children with disabilities were often segregated into special schools until the late 20th century (Mitchell, 2015). This practice reflected societal attitudes that viewed disability as a deficiency rather than a difference to be accommodated within mainstream education. The shift towards inclusion has been gradual but necessary as countries recognise the importance of diversity in educational settings. In South

Africa, the apartheid system institutionalised racial segregation in education through policies like Bantu Education, which aimed to perpetuate socio-economic marginalisation among Black South Africans (Christie, 1985).

The legacy of these exclusionary practices continues to affect educational access and quality today (Seekings & Nattrass, 2008). The historical context reveals systemic barriers that persist and necessitate critical examination of current educational policies. The introduction of FSSs was part of a broader movement towards inclusive education aimed at addressing these historical injustices. FSSs were established to provide support and resources for learners with barriers to learning within their communities (Department of Education, 2005). However, despite these intentions, many FSSs struggle with inadequate resources and support systems necessary for effective implementation (Mahlo, 2020).

2.2.2 Theories underpinning inclusive education

Inclusive education advocates for the right of all learners to participate fully in their education, regardless of their individual needs or backgrounds. According to Ainscow (2016), inclusive practices not only benefit learners with disabilities but enhance the learning experiences of all learners by fostering a more supportive and collaborative environment. Inclusive education, supported by multiple theoretical frameworks, aims to create barrier-free learning environments for all. Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, as expanded by Cologon (2019), underscores the role of community and interaction in learning. In contrast, Meyer (2019) advocates for the Universal Design for Learning, emphasising flexible curriculum designs adaptable to various learners. However, Giroux (2019) and his critical pedagogy stress that genuine inclusion must confront and transform prevailing power structures in education. These diverse theories reveal the intricate nature of implementing inclusion, intertwining educational, social, and political challenges. This study aims to provide a fresh perspective on the ongoing conversation about equitable education worldwide by investigating how these frameworks interact in the daily work of South African educators of English as a second language.

2.2.3 Impact on learners

Marginalisation and exclusion in education have cascading effects on learners. Apart from hindering academic achievements, exclusion denies learners the social benefits of schooling, including self-worth, identity formation, and community participation (Snow, 2019). In South Africa, the legacy of Bantu Education still resonates, with many Black South Africans experiencing socio-economic challenges due to the inferior education they received under apartheid (Seekings & Nattrass, 2008). According to Finn and Rock (1997), learners who feel disconnected from the educational environment are less likely to

participate actively and succeed academically. Juvonen et al. (2000) further emphasise that learners who experience social exclusion are prone to emotional distress and may exhibit behavioural problems.

Exclusion can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and low self-esteem among learners. Learners who are marginalised may struggle to develop crucial social skills. According to Hughes et al. (2005), peer relationships are essential for learning, and those who are excluded often miss opportunities for collaborative learning and social interaction. The long-term impacts of exclusion can be severe, contributing to dropout rates and limiting future educational and career opportunities. UNICEF (2020) also stated that marginalised learners are at increased risk of dropout and disengagement due to lack of support, resources and opportunities.

Garcia and Weiss (2017) argued that marginalised learners face systematic barriers that persist beyond their schooling years, affecting their socio-economic status. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated existing inequalities in education, with marginalised learners facing increased barriers to access and participation (UNESCO, 2020). Marginalised learners are more likely to experience mental health concerns, such as anxiety and depression, due to social isolation and lack of support (WHO, 2020). The National Association of School Psychologists (2022) emphasised the necessity of addressing the mental health needs of marginalised learners, such as those from low-income families and learners with disabilities. Moreover, schools must provide accessible and culturally appropriate mental health services to help these learners thrive.

2.2.4 Policy landscape, implementation and challenges

Gauteng's FSSs policy environment is intricate, characterised by a blend of aspirations and challenges. The 2001 White Paper 6 endorsed inclusive education, yet its realisation encounters financial and professional hurdles, (Naicker & Mestry, 2019). Mahlo (2020) broadens this perspective, attributing struggles to socio-political factors and community involvement. Meanwhile, Van der Merwe and Vally (2021) critique the policy's theoretical nature, arguing it is disconnected from the unique context of townships. This complexity indicates a deeper issue: the disconnection between policy ideation and on-the-ground implementation. Achieving inclusivity necessitates a reconsideration of policy foundations and execution amid intertwined challenges of resources, socio-political nuances, and theoretical-practical divides. According to Mbiza et al. (2024), the use of indigenous languages like Xitsonga in mathematics instruction in rural contexts, such as Acornhoek, illustrates how language policy directly affects educational effectiveness and highlights the pedagogical challenges arising from language diversity. These frameworks not only improve comprehension but also support inclusive practices essential for creating

equitable learning environments. Smith and Johnson (2021) underscore the significant impact of policy on exclusion and marginalisation within FSSs. They identified key policy gaps and inconsistencies that perpetuate educational inequities.

Through a case study analysis, this research identifies common implementation challenges faced by FSSs in effectively including and supporting marginalised learners. These challenges include a lack of resources, staff resistance, and inadequate training (Brown & Jackson, 2020). This critical analysis evaluates current policy frameworks and their impact on fostering inclusion in FSSs, identifying barriers such as inadequate funding, standardised testing practices, and structural inequalities that hinder the successful inclusion of marginalised learners (Jones & Patel, 2018). Overall, these studies highlight the complex interplay between policy, implementation, and the challenges of exclusion and marginalisation within FSSs. Furthermore, they emphasise the need for more cohesive and comprehensive approaches to addressing educational inequities and promoting inclusive practices for all learners.

2.2.5 Full-Service Schools in Gauteng's township setting

Full-Service Schools in Gauteng's townships embody inclusive education, as mandated by White Paper 6, which aims to integrate all learners, regardless of their differences (DoE, 2001). Despite the promise of inclusive education, these schools face significant challenges, particularly in Gauteng's townships. The Sedibeng West District exemplifies these challenges, with research revealing both progress in inclusion and disparities in resource distribution and educator preparedness (Selepe & Mawasha, 2019; Motitswe et al., 2020). Mahlo (2020) details the discord between policy aspirations and real-world implementations.

While these challenges are significant, they also present FSSs with opportunities to reshape inclusive education. By drawing on frameworks such as Vygotsky's social constructivism and Universal Design for Learning (Cologon, 2019; Mayer et al., 2019), these schools can devise strategies sensitive to learner needs and challenge existing norms, in line with Giroux (2019). Moagi's (2022) research identified barriers such as misconceptions about inclusive education policy, a lack of specialised committees, insufficient learner profiling, and inadequate family participation. Addressing these issues is critical for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Huo and Mobara (2024) further explored educators' perspectives on inclusive education within FSSs, revealing themes such as the importance of proper school administration support, effective teaching methods, and active parental involvement. Tackling these issues is essential for enhancing the implementation of inclusive education. In summary, despite obstacles, FSSs in Gauteng's townships are pivotal in envisioning an inclusive educational future.

2.2.6 Learner diversity

Addressing the increasing variety of learner populations poses a challenge for education in today's globalised world. Schools and educators struggle to recognise and value the unique experiences, backgrounds, and requirements of every learner across national boundaries. Understanding learner diversity and its implications is crucial for any educational framework aiming to be inclusive (Possi & Milinga, 2018).

Diverse learner needs refer to the distinct educational demands arising from variations in background, including culture, socioeconomic status, language, cognitive ability, physical attributes, and emotional needs. Learners enter the classroom with different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and varying abilities. This diversity encompasses not only academic differences but also cultural and linguistic ones. Learners come from various ethnic and racial backgrounds, bringing unique worldviews, languages, and cultural experiences. Additionally, these differences extend to their learning preferences; for instance, some learners may process information best visually, while others prefer auditory or kinesthetic approaches. Each of these elements adds to the complexity of teaching in a diverse classroom setting. Furthermore, some learners may have specific learning disabilities that require specialised attention, alongside varying socioeconomic backgrounds, physical and health needs, and emotional and behavioral challenges. Educators must possess a deep understanding of these diverse requirements to create an instructional environment that is inclusive, equitable, and effective for all learners (Rowan et al., 2021).

2.2.6.1 International perspective on learner diversity

Globally, education is evolving from traditional approaches to ones that acknowledge the broad spectrum of learner diversity. Banks (2021) advocates for a profound transformation of curricula that goes beyond merely adding diverse content. Gay (2013) introduces culturally responsive teaching, where educators skillfully incorporate cultural nuances into learning. However, embracing diversity presents challenges. Zhou (2019) expresses concern that an overemphasis on diversity could dilute educational standards, scattering focus and weakening educational objectives. Thus, it is crucial to strike a balance between recognising diversity and maintaining educational cohesion and purpose. Achieving this balance requires carefully crafted curricula and robust educator training programs, ensuring that education embraces diversity while retaining its core purpose and structure.

2.2.6.2 Continental (African) perspective on learner diversity

Africa, with its vibrant mosaic of languages, cultures, and customs, presents a unique panorama of trials and opportunities in addressing learner diversity. Ngugi (1986), cited in Rani (2022), advocates for educational systems that not only acknowledge but also celebrate the native tongues and cultural narratives

that traverse this diverse continent. Such an approach safeguards cultural legacies and fosters a learning environment where learners feel seen and appreciated. Conversely, Mkandawire (2005) highlights the intricate challenge of nurturing a cohesive national identity while allowing cultural plurality to flourish, particularly in the context of the continent's past colonial dominion, which often sought to impose a uniform cultural narrative. The key lies in forging educational frameworks that honor and reflect the myriad cultural identities while fostering a sense of unity and collective ambition. This necessitates a curriculum that is as inclusive as it is reflective, alongside educators whose cultural competence and sensitivity align with the diverse tapestries of their learner body.

2.2.6.3 South African perspective on learner diversity

Understanding learner diversity within the South African context requires a comprehensive analysis that incorporates linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic dimensions. The country's unique demographic landscape, characterised by eleven official languages, reflects the multilingualism enshrined in the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. While this legal framework aims to promote and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity, the reality in many schools is that mother-tongue instruction remains significantly underutilised (Fouche et al., 2023).

South Africa is following a distinct trajectory in the post-apartheid era as it strives to embrace learner diversity. Jansen (1998) explores the country's efforts to heal historical injustices, highlighting the establishment of educational systems that guarantee equal opportunities for all, regardless of their backgrounds. Scholars such as Motala (2003) and Gay (2013) have expanded on Banks's (1993) foundational theories, emphasising the need for a curriculum that is not only culturally responsive but also contextualised to meet South Africa's unique socio-cultural milieu. These contributions suggest a conceptual framework for curriculum development that is cognisant of South Africa's rich cultural heritage and the varied experiences of its learners. Such a framework emphasises the need for a curriculum that transcends mere inclusion by embedding the principles of social justice and equality into the very fabric of educational content and pedagogical practices. This requires a deep understanding of the complex socio-political fabric of the country and its influence on learner journeys. However, achieving this goal is fraught with challenges, including language barriers, socioeconomic disparities, and unequal resource allocation. According to Kovinko et al. (2024), the increasing prevalence of multilingualism in classrooms necessitates both awareness and practical frameworks to enhance instructional effectiveness. Continuous efforts are required to develop responsive pedagogical practices that foster inclusivity and support all learners. The ultimate aim is to create practices that are both reparative and progressive, ensuring that all learners feel seen, heard, and capable of achieving academic success without feeling marginalised or alienated.

2.2.7 Importance of accommodating diverse needs in education

2.2.7.1 International perspective

Diverse needs in education have transitioned from a peripheral concern to a core principle in global pedagogical discourse. This evolution arises from an increasing awareness that traditional methods can inadvertently sideline learners from varied backgrounds and with differing learning needs. Ladson-Billings (2019), a renowned international scholar, emphasised the pitfalls of conventional educational paradigms that often overlook or undervalue diversity. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2020), prominent figures in the global education landscape, assert that genuinely inclusive practices are the foundation of quality education. Such practices empower all learners to engage in rich, fulfilling learning experiences and should not be viewed as mere add-ons. Artiles (2019) contributes to this discourse with a cautionary note, stressing that true inclusivity in education requires deep, structural changes to curriculum design and instructional methods. Superficial adjustments may masquerade as inclusivity but fail to address the systemic changes necessary for all scholars to thrive. These realisations gained significance within the framework of our investigation. The study's overarching goal is to delve deeper than surface-level observations by examining how English educators in the intermediate phase at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng implement adjustments that reflect a genuine commitment to diversity. It underscores the need for a systemic shift in South African education to address the specific challenges and opportunities that a diverse population brings to schools.

2.2.7.2 South African perspective

Korkie, Beyers and Swanepoel's (2025) research examined the challenges of implementing inclusive education approaches in South Africa. The study identified a gap between the understanding and application of inclusive concepts by pre-service educators and emphasised the necessity for in-service training on inclusive methodologies for both educators and educational lecturers. Within the South African context, addressing learner diversity is intertwined with the nation's unique historical and socio-political narrative. While it resonates with global discussions on inclusivity, the local strategies and challenges are distinctly South African. The post-apartheid transformation highlights the constitutional obligation to accommodate diversity in education. In alignment with the broader national objectives, the South African Schools Act (1996) and White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (2001) aim to promote inclusive education that prioritises equal access and the removal of instructional barriers. Thus, it is evident that genuinely addressing diverse needs in education is crucial. Rather than relying on superficial measures, a comprehensive approach is required. This study aims to explore how intermediate phase English educators in South Africa navigate this complex landscape, potentially providing insights that broaden the conventional understanding of inclusivity.

2.2.7.3 Intermediate phase learners

Intermediate-phase learners occupy a critical stage in their educational journey as they transition from foundational learning to more complex academic demands. Their developmental needs are multifaceted, encompassing cognitive, social and emotional dimensions that require a thoughtful, balanced, and responsive pedagogical approach. In the context of learner diversity, this phase is particularly significant, as learners begin to form stronger individual identities and develop heightened self-awareness. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to recognise and address the varied needs of these learners in ways that are both inclusive and developmentally appropriate (Mtambo & Tshuma, 2023).

2.2.7.4 Teaching English

Teaching English in a diverse setting presents unique complexities. English, often regarded as a global lingua franca, carries significant socio-cultural weight, especially in post-colonial contexts like South Africa (Rudwick, 2021). The challenge extends beyond linguistics to include the necessity of ensuring that the content is culturally relevant and sensitive. Given the diverse backgrounds of learners, English may serve as a second, third, or even fourth language for many, requiring a pedagogical approach that is sensitive to these linguistic and cultural nuances. The goal is to promote language proficiency while fostering an inclusive environment where each learner's cultural and linguistic heritage is acknowledged and valued (Harmer, 2014).

Research indicates that learners who receive instruction in their mother tongue during the early grades perform better in higher-order reading comprehension tasks. However, many South African learners transition to English instruction too early, often without sufficient proficiency in the language, which hinders their academic success (Palane & Howie, 2019). "Learning in a language that is not one's mother tongue is an international phenomenon brought about by increased mobility and migration across the world" (Dreyer, 2017, p. 1). In many South African schools, learners begin actively using their first additional language, often English, as the language of learning and teaching in Grade 4 (Department of Education, 2011). Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit, and Van Deventer (2016) found that some educators felt capable of providing one-on-one support to learners; however, they are discouraged by the demands of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document and limited resources.

Structured methods are employed in planning English classes in South African primary schools to ensure effective language learning. Educators follow Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs), which provide a roadmap for curricular delivery. According to Chauke and Tabane (2021), these plans outline essential ideas, competencies, and schedules for teaching English throughout the academic year.

2.2.7.5 Alignment with the South African education system

Aligning with the CAPS is a priority for the Department of Basic Education (2020) in teaching English during the intermediate phase. Some argue that CAPS is not applicable in townships, as it fails to consider the local context (Jansen, 2019). While Spaull and Kotze (2019) view CAPS as providing necessary structure, they also acknowledge challenges, including the integration of indigenous languages.

Educator training is central to this alignment, with Wits et al. (2020) emphasising the importance of preparing educators for the diverse demands of English instruction. However, Taylor and Vinjevold (2019) highlight discrepancies between training and classroom realities, which affect the quality of English teaching. Assessment practices also illuminate this connection. Reddy et al. (2020) argue that tests like the Annual National Assessments (ANA) may not effectively capture language nuances. Conversely, Makgato and Mji (2019) defend the role of standardised testing in monitoring and accountability. Aligning intermediate English instruction with the South African system involves a complex interplay between curriculum, educator training, and assessments. This research aims to enhance understanding of this alignment in specific contexts. However, an analysis of inclusive education in South Africa revealed a significant gap between policy and practice, despite existing policies. Challenges include inadequate training for educators and a lack of resources, necessitating a more integrated and practical approach to inclusive education (Engelbrecht, 2020).

2.2.7.6 Challenges in assessing learners with different abilities and backgrounds

Evaluating learners with varying abilities and backgrounds is a complex endeavor. Swallow (2020) discusses how classroom diversity enriches perspectives but complicates standard evaluations. Cultural biases in tests (Reynolds et al., 2020) further challenge fair assessment for learners from different ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, conventional tests may overlook the unique talents of learners with disabilities (Thompson et al., 2021). Such insights highlight the need for adaptive evaluation methods that reflect the multifaceted nature of learners. Within the framework of Full-Service township primary schools in Gauteng, this research posits that traditional evaluation methods may fall short in capturing the varied trajectories of learners. English educators in intermediate phases are thus encouraged to look beyond established assessment techniques. To authentically gauge and nurture every learner's potential, there is a compelling call for fluid, inclusive, and culturally sensitive assessment tools that reflect the diverse essence of township classrooms.

2.2.8 Specific case studies or examples relevant to the Sedibeng West district

The Sedibeng West District in Gauteng embodies a mosaic of national challenges and triumphs. In this complex landscape, Selepe and Mawasha (2019) revealed mixed results regarding inclusive education. Motitswe et al. (2020) focused on Thuto Lesedi Primary School, highlighting an integrative learning ethos

hindered by inconsistencies in resources and training. Further analysis by Mahlo (2020) exposed a gap between policy ideals and their real-world implementation, influenced by community dynamics and leadership roles. As a result, Sedibeng serves as a poignant reflection of dichotomies, an aspiration for inclusivity confronted by the harsh realities of resource constraints and diverse needs, mirroring broader challenges in Gauteng's educational landscape.

2.3 Theoretical framework: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Adaptive classrooms that cater to learners' unique learning styles are the goal of the progressive educational framework known as UDL. Universal Design for Learning challenges the one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning, which is fundamentally problematic. This framework is inspired by the concept of universal design in architecture (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). According to Kelly et al. (2022), UDL emphasises the importance of designing educational objectives, strategies, resources, and assessments that are suitable for all learners, rather than just a singular, idealised typical learner. At its core, UDL is founded on three principles: first, learners should have access to various representations that facilitate their learning; second, they should have options for actions and expressions that allow them to demonstrate their knowledge; and third, they should have access to diverse engagement strategies that connect with their interests, provide appropriate challenges, and enhance motivation (Rose & Meyer, 2002). The goals of this research, which aim to investigate how educators in a Gauteng township primary school address their learners' varied needs, align closely with these principles

Within this research's scope, UDL serves as a robust foundation for exploring how educators design and implement lessons that honour individual differences among learners. Given that learners' interests and fundamental motivations can vary significantly across socioeconomic groups, this consideration is particularly relevant. This research will examine the various strategies educators employ to engage learners, such as promoting teamwork, incorporating cultural references, and utilising technology tools, to create a more welcoming and inclusive classroom environment. Additionally, the study's overarching goal is to uncover how educators in townships address specific extrinsic challenges, such as financial difficulties, that learners may face, as these obstacles can significantly impact their motivation and performance in class.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL), rooted in cognitive neuroscience and educational psychology (Rose & Meyer, 2002), advocates for designing flexible learning environments that accommodate diverse learners from the outset. However, when considering resource-constrained township schools, several limitations emerge that challenge the practical implementation of UDL principles. Firstly, one significant limitation pertains to infrastructural deficits. Township schools often grapple with inadequate physical

infrastructure, such as outdated classrooms, insufficient teaching aids and limited technological access (Chowa & Masa, 2014). These constraints hinder the deployment of multiple means of representation, which frequently rely on technology-rich resources like multimedia tools or assistive devices elements that are often scarce in such contexts (Kozleski et al., 2018). Secondly, there is the issue of teacher preparedness and professional development. Implementing UDL requires educators to have specialised training to design and adapt curriculum materials effectively (Dell'Anna et al. 2018).

In resource limited settings, educators often face heavy workloads and lack ongoing professional development opportunities, limiting their capacity to adopt UDL strategies critically (Dacus-Hare, 2023). Consequently, the intended benefits of UDL may remain theoretical rather than practical. Moreover, the socio-economic challenges prevalent in township communities such as poverty, limited parental involvement and societal stigmas further complicate UDL's application. These factors influence students' engagement and access in ways that may not be fully addressed solely through curriculum adaptations (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Therefore, resource constraints extend beyond material shortages to encompass broader socio-economic and systemic issues.

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework emphasises creating flexible, accessible and inclusive approaches to education and research. Applying UDL principles to data collection instruments such as interviews, observations and document analyses can enhance their accessibility, fairness and richness, while guiding ethical and equitable data analysis and interpretation. Designing interview questions that cater to diverse participants' backgrounds, experiences and communication preferences encourages richer responses (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Developing standardised yet flexible protocols ensures inclusivity by accounting for diverse behaviors and expressions, avoiding bias or misinterpretation (Rose et al., 2014). Applying UDL encourages analysts to recognise multiple interpretations of data, acknowledging diverse perspectives (Sutherland et al., 2020). UDL informed analysis entails ongoing reflection on how interpretative frameworks may privilege certain voices over others. Researchers should actively seek out marginalised or underrepresented perspectives within the data (Mitchell, 2014).

2.3.1 Multiple means of representation

To accommodate a wide range of learning styles, this concept emphasises the importance of providing content in various forms and media. Some learners may benefit more from visual aids, while others may prefer written or spoken explanations (Courtad, 2019). Given that the learners at this Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng come from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, it is essential to present knowledge in multiple formats, in line with the UDL principle of multiple modes of representation. The primary goal of this research is to identify the strategies educators use when

developing lesson plans to meet their learners' needs. This principle encourages educators to consider how they can incorporate visual, auditory, and tactile resources into their lessons so that all learners, including those who may struggle with text-based materials due to language barriers, cultural differences, or learning disabilities, can grasp the content. This study will adhere to the principles of UDL, which prioritise inclusive and accessible learning materials, by investigating whether educators are aware of and make accommodations for learners' diverse learning styles.

2.3.2 Multiple means of engagement

Recognising that learners differ in what motivates and interests them, UDL advocates for a variety of methods to engage learners. This may include varying instructional approaches or offering choices in assignments to accommodate individual interests and strengths (Dickinson & Gronseth, 2020). The research examined whether educators are aware of and actively planning for the diverse ways learners' process information, aligning with UDL's emphasis on accessibility and inclusivity in learning materials. This principle is particularly relevant to the study's second objective, which seeks to determine how educators implement inclusive teaching strategies in lesson delivery. Engagement is crucial in classrooms characterised by diverse socio-economic backgrounds, where learners' motivation and interests can vary significantly. The research investigated how educators are utilising different engagement methods, such as collaborative activities, integrating learners' cultural references, or using technology, to ensure that each learner is not only present but also actively involved in the learning process. Additionally, the study explored how educators navigate the challenges of engaging learners who may be facing external stressors common in township settings, such as economic difficulties, which can significantly impact classroom engagement.

2.3.3 Multiple means of action and expression

Universal Design for Learning emphasises diverse expressions of knowledge, allowing learners to demonstrate understanding through various mediums such as written work, presentations, or art (Courtad, 2019). Universal Design for Learning aligns with South Africa's inclusive educational aspirations; however, its practical implementation faces challenges such as resource constraints and untrained educators (Rao, Ok & Bryant, 2019). This research explores UDL's application within a township school, aiming to clarify its constraints and achievements to inform policy and pedagogical strategies.

Universal Design for Learning will serve as a framework for data analysis, guiding the evaluation of educators' approaches. The study will identify where educators align with or diverge from UDL principles, suggesting best practices and areas for improvement. Universal Design for Learning's strength lies in its inclusivity and adaptability, addressing diverse learner needs and cultural backgrounds (Edyburn, 2019).

Despite its advantages, challenges in practical application, particularly in resource-limited settings, persist (Rao, Ok & Bryant, 2019). The study aims to assess UDL's potential in Gauteng's intermediate English education, aligning its principles with South Africa's inclusive ethos and identifying practical limitations.

2.4 Strategies that intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service School, use when designing their lessons to accommodate learners diverse learning needs

Educators adopted differentiated instruction as their primary approach to navigate the diverse set of learners in their classrooms. According to McGrath and Willcutt (2022), antecedent learning incorporates Bloom's taxonomy as an educational framework for systematic guidance. The planner applies Bloom's taxonomy and differentiated instruction techniques to deliver lessons that cater to every learner's needs. This approach reflects an advanced understanding of cognitive development. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework aligns perfectly with this concept, as differentiated tasks serve as support systems that help learners progress within the boundaries of their ZPD (Chang, 2023).

Visual learning tools have become essential for educating learners with diverse language backgrounds, as they clarify complex ideas and enhance classroom participation (Contreras, 2024). Furthermore, educators use code switching and their learners' native languages to create an inclusive language learning environment. By employing code-switching, educators deliver instructions in familiar linguistic forms, reducing cognitive strain for English language learners (ELLs) and promoting fairness during instruction. Educators use code switching and their learners' indigenous languages to create an inclusive language learning environment. Heugh et al. (2021) demonstrate that incorporating indigenous languages in schools enhances conceptual learning and boosts language self-confidence among multilingual learners, even in the face of limited educational resources. Code-switching proves beneficial for cognitive development as outlined by Vygotsky's theory (Ali, Ihsan & Sherazi, 2023).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the relevant literature concerning inclusive education practices within Gauteng's Full-Service Schools. By examining historical contexts, current practices, theoretical frameworks, and the critical importance of accommodating diverse learner needs, this chapter effectively highlights significant gaps and challenges faced by educators in the contemporary educational landscape.

In conclusion, addressing the complexities associated with inclusive education in Gauteng's Full-Service Schools requires collaborative efforts among educators, policymakers, and various stakeholders. By prioritising inclusivity in educational policies and practices, South Africa can move closer to realising its commitment to providing quality education for all learners. This commitment is not merely a policy directive but a moral imperative that underscores the importance of equity and access to education for every child, regardless of their background or abilities.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design employed in this study, which investigates how intermediate phase ESL educators at a FSSs in the Sedibeng West District accommodate the diverse learning needs of their learners. The research design serves as a comprehensive framework by detailing its paradigmatic perspective and philosophical assumptions, as well as the methodology utilised, the research context, the sampling strategies, the data collection instruments, the data analysis techniques, the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations addressed. This chapter clarifies these elements to provide a transparent framework that illustrates how the research was conducted and demonstrates its alignment with the study's objectives.

3.2 Paradigmatic perspective

This research is founded on the interpretivist paradigm, as it aims to understand personal experiences and perspectives within specific contexts (Potrac et al., 2014). The interpretivist approach offers a crucial framework for examining the complex challenges educators face at a FSSs in the Sedibeng West District, where teaching practices are shaped by various social, cultural, and historical influences. By adopting this approach, the researcher gained an in-depth understanding of educators' actual experiences and perspectives as they implement inclusive strategies for diverse learner populations in FSSs environments. The interpretivist paradigm of qualitative research emphasises the notion that reality comprises multiple constructions formed through social interactions, making it essential to understand participants' lived experiences for knowledge generation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This study utilises an interpretivist framework to acknowledge that knowledge is a subjective process influenced by the research context and developed through the interaction between researchers and participants (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). It investigates how educators in a FSSs comprehend their inclusive teaching methods by analysing their lesson planning, delivery, and assessment practices. The research employs focus group interviews as a qualitative approach to uncover how educators adapt their teaching methods to meet diverse learner needs.

3.3 Philosophical assumptions of paradigms

Philosophical assumptions encompass fundamental beliefs that shape researchers' interpretations of reality and their methods for knowledge acquisition (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Research paradigms are built upon these assumptions, significantly influencing the development of research design and decisions regarding methodology and data analysis interpretation (Scotland, 2012). This study examines four core philosophical assumptions: axiology, which relates to values and ethics; epistemology, which investigates

the nature of knowledge; ontology, which explores the nature of reality; and methodology, which reflects the research approach. The following sections elaborate on each assumption to illustrate their influence on the study's focus on inclusive education within FSSs in Gauteng.

3.3.1 Axiology: the role of values and ethics in research

Axiology explores how values and ethics impact every aspect of research, including researcher-participant interactions and data interpretation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Research conducted under interpretivist principles recognises subjectivity as a critical element shaping the entire investigation process (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Research outcomes are influenced by the researcher's personal beliefs and cultural background, necessitating ongoing reflexivity to mitigate bias and uphold ethical standards (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This research maintains ethical integrity by emphasising respect, fairness, and transparency, ensuring that educators' voices are authentic and undistorted (Mertens, 2014). The study requires informed consent from participants and guarantees their confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the research process. Ethical integrity is further upheld by allowing participants to review and confirm their responses, ensuring their personal experiences and viewpoints are accurately represented in the findings. The research adheres to established ethical protocols for educational studies and emphasises cultural awareness and inclusive practices while collaborating with educators in Gauteng's FSSs. A values-driven approach is adopted to reveal how education systems are influenced by social, economic, and institutional forces affecting both teaching and learning (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The researcher actively interprets educator narratives while upholding ethical responsibilities and ensuring fairness in knowledge representation and participant empowerment (Tracy, 2020).

3.3.2 Epistemology: the nature and acquisition of knowledge

Epistemology focuses on the nature of knowledge, its existence, and the methods through which it is acquired, particularly within qualitative research paradigms. Rooted in the interpretivist tradition, this study posits that knowledge is a subjective social construct, shaped by context and emerging through human experience and interaction. Consequently, truth is regarded as relative rather than absolute (Schwandt, 2000). The research draws on educators' lived experiences within diverse classroom environments, particularly as they navigate challenges arising from socio-economic disparities and the implementation of inclusive education policies.

Rejecting positivist assumptions that prioritise measurable data over lived realities, this study values educators' narratives and practical insights as legitimate sources of knowledge (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To explore these perspectives, the research employs semi-structured interviews, classroom observations,

and document analysis methods that facilitate an in-depth exploration of how educators perceive inclusive teaching and adapt their instructional strategies to address the needs of diverse learners.

Grounded in a constructivist epistemological framework, the study embraces the notion that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction between the researcher and participants, emphasising interpretation, dialogue, and contextual understanding (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). It acknowledges that teaching practices are deeply embedded within broader social and institutional contexts that shape educators' decisions and experiences. By centering educators' real-world experiences, the study aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of inclusive education, informing policy development and the design of educator training programs.

3.3.3 Ontology: the nature of reality

Ontology addresses the fundamental nature of reality and its interpretation through research frameworks. Interpretivist research operates under a relativist ontology, suggesting that reality varies and evolves through individual experiences and social environments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The study recognises that educators' views on inclusive education arise from a variety of factors, including personal beliefs, institutional support, classroom demographics, and policy implementation. Interpretivism opposes positivist paradigms by accepting multiple realities, acknowledging that each educator possesses a unique and context-based understanding of inclusive education (Bryman, 2016). Individual experiences, professional training, and exposure to inclusive education policies shape the framework through which perspectives are formed. The research reflects reality as fluid and socially constructed, ensuring that educators' voices remain contextualised within their teaching environments rather than being generalised or homogenised (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This ontological stance is essential for understanding the complexities of inclusive teaching, as it enables researchers to document how educators develop and implement inclusive teaching methods across different schools.

3.3.4 Methodology: the research approach and design

The research methodology encompasses the specific strategies and procedures used to explore the research problem while adhering to interpretivist principles. A qualitative case study approach is employed to deeply investigate inclusive education at one FSS located in Gauteng, as described by Yin (2018). This methodology excels at collecting detailed and vivid data regarding educators' real-world experiences, the challenges they encounter, and their teaching methods. The study utilised focus group interviews with educators to gather their views, alongside classroom observations to record active teaching strategies and document analysis to examine school policies and lesson plans. The use of multiple qualitative methods

enhances data triangulation, which verifies both the credibility and depth of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research applied thematic analysis, organising data into distinct themes based on the narratives shared by participants, (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Through this methodological approach, the researcher maintained a focus on participants, allowing educators' experiences and perspectives to influence the study's findings. This research differs from quantitative methods by emphasising understanding interpretation and context to explore the complexities of inclusive education rather than measuring and predicting outcomes.

3.4 Research methodology

The research utilised qualitative methods to examine the planning, teaching, and assessment strategies employed by English second language educators at the intermediate level in a Full-Service primary school. Qualitative research methods were chosen for their ability to thoroughly explore participants' experiences and perspectives, along with their interactions (Merriam, 2009). The selected methodology aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, acknowledging that reality emerges from social constructs and that understanding it requires analysing participants' personal experiences and interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Adopting a qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gain contextual understanding while evaluating how educators' beliefs and training, along with institutional support systems, affected their teaching practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.4.1 Justification for qualitative research

The choice of qualitative research stemmed from its capability to understand complex human behaviour within real-world environments. Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative research prioritises exploration and flexibility, facilitating deep engagement with participants' lived experiences (Bryman, 2016). The study required examining educators' planning, teaching, and assessment practices without predefined hypotheses, leading to qualitative inquiry as the most appropriate methodological approach. Investigating educator practices allowed the researcher to identify hidden teaching patterns, reveal real-world obstacles to inclusive education implementation, and identify adaptable best practices for policy enhancement (Tracy, 2020).

3.4.2 Strengths and limitations of qualitative research

3.4.2.1 Strengths

The primary strength of qualitative research lies in its capacity to deliver detailed examinations of phenomena in their natural settings (Bryman, 2016). The study benefitted from the adaptability of qualitative methods, which allowed the researcher to modify data collection techniques in response to

emerging patterns and participant insights (Flick, 2018). Through focus group interviews, the researcher could delve deeper into educators' experiences, enabling participants to express their views openly while allowing for further exploration of specific issues (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Direct classroom observations reinforced the research findings by enabling the researcher to observe teaching methods in practice rather than relying solely on self-reported information. The study combined focus group interviews, observations, and document analysis to enhance trustworthiness and validity, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of inclusive teaching practices in FSSs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.4.2.2 Limitations and mitigation strategies

While qualitative research has its advantages, it also faces certain limitations. Findings lack generalisability due to the study's small sample size and specific context (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study prioritised transferability over broad generalisability, allowing its findings to provide relevant insights for comparable educational situations (Shenton, 2004). To improve transferability, the research offered detailed descriptions of the research context, participant backgrounds, and findings, enabling other researchers and educators to assess the applicability of these insights to their own environments (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Qualitative research is also susceptible to researcher bias, which occurs when the researcher's personal viewpoints and experiences affect the interpretation of study results (Yin, 2018). The research process incorporated reflexivity to manage bias by having the researcher continuously examine and consider their personal biases throughout the study (Mertens, 2014). The study implemented member checking, allowing participants to review transcripts and research outcomes to validate their statements (Birt et al., 2016). Additionally, peer debriefing sessions with academic supervisors and professional colleagues were conducted to maintain the integrity of data interpretation according to research standards.

3.5. Research site

The researcher conducted this study at a FSS in the Sedibeng West District of Gauteng province in South Africa. This Full-Service School exemplifies South Africa's inclusive education vision by striving to meet the diverse educational needs of all learners, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, as outlined by the Department of Education in 2001. However, the school's educators face several significant challenges, including limited educational materials and overcrowded classrooms, compounded by socio-economic factors that impact their capacity to deliver inclusive teaching methods and improve learning outcomes (Motala & Vally, 2002).

The Full-Service School is located in the township area called Evaton, which lies within Vanderbijlpark, Johannesburg, Gauteng. Evaton itself is historically significant as one of the older remaining freehold African townships in South Africa, known for its relative autonomy and opportunities for African residents to own property and advance socially and economically in an urban environment. This makes Evaton distinct in providing a longstanding space for community development and self-reliance despite broader systemic challenges faced by township communities. Thus, this Full-Service School represents a critical educational institution in a historically rich, socially dynamic, and economically challenged township environment, where community participation and external partnerships work together to address educational and social needs.

The school serves 1,200 learners, most of whom are Black African learners from low-income households. The school's racial demographics reflect the enduring effects of apartheid-era segregation while also showcasing efforts to promote educational equity post-apartheid (Jansen, 2004). It faces unique obstacles due to poverty, language differences, and inadequate infrastructure, all of which influence teaching and learning within the township institution.

The research focused specifically on ESL educators teaching Grades 4 to 6 at the FSS in the Sedibeng West District. These educators taught English as a subject while using it as the instructional language for various subjects, making their role critical for learner academic achievement (Heugh, 2000). Each grade in the intermediate phase contained a single class of 40 to 45 learners, highlighting the widespread issue of overcrowding in township schools. Many learners came from environments with limited English exposure, resulting in additional challenges in understanding lessons and participating in classroom activities.

3.6 Sampling

Sampling describes how researchers choose participants from a broader population to collect data that supports the study's goals (Bryman, 2012). The researcher applied purposive sampling, a common non-random method in qualitative research, to select participants based on defined inclusion criteria (Palinkas et al., 2015). This approach was used to identify participants with the necessary expertise and practical classroom experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018) regarding inclusive education practices in township FSSs. The study specifically targeted educators currently teaching in the intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6) to gather detailed, context-specific information through the analysis of their lesson planning, lesson delivery, and assessment practices aimed at supporting diverse learners. Participants were selected based on their adherence to specific criteria, ensuring the relevance and depth of the collected data. The educators were chosen from a FSS located in the Gauteng townships. While the sampling method generated thorough

qualitative data, it also presented limitations, including potential selection bias and restricted applicability to other educational contexts. To mitigate these limitations, the study recruited educators with varying levels of experience and diverse backgrounds to capture a broader range of perspectives from the school environment. The research utilised the principle of data saturation to determine the sample size, which occurs when additional data yield no new insights (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). The chosen sampling method aligned with the qualitative study's objectives by enabling detailed investigations into lesson planning, delivery, and assessment practices for inclusion, as well as educator challenges and policy effectiveness in FSSs in townships.

3.6. 1 Sample criteria

The study implemented specific inclusion criteria to select participants, ensuring that only educators with suitable experience contributed to the research. A minimum of three years of teaching experience at the intermediate level (Grades 4 to 6) was the primary selection requirement. This criterion guaranteed that participants had sufficient classroom experience in township schools to provide informed feedback on inclusive education methods. The study considered educator experience essential for understanding how they adapted their teaching strategies to effectively support the diverse needs of learners.

Participants were required to have subject expertise, as the focus was exclusively on English language educators in Full-Service primary schools. English educators were selected because their subject serves as both the medium of instruction and an academic discipline, posing unique challenges for inclusive educational environments. The research targeted English educators to conduct a precise examination of teaching methods that assist diverse learners in language education. This approach provided comprehensive insights into inclusive teaching practices in a core academic subject that significantly influences learners' educational development and self-confidence.

The research project sought participants who demonstrated a willingness to share their experiences and reflections. To obtain meaningful qualitative data, educators needed to agree to participate in both focus group interviews and classroom observations. The nature of qualitative research necessitated detailed participant insights, making the involvement of educators who could openly discuss their teaching methods essential. The study focused on selecting six participants from a designated Full-Service township primary school who taught English in the intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6). The aim was to gather varied perspectives by collecting insights from educators across different grade levels to develop a comprehensive understanding of inclusive education practices in township schools.

The research emphasised depth over breadth by investigating educators' experiences rather than collecting large amounts of superficial data. The research team employed purposive sampling to select educators who possessed hands-on experience and knowledge in addressing diverse learning needs. According to Patton (2015), qualitative research prioritises depth to enable researchers to gain a detailed understanding of educational complexities. The primary recruitment goal was to involve between six and eight participants, a number expected to achieve data saturation, indicating that no new insights would emerge from additional data.

The study included six educators who shared their unique viewpoints on both the challenges and successes encountered while implementing inclusive teaching methods. Educators from all intermediate phase grade levels were included to ensure a variety of teaching experiences were represented. This distribution allowed the researcher to analyse educational practices across different learner development phases, enhancing the understanding of inclusivity across various educational levels. The research gathered important information regarding the teaching methods used by township school educators to support diverse learners and the systemic obstacles that hinder successful implementation, as shared by experts in diverse classrooms.

3.7 Data collection instruments

Selecting appropriate data collection instruments was crucial for acquiring detailed, high-quality information, as noted by Creswell (2014). Multiple instruments were employed in this study to conduct an in-depth examination of English language teaching strategies at a Full-Service primary school. A variety of data collection methods facilitated a comprehensive understanding of inclusive teaching approaches and classroom challenges for diverse populations.

3.7.1 Document analysis

This study utilised document analysis as the primary approach to collect information about educators' planning, delivery, and evaluation methods for inclusive teaching practices. The analysed documents included lesson plans, which revealed educators' strategies for structuring learning activities through inclusive instructional techniques that addressed the diverse learning needs of learners. The assessment rubrics provided insights into the evaluation criteria educators used to measure learners' performance and how these tools reflected inclusive practices while supporting different learner abilities. Learner feedback forms offered information on how educators communicated learners' progress and adapted feedback methods to meet diverse learning needs. The selected documents aimed to investigate how inclusive education principles were implemented in classroom settings. Document analysis enabled researchers to

combine interviews and classroom observations, thereby enhancing both the credibility and depth of their findings (Bowen, 2009). The analysis followed a systematic procedure, with the assessment tool developed by integrating inclusive education principles with elements of the UDL framework. The checklist evaluated differentiated instruction practices, accessibility features, scaffolding methods, accommodations for learners facing learning barriers, and adherence to inclusive teaching strategies. The checklist in Appendix A served as the analytical tool to assess how instructional materials contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment.

The researcher employed document analysis as a valuable qualitative approach to examine pre-existing data, which remains stable and does not disrupt the subjects being studied (Bowen, 2009). This method allows researchers to identify patterns and themes while determining instructional intentions without influencing participant behavior (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The method's strength lies in its ability to contextualise and validate information from additional data sources. However, documents may not always accurately represent actual classroom activities, as they often cater to external reporting needs or administrative formats (O'Leary, 2014). Researchers must cross-validate interpretations to avoid potential bias in their findings. The study addressed these limitations by cross-referencing document analysis results with evidence from interviews and observations to verify coherence and reliability.

3.7.2 Focus group interviews with educators

Six educators who taught English in the intermediate phase participated in focus group interviews based on their professional experience and teaching responsibilities. Prior to classroom observation sessions, the educators engaged in focus group discussions that examined their approaches to lesson planning, instructional methods, and experiences with inclusive teaching methodologies. Through these focus group interviews, educators shared their viewpoints and engaged in reflective conversations that highlighted both achievements and obstacles in applying inclusive educational methods.

The focus group format of the interviews provided participants the flexibility to discuss specific topics while allowing them to elaborate on their experiences. This method enabled participants to construct comprehensive narratives about their teaching experiences (Ruslin et al., 2022). A predetermined set of questions guided the focus group interviews, ensuring consistency while allowing for in-depth discussions (see Appendix B). The focus group interview questions explored educators' views on learner diversity, their instructional modifications, and the institutional support mechanisms that facilitate inclusive education.

3.7.3 Classroom observations

The researcher conducted classroom observations to directly assess how educators implemented teaching strategies and adapted to diverse learner needs. Real-time observations enabled the analysis of inclusive teaching practices by evaluating instructional differentiation techniques and monitoring both classroom interactions and learner engagement. This approach confirmed insights from interviews and document analysis, leading to a comprehensive interpretation of teaching dynamics.

A structured observation guide was used to document key components of classroom instruction, including lesson delivery, classroom management methods, and accommodations for learners with diverse needs. The observation guide in Appendix C established criteria for evaluating instructional techniques, multimodal teaching approaches, and educator-learner engagement. Systematic documentation of classroom activities allowed the study to accurately represent teaching practices while identifying both strengths and areas for development (Jebur et al., 2021).

3.7.4 Triangulation of data

The study employed document analysis alongside group interviews and classroom observations to create a triangulated research method aimed at enhancing the validity and reliability of its findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data triangulation facilitated cross-verification, ensuring that conclusions were drawn from multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single method. The research gained credibility by comparing educators' reported strategies against both documented lesson materials and actual classroom teaching methods. By combining multiple qualitative data collection methods, the study offered a comprehensive investigation of inclusive education in a Full-Service township primary school. These methods provided insights into effective instructional strategies while revealing educator challenges and highlighting areas for policy and professional development enhancements.

3.8 Data analysis

The analysis of collected data was crucial for generating valuable insights from the study. This method required researchers to identify patterns within extensive qualitative data sets and combine these patterns to derive comprehensive findings (Merriam, 2009). The study utilised thematic analysis, a qualitative method focused on detecting recurring patterns in qualitative information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach allowed researchers to deeply examine educators' experiences with inclusive teaching practices.

Data analysis occurred in six distinct phases. The researcher first became familiar with the data by reading interview transcripts, classroom observation notes, and findings from document analysis multiple times.

This stage fostered a deep understanding of the data, facilitating the identification of initial patterns and emerging insights. In the next phase, the researcher created initial codes from data segments relevant to the research questions, systematically categorising them. This initial coding process highlighted educators' teaching methods and their perspectives on inclusive education while underscoring the challenges they faced. Each data source, focus group interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, underwent independent thematic analysis to uncover unique patterns. This analysis process ensured that insights remained specific to each dataset's distinctive features. The results from initial coding and theme development for each data type were integrated during the cross-data comparison stage, enabling the triangulation of findings and cross-source theme comparisons, which contributed to a synthesised understanding of inclusive teaching practices in FSSs.

Following the coding phase, the thematic search involved grouping related codes into broader thematic categories. The identified themes underscored essential components of inclusive education, encompassing differentiated instruction, resource constraints, and classroom management approaches. The researcher verified the consistency between the themes and the data sources to align with the study's objectives. During the refinement process, researchers reviewed the themes to eliminate inconsistencies and merge or remove redundant themes. This identification process ensured the themes accurately reflected educators' experiences while maintaining consistency across multiple data sources.

After finalising the themes, researchers defined and named them to highlight their significance for the study. They performed a detailed analysis of all themes, integrating illustrative examples from both focus group interviews and classroom observations. This step revealed the strategies educators employed to implement inclusive teaching practices as well as the challenges they encountered. The writing phase combined the themes into a structured narrative that connected the findings with the research objectives. Through direct participant quotations and classroom observation examples, the narrative provided a multidimensional understanding of the data.

Through thematic analysis, researchers established a robust and methodical framework for interpreting their data. The iterative process allowed researchers to refine themes in response to emerging insights, enhancing the findings' validity, as supported by Guest et al. (2012). The in-depth analysis of qualitative data revealed both the teaching methods educators employed and their rationale for selecting specific instructional strategies. This research approach enabled a detailed exploration of inclusive education practices at FSSs in Gauteng townships, enriching educational scholarship.

3.9 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness serves as a key element for validating the study's findings, impacting credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified these concepts as essential for maintaining rigor and reliability in qualitative research. The research process and results gained validation through these elements, ensuring that the study's conclusions accurately reflected participants' real-world experiences.

3.9.1 Credibility (truth value)

Credibility signifies how confident researchers are in the truthfulness of their findings and their alignment with participants' actual experiences. Researchers enhanced their study's credibility by conducting member checks, which involved participants validating early findings to confirm they accurately represented their experiences (Holloway & Galvin, 2016). The researcher maintained long-term engagement, allowing for a deeper understanding of both classroom environments and educators' perspectives. Through extended interactions, the researcher built trust with participants, strengthening the validity of the collected data. The research team employed triangulation methods to cross-check data from focus group interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, validating the consistency of interpretations and findings.

3.9.2 Dependability (consistency)

The research team established dependability by maintaining a comprehensive audit trail that documented all steps of the research process. The methodology provided clear oversight of decision-making processes, ensuring that research findings were based on systematic inquiry rather than researcher bias (Nowell et al., 2017). Multiple data collection sources, such as interviews and classroom observations, were utilised to enhance reliability and confirm that findings remained consistent across various contexts. An external researcher independently evaluated the methods and interpretations in a peer review process to verify that the findings logically emerged from the research methodology.

3.9.3 Confirmability (neutrality)

Confirmability demonstrated that research findings reflected participant experiences rather than researcher biases. The researcher maintained reflexivity throughout the study by documenting reflections on potential biases and assumptions in a dedicated journal. This practice enhanced self-awareness and reduced the impact of personal bias during data interpretation (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The research maintained objective analysis of inclusive teaching practices by ensuring confirmability, which supported ethical research standards.

Through the establishment of trustworthiness via credibility, dependability, and confirmability, the study strengthened the validity of its findings and contributed meaningful insights to inclusive education research. The research process upheld high academic standards through these mechanisms, increasing trust in the conclusions reached and their significance within educational discussions.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The importance of ethical research standards was critical when examining sensitive educational settings like Gauteng's Full-Service primary schools. The research identified significant ethical issues involved in engaging educators from these particular school settings while safeguarding participants' rights and dignity throughout the research process. Ethical standards guided the procedures for data collection at each phase, from participant recruitment to data analysis, ensuring adherence to research ethics regulations.

3.10.1 Informed consent

The researcher obtained informed consent from all study participants prior to beginning data collection. Participants received a detailed informational document explaining the study's purpose, potential risks and benefits of participation, and their rights. Participants were encouraged to ask questions before interviews and document analysis commenced and provided their consent in advance. Throughout the study, participants received multiple reminders about their rights and the ability to withdraw at any time without repercussions (O'Neil, 2004). The research demonstrated ethical respect for autonomy and transparency by informing educators that their participation was completely voluntary.

3.10.2 Confidentiality

The study implemented rigorous procedures to maintain participant confidentiality throughout the research process. Collected data, including interview transcripts, observation notes, and assessment documents, were securely stored to prevent unauthorised access (Israel & Hay, 2006). The researcher removed personal identifiers from the dataset and replaced them with unique codes to protect individual identities. Digital records were saved on password-protected devices, while physical documents were secured in locked cabinets. Ensuring confidentiality protected educators from professional repercussions, allowing them to share their experiences openly (Bryman, 2016).

3.10.3 Anonymity

The research report preserved participant anonymity by excluding any identifying information. To enhance confidentiality, all participants and their schools were assigned pseudonyms, as recommended

by (Sieber & Tolich, 2013). The report avoided using specific details that could reveal the identities of individuals or the institution. The sensitive discussions surrounding inclusive education necessitated anonymity, enabling participants to share their experiences honestly and without reservation.

3.10.4 Voluntary participation

The study included only voluntary participants. It was clearly communicated to participants that they were under no obligation to participate and could withdraw at any time without facing negative repercussions (Resnik, 2015). Researchers consistently reminded participants before and after each data collection session that they maintained control over their involvement, ensuring they felt respected. The authenticity of the data collected was enhanced as educators participated more openly when they felt empowered by their voluntary involvement in decision-making. By strictly adhering to ethical principles, the study aligned with recognised research ethics standards and established a respectful and secure research environment. The ethical guidelines implemented for participant protection bolstered both the credibility of the findings and the safeguards for participant rights.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined a comprehensive methodology for examining inclusive education practices used by intermediate phase English educators in a Full-Service School located in a township of the Sedibeng West District in Gauteng. The research investigated the specific challenges educators face when delivering inclusive education programs in a FSS. The chapter demonstrated a strong commitment to documenting genuine educational experiences by establishing precise research objectives and employing qualitative approaches such as document analysis, focus group interviews, and classroom observations. The research design adopted an interpretivist paradigm to emphasise the role of social context in shaping educators' instructional strategies. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were prioritised to maintain credibility and trustworthiness while protecting participants. The next chapter, Chapter Four: Research Findings, will present the outcomes derived from data collection activities.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to gain insights into the methods employed by primary school educators who teach English as a second language in a Full-Service School within the Sedibeng West District of Gauteng. This chapter presents the findings from focus group interviews, classroom observations and document analysis conducted with six intermediate phase English educators at a Full-Service School in a South African township, with the aim of exploring how their teaching strategies align with the broader goal of improving English language learning outcomes for learners in multilingual and resource-constrained environments. By examining these methods in depth, the chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective practices and challenges, thereby linking the empirical data directly back to the overarching research aim of enhancing ESL education in Full-Service township schools.

Direct quotations from participants, reflecting their lived classroom experiences, support each theme. The findings primarily focus on what educators report doing, the strategies they employ, and the challenges they face. However, the analysis and theoretical interpretation of these processes will be addressed in Chapter Five. The voices and experiences of the participants are utilised to support the research.

4.2 Demographic data

Table 4.1: Demographic data of participants

Participant	Grade Taught	Gender	Years Teaching	Age	Years in Intermediate Phase	Years at FSS
1	Grade 6A	Female	37	58	37	14
2	Grade 6B	Female	6	28	6	6
3	Grade 4A	Female	22	49	20	20
4	Grade 4B	Female	12	39	12	7
5	Grade 5A	Female	9	32	9	9
6	Grade 5B	Male	16	47	16	8

The demographic profile of the six participants reveals a diverse range of professional experience and subject specialisation in the intermediate phase. Teaching experience ranged from early-career educators to highly experienced professionals, who have taught for 37 years and spent over a decade in a FSSs. This wide range allowed for a balanced reflection on inclusive education practices, shaped by both long-

standing institutional memory and more recent exposure to post-White Paper 6 reforms. All participants had taught in the intermediate phase for several years, with most having also worked exclusively in FSSs for a substantial portion of their careers. Their direct experience with inclusive practices, classroom diversity, and systemic challenges made them well-positioned to provide rich, contextually grounded insights into how learner diversity is accommodated in English instruction at a FSSs in a South African township setting. The demographic diversity in terms of gender and grade distribution further enriched the findings, ensuring that the perspectives incorporated nuances across Grade 4 to Grade 6 within the intermediate band.

4.3 Analytical procedures for identifying themes and sub-themes

Themes and sub-themes were identified through analytical procedures. Analysis of qualitative data, derived from focus group interviews, lesson observations, and document analysis (lesson plans and assessment checklists), was done using the thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2024). This method was chosen for its ability to analyse, identify, and describe patterns in qualitative data that accommodated the interpretivist research paradigm characterising the study. The transcription of interview recordings was the first stage of analysis, after which all transcripts were read time and again until acquainted with the data. The initial coding was manual, picking up key words, phrases, and often repeating thoughts that showed how English educators attend to learner diversity in English lessons. Preliminary categories developed from the open coding stage included “differentiated instruction,” “code switching,” “scaffolding,” and “time constraints.” Moving forward with the analysis, codes were aggregated into broader categories that matched the objectives of the research. For example, responses pertaining to adapting lesson plans and grouping learners based on ability were combined under the umbrella theme “use of differentiated instruction to address varied learning ability.” Comments addressing the use of learners’ home language, visual aids, and accessible materials were also organised under “code switching and use of mother tongue for inclusive language practices.” Across all six participants, data were analysed under these themes by comparing across participants to identify areas of convergence and divergence.

The study used triangulation by matching interview responses with information obtained from lesson plans, assessment tasks, and observation checklists. The analysis confirmed and strengthened the developing research themes. The presence of varied instructional approaches and modified curriculum content received verification through lesson plan analysis and classroom observations. The researcher finalised the themes after saturation occurred, indicating that new insights were absent from the

accumulated interview and observational data. The analysis produced a comprehensive thematic framework with nine final themes that followed the study's three fundamental research objectives.

4.4 Findings from the interviews

4.4.1 Main theme 1: Instructional strategies for diverse learners

Differentiated instruction emerged as the primary approach educators used to adapt their teaching for diverse learner profiles in English classes at FSSs. This method involves intentionally tailoring teaching strategies, materials, tasks, and assessments to align with the specific learning styles and needs of learners. FSSs exemplifies the pedagogical necessity for inclusive education, making differentiated instruction a valuable tool for achieving learning equity. All educators recognised the diverse nature of their classrooms and understood what was required to develop effective, flexible instructional methods. One participant explained, "*The teaching practitioner implements differentiated instructional methods while working with flexible learners' groupings using collaborative teaching and supportive feedback approaches*." (Educator 6A) The educator's statement shows how instructional differentiation functions together with versatile classroom designs and adjustable feedback systems.

Educators use flexible grouping methods to organise learners beyond traditional ability to avoid violating inclusive practices that discourage group segregation. Supportive feedback stands as an essential element that allows educators to help learners receive constructive feedback, fosters learning advancement, and creates an inclusive educational space. Educator 4A described educational methods in a general way when she stated that, "*strategy selection depends on individual learners' unique requirements."* After teaching for 12 years, this participant shows a refined ability to identify learners' individual learning needs. This specific statement reveals educational planning along with teaching flexibility, which defines core elements of differentiated instruction. Instructional methods need adjustment based on the educator's understanding that learners move through material at different speeds and can hold varying amounts of knowledge.

Educator 5B explained in his observation that, *both Bloom's taxonomy and differentiated instruction serve as tools for me to create learning plans that serve diverse learners."* The response shows how educators apply standardised pedagogical tools to design instructional activities that target different levels of learners' thinking. The hierarchical learning objectives of Bloom's taxonomy enable educators to create developmentally appropriate learning activities that progressively move learners through different cognitive stages. The educator's dedication to differentiated instruction now extends beyond choosing different methods to creating cognitive learning experiences that honor learner diversity. Various

respondents agreed on one important point: educators are not merely aware of learner diversity; they understand learner diversity and go beyond basic awareness by designing special strategies to work directly with different learners' populations. The FSSs operates within a pedagogical culture supporting inclusive education procedures found in White Paper 6 and its accompanying policies. The analysis demonstrates that teaching professionals maintain essential control through expert decision-making to manage diverse learner situations despite limited institutional aid or training programs. The research data demonstrates that differentiated instruction encompasses much more than standalone methodologies because it represents a dedicated instructional framework. Differentiated instruction operates as a framework that emphasises adaptability, fairness, and a commitment to active response. Educators assume the role of pathway mentors who guide learners through learning instead of acting as single-source content disseminators. Through modifications in instructional grouping systems, learners' feedback techniques, and cognitive difficulty levels, educators provide visible action to bridge learning gaps for all learners, particularly for those with language barriers, cognitive hindrances, or social disadvantages.

4.4.2 Language professionals navigate between codes through code switching and leverage mother tongue as an inclusive language practice.

Strategic code-switching, utilising learners' home languages alongside English, serves as a primary instructional approach in South African FSSs multilingual classrooms to promote inclusive instruction. This theme highlights educators' deliberate practice of incorporating informal languages to bridge understanding gaps and create equitable educational opportunities, aiming to enhance participation from learners acquiring English as a second language. Educators employed code-switching strategies to simplify challenging content and foster active learning environments, resulting in meaningful outcomes. Educator 4B who had twelve years teaching experience explained, "*I incorporate learners' existing knowledge and accessible terminology together with visual communication methods which include code switching, visual materials along with pictorial learning activities*".

This research demonstrates how code-switching operates as a structured system when combined with various inclusion strategies to support learning. To illustrate the educator's commitment to linguistic inclusion, learners' existing knowledge and accessible language, along with visual aids and code-switching, are employed. Educators who activate learners' prior knowledge and explain new concepts using familiar and instructional language create an environment that minimises cognitive overload, facilitating learners' mastery of course material. Educator 6B who was the most experienced participant in the study provided this simple yet vital realisation, when saying that "*the educator uses code switching moving learners between their first language and English*." This brief statement highlights the importance

of incorporating learners' home languages in formal academic settings. By utilising intentional mother tongue instruction, educators treat language learning as both a communication tool and an intellectual resource, particularly benefiting learners who are learning English as an additional language.

The inclusion of native languages by learners who speak differently from the language of instruction fosters a pedagogical shift toward culturally relevant teaching methods. Educator 6A who has six years of teaching experience also mentioned the use of code switching together with alternative explanation methods, because *"I implement code switching and use various explanation techniques."* The quoted statement highlights the educator's flexible teaching skills, as code-switching serves as one technique among various inclusive methods. This inclusion of diverse approaches demonstrates teaching flexibility, showcasing the ability to adapt to learner variability in classrooms that require more than one instructional strategy. Teaching practices must be adaptable, integrating linguistic methods like code-switching with multiple explanations to support all learners in the learning process. The data indicates that code-switching functions as an explicit communication tool and a crucial mechanism for bridging different language systems. Learners utilise code-switching to interpret challenging English texts, while instructional staff employ it to convey new information and enhance classroom participation. Educators particularly benefit from code-switching in English classes, as learners may perceive language as both a barrier and a pathway to knowledge. Using the mother tongue for instruction validates learners' cultural identities, fostering a sense of belonging and self-esteem that drives academic motivation and engagement.

Educators particularly benefit from code-switching in English classes, as learners may perceive language as both a barrier and a means to acquire knowledge. Employing the mother tongue for instruction affirms learners' cultural identities, fostering a sense of belonging and self-esteem that fuels academic motivation and engagement. Data from participants demonstrate their understanding of inclusive education within the national policy framework. The practice of code-switching advances the Department of Basic Education's inclusive framework, as outlined in White Paper 6, through diverse teaching approaches that reach all learners. The educators involved in this research showcase practical methods to implement this policy by employing language-sensitive teaching strategies in varied language contexts.

4.4.3 Challenges in inclusive instruction due to CAPS and ATP constraints

Staff members at the FSSs showed a deep dedication to inclusive teaching methods yet struggled with both rigid curricula and regulatory limits that hindered their practices. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) together with ATPs create standardised frameworks for schools while concurrently blocking educators from properly adjusting learning to suit diverse learner populations. The

practical difficulties educators encounter from implementing inclusive approaches stand against their need to maintain strict adherence to curriculum delivery schedules while they work with overcrowded classrooms. Educator 6A explained this conflict by saying that, "*expectations for differentiated instruction cannot always help learners effectively because CAPS documents control the limited time available for instruction."* Educators feel frustrated when implementing inclusive practices through differentiation methods while dealing with an inflexible curriculum framework.

According to CAPS, the educational framework sets both teaching requirements and timeline parameters which prevent educators from providing supplemental education support as needed. The educator's reflection confirms how philosophical benefits of differentiated instruction conflict with policy demands which restrict practical implementation. Additional confirmation came from Educator 4B who expressed that, "*inclusive learning strategies fail to serve all learners because of strict time limits which restrict individualised instructional support*." Every ATP establishes precise learning outcomes that educators must reach during each week or term because of the limited time.

The tight constraints of scheduling prevent educators from personalising their instruction and providing intervention support for learners who need it. Learners with barriers experience the most difficulty as there is inadequate time in supporting them individually to understand the curriculum at their own pace. Jeopardising the pace of curriculum delivery is the primary issue because of overcrowded classrooms. Educator 5B noted that, '*instructional techniques that create inclusive learning environments face obstacles because of the overcrowded classroom environment."* Large number of learners make it difficult for educators to properly segment instruction methods and track individual learners' advancement or customise their responses. Despite educator dedication to inclusive pedagogies, their efficacy decreases when educators manage diverse classrooms with different abilities and languages supported by inadequate classroom space. The data shows that a foundational problem exists within the educational system. The official policies for inclusive education guarantee flexibility and differentiation plus learner-centred focus yet the delivery system maintains strict standardised curriculum that is heavily limited by time. The data showed that the participants believed that the curriculum deadlines supersede learner rights to meaningful education and learning success. National priority status for inclusive education faces difficulties because the current CAPS and ATPs system creates challenges for educators who need to balance lesson delivery with learner support.

4.5 Theme 2: Language practices supporting inclusion

4.5.1 Visual aids and teaching resources operate as essential components for educational inclusion. Through visual and tactile resources, FSSs educators working with intermediate-phase learners created accessible learning environments that helped learners understand and succeed in English classes. Every educator said these instructional resources proved helpful to learners with barriers to learning and enhanced education for all learners through clearer explanations and more engaging lessons. Educator 4B presented her methods of implementing visual and hands-on strategies when she said, *the teaching aids I choose include cut-and-paste materials and pictures for my learners."* The educator demonstrates commitment to advance beyond written instruction because visual and hands-on learning methods work best for some learners. Interactive learning materials including cutting and pasting activities serve learners who process information differently and help learners who find textual explanations difficult to understand. Building on this, Educator 4A elaborated that, *"learners in support classes begin to grasp classroom content when educators incorporate visual educational aids with cut-and-paste materials."* Visual instructional tools create important advantages for learners who need academic support because of developmental or language-related learning differences. The data showed that learners developed a better understanding when they engaged physically with the materials because of their need for concrete sensory presentation of information. Educators used this approach to improve access for learners who normally would not receive standard classroom teaching methods. Similarly, Educator 5A stated that, *"the educator utilises images together with sounds as a learning accommodation method for different learners."* Multimodal learning strategies work through sensory fusion of visual and auditory modes to address learner learners' diverse needs. Planetary sounds used with visual educational materials create a potent learning environment for learners who benefit from various sensory representations of core concepts.

The educational setting uses visual resources as its primary inclusive teaching methodology. Educators incorporated these tools to serve as core components they used when developing lesson plans and delivering instruction. Educators made purposeful resource choices that worked to ease all learners' access especially those encountering barriers or language challenges during learning. The fundamental philosophy behind inclusive education as a model matches this statement precisely. Learning environments must provide access for all learners to participate in academic opportunities while overcoming personal learning hurdles. The learners' need for visual and tactile resources demonstrates their flexibility when challenged by restricted access to classroom materials.

Educational professionals who operate under technology constraints develop innovative solutions using basic resources in order to reach their inclusive study goals. Through simple resources including pictures,

hand-drawn supporting materials and cut-and-paste activities, the participants demonstrate effective professional development which addresses environmental constraints to maintain solid educational standards.

4.5.2 Individualised and cooperative learning approaches

Learner diversity at the FSSs received attention through educators who incorporated individualised and cooperative learning strategies as their main accommodation tactic. Educators strategically combined specific learning support with peer-led education to meet diverse learners learning requirements and capabilities according to the study's findings. This teaching practice creates a flexible academic framework which supports learners through individual assistance and cooperative learning activities. Educator 6B noted that merging different instructional methods provides advantages when he said that, "*inclusive classrooms benefit from group collaboration combined with individualised assistance and repeated instructional practices.* "This educational approach combines multiple instructional techniques by incorporating specific learner supports into standard class teaching methods. The combination of group work enables peer learning but specific learner needs primarily include targeted individual support that focuses on addressing learning barriers for learners with special requirements. Repetition becomes necessary because learners generally need repeated exposure to information to learn effectively particularly learners who struggle with language processing and language skills. The same educator made this point in another statement when he noted that, *"the learners' grouping system occurs through my instructional methods which promote their support for each other.*" Through peer interaction, learners learn better when the learning environment uses as an inclusion tool.

The strategic grouping techniques of educators create interactive learning spaces that enable learners with different abilities to work together while they support each other's educational and social needs. In settings with limited adult support, peer scaffolding provides an effective way for educators to connect with learners beyond their physical reach. The implementation of personalised learning methods became clearer through Educator 4A's insights who noted that, *"educators select teaching assignments based on what learners need and what level their abilities match."* The presented quote demonstrates effective differentiation implementation within cooperative learning structures. Each participant receives personalised learning activities which match their developmental stage and learning style characteristics. By using this method, educators ensure learners access instructional material while maintaining respect for their learning approach and speed in accordance with inclusive education principles. Learner diversity at the FSSs requires educators to utilise multiple instructional approaches to meet individual learning needs. Through the integration of both personalised teaching strategies and collaborative group activities,

they achieve successful results in addressing learner's requirement for flexible attention and social assimilation.

Through this perspective, the educators showed that they understood that inclusion exceeded content access by including opportunities for learner interaction and mutual support. These instructional approaches formed part of a well-organised classroom system. The format of instruction shifted between individual and group learning activities according to content complexity, learner abilities and the particular challenges within the classroom. These teaching approaches demonstrate both an educator's dedication to inclusive instruction and their ability to accommodate learners with different learning needs.

4.5.3. Educators implemented scaffolding techniques combined with participation-building methods to overcome diverse learner abilities.

English classrooms within the FSSs discovered that scaffolding and learner participation are essential accommodations for their diverse population of learners. Educators employed various forms of structured guidance to assist learners with tasks they could not complete independently, ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all without limitations. Educator 5A explained that scaffolding requires educators to simultaneously support learners' cognitive and emotive development by saying that, *"scaffold your learners' learning. Be available and approachable*." Through this statement, the educator demonstrates dedication to instructional scaffolding by breaking down complex lessons while also emphasising the need for emotional support, which fosters learner security. By being ready and open to learners' inquiries, educators show their commitment to providing judgment-free support, a crucial aspect of inclusive classrooms.

Educator 4B discussed the collaborative scaffolding process by stating that, *"learners receive help from both their classmates and their educator while completing personalised assignments."* The statement demonstrates that scaffolding education relies on the active participation of both educators and learners. Educators integrate peer-to-peer learning with their guidance, aligning with socially constructed learning theory. High educator-to-learner ratios make peer support an essential resource, enhancing comprehension and preventing any learner from feeling isolated during classroom activities. Educator 5B explained how different instructional techniques are employed to assist learners with varying abilities in their learning by stating that, *"I help learners understand by repeating tasks while enforcing essential lessons for reaching learners at all ability levels."* Educational professionals employ repetition and emphasis as standard scaffolding practices to enhance learners' understanding of classroom content and their ability to retain knowledge. This educational plan acknowledges that learners process information differently and need to

encounter key concepts multiple times before mastering them. This approach is particularly effective for teaching learners who face cognitive challenges, language-based learning differences, or attention difficulties. Through these strategies, educators showcase their expertise in using scaffolding techniques to maintain learner engagement while improving comprehension and fostering an inclusive learning environment.

Educators implement responsive practices to provide tailored levels of support that adapt to each learner's specific needs, regardless of their performance or abilities. By operating within each learner's Zone of Proximal Development, every learner can engage meaningfully with classroom content and progress along their learning path. These educators illustrate how their focus on participation highlights that inclusion extends beyond academic achievement to emphasise learner involvement and commitment. Educators uphold inclusive education standards by safeguarding each learner's right to full participation through access to materials and opportunities for active input.

4.6 Main theme 3: Assessment practices and challenges

4.6.1 During assessments, educators purposefully employ graded rubrics alongside multimodal assessment techniques.

They actively utilise structured assessment tools that integrate rubrics and mark sheets with visual resources to foster inclusive assessment practices that support diverse learners. These educational tools offer standardised procedures while allowing for adaptable features, enabling educators to evaluate learners equitably across varied population groups while making context-specific adjustments. Through an interview, educator 6B described the types of assessment tools which were frequently utilised by stating that, *"my assessment method incorporates three components including rubrics combined with mark sheets along with language proficiency tests."* The proposed assessment methodology employs objective grading tools alongside diagnostic evaluation instruments. By implementing rubrics and mark sheets, learners gain a clear understanding of assessment standards before evaluations begin. This approach offers significant advantages for learners facing language and cognitive challenges, as it reduces confusion and facilitates focused learning preparation. Language proficiency assessments allow educators to differentiate between learners' academic understanding and their language abilities, ensuring that linguistic skills do not distort performance results. Educator 5B uses structure instruments including rubrics and memoranda to assess learner work according to predetermined assessment criteria, and noted that, *"learners are assessed using professional memorandums together with custom-developed grading rubrics."*

Assessment tools require direct synchronisation with course standards to maintain their effectiveness. The memorandum outlines standardised assessment practices, while the rubric allows educators to evaluate learners at different skill levels. A rubric is particularly effective for learners with barriers, as it validates their partial understanding and accepts creative approaches to expressing ideas, in contrast to conventional marking systems. This adaptability benefits assessment tools by enabling educators to differentiate evaluation methods, allowing all learners to demonstrate individual achievement according to their diverse abilities. Educator 4B shared a unique viewpoint when he stated that, *"at the beginning, our instructional practice works with simple sounds and images to help learners who face learning challenges."* Subjects are evaluated using various assessment methods that go beyond basic written tasks. Educators design educational pathways using visuals and audio for learners who struggle with traditional reading and writing formats. English educators in multilingual and resource-constrained environments should utilise these specific tools to support learners who face challenges in simultaneously developing language skills and literacy abilities.

4.6.2 Educators encounters significant problems during assessment process because of limited resources, time constraints and high workload demands.

At the FSSs, the most critical barrier to inclusive assessment procedures stemmed from insufficient resources, inadequate time, and overwhelming educator workloads. Structural barriers created issues that hindered the effective implementation of educational assessment strategies aimed at inclusivity. Educators acknowledged the need to modify assessments, but real-world classroom conditions, administrative responsibilities, and limited support systems obstructed their successful implementation. To effectively incorporate differentiated assessments, Educator 5B expressed that time constraints made implementation difficult and stated that, *"I create various lesson materials that support diverse learner abilities yet our limited resources constrain my practice."* The quote highlights the gap between the objectives of inclusive schools and the practical opportunities for genuine implementation. The educator's commitment to designing assessments for diverse abilities faces resistance from short deadlines, which restrict planning depth and consistency. Time is crucial for inclusive education, as educators need it to develop various learning tasks, provide feedback, conduct formative assessments, and offer additional support. The limited availability of time forces educators to choose between teaching essential content and fostering deep learner involvement, ultimately affecting their ability to create inclusive learning outcomes. Within a single classroom, diverse learner needs present significant challenges, as noted by this educator. The primary difficulty arises from accommodating learners with varying abilities, including both struggling and advanced learners, in the same classroom space. *"The struggle of creating one unified assessment*

captures the lack of intersection between accessibility for constrained learners and the cognitive challenge for advanced learners." (Educator 4B) The educator's reflective statements show how curriculum constraints contrast with the challenge of providing support to learners whose learning ability varies significantly. The high ratio of learners to educators within FSSs makes it challenging to use tiered assessments and flexible rubrics systematically. These obstacles grow worse due to the absence of institutional backing. As Educator 4A noted, *"Educators lack meaningful support from their district. Social workers along with therapists make rare appearances at the school."* A collaborative, multidisciplinary assessment is essential for evaluating learners with developmental or psychosocial barriers. Assessing all learners inclusively extends beyond the educator's sole responsibility. The assessment process requires active coordination among learning support specialists, therapists, and social workers. Educators who lack presence in decision-making forums and professional support often find themselves juggling multiple roles, leading to burnout and potential inequities in learner assessments. Research indicates that dedicated educators strive to maintain inclusive assessment practices despite facing systemic obstacles that complicate their efforts. Challenges related to time management and classroom capacity, coupled with insufficient specialised support, directly impact the effectiveness of inclusive educational practices. While the Education White Paper 6 (2001) officially endorses collaborative, well-funded support systems, the implementation of these policies falls short of addressing the realities on the ground.

4.6.3 Flexible and modified assessment approaches

In diverse learner contexts, assessment practices in inclusive education must adapt to meet individual learner needs. The FSSs educators modified assessment tasks to provide equitable opportunities for all learners to demonstrate their understanding. Participants shared how they adjusted assessment tools by making meaningful changes to structural elements, content substance, assessment delivery frameworks, and verbalisation methods. Assessment needs to build on learner capabilities according to Educator 6A when he said that, *"through my assessment process, I customise difficulty parameters and provide detailed instructions along with continuous feedback."* The assessment approach demonstrates active efforts to align assessment measures with learners' readiness levels. By adjusting difficulty levels, learners with varying cognitive and language capabilities can pursue the same educational objectives at different levels of complexity. Dual-language classrooms benefit from clear directions, which help minimise misunderstandings, while ongoing feedback supports learner progress. This method allows assessment activities to serve as formative feedback tools that inform educational practices and promote learner advancement beyond traditional grading. Educator 6B explained how she modifies assessments by focusing on curriculum differentiation and designing various types of questions. She noted that, *"my*

assessment tools include questioning style and curriculum differentiation." In this approach, assessment transcends formal written activities, representing an active process between educator and learner. By employing various strategic questioning formats, such as open-ended, probing, and scaffolded questions, educators can evaluate learners' understanding at different cognitive stages. The strategy of curriculum differentiation ensures that assessments are tailored to align with each learner's unique educational goals, personal learning pace, and abilities. These adapted strategies enhance accessibility for learners facing barriers and reduce assessment-related anxiety. Educator 5A described their assessment practices, which incorporate images, sounds and code-switching as integral components of their approach. She noted that, *"assessing learners with barriers becomes possible through the combination of pictures together with sounds and code-switching language methods."* The approach signifies a shift in education from traditional testing methods based on texts to more inclusive assessment strategies that accommodate various modes of communication. This is particularly beneficial for learners whose reading comprehension, language proficiency or auditory skills may pose challenges. Visual and auditory cues assist learners in grasping complex material that is difficult to understand, enabling them to express their comprehension in ways beyond conventional writing. The practice of code-switching in assessments prevents linguistic differences from hindering learners' ability to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter. Educators who incorporate learners' home languages enhance content comprehension while also fostering the development of English skills.

The FSSs assessment techniques have evolved through intentional adaptations to address the diverse needs of their learner population. These modifications have created better access for all learners, promoting a more equitable learning environment. Educators view assessment as a double-edged tool, serving both evaluative and motivational purposes.

4.7 Findings from classroom observations

Classroom observations were conducted in six different classes over a period of three weeks. An observation checklist was used to assess various aspects of inclusive teaching practices. The following key findings were noted:

4.7.1 Lesson objectives

In 83% of observed lessons, lesson objectives were clearly defined and aligned with learners' diverse needs.

4.7.2 Instructional strategies

Various instructional strategies were employed in 100% of observed classes. For instance, visual aids were used in all lessons observed.

4.7.3 Adaptations and modification made

Adaptations or modifications to lesson materials were noted in 67% of observations.

4.7.4 Opportunities for differentiated instruction

Opportunities for differentiated instruction was partially used.

4.7.5 Inclusive teaching strategies

Inclusive teaching strategies were used to assist diverse learning abilities.

4.7.6 Support and scaffolding

Support and scaffolding were also effectively used to different learners with barriers.

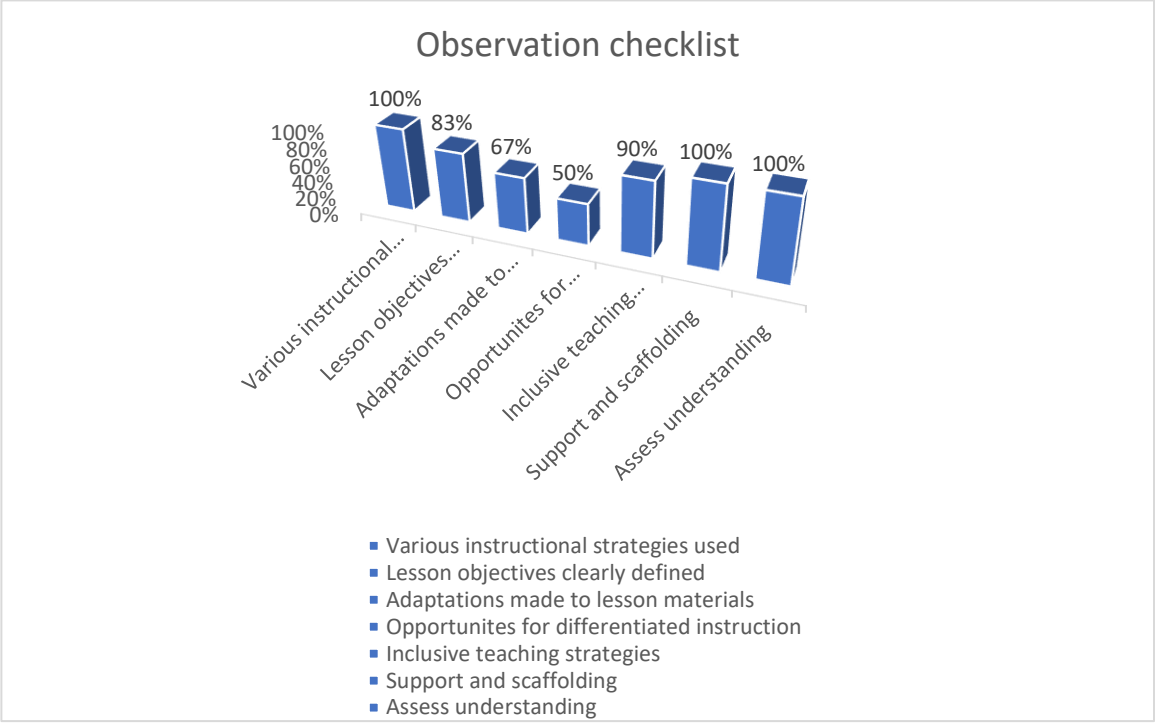
4.7.7 To assess learners understanding

Class activities and oral questions were used to assess learners understanding.

4.2 Table 1: Summary of observation findings

Criteria	**Yes (%)**	**No (%)**
Lesson objectives clearly defined	83	17
Various instructional strategies used	100	0
Adaptations made to lesson materials	67	33
Opportunities for differentiated instruction	50	50
Inclusive teaching strategies	100	0
Support and scaffolding	100	0
To assess learners understanding	100	0

Figure 4.1: Observation checklist results



4.8 Findings from the lesson plan checklist

The lesson plan checklist was used to evaluate how effectively educators designed their plans to meet the needs of diverse learners. The findings indicated that all reviewed lesson plans included a variety of tasks tailored to different ability levels, ensuring support for learners with varying learning needs. Objectives across the plans were clear, specific, and measurable, and they were prominently displayed to enhance understanding. In terms of instructional strategies, all educators successfully incorporated group work, visual aids, and hands-on activities to facilitate engagement and comprehension. However, regarding adaptations for diversity, most educators utilised tools such as graphic organisers and manipulatives to support different learning styles, although one educator did not modify the materials to accommodate diverse needs.

4.3 Table 3: Summary of lesson plan findings

Criteria	Yes (n=6)	No (n=6)	Comments
The plan accommodates all learning abilities of learners	6	0	Varied tasks tailored to different ability levels were evident in all plans.
The lesson objectives are clearly defined and aligned with diverse learning abilities	6	0	Objectives were specific and measurable across all lesson plans.
Does the lesson include various instructional strategies?	6	0	All educators effectively employed group work and technology integration.
Are there adaptations or modifications made to the lesson to resources/materials To cater diversity?	5	1	Most educators adapted materials; one did not fully modify resources for diversity.
Curriculum content was modified using differentiated instruction to respond to different learning abilities of all learners in class	3	3	Some educators were able to modify the content however CAPS document demands made it difficult for them to modify curriculum content and limited time to cover the ATP content.
Class activity and set questions accommodates various intelligences of diverse learning needs	5	1	Most educators set class activities that accommodates various intelligences of diverse learning needs

4.9 Findings of the assessment tasks

The assessment findings indicate a positive overall trend in assessment practices. Most respondents agree that assessments are designed to accommodate diverse learning needs (80%) and are aligned with curriculum standards and Bloom's taxonomy (both at 80-90%). Additionally, a significant majority (90%) believe learners are given sufficient time to complete tests, and most assessments allow for various presentation formats, such as writing, oral presentations, or demonstrations, to support different learning styles. However, there is less consensus regarding the use of technology in assessments, with only 30% of respondents affirming that learners can use devices like laptops or tablets, indicating limited integration of technology. Group assessments are generally permitted, with 80% support. Overall, the findings suggest

that while assessments are well-aligned with educational standards and inclusive of different presentation methods, there is room for increased technological integration to better support diverse learning needs.

4.4 Table 4: Summary of the assessment tasks

No.	Criteria	**Yes 0-100%**	**No % 0-100%**
1	Here remains different level of assessment to accommodate diverse learning needs	80%	20%
2	The assessment task aligned with the curriculum and grade level of the learners	90%	10%
3	The assessment task allows learners to use technological devices such as laptop, tablet, etc.	30%	70%
4	The assessment task allows learners to display their ability of various intellects such as visual, oral, interpersonal etc.	70%	30%
5	The assessment task is aligned with Bloom's taxonomy	80%	20%
6	Group assessment was allowed	80%	20%
7	The learners had a sufficient amount of time to finish the test.	90%	10%
8	Different of presentation such as writing, oral, demonstrations were allowed to accommodate diverse learning abilities	90%	10%

4.10 Discussion of findings

The findings from the Gauteng township FSSs research critically extend existing literature by highlighting how localised contextual factors uniquely shape the enactment of inclusive education practices, particularly within resource-constrained, high-demand settings. While previous studies have established the effectiveness of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory especially the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in facilitating differentiated instruction and scaffolding, this study provides nuanced insight into how these frameworks operate amid systemic and institutional challenges characteristic of township schools.

The educators' demonstrated commitment to inclusive education aligns with international research praising educator agency in adapting pedagogy to diverse learner needs. However, the Gauteng context foregrounds the tension between such grassroots innovation and rigid systemic policies like CAPS and the ATP scheduling, which impose stringent curricular pacing and limit flexibility. This tension echoes

literature emphasising the disjuncture between inclusive education policy rhetoric and on the ground realities, where educator often revert to superficial inclusivity due to external pressures and resource deficits.

Furthermore, the study reveals how contextual modifications such as integrating visual aids, code-switching, and multimodal assessment serve essential roles in enhancing accessibility and learner engagement, extending scholarship on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. The explicit focus on township schools adds critical depth by underscoring how socio-economic factors, overcrowding, and material scarcity shape both barriers and innovative responses. This challenges narratives often centered on well-resourced urban schools, presenting an alternative view of inclusion as a locally negotiated practice.

The systemic constraints identified, such as insufficient district support and overwhelming learner-educator ratios, reinforce concerns raised in existing literature regarding sustainability and scalability of inclusive practices. Without institutionalised professional development and supportive frameworks, adaptations risk fragmentation and eventual erosion. This finding advance calls for policy and administrative reforms that move beyond prescriptive curricula toward enabling teacher collaboration, resource provision, and ongoing capacity building particularly in marginalised contexts.

By situating UDL and Vygotsky's ZPD within this township environment, the study also expands theoretical applicability. It illustrates that scaffolding and multiple means of representation are not only pedagogical ideals but pragmatic necessities adapted creatively to context-specific challenges. Thus, the research contributes to a more situated understanding of sociocultural theory's relevance, emphasising how learner-educator interactions and social mediation must account for structural and cultural realities.

4.11. Conclusion

The study uncovered qualitative results demonstrating how intermediate phase educators in a FSSs adapt their approaches to teaching and evaluating English to meet diverse learner needs. By exploring participant testimonies, the study revealed various inclusive methods. School practices included differentiated teaching strategies, code-switching, native language support, visual materials, collaborative learning techniques, step-by-step guidance, and alternative assessment systems. However, the educational system faced ongoing challenges, including time constraints, inflexible CAPS and ATP curricula, insufficient district resources and support, and limited funding, all of which hindered effective inclusive learning. Research participants showed a strong commitment to inclusive practices but expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of organisational structures designed to support their efforts. This chapter lays the groundwork for critical interpretation in the next chapter. Chapter Five will draw on previous

theoretical frameworks and literature to examine educators' expressed practices in relation to their compatibility with inclusive education policy, theoretical foundations, and best practice recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from research conducted on the practices of intermediate phase English educators at a Full-Service School in Gauteng. The aim is to analyse how these educators address the diverse learning needs of their learners within the context of inclusive education. The chapter is structured to first remind readers of the main and sub-research questions that guided this study, followed by a detailed analysis of the collected data. The discussion will integrate relevant literature reviewed in Chapter Two, providing a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

This research analyses the results of focus group interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis of intermediate phase English educators at a Gauteng FSSs to evaluate their responses to learner diversity. Each research objective identifies key themes that reflect educators' perspectives on the implementation of inclusive education. The execution of inclusive teaching methods operates within multiple educational systems, encompassing curriculum demands, policy standards, and classroom environments.

5.2. Sub research question 1: What strategies do intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service School, use when designing their lessons to accommodate learners diverse learning needs?

5.2.1 Use of differentiated instruction to address varied learning abilities

Educators adopted differentiated instruction as their primary approach to navigate the diverse set of learners in their classrooms. Participants described this practice through its flexible grouping methods, targeted feedback, and a range of teaching strategies that utilise Bloom’s Taxonomy to create cognitively tiered tasks (Roberts & Inman, 2023). The findings support Tomlinson's (2017) conceptual framework, emphasising the need for educators to adapt educational elements to align with learners' readiness, interests, and learning styles. The survey results indicated that educators proactively planned for classroom diversity rather than merely responding to learning barriers as they arose. One educator explained how he combined “flexible grouping” with “collaborative learning” and “supportive feedback.” This teaching method merges academic strategies with those that focus on social development, addressing learners’ developmental needs. The strategy aligns well with UDL's principle of multiple means of engagement, which teaches educators to develop diverse strategies to motivate learners to engage

meaningfully with content (CAST, 2018). According to McGrath and Willcutt (2022), antecedent learning incorporates Bloom's taxonomy as an educational framework for systematic guidance. The planner applies Bloom's taxonomy and differentiated instruction techniques to deliver lessons that cater to every learner's needs. This approach reflects an advanced understanding of cognitive development. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework aligns perfectly with this concept, as differentiated tasks serve as support systems that help learners progress within the boundaries of their ZPD (Chang, 2023).

This discovery highlights the educational system's reliance on educators' insight-driven teaching methods and personal dedication rather than established organisational support. Literature published by McIntosh (2021) shows that while differentiated instruction yields positive results, it struggles to sustain itself unless institutions provide essential systemic resources, including co-teaching programs, additional staff, and scheduled planning opportunities. Although school educators demonstrated resourcefulness, system policies failed to establish mechanisms that could support or standardise differentiated teaching approaches in this study. Differentiated instruction aligns well with UDL and sociocultural frameworks but reveals a significant weakness regarding development support at the institutional level. Educators employ best practices but encounter major obstacles, underscoring the need for systemic support to develop differentiated instruction into a sustainable school-wide methodology.

5.2.2 Educators use code switching and their learners' native languages to create an inclusive language learning environment.

Participants often selected code-switching to alternate between English and learners' home languages when they needed help understanding classroom content. Staff members recognised the functions of code-switching as both a comprehension aid and a mechanism that connects learners' everyday experiences to educational subjects. As Educator 4B explained, "Learners use prior knowledge with accessible language while I use code-switching combined with media aids and picture activities during my teaching." This instructional approach integrated multiple languages along with diverse learning tools. Code-switching practices reflect culturally responsive instructional methods and uphold the UDL principle, which emphasises representation through multiple means (Contreras, 2024). By employing code-switching, educators deliver instructions in familiar linguistic forms, reducing cognitive strain for English language learners (ELLs) and promoting fairness during instruction.

Heugh et al. (2021) demonstrate that incorporating native languages in schools enhances conceptual learning and boosts language self-confidence among multilingual learners, even in the face of limited

educational resources. Code-switching proves beneficial for cognitive development as outlined by Vygotsky's theory (Ali, Ihsan & Sherazi, 2023). The human brain utilises language not only to convey information but also to create thought pathways for interpreting knowledge (Heugh et al., 2021). Education professionals who incorporate learners' mother tongues facilitate access to challenging ZPD concepts, thereby improving knowledge retention (Vygotsky, 1978). Educator 4B noted that "the use of code-switching moves learners between their first language and English." The practice of code-switching has sparked extensive discussions within the academic community. However, Fredericks (2021) argues that the overuse of home language in classroom interactions limits learners' opportunities to learn and understand English, which serves as the primary language of instruction in South African schools.

Educators within the FSSs context judiciously employed code-switching as an occasional teaching tool for short-term assistance rather than as a substitute for long-term English instruction. Their teaching decisions were informed by learners' needs, even when these choices diverged from established language policy guidelines. The research indicates that schools must adapt their language teaching approach to accommodate English instruction due to conflicting official policies that prioritise language learning, despite the practical challenges present in classroom environments. The data from this study supports Tamang's (2024) recommendation to implement bilingual education that combines multiple approaches rather than adhering to a single model.

5.2.3 Academic obstacles prevent inclusive instruction because of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) restrictions.

This research finds that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and ATP pose a fundamental challenge to inclusive teaching practices. Educators report that the demanding pacing structure and content-heavy requirements hinder their ability to effectively integrate inclusive teaching methods. Educator 6A noted, "The requirements within the CAPS document limit teaching time for differentiated instruction to be frequently effective." The rigid timelines obstruct the implementation of learner-responsive approaches, according to educators. Moreover, educator 4B observed, "The inclusion strategies fail to meet every learner's needs due to time constraints and the necessity for individualised support." The practical limitations of inclusive teaching arise because formal curriculum requirements take precedence over conceptual support. Pillay (2024) argues that the CAPS curriculum provides excessive prescription, which hampers educators in under-resourced schools from adapting their teaching methods to meet individual learners' needs. The issue of insufficient structural changes worsens when classrooms become overcrowded, as the implementation of inclusive teaching methods faces obstacles due to excessive learner numbers (Njinuwo, 2024). Frazenburg (2021) supports the idea that curriculum

development needs to address contextual needs specifically in Full-Service educational settings. These findings challenge the fundamental concepts of UDL, which advocates for a flexible curriculum and multiple learning pathways (Evmenova, 2018). From Vygotsky's perspective, scaffolding must be individualised; however, this becomes impossible under strict pacing guidelines (Vygotsky, 1978).

5.3 Sub research question 2: How do intermediate phase English second language educators, at a Full-Service township primary school, deliver their lessons to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs?

5.3.1 Visual aids with teaching resources function as essential tools to promote classroom inclusion.

Visual learning tools have become essential for educating learners with diverse language backgrounds, as they clarify complex ideas and enhance classroom participation (Contreras, 2024). Educator 4B noted, "*Among my teaching tools, I regularly use cut-and-paste activities as well as pictures.*" Educators choose multisensory materials because they enable learners to access information in ways that align with their varied learning styles (Evmenova, 2018). The UDL principle of multiple means of representation emphasises presenting information in different formats (CAST, 2018). Educator 4A supported this view, stating, "*When learners in support classes use visual teaching aids along with cut-and-paste methods, they begin to develop understanding.*" Visual teaching techniques empower learners who encounter barriers to comprehension, allowing them to process information in ways that traditional verbal and cognitive methods cannot achieve. Vygotsky's theory illustrates that mediational tools serve as cognitive links within the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). The study aligns with Lieberman et al. (2024), who demonstrate how resource-rich environments foster inclusive practices as learners' exhibit varying abilities. While visual aids are effective, their success often depends on educator initiative, as institutions frequently lack adequate support. Full-Service Schools need greater access to materials that align with learning objectives to effectively meet their educational needs.

5.3.2 Individualised and cooperative learning approaches

Educators implemented their lessons through peer collaboration and individualised learning approaches to meet the diverse needs of learners. Educator 6B explained that *"group interaction with individuals combined with repetition supports learning in inclusive classroom environments."* This underscores the necessity for dual educational methods that integrate social learning and personalised support. Such teaching methods reflect Vygotsky's perspective that learners acquire knowledge through peer mediation and collaborative work within their ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). Cooperative strategies, as highlighted by Educator 6B, who stated that *"all learners work together in collaborative assignments so that they can help one another,"* illustrate this concept. Through this approach, learners benefit from guidance provided

by peers who excel in specific subjects while also developing self-direction and social compatibility. The emphasis on shared learning experiences over segregated interventions aligns with Florian and Black-Hawkins' (2011) principles of inclusive pedagogy.

A strategy aimed at personalised task assignment operates effectively by assigning unique educational activities to each learner based on their performance, abilities, and learning requirements. This approach resonates with the commitment of UDL to flexible teaching methodologies. Differentiated task assignments allow learners of varying ability levels to engage with appropriate educational content. However, the successful implementation of these promising strategies necessitates well-structured classes and trained educators, conditions that FSSs in township areas currently do not meet.

5.3.3 Educators build supportive structures while encouraging participation at different learning levels.

Learner scaffolding components serve as essential tools to advance learners' progress, especially for those facing learning obstacles. As Educator 5A stated, *"Scaffold your learners' learning. Be available and approachable."* Study data indicated that learners require comprehensive cognitive and emotional support to achieve meaningful participation. The study reinforces Vygotsky's ZPD theory by demonstrating how scaffolding connects learners' abilities with instructor support (Puntambekar, 2022). Under the UDL framework, educators employ varying levels of support to enable learners to advance at safe rates (Evmenova, 2018). Participants noted that peer collaboration functioned as a form of scaffolding, facilitating assistance from both educators and classmates during individual activities. Each learner received support from their peers and educator while working independently. The collaborative role of educators and learners serves as a co-mediating intervention that supports sociocultural learning theories regarding social interactions.

Repetition works in conjunction with emphasis for effective teaching purposes (Roberts & Inman, 2023). Educator 5B stated, "*I implement work repetition combined with key point prioritisation."* This approach relates to Tomlinson's (2017) methods for differentiating instruction, where repetition functions both as scaffolding support and as a reinforcement mechanism. Sustainable scaffolding in inclusive classrooms requires planning time and reduced workloads; however, these supportive resources are often scarce in many contemporary inclusive teaching environments (Seo & Richard, 2021).

5.4 Sub research question 3: To investigate the assessment strategies used by intermediate phase English second language educators at a Full-Service School to accommodate learners' diverse learning needs.

5.4.1 Flexible and modified assessment approaches

The assessment strategies employed by educators' exhibit flexibility to support diverse learner abilities. For instance, one educator shared their teaching approach by stating, *"I adjust difficulty levels, give clear instructions, and provide ongoing feedback*" (Educator 6A). Evaluation methods must vary according to learners' needs, as standardised tests often fail to accommodate learners with barriers to learning (Kubiszyn & Borich, 2024). The UDL principle of multiple means of expression (CAST, 2018) supports learners' ability to demonstrate knowledge in various ways when educators provide ongoing feedback and adjust assessment complexity levels. Furthermore, another participant (Educator 6B) noted that "*the assessment tools used include questioning styles and curriculum differentiation methods."* Strategic implementation illustrates how educators develop specific approaches to facilitate learner participation in assessment activities.

Educator mediation directly supports the principles of Vygotsky's ZPD by providing learners with stepped assistance to achieve mastery. Educator 5A shared an inclusive assessment method, stating, "*Educators use images along with audio elements and language variation to help learners with cognitive obstacles demonstrate learning*." A multi-sensory assessment strategy serves as a language-free pathway for learners to express their understanding. Heugh (2021) defines culturally and linguistically responsive assessment as one in which educators respect learners' native languages instead of penalising them. These assessment approaches, showcased within Tomlinson's (2017) differentiation framework, create beneficial conditions for learner accessibility and enhance agency. South Africa's Inclusive Assessment Policy Framework (Matolo, 2021) provides comprehensive guidelines to eliminate educational barriers and establish equitable assessment conditions. While these flexible assessment methods demonstrate commendable intentions, they primarily rely on individual educator motivation rather than robust organisational infrastructure. Standards for modified assessments and training protocols must be established to ensure consistency in practice.

5.4.2 Rubrics combined with multimodal assessment tools serve as educational evaluation approaches.

Educational staff utilised rubrics alongside multimodal tools to both evaluate and differentiate assessment methods. Educator 6B stated, "*I use three different types of tools for assessment, including rubrics, mark sheets, and language proficiency tests."* These assessment practices reflect a commitment to both technical consistency and the individual learning needs of learners. According to Tolgfors (2018), rubrics

excel in inclusive education because they clarify expectations and facilitate varied performance methods among learners. Educator 5B added that "*my assessment strategy combines rubrics and memoranda for evaluating learners' work."* This formal evaluation approach indicates a structured method essential for working with learners in inclusive settings, where uncertainties can exacerbate anxiety or overwhelm cognitive abilities. The systematic assessment framework aligns with Vygotsky's concept that instructional tools act as mediators of learning (Almeida, 2022).

Meanwhile, Educator 4B explained that "*our teaching method begins with basic concepts combined with audio content and visual aids to benefit learners who face learning challenges."* This approach enables learners to access educational materials through multiple sensory channels, in accordance with UDL principles that address representation needs (CAST, 2018). Learners' performance improves when assessments incorporate visual and auditory content, as suggested by Paivio's dual coding theory, which asserts that learners process information more effectively through combined visual and verbal presentations (Wong & Samudra, 2021). When educational evaluators integrate multiple tools into assessment activities, they provide additional accessibility options, allowing learners to leverage their strongest competencies. However, these evaluation methods will only gain traction once educators receive adequate training and resources.

5.4.3 Educational assessments dealing with diverse learners face three critical obstacles: time consumption, resource management and increased workload.

Despite educators' dedication to implementing assessment practices, existing structural limitations hinder their effectiveness. Educator 5B expressed concern, stating, "*The planned diversified lessons aim to match all learner abilities, although the available time remains insufficient*." Educators face rigid schedules and overloaded curricula that complicate efforts to meet inclusive learning goals. The same educator identified another assessment challenge, saying, "*higher education presents remarkable difficulties since learners of varying ability levels share the same classroom."* When adequate additional staff or differentiated assessment methods are lacking, the heterogeneous learner population becomes increasingly difficult for educators to assess effectively, leading to heightened teaching stress. Furthermore, Educator 4A noted that "*the district provides insufficient support to educators. Social workers and therapists rarely visit the school."* The lack of multidisciplinary coordination represents a significant challenge to the team-based approach described in White Paper 6 (2001) (Mpu & Adu, 2021). The assessment process necessitates input from educators and specialists who can devise strategies for learners facing cognitive, emotional, and behavioural challenges. These systemic issues indicate that inadequate resources and institutional support render inclusive assessment an ideal rather than a practical reality. While educators demonstrate

commitment, they struggle to provide sustainable, equitable assessment practices due to insufficient support, inadequate time, and limited assessment tools.

5.6 Conclusion

The research conducted at a Gauteng FSSs examined how intermediate phase English educators integrate diverse learners into their educational and assessment processes. This analysis applied UDL alongside Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory to interpret classroom practices, including differentiated instruction, code-switching, scaffolding, multimodal assessment, and flexible grouping, within the theoretical and policy context outlined in Chapter Two. The study reveals that educators exhibit strong dedication to inclusive education; however, their efforts are often isolated and hindered by institutional constraints. The strict scheduling rules of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and ATP, combined with insufficient district support, limited materials, and high learner-educator ratios, represent systemic barriers. Educational staff have made contextual modifications to learner assessments and implemented learner-focused activities while integrating visual aids with linguistic elements to enhance classroom accessibility and engagement. However, these educational strategies risk becoming unsustainable without a proper institutional framework or professional development support to ensure ongoing implementation. The study's theoretical findings reinforce the efficacy of UDL and Vygotsky's ZPD framework as tools for enacting inclusive education practices. The teaching strategies of scaffolding, along with multiple means of representation and differentiated assessments, align directly with theoretical frameworks that advocate for inclusive teaching methods within resource-constrained environments. The research findings are further validated by consulted literature, which also cautions against the ambiguity between policy and practice implementation and the potential for superficial inclusivity.

6. CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, the study and its outcomes are summarised to bring the research to a close. This section combines the key points from each chapter, offers meaningful advice for teaching in FSSs, highlights the challenges encountered during the study, and outlines potential avenues for future research. The aim is to assess how this study has contributed to progress in inclusive education within South African township schools and to suggest ways for educators and schools to advance.

6.2 Overview of the Research

6.2.1 Brief description of each chapter (chapters 1–5)

This research focused on understanding how English educators in a FSS in a South African township address learners' diversity in the classroom. The study was divided into five main chapters, each contributing significantly to the understanding of inclusive education in a resource-limited area. Chapter One introduced the research by outlining both the theories and the context involved. It emphasised the importance of inclusive education in South Africa, where the legacy of segregation remains prevalent. The chapter demonstrated how FSSs can make equitable education a reality for learners facing challenges. It summarised the motivations for the study, defined the main research issue, and clearly articulated the purpose, aims, and key questions. Since intermediate phase educators play a dual role in education, the chapter focused specifically on them. Given the minimal research on township-based FSSs regarding English instruction, this study aimed to fill that knowledge gap.

Chapter Two reviewed relevant literature to establish the major concepts and theories underpinning the study. It examined research on diverse learners, policies for various learner types, and challenges associated with teaching in township schools in South Africa. This chapter explored how historical and ongoing factors contribute to educational inequities and outlined strategies for inclusive teaching.

The conference convened international, African, and local perspectives on diversity, linking global ideas to local practices. Both Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the UDL framework served as critical guides for designing education. The chapter highlighted challenges in implementing policies within Gauteng's FSS program.

Chapter Three detailed the research methodology. The study employed a qualitative approach, using the interpretivist paradigm to investigate how educators operate in their roles and the strategies they employ.

The chapter explored philosophical aspects, including ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology, emphasising the study's values of subjectivity, shared meaning, and ethics. It explained that six experienced English educators from the intermediate phase were selected through purposive sampling and described data collection methods, such as focus group interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, including lesson plans and quizzes. The chapter also addressed adherence to ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality.

In Chapter Four, research results were organised according to the study's objectives: planning, delivering, and assessing lessons that accommodate diverse learners. Through thematic analysis guided by Braun and Clarke, the study identified several inclusive methods employed by educators, including differentiated instruction, code-switching, scaffolding, group learning, and flexible assessments. Additionally, the chapter revealed challenges faced by educators, such as overcrowded classrooms, demanding curriculum frameworks (CAPS), insufficient teaching time, and shortages of essential teaching materials.

Chapter Five provided a meaningful interpretation of the findings using the theoretical models discussed in earlier chapters. The research assessed whether the observed practices aligned with or diverged from UDL and Sociocultural Theory. It was clear that while educators can utilise their professional skills and adapt, their efforts toward inclusion are often constrained by systemic issues. The chapter highlighted that the ability to include all learners in schools differs significantly between under-resourced township settings and policy intentions. Participants concluded that although inclusive teaching is attainable, it depends on substantial systemic changes, ongoing support for educators, and strong connections between policies and practices.

6.3 Main research question findings

6.3.1 Introduction

The main question serves as the foundation for understanding key issues and guides the study toward deriving meaningful insights. This section discusses the findings related to the primary research question: How do intermediate phase ESL educators at a FSS in the Sedibeng West District accommodate the diverse learning needs of their learners?

6.3.2 How do intermediate phase second language English educators (ESL), at a Full-Service School in the Sedibeng West District, accommodate learners diverse learning needs?

To address the diverse academic needs of their learners, educators at FSSs regularly employed differentiated instruction. By utilising resources such as Bloom's taxonomy, flexible grouping, and constructive criticism, they adapted instructional strategies, assignments, and assessments to align with

learners' skill levels. Differentiation was seen as a framework that supported flexibility, fairness, and learning equity, rather than simply a method. Educators viewed themselves as facilitators, guiding learners through the material at varying levels and paces. To aid comprehension, especially for English Language Learners (ELLs), educators intentionally alternated between English and learners' native languages. This approach enhanced engagement and reduced cognitive overload, particularly when combined with visual aids and alternative explanations. Educators recognised the mother tongue as a cultural and educational resource essential for fostering inclusivity, boosting self-esteem, and enhancing class participation.

To further promote inclusivity, visual aids and practical resources, such as cut-and-paste tasks and images, were vital. These multimodal strategies supported learners facing language or cognitive challenges and catered to diverse learning styles. Educators overcame technological and environmental limitations by employing these low-tech yet innovative resources, ensuring all learners could access and engage with the material meaningfully.

To accommodate various learners, educators integrated individualised instruction with peer collaboration. Strategies included grouping learners for peer support and providing tasks tailored to their skill levels and learning rates. This dual approach allowed learners to participate academically and socially, reinforcing inclusive learning environments even in settings with limited support personnel. By offering structured guidance and emotional support, educators facilitated learners' progress through scaffolding. Peer support was crucial in preventing any learner from feeling isolated, particularly in large classes. Learning strategies such as task repetition, explicit instructions, and incremental challenges enabled learners to advance within their zone of proximal development, demonstrating that inclusion emphasises both participation and comprehension.

Educators adapted instructions, question formats, and difficulty levels while providing ongoing feedback. These flexible assessments functioned as both formative and evaluative tools, guiding instruction and learning while ensuring that every learner had an equal opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. However, the rigid CAPS and ATP curriculum frameworks posed significant challenges for educators, as they limited the time and flexibility necessary for individualised support. Overcrowded classrooms, strict pacing schedules, and standardised assessments hindered the full implementation of inclusive practices like differentiation interventions. A persistent issue remained: the gap between policy ideals and their practical constraints.

6.4 Recommendations

The results of this study indicate that while FSSs educators are committed to including learners, systemic and contextual barriers prevent them from fully implementing the recommended practices. The following actions are recommended to enhance inclusive education at the intermediate level in township-based FSSs.

6.4.1 Professional development for inclusive pedagogy

Clarify and standardies the roles and responsibilities of SBSTs, providing them with targeted training and realistic caseloads. Encourage regular meetings focused on problem-solving and sharing practical strategies rather than formal reporting.

6.4.2 Curriculum flexibility within CAPS and ATP frameworks

Allow educators some flexibility to adapt the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and the Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) to meet diverse learner needs. Encourage simple adjustments, such as differentiated tasks or pacing guides, rather than overhauling the entire curriculum.

6.4.3 Enhanced classroom support mechanisms

Facilitate access to support personnel like teaching assistants or itinerant specialists on a rotational basis, focusing on schools with the highest needs. Implement manageable strategies such as regular collaboration time between classroom educators and support staff**.**

6.4.4 Equitable resource allocation and infrastructure support

Prioritise distribution of basic learning materials and infrastructure upgrades to schools in underserved areas through phased and budget-conscious planning. Use community partnerships and government programs to supplement resources effectively.

6.4.5 Parent and community engagement

Promote small-scale, sustainable activities to involve parents and community members in supporting learning, such as volunteer reading sessions or school committees. Use accessible communication channels like SMS or community radio to maintain regular contact.

6.5 Implications for future research

This study has identified numerous opportunities for research on inclusive education in South African FSSs. Although it focused on intermediate-grade ESL educators, broader studies are needed to explore how inclusivity is implemented across different grade levels, subjects, and various school settings.

6.5.1 Urban-rural comparative studies

It is essential to examine and compare the processes of inclusive education in urban and rural FSSs. These schools often face challenges related to infrastructure and staffing, which may impact the effectiveness of their inclusive strategies. The findings from such studies would inform the development of policies tailored to each area and enhance the implementation of these policies (Sumida & Kawata, 2021).

6.5.2 Inclusion of learner and parent voices

Future research should consider the perspectives of learners and their parents. Although their views are rarely included in studies on inclusive education, they are crucial for understanding how teaching practices and support can significantly impact learning. Feedback from learners highlights issues with instructional support, while parents can offer insights on enhancing collaboration among all stakeholders (Mangiaracina et al., 2021).

6.5.3 Longitudinal impact studies

Evaluating inclusion strategies requires assessing their effects both in the initial stages and over the long term, particularly regarding learners' grades, interest in school, and self-image. Longitudinal studies can track learners' development, dropout rates, and their psychological and social growth in relation to inclusive teaching (Liddell & Rae, 2001).

6.5.4 Evaluation of educator training programmes

A formal evaluation of UDL and inclusive training programs for educators in South Africa is necessary. Evaluations utilising practical methods can determine whether educators' practices are sustainable or merely temporary reactions to new policies (Kelly et al., 2022). Additionally, research could investigate whether pre-service educator programs adequately prepare future educators for diversity in their roles.

6.6 Limitations of the study

While the data gathered was very helpful, several drawbacks should be acknowledged. The study was conducted in only one FSS in a township in Gauteng, limiting the applicability of the findings to the rest of Gauteng or to schools at different stages. Since every school is unique, factors such as learner demographics and the dynamics of leadership and district support may differ from those observed in other FSSs. Additionally, the sample size of six educators allowed for in-depth analysis but limited our ability

to draw broader conclusions. A larger number of respondents could have provided a more comprehensive view, particularly regarding differences among schools or provinces.

The researcher focused solely on educators' opinions, excluding learners, parents, and education officials from the research. This single-stakeholder approach restricts the study's comprehensive scope. Future research should gather data from diverse sources to accurately represent the school ecosystem. Finally, the study relied only on interviews, classroom observations, and document examinations conducted over a limited time frame. A design that tracked the development of inclusive strategies over a longer period could have offered insights into how these strategies respond to changes in policies and institutions.

6.6.1 Theoretical limitations

The study was framed within specific theoretical perspectives that may have influenced the interpretation of data and the framing of research questions, potentially limiting alternative understandings. The reliance on certain conceptual frameworks may have narrowed the focus, excluding other valuable theoretical lenses that could have enriched the analysis. Additionally, assumptions embedded within these theories about inclusion, leadership, and educational equity might not fully capture the complexities and contextual nuances of the township school environment, affecting the depth of the findings.

The researcher's positionality inevitably influenced the research process, interpretation of data, and engagement with participants. Being an outsider or insider to the community, holding particular social identities, or having personal beliefs about inclusion and education could have shaped interactions and responses in subtle ways. Reflexivity was maintained, but the study acknowledges that complete neutrality is unattainable. Power dynamics between the researcher and participants might have affected openness, and interpretations may reflect the researcher's vantage point rather than an objective reality. Future studies could benefit from collaborative approaches or co-research with community members to mitigate positional biases

6.7 Conclusion

This research contributes to the body of studies on inclusive education in South Africa by examining how English educators in a township-based FSS address the challenges posed by diverse learners. The findings indicate that educators strive to be inclusive in their teaching by employing various approaches, such as differentiated learning, scaffolding, switching between languages, and utilising multiple assessment methods. These strategies aim to support learners facing diverse social, cognitive, and language challenges within the classroom.

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in UDL and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, both of which emphasise equity, learner agency, and real-life relevance. However, several challenges have emerged, including the limited flexibility of the CAPS curriculum, overcrowded classrooms, a scarcity of teaching resources, and insufficient systemic support. These issues highlight the gap between educational policy ideals and the realities experienced in historically neglected communities.

To achieve the full success of inclusive education in South African FSSs, alignment is needed between guidelines, curriculum content, educator skills, and available resources. Educators should not only follow directives but also participate in designing and implementing inclusive teaching methods. Furthermore, policymakers must take into account the perspectives and experiences of people living with disabilities when formulating policies.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A: participants' information sheet for educators



University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg

Private Bag 3

Wits 2050

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Nqobile Victoria Hlela and I am a Med learner in Inclusive Education at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg under the supervision of Dr Moeniera Moosa. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am "Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng" The aim of this research project is to investigate how intermediate phase ESL educators accommodate their learners' varied learning styles in a Full-Service primary school in Sedibeng West District.

I kindly ask you to take part in this research project. I would like to kindly ask you to allow me to record, observe, document analysis of lesson plans and assessment methods, participate in focus group and interview you about your teaching strategies for 35 to 55 minutes, Monday to Friday for term 3 and 4. You will not pay anything to take part in this project. You can choose to take part or to stop taking part in the study. If you want, you may answer all questions but if you do not want to, you can stop at any time then continue at another time suitable for you. The interview, document analysis for lesson plans and assessment methods, focus group and the observation will be completely confidential, and I will not use your name in my final research report. If you feel uncomfortable while I am interviewing you, recording and observing your lessons, we will stop the process and continue at another time. If you need some support or counselling services, these are available free of charge at the school. The learner support

educator will be ready to help (Contact details of the counsellor or LSE educator will be supplied later during the term).

If you have any questions during or afterwards about the interview, focus group, document analysis, observation and recording feel free to contact me on the phone number below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (if you want). The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years. With your permission the data collected from the research project may be used by other researchers in a format whereby your names will not be used. If you have any complaints about this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, emailhrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Nqobile Hlela

Researcher: Nqobile Hlela (1448564@learners.wits.ac.za)-0796534223

Supervisor: Dr Moeniera Moosa (Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za) 011 717 3085

Appendix B: Interview schedule



M.Ed. coursework and research proposal

Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng.

DATE	PARTICIPANTS	FOCUS	TYPES OF INTERVIEW	DURATION
03/10/2024	ALL 6 educators	Strategies to accommodate learners' diversity	Group interview	60 minutes
07/10/2024	ALL 6 educators	School assessment progress and performance of learners with diverse needs	Group interview	60 minutes
08/10/2024	ALL 6 educators	Teaching strategies	Group interview	60 minutes

Lesson observation schedule

DATE	PARTICIPANTS	FOCUS	GRADES	Date
14/10/2024	Grade 4A and 4B	Strategies to accommodate learners' diversity, School assessment progress and performance of learners and Teaching strategies	Grade 4	30 minutes
16/10/2024	Grade 5A and 5B	Strategies to accommodate learners' diversity, School assessment progress and performance of learners and Teaching strategies	Grade 5	30 minutes
17/10/2024	Grade 6A and B	Strategies to accommodate	Grade 6	30 minutes

Lesson plan check list schedule

DATE	PARTICIPANTS	FOCUS	GRADES	DURATION
21/10/2024	4A and 4B	Strategies to accommodate learners' diversity, School assessment progress and performance of learners with diverse needs	Grades 4	30 minutes
23/10/2024	5A and 5B	Strategies to accommodate learners' diversity, School assessment progress and performance of learners with diverse needs	Grades 5	30 minutes
25/10/2024	6A and 6B	Strategies to accommodate learners' diversity, School assessment progress and performance of learners with diverse needs	Grades 6	30 minutes

Appendix C: SGB letter



University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg

Private Bag 3

Wits 2050

SGB Chairperson

Date: 01/07/2024

Dear Sir

Re: Permission to conduct research at xxxx Full Service School

My name is Nqobile Victoria Hlela

I am a Masters of Education student in Inclusive Education at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, under the supervision of Dr Moeniera Moosa. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am "Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng." The aim of this research project is to investigate how intermediate phase ESL educators accommodate their learners' varied learning styles in a Full-Service primary school in Sedibeng West District.

The research will entail collecting data from educators. I humbly request permission to conduct the research in your school. I will invite individuals from your school to participate in this study. The study will entail interviewing six educators. If they agree, they will be asked to be interviewed, observed, participate in focus group discussions, document analysis for lesson plans and assessments and audio

recordings. The data collection will take place on the premises of the school and during work hours for 35 to 55 minutes, Monday to Friday for term 3 and 4.

Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (if you want). The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organization. The permission letter should be on your organization's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

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

Yours sincerely,

Nqobile Hlela

Researcher: Nqobile Hlela

0796534223

1448564@learners.wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr Moeniera Moosa

Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za

011 717 3085

Appendix D: Permission letter



University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg

Private Bag 3

Wits 2050

Date: 01/07/2024

Dear Sir

Re: Permission to conduct research at xxxx Full-Service school

My name is Nqobile Victoria Hlela and I am a Masters of Education student in Inclusive Education at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg under the supervision of Dr Moeniera Moosa. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am "Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng". The aim of this research project is to investigate how intermediate phase ESL educator accommodate their learners' varied learning styles in a Full-Service primary school in Sedibeng West District. The research will entail collecting data from educators. I request permission to conduct the research in your school. I will invite individuals from your school to participate in this study.

The study will entail interviewing six educators from grade 4, 5 and 6. If they agree, they will be asked to be individually interviewed, observed, participate in a focus group discussion, and to analyse their lesson plans and assessments. Their permission will also be sort to audio recording all interviews. The data collection will take place on the premises of the school and observations will take place during work hours for 35 to 55 minutes, Monday to Friday for term 3 and 4. All interviews will take place after school hours at a mutually convenient time.

Participants will be asked to give their written consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (if you want). The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organization. The permission letter should be on your organization's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

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

Yours sincerely,
Nqobile Hlela

Researcher: Nqobile Hlela
0796534223
1448564@learners.wits.ac.za

Supervisor: Dr Moeniera Moosa

Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za

011 717 3085

Appendix E: Participant information sheet for learners



Dear Learner

My name is Nqobile Victoria Hlela and I am a MEd student in Inclusive Education at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg under the supervision of Dr Moeniera Moosa. As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating "Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng". The aim of this research project is to investigate how intermediate phase ESL educator accommodate their learners' varied learning styles in a Full-Service primary school in Sedibeng West District.

I kindly ask you to take part in this research project. I would like to kindly ask you to allow me to record, observe classroom interactions during lessons for 35 to 55 minutes, Monday to Friday for term 3 and 4. You will not pay anything to take part in this project. You can choose to take part or to stop taking part in the study. If you want, you may answer all questions but if you do not want to, you can stop at any time then continue at another time suitable for you. The observation will be completely confidential, and I will not use your name in my final research report. If you feel uncomfortable while I'm observing the lessons, we will stop the process and continue at another time. If you need some support or counselling services, these are available free of charge at the school. The leaner support educator will be ready to help (Contact details of the counsellor or LSE educator will be supplied later during the term).

If you have any questions during or afterwards about the observation and recording feel free to contact me on the phone number below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (if you want).

The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years. With your permission the data collected from the research project may be used by other researchers in a format whereby your names will not be used.

If you have any complaints about this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, emailhrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Nqobile Hlela

Researcher: Nqobile Hlela (1448564@learners.wits.ac.za)-0796534223

Supervisor: Dr Moeniera Moosa (Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za) 011 717 3085

Appendix F: Information sheet for parents



Dear Parent

My name is Nqobile Victoria Hlela and I am a MEd student in Inclusive Education at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg under the supervision of Dr Moeniera Moosa As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project, and I am investigating "Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng". The aim of this research project is to investigate how intermediate phase ESL educators accommodate their learners' varied learning styles in a Full-Service primary school in Sedibeng West District.

I am writing to inform you that, as part of my research study, I will be conducting a research study in your child's class (grade 6) by observing learners in their classroom environment. While I'm in the classroom, I will observe the educator's strategies and learner's interactions and take notes and audio recording. I will not record your child's name. Your child will not do anything outside of his or her normal classroom activities and there is no risk to your child. Your child's participation will not affect his/her grade. This observation aims to enhance our understanding of effective educational practices and ultimately improve the learning experiences of all learners. The observation will take place during regular class hours for 35 to 55 minutes, Monday to Friday for term 3 and 4 and I will ensure that they are conducted in a respectful and unobtrusive manner. Your child's participation in this research is very important.

The learner will not pay anything to take part in this project. The learner can choose to take part or to stop taking part in the study. The observation will be completely confidential, and I will not use your child's name in my final research report. If the learner is feeling uncomfortable during the observation of the lessons, we will stop the process and continue at another time. If the learner needs some support or counselling services, these are available free of charge at the school. The leaner support educator will be ready to help (Contact details of the counsellor or LSE educator will be supplied later during the term).

If you have any questions feel free to contact me on the phone number below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (if you want). The data collected from this research project will be stored in a password protected computer and will be kept for 5 years. With your permission the data collected from the research project may be used by other researchers in a format whereby learner's names will not be used. If you have any complaints about this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 717 1408, emailhrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Nqobile Hlela

Researcher: Nqobile Hlela (1448564@learners.wits.ac.za)-0796534223

Supervisor: Dr Moeniera Moosa (Moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za) 011 717 3085

Appendix G: Parent consent form



Name of researcher: Nqobile Victoria Hlela

I herewith wish to request your permission to conduct the research in your school. By signing below, I, …… …..., give permission for my child,_____to participate in the research to take place at xxxxx Full-Service school.
I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that my child's participation is voluntary.	YES	NO
I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered	YES	NO
I am aware that the observations will take place during teaching and learning time.	YES	NO

I am aware that participation will remain anonymous (participants names or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report.	YES	NO
I am aware that other researchers may use the information provided by participant's observation/audio recordings (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.	YES	NO

…… (Parent's name)

……. (Learner's name)

…… (signature)

…… (date)

Appendix H: Participants consent form



Name of researcher; Nqobile Victoria Hlela

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

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study.	YES	NO
I agree that the interview/ focus group may be audio recorded.	YES	NO
I agree to be observed teaching in the classroom	YES	NO
I agree that the documents Analysis may be photographed.	YES	NO

I agree that direct quotations from my interview/focus group/audio recording may be used by the researcher in their research report. YES NO

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name or other identifying data will not be used by the researcher in their research report. YES NO

I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview/focus group/observation/document analysis/audio recordings (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on. YES NO

…… (Name of participant)

…… (Signature)

…… (Date)

Appendix I: Group interview questions



M.Ed. coursework and research project

Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng.

- Gender: _____
- Age: _____
- Number of years teaching:_____
- Number of years teaching in the intermediate phase: _____
- Number of years teaching at a FSS: _____

1. Which grade are currently teaching and the number of learners in your classroom?

_____

2. How do you address the diverse needs of learners in your classroom?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What are typical issues in the classroom that challenge you to think and do differently?

5. What learning needs do you consider when planning the lesson plan?

6. Explain how do you cater diverse learning needs when planning the lesson?

7. How do you ensure that your lesson plans address the diverse needs and abilities of your learners in terms of language proficiency, cultural background and learning styles?

8. In what way do you involve learners with special needs in your lesson?

9. Have you faced any challenges in planning or assessing lessons for diverse learners? If so, how have you overcome those challenges or adapt your teaching strategies?

(ii)The strategies to accommodate learner's diversity

1. What is the support structure of the school? In terms of the learner's support.

2. Can you give me an idea of what do you think diversity mean?

3. What kind of support do you give and receive in the school?

4. In what way/s is this school different from other schools?

5. How do you encourage active participation among learners with diverse abilities during your lesson?

6. How do you differentiate instruction to cater the diverse learning needs of all learners in your English lessons?

7. Could you please share your experience when it comes to using inclusive teaching strategies to address learner diversity in English lessons?

8. What specific inclusive teaching strategies do you incorporate during your English lessons to ensure that all learners, regardless of their diverse backgrounds and abilities, can fully participate and engage in the learning process?

9. What teaching strategies do you employ to create an inclusive learning environment where all learners feel valued and supported?

10. What strategies or teaching methods do you find most effective in catering to the diversity of your learners in an English classroom?

(iii) School assessment progress and performance of learners with diverse needs

1. Can you elaborate on the assessment tools or methods you use to evaluate the language skills and overall development of your learners?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How do you modify or adapt your assessment methods to accommodate the individual needs and abilities of diverse learners?

_____

_____

_____

3. How do you assess learners with learning barriers within the classroom?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix J: Lesson plan checklist

University of the Witwatersrand

M.Ed. coursework and research proposal

Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng.

Grade:_____

Date of the lesson:_____

Participant:_____

No.	Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1	The plan accommodates all learning abilities of learners			
2	The lesson objectives clearly defined and aligned with the diverse learning abilities of learners			
3	Does the lesson include various instructional strategies to accommodate different learning styles and abilities?			
4	Are there adaptations or modifications made to the lesson to resources/ materials to cater for diversity?			

5	Differentiated instruction was incorporated when planning the lesson			
6	Curriculum content was modified using differentiated instruction to respond to different learning abilities of all learners in class			
7	Class activity and set questions accommodates various intelligences of diverse learning needs			

General overall comments:

Appendix K: Observation checklist



M.Ed. coursework and research proposal

Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Grade: ____

Participant: _____

No.	Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1	Lesson objectives clearly defined and aligned with the diverse learning needs of learners			
2	Lesson includes various instructional strategies to accommodate different learning styles and abilities			

3	Adaptations and modifications made to the lesson to cater to diverse needs of learners			
4	Opportunities for differentiated instruction or individualised support for learners with diverse needs			
5	Inclusive teaching strategies used to actively engage all learners during lessons			
6	Specific instructional methods, such as visual aids, manipulatives or technology, to address learner diversity			
7	The educator provides support and scaffolding for learners with diverse needs			
8	The educator assesses learners understanding and progress during and after lesson			
9	Various assessments methods used to accommodate different learning needs and preferences			

10	The educator provides feedback or modifications to address learner's diverse needs			
11	Learners get the chance to voice their opinions, insights, and achievements.			
12	There are individualised or tailored assessments for learners with specific learning challenges			
13	Throughout the class, the instructor was able to spot learners' struggles with understanding.			
14	The learners who needed extra help were able to get it in the classroom.			
15	Differentiated instruction was successfully implemented			
16	Questions asked accommodated all learners' abilities			

General overall comments:

4. Sample of transcript

4.1 Transcript of interview with educators

Interviewer: Thank you for joining me today, Educator 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 6A and 6B to start, can you tell me which grades you are currently teaching?

Educator 4A: Grade 4A

Educator 4B: Grade 4B

Educator 5A: Grade 5A

Educator5B: Grade 5B

Educator 6A: Grade 6A

Educator 6B: Grade 6B

Interviewer: How many learners are in your classrooms?

Educator 4A: 45 learners

Educator 4B: 48 learners

Educator 5A: 43 learners

Educator5B: 45 learners

Educator 6A: 48 learners

Educator 6B: 56 learners

Interviewer: How do you address the diverse needs of learners in your classrooms?

Educator 4A: I normally use different strategies according to the learner's different needs.

Educator 4B: I use individual support and differentiated instruction strategies, such as grouping learners by ability and providing various resources tailored to their learning styles. I also incorporate technology to engage learners with different needs.

Educator 5A: I acknowledge their background experience and allow them to learn about their different cultures

Educator5B: I use different strategies that caters the learner's different needs.

Educator 6A: I use differentiated instruction

Educator 6B: I work according to my learners' pace using differentiation

Interviewer: What are typical issues in the classroom that challenge you to think and do differently?

Educator 4A: One major challenge is managing varying levels of language proficiency among learners. Some learners struggle with basic vocabulary, while others are more advanced, which requires me to adapt my teaching methods frequently.

Educator 4B: Different educational needs of learners and background information

Educator 5A: How to cater learners with severe barriers in class it is very challenging because, they are all mixed in one class and at the same time I have to accommodate those who are intelligent, so it is a challenge and time consuming to give individual support

Educator5B: Disrespectful learners that are also struggling academically

Educator 6A: Learner who cannot read

Educator 6B: Teaching styles and strategies to according learners' disabilities

Interviewer: What learning needs do you consider when planning the lesson plan?

Educator 4A: Different learning ability of learners, resources, goals and learning activities

Educator 4B: That learners are not the same

Educator 5A: Different learning abilities of learners, and different level of intellectual

Educator5B: I plan the lesson according to the learner's different learning styles and abilities

Educator 6A: Teaching styles and strategies according to learners' disabilities

Educator 6B: learners with barriers

4.2 Transcript of observations

Date: 14/10/2024

Time: 9:00

Grade: 4

Participant: Grade 4A

No.	Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1	Lesson objectives clearly defined and aligned with the diverse learning needs of learners	✓		
2	Lesson includes various instructional strategies to accommodate different learning styles and abilities	✓		
3	Adaptations and modifications made to the lesson to cater to diverse needs of learners	✓		
4	Opportunities for differentiated instruction or individualised support for learners with diverse needs	✓		
5	Inclusive teaching strategies used to actively engage all learners during lessons	✓		

4.3 Transcript from lesson plans checklist

Grade: 5A__

Date of the lesson: _24/10/2024

Participant: _Grade 5A

No.	Criteria	Yes	No	Comments
1	The plan accommodates all learning abilities of learners	✓		
2	The lesson objectives clearly defined and aligned with the diverse learning abilities of learners	✓		
3	Does the lesson include various instructional strategies to accommodate different learning styles and abilities?	✓		
4	Are there adaptations or modifications made to the lesson to resources/ materials to cater for diversity?	✓		
5	Differentiated instruction was incorporated when planning the lesson	✓		

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | WSoE Wits School of Education

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NONMEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER:** **2024ECE054M**

PROJECT TITLE

Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full Service township primary school in Gauteng.

INVESTIGATOR	Nqobile Victoria Hlela
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	WSoE
DATE CONSIDERED	09 September 2024
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Minimal Risk
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the Research Report
ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE	25 September 2024
CHAIRPERSON	Dr. Lawan Abdulhamid

cc: Dr Moeniera Moosa

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

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

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

Signature **Date** 23 / 10 / 2024

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GAUTENG PROVINCE

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

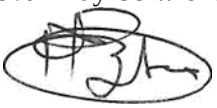
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GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL **LETTER**

Date:	04 November 2024
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2025 30 September 2025 2024/439
Name of Researcher:	Hlela NV
Address of Researcher:	8 Linde street
	Vanderbijlpark, CW%
Telephone Number:	0796534223
Email address:	1448564@learners.wits.ac.za
Research Topic:	Investigating intermediate phase English educators' practices, in responding to learner diversity at a Full-Service township primary school in Gauteng.
Name of University:	Wits
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	1 Primary
District/s/HO	Sedibeng West

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. **The following conditions** apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be **withdrawn should** any of **the conditions listed** below be **flouted:**



Letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*

Because of the *relaxation of COVID 19 regulations* researchers *can collect data* online, *telephonically, physically access schools* or *may* make *arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should* die *submitted to* the *GDE Education* **Research** *and Knowledge Management directorate.*

4. *The Researchers are advised to wear a mask at all* times, *Social distance at all* times, *Provide a* vaccination *certificate or negative COVID•19 test, not older than 72 hours, and Sanitise frequently.*

5. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

6. *A* letter/ *document that outline the purpose of the research and the anticipated* outcomes *of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*

7. *The Researcher will make* every effort obtain *the goodwill and co-operation of* a// *the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, educators and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that* opt not *to participate will not be penalised in any way*.

8. *Research may only be conducted after* school *hours so* that *the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director* (if at a district/head *office)* must be *consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*

9. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the* last *quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*

10. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the* Gauteng *Department of Education.*

11. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain* written *parental consent of all learners that* are *expected to participate in the study.*

12. *The researcher is responsible to supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*

f3. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, educators and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*

14. *On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director. Knowledge Management*

& Research with one Hard Cover *bound* and an electronic copy of *the* research.

15. *The researcher may be expected to provide* short *presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her* research *to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*

16. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Depal1ment of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks lot ward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



.....

Mr. David Bapela

CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 04/11/2004

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7"' floor. 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 255 0488

ALPHA RESEARCH HUB

CERTIFICATE

OF EDITING

This is to certify that:

The academic work titled "INVESTIGATING INTERMEDIATE PHASE ENGLISH EDUCATORS' PRACTICES, IN RESPONDING TO LEARNER DIVERSITY ATA A FULL SERVICE TOWNSHIP PRMARY SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG" has undergone a thorough proofreading and editing process by the undersigned. During this process, attention was given to the accuracy of English language usage, including grammar, punctuation, spelling.

It is hereby affirmed that, to the best of the editor's knowledge, the integrity of the research content and the author's original intent have been preserved. No substantive changes were made to the content that would alter the original academic contribution or findings of the work.

ALUFUNO MCWABE
CHIEF EDITOR
27 JUNE 2025
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